

The Foundation of India's Future

POSITIVE NATIONALISM

GOPAL RAI

Translated into English by
Prof. Sangeeta Mittal



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BookAge Publications
I-152, 2nd Floor Street No. 11
Lalita Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092
Ph: 9811140390
E-mail: bookage_nks@yahoo.com

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Preface to the Revised Edition

It is a matter of great pleasure that within such a short span of time revised second edition of *Positive Nationalism* is being published. The credit for this goes to all those Indian readers living in different parts of the world who have not only read this book but also discussed it from time to time on various platforms. The suggestions that have come out from these discussions have also been incorporated in this edition. The chapters included in this edition have not been written by me but have been delivered as speeches on different occasions under the aegis of the *Desh Ki Baat* Foundation lectures. On account of this, there were references to contemporary debates and conditions at several places in the book which were difficult to decipher for new readers who were not familiar with those contexts. Apart from this, the chapter division in the earlier edition was on the basis of my lectures, and thus, it was not quite appropriate to the chapter division of a book. There were proofreading mistakes also at some places. This is the reason why we have needed this new edition.

In this new edition, two separate chapters on positive nationalism have been combined into one. In the same way, two chapters pertaining to women's issues have been clubbed into one chapter. Three different chapters on the topics of caste, reservation and social justice have been merged to make one single chapter. In the chapters on Mahatma Gandhi and Shaheed Bhagat Singh, a section on Dr. Ambedkar has been added to form a new chapter. Apart from this, two of my earlier statements on environment and media have been transcribed to be included in this edition. Along with these chapters, *Mission Desh Ki Baat* has also been included in this edition.

This revised edition of *Positive Nationalism* has been made possible because we had the manuscript of the first edition in the preparation of which Late Dr. Pradeep Kumar had made a very important contribution. Along with him, Seema Joshi, Prof. Gauhar Raza, Prof. Manoj Kumar Singh, Ritu Rani and Upendra Kumar have also made a valuable contribution.

The Team *Desh ki Baat* has also made a commendable contribution in the preparation of this revised edition. I am especially grateful to the publisher of this book, Sh. Narendra ji who facilitated the publication of the edition in a very short span of time.

Gopal Rai

Preface to the First Edition

This book is a collection of the ideas of honourable Gopal Rai. These ideas have been expressed by him in the speeches given on different platforms. In 2018, he started a forum called '*Desh Ki Baat*'. This programme is run in all the legislative sessions of the Delhi Government. This is a thinking and brainstorming platform, where everyone can share his or her views about social, political or cultural issues.

Keeping in view, the needs of this platform, especially for the educated youth, many educational institutions are organizing programmes under its banner. In the recent past, many colleges affiliated with Delhi University have organized activities under '*Desh Ki Baat*' which has gained wide acceptance among the youth.

Looking at the present scenario in the country, the condition of education, employment and social development, it is urged that the youth, farmers, workers, women, backward classes, and other marginalized sections of the society work together. They must recognize the affirmative and positive aspect of our civilization, culture and history and integrate those into their lives.

In this context, *Desh Ki Baat* is promoting a fresh wave of nationalism and patriotism. At the same time, it is also refining its thinking. The political activism and debates of Gopal Rai are creating clarity of thought and a concept of positive nationalism is being formulated.

Positive nationalism is ideological thinking, which takes into account those aspects of our tradition, history, culture and politics, which will enable the last person to get his fundamental rights, irrespective of his caste, creed or sex. Hence, we must know our legacy of positive nationalism. Only then we can struggle for a better future.

Late Pradeep Kumar Singh

Assistant Professor

Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar College

Delhi University, Delhi.

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1. The Meaning of Nation

For understanding the deeper meaning of positive nationalism, we will have to understand the meaning of nation. The moment we hear the word 'nation', we feel proud and a pleasant sensation fills our hearts. Even utterly selfish people feel that they should get over their selfishness and contribute to the nation.

What is a nation without its citizens? Ask yourself, if a person living in distant Manipur is a citizen of India or not? Whether an adivasi is a part of our nation or not? Isn't the dalit who serves others right through his life a part of this country? Women, who constitute nearly half of the Indian populace, do they have a share in this country? Does not this nation belong to the lakhs of farmers toiling in the fields of India? What about the labourers who erect huge edifices and skyscrapers, are they Indians or not?

Does the nation only belong to the select few who are powerful and wealthy? The answer is no. The sons and daughters born in any corner of India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Kutch to Manipur in any community or any religion are as much a part of India as anyone else. Unless this idea is deeply instilled in our hearts, it will be absolutely impossible to think or act about the nation. With divisive thoughts, even if we use our full potential for national development, yet it is possible that instead of producing constructive energy, it may one day produce a Hiroshima-Nagasaki, and whatever nation we have today, may also be annihilated.

We think of making our nation strong and powerful, but in the routine of life, it often becomes difficult to think about the nation. A person living in Delhi, the national capital, may not realize how a common man of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Assam or any other state of India subsists and survives. What does he think about this nation? How do adivasis look at the nation? What are their dreams about the nation? Women are the victims of male oppression and violence just because they are women. What do they think about their country? In India, people follow different religions. When the misdeeds of one person from the fundamentalist sect of a religion become the basis of maligning and humiliating a religion, then what do the followers of that religion think about the nation?

When you think about the nation, don't you visualize the crores of workers toiling day and night? Don't you see the anxiety of a farmer about his daughter's wedding? Don't you see the struggle of an adivasi? The insult heaped on dalits for no fault of theirs? If you cannot perceive all these, then despite seeing everything you do not see the nation. You do not reflect the nation in your mind's mirror? The half-baked pictures of the nation that have been implanted in our minds are biased and flat. These cannot lead our nation on the path of progress.

The thought that I am trying to convey for your contemplation is that a nation does not exist without its citizens. A nation is not a mere geographical area with borders and boundaries. It is made of its people. Without making its citizens strong, no nation can become powerful. Till every single child feels economically, socially, culturally and politically empowered, a nation cannot be empowered. Thus, I reiterate, that one cannot know a nation by merely looking at its map or geographical features. For knowing a country one will need to understand its people belonging to different religions, communities, regions, castes and cultures. You will have to share and participate in their despair and joys, their

dreams and aspirations. These common joys and sorrows, dreams and aspirations of people are what constitute a nation.

2. The Origin and Evolution of 'Nationalism'

You know that there have been different stages of evolution of human civilization. For the progress of civilization, different practices, systems and ideologies have been experimented with. In the beginning, there was a primitive system. Gradually, human beings invented agricultural equipment and the agrarian system came into being. Tribes and clans developed. In different parts of the world, clan clusters and organizations started developing. Clan culture later gave rise to feudalism. Feudalism then led to kingship. Monarchies extended their authority, territory and domain in their own way. As kingship developed, different political systems came into practice. Within a country, sometimes there could be five empires, ten empires or even hundreds of kingdoms. The country did not change but different ideologies and systems kept on taking turns in the governance of these kingdoms and empires.

In France, people raised their voice against the oppression and apathy of the kings. A consciousness grew amongst people against monarchy. A sense of nationalism developed which gave them the feeling of 'one nation'. They figured out that they should have liberty, equality and fraternity. The difference between the ruler and the ruled should be erased. A democratic nationalist spirit originated. In the process many ideological variations found expression. One of them is the ideology of nationalism.

According to a school of thought, nationalism was born in modern Europe. Renaissance, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, French Revolution and Colonialism played important roles in its development. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this ideology of nationalism reached its pinnacle and then spread to almost all nations across the world. Sociologists, political scientists and philosophers across

the globe tried to understand and define nationalism in their own way. One common aspect that emerged from all these thinkers was that nationalism is an ideology that celebrates one's love for the nation and consistent attempts to better and improve the nation. However, in the name of this ideology, the wars, the politics and the systems that were promoted, led to the emergence of two divergent viewpoints, viz.

1. Negative or destructive nationalism
2. Positive or constructive nationalism.

3. Negative Nationalism versus Positive Nationalism

If someone asks you what is the difference between negative nationalism and positive nationalism, one can say that both claim to work for national development as well as solving the problems of the citizens. However, they are different in terms of the means they use and the ends they achieve. Negative nationalism is based on hatred, whereas positive nationalism has love at its core. Positive nationalism wishes to consolidate its strength by uniting people through love and harmony, whereas negative nationalism accumulates power by dividing people in hatred and conflict.

Historically, two very aggressive experiments in negative nationalism have taken place. First happened in Germany where Hitler spread hatred against the Jews. He made people believe that if the Jews could be exterminated, all the problems of Germany would vanish, and it would become the greatest of all nations. We all know the results of this ethnic cleansing experiment. Many innocent people were killed, Hitler had to commit suicide, and thirdly, Germany was divided into two parts– East Germany and West Germany.

A second example is Pakistan which came into existence based on religion. Simply becoming an Islamic nation neither ensured education for its children nor employment for its adults. It did not guarantee equality and gender parity.

Despite being an Islamic state, even mosques are bombed there. People are forced to live in mortal fear. Children are denied education and the sick long for proper treatment facilities. Their leaders are assassinated. And like the Germans, eventually Pakistan also got divided into two and a new nation of Bangladesh came into existence.

Both these examples highlight the predominant three negative effects of negative nationalism. First, the massacre of the innocent people; secondly, assassination or suicide of their leaders and thirdly, the division of their country. On the other hand, positive nationalism has been successfully practiced across the world. We can see it in the making of Soviet Russia, in Japan's development and the self-reliance of Cuba. All the innovations that have gone into the development of these nations are integrally linked to the philosophy and passion of positive nationalism.

You may remember, Hitler defeated many European nations, but at last, he had to accept defeat from Russia. Hitler was fighting based on his martial strength, whereas Russia was fighting on the faith of its citizens. In several corners of Russia where Hitler's army reached, there was no Russian army to counter-attack, but there were children and youth who had immense love for their nation. People from every village, every locality and every street stood up for their nation and bravely encountered Hitler's army as they felt that as their nation preserved their well-being, so they should sacrifice their lives for the nation.

If we want our nation to progress, base your endeavor in love and affection. The affection of the people for the nation is the very foundation of positive nationalism.

4. Development of Negative and Positive Nationalism in India

It is during the freedom movement that nationalist feelings originated in India. Gradually, we witness its development both in the direction of negative nationalism and positive nationalism. We all know that during the Battle of Plassey,

the person who took on Lord Clive was not a Hindu, but a mere twenty-four-year-old Muslim youth, Siraj-ud-daulah. You all know about him. He did not get into an agreement with Lord Clive while his commander-in-chief Mir Jafar sold his integrity to Lord Clive. Siraj-ud-daulah gave up his life but did not accept the terms and conditions of the East India Company. It was probably not a national level war, but a significant war nevertheless against the British East India Company.

The 1857 uprising, which is usually considered the First War of Independence was preceded by many small battles that farmers and adivasis fought against the British. Whether you think of them as fighting for India's freedom or not is a different question since there was no centralized government or movement at that time. There were numerous kingdoms and kings in India. The British were trying to annex one kingdom after another. By 1857, almost the whole of India was under British rule and whatever kingdoms were left, their sovereignty was also in the end destroyed by the British. As the East India Company continued to take over every inch of India, simultaneously, a nationalist feeling was gradually finding its place and cementing itself in the hearts of the people. You may call it a feeling of nationalism or positive thinking.

In the 1857 uprising, people from across India came together and a positive nationalism was born. The Europeans thought that a nation is a conglomeration of people belonging to one religion, one language and one region. India proved it wrong. The 1857 war of independence refuted this and established the fact that despite the diversity in religion, race, language and region, people can unite together and can pave way for national progress. This was exactly the antithesis of Germany's negative nationalism. In comparison, it was a nationalism based on love.

When you try to grasp the power of positive nationalism of the 1857 uprising, you will realize that it made Bahadur

Shah Zafar and Nana Sahib come together to renounce everything for the sake of the nation. It even inspired the Rani of Jhansi, Laxmi Bai, and Begum Hazrat Mahal to martyr for India. The rising tide of positive nationalism spurred Azimullah Khan and Tantia Tope together to fight the British. It is positive nationalism that generated feelings of surrender, dedication and love in all and took everyone along in its stride.

During the days of the freedom movement, three types of slogans were common- "British, Quit India", "Allah ho Akbar" and "Har Har Mahadev". It was the essence of positive nationalism that uprooted the hundred years' rule of the East India Company which held sway from 1757 -1857. Usually, we say that in 1947 we got freedom from the British, but on 14 May 1857 to 21 September 1857, a Council headed by Bahadur Shah Zafar ruled from Red Fort. This council ruled for five months. The British collaborated with the traitors to regain control over Red Fort.

I would like you to visit Old Delhi. As you pass the Delhi Gate, you will come across a gateway called *Khooni Darwaza*. You must have heard about it. On 14 May 1857, Indians ousted the British. Thereafter in September, the British again attacked when Bahadur Shah Zafar along with his son and two grandchildren was at Humayun's tomb. Bahadur Shah Zafar was arrested and then put on house arrest in Red Fort. At that time Hudson was the British commander. Hudson arrested and brought Bahadur Shah Zafar's son and grandsons to *Khooni Darwaza* and beheaded them. Hudson put their heads on a platter and presented them to Bahadur Shah Zafar saying, "This is the gift for your nationalism!" Bahadur Shah Zafar replied, 'If this is the gift for my nationalism, then I accept it. I am ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of my nation". It is because of his sacrifice that we are free today. The revolt of 1857 led to a brutal suppression of India by the British.

In 1857, the rule of the East India Company came to an end. India came under the direct rule of Queen Victoria. The

process of looting and plundering India continued unabated. Slowly once again, the feelings of revolt were born. People started voicing their protests everywhere. The British understood that till Indians were divided on communal lines into Muslims and Hindus, it would be difficult to rule India for long. Thus, they devised the two-nations policy. They started implanting the essence of European nationalism amongst Indians. The first experiment happened in Bengal in 1905 when Bengal was divided into Hindu Bengal and Muslim Bengal.

The British tried to sow the seeds of negative nationalism amongst Indians so that they could reap the benefit of ruling India for the longest period. It was done with the intention of prolonging their exploitative and oppressive regime. It was a weapon used by the British. The whole of India stood against the Partition of Bengal. In those days there was no internet, social media, newspapers, or television, not even many modes of transportation. Yet there was a conviction. That is what catalyzed the people of Bengal into action.

Partition of Bengal was an attempt by the British to institutionalize negative nationalism. Under the leadership of, Lal-Bal-Pal (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal), there arose nationwide protests against it. It was due to positive nationalism; else what did Punjabi Lala Lajpat Rai or Maharashtrian Bal Gangadhar Tilak have to do with Bengal?

Earlier, the Mughals ruled the north, the west was ruled by the Marathas. If something happened in the Maratha territory, the Mughals would not care. In the same way, it did not matter if the Pallavas were ruling in some part of India and the Huns were in another part. They did not care about each other. However, during the freedom struggle, a new awakening was born and a new sensitivity about the nation arose. If Punjab was attacked, the pain was felt in Bengal too. If Bengal was partitioned, Maharashtra also suffered. A positive nationalistic feeling had come into existence. In 1905,

the *satyagraha* for discarding foreign goods (*swadeshi*) and self-rule (*swaraj*) began. The British felt defeated. They had to flee from their capital Calcutta and make a new capital in Delhi.

They resolved that they could not rule India unless they created disunity among its people. They were afraid of the feeling of affirmative and positive nationalism that had arisen in the hearts of the people. In this process, two organizations came into existence – the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. The Hindu Mahasabha gradually developed into *Rashtriya Sawamsevak Sangha* (RSS). You will realize that the RSS did not contribute to the freedom struggle. One parameter of love for the nation is that you make sacrifices for the nation. During the entire freedom struggle, there was no participation of the Hindu Mahasabha or Muslim League in any movement or protest. They did not make any sacrifices. They only encouraged negative nationalism and the result was the Partition of India in 1947.

It is significant to note that in 1905 when a state is divided, the whole nation stood against it; but in 1947 when a nation was divided, no voice of protest was heard. It was because by then our minds had been so poisoned by the negative nationalism of the *Hindu Mahasabha*, *Rashtriya Sawamsevak Sangha* and Muslim League that the Partition of India seemed justified in the interest of the nation. People across India from cities and villages were a part of the freedom struggle but not a single person from the RSS staked anything for the sake of the nation. It just demanded a *Hindu Rashtra* – a Hindu nation. Initially, the Muslim League was with the fight for the freedom of India, but very soon they too embraced the idea that they needed a Muslim nation. The British planted the seeds of hatred through V.D. Savarkar and M.A. Jinnah. Their ideology emphasized that a nation can only be strong when it is constituted of people belonging to one single religion, language, dialect or culture. They believed that in this homogenous kind of nation, all the problems would be

eliminated. The Hindu nation Nepal and Muslim nation Pakistan are in front of us today and we can see that they still suffer from unemployment and ignorance.

Another important point I want to make is, usually it is believed that only Jews were killed in Germany but in reality, equal or greater number of Germans were also killed. The nation, which is built on hatred and negative nationalism does not suffer danger from minorities. The minorities can neither make nor mar a government there. When the power is based on the majority, thereafter minorities are not a threat. It happened in the case of both undivided India and Germany. The living example of this is Pakistan, the very origin of which is based on religion. Today in Pakistan, people live constantly under the threat of terrorism. Who suffers? The majority Muslim population.

Currently, the kind of nationalism, *Rashtriya Sawamsevak Sangha* and *Bharatiya Janata Party* are misguiding the nation with is the negative nationalism of the German model. Why does the RSS want to re-establish this negative ideology? Do they want lakhs of Indians to die as people died in Germany? Are they sure, like Hitler, their leader will not commit suicide? Can they ensure that India will not be divided further because of the foundations they are laying of negative nationalism amongst the masses?

Today the *Rashtriya Sawamsevak Sangha* and *Bharatiya Janata Party* are making claims that they want to build a Hindu nation. They are not saying this because they really want to do so. They are merely saying this to retain power. They are emphasizing that India lived under slavery for centuries, that is why it suffers from unemployment and gendered violence. That is why women are victimized and do not receive education. The country became backward. They say that had Muslims not enslaved this country, then there would not have been unemployment; then people would have been educated; everyone would have had equal rights; and there would have been no caste discrimination. But we all know it is not true. It

is only false propaganda. In a nutshell, negative nationalism is trying to spread hatred to ensure its legitimacy and longevity.

We are not analyzing what happened in Germany. Nor are we learning anything from Pakistan. It is extremely grievous when a nation or community or society does not learn from history. Even a child learns when he puts his hand in the fire for the first time out of curiosity. If he does it again, he realizes, that it will burn. If a child can learn, why can't we learn that if our nation is pushed into the fire of negative nationalism, it will move down the path of disintegration, the path of killing, murders, carnage, assassination and the suicide of the leaders? There is no path to development in this ideology, neither today nor tomorrow. Not in the present or the future. Therefore, we must discard negative nationalism and switch to positive and affirmative nationalism.

5. Indian Culture, Indianness and Positive Nationalism

If we study ancient Indian history, we will witness a different India. Similarly, India was different in medieval times. Modern Indian history presents another picture of India which consists of both negative and positive aspects of our culture. Some people look only at the negative side, while others emphasize only the positive side. None of them provides a wholesome picture of India and its culture.

The people who look at Indian culture from a uni-dimensional point of view, I want to ask them, isn't the culture of the Indus Valley a part of Indian culture? Is the Vedic culture not a part of Indian culture? The culture which evolved during the Jain and Buddhist period-is that not a part of the Indian ethos? The Bhakti revolution developed by Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Jayasi and Meera-is that not part of Indian culture? Even the nationalist feelings that developed during the freedom struggle between 1857 to 1947- is that not part of Indian culture?

What will be left if we eliminate these periods of Indian history? Can that give a composite and syncretic view of Indian civilization and culture? Will it suffice to lay a foundation for a great future for India? Today, in India, two kinds of voices can be heard prominently, one which wants to build a so-called Hindu nation in the name of appealing to Indian culture and the other, which wants to altogether dismiss the significance of Indian culture by way of opposing the Hindu nation brigade. It is to be understood that both these voices are limiting their arguments to the negative aspects of Indian culture. Both these factions do not mention the positive aspects of Indian culture and heritage at all. They do not talk of inclusive Indian culture where the worldview of '*Vasudhaiv kutumbakam*' is celebrated and pluralism is championed.

From ancient days, India, instead of being reclusive, has believed in multi-culturalism and it can be seen from the fact that India compiled such a glorious body of knowledge- the Vedas- not one but four. It is the nation where Jain and Buddhist philosophy were born. If we talk about the Puranas, they are not one but eighteen. India promotes nine branches of philosophy and not one: Charvaka's materialist philosophy as well as Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Mimansa and Vedanta philosophies. The people of this land are capable of amalgamating nine branches of philosophy and carry forward.

From ancient times we see that India has been a land of scholars and scientists. This is because India traditionally had a debating culture. Anyone could express his or her views in a logical manner in this eristic tradition. From ancient times till the freedom movement, the tradition of philosophical disputations continued. The people from every faith, every creed, every worldview had the right to air and defend their views. It is because of this argumentative culture that India has the tradition of integrating two polarized worldviews. If there was a place for spiritual Vedanta, then there was also scope for materialistic Charvaka philosophies. Can you think of such a broad perspective today? Since ancient times, India

never espoused the unitary worldview. It always professed a blend of different views, faiths, belief systems.

The medieval period of India is not just about Mughals, nawabs, kings and chieftains but also about Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas, Ramdas, Rahim, Meera and Nanak. They were the leaders of the Bhakti movement. Their Bhakti movement spread nationwide, doing away with the differences between the north and south and to celebrate humanism and love. This heritage of the Bhakti movement is an essential part of Indian culture. In modern times, the freedom struggle of India also showcases the pluralistic ethos of India in which people belonging to every religion, every community, every caste and every region whole-heartedly participated to liberate the country from the British.

Today a conspiracy is going on to kill this pluralistic tradition of India. The heritage of pluralism has originated and developed for thousands of years. The composite culture which we have created and earned over thousands of years, should it be expunged? If they have their way, they would want to change India to one creed, to one religion, to one worldview. To achieve this, they are trying to spread the hatred of negative nationalism and making every effort to engage people in communal tussles. In the land of Ganga-Yamuna, they want to divide people into a Hindu and Muslim binary. With negative nationalism, anyone can be lynched on the street.

Today there is an effort to make one man, one party, one organization greater than the nation which is not only against the democratic ethos of the nation but also against the soul of our composite culture. To kill pluralism would mean that there will not be any diversity in views, no free expression, no culture of debate, and eventually applying brakes on our developmental processes. Would our sons and daughters want India to become another Pakistan or Nepal, the countries based on religion? Would they like to get stuck in a narrow blind cul-de-sac of theocracy from where there is no way out?

As opposed to negative nationalism, positive nationalism connects the diversity of India to its essence. According to positive nationalism, India is like a bouquet of variegated flowers. The flowers in this bouquet represent different languages, religions, regions, communities, rivers, lakes, mountains ranges and plains. They represent different seasons, divergent lifestyles, cuisines, attires, cultures and belief systems. I wish to say, there are hundreds of nations in the world, but India is unique. The expanse of fertile land it has, very few nations have. Similarly, the number of rivers it has, the mineral wealth which is found here and its seasonal variety very few nations have. The numbers of Indian workforce very few nations can match. No doubt, India is facing many problems but India also has the acumen to find solutions for these problems.

When I think of science and spirituality, I look at them as complementing each other and not opposing each other. We need both. For the development of personality and positivity, we need spirituality and for the physical and material development of the nation, we need science and technology. We need science and technology for fulfilling our basic material needs but science and technology without spiritual values can lead to the unethical use of science like in the case of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Thus, spirituality and science should go hand in hand.

If we wish to carry forward Indian civilization and culture, we have to revive the traditions from Buddha to Swami Vivekananda and from Kabir to Shaheed Bhagat Singh. This glorious heritage of India is based on highest virtues of Indian civilization, sacrifice, altruism and penance. Any individual, society or nation can only progress when it strengthens its positive ethos. History teaches us this and our future also depends upon this. Therefore, I urge the youth to ensure the progress of our nation by nourishing and nurturing the pluralism and positivity of Indian culture.

If we truly love our nation, we must pursue only that. India has never had one language, one attire, one cuisine and

it will never have in future. To make India a superpower we must all unite. In our country, no family of five dresses alike, eats alike or wants to travel to the same destination twice, yet they thrive as a family. Similarly, our nation has different views and religions, yet the nation keeps progressing because we respect diversity and the likes and dislikes of others.

The quintessence of Indian identity is to keep the people of different faiths, languages, regions, cultures and worldviews respectfully united. If we make any mistakes, we must rectify them and encourage others also to rectify their mistakes. While we respect our good qualities, we must respect the goodness in others too. Anyone who is born in India, loves India, wants to keep India united, shall have to struggle. Just saying "Bharat Mata ki Jai" is not enough; it is the struggle that will protect our Indianness.

Through all the meandering struggles that India has emerged as a nation, there has to be some divine power that has kept it alive. Many civilizations came into existence, developed and then perished but India was, is and will be forever. Poet Iqbal has expressed it aptly:

"Civilizations of
Greece, Egypt and Rome
Have all disappeared from this world.
Their demise has been survived by us.
There is something
that our existence is not erased
Though for ages
The tide has remained against us.

6. Positive Nationalism and the Indian Constitution

Normally, the Constitution is considered a document of rules and regulations for governing a nation. It determines

the fundamental political and administrative structure of a nation. However, the Indian Constitution is not just a mere document. To the world, it is an articulation of sovereignty, equality and self-governance created by India after getting the long-awaited freedom from the British. It shows its people the enlightened path to the development of India.

That is why positive nationalism thinks of the Constitution as its base, as its foundation. From the point of view of positive nationalism, it is not just a book of rules but a reflection of the dreams of our martyrs, a dream of a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic that must be realized. Our Constitution enshrines India's pluralistic tradition which underscores positive nationalism.

The Preamble of our Constitution states:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and opportunity, and to promote among them all,

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this 26th day of November 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

The greatest significance of the Preamble is that in very few words, it encapsulates the essence of our constitution. I believe that without understanding the Preamble, it is not possible to comprehend our Constitution. The Preamble begins with "We, the People of India" in which "We" stands for all Indians – starting from a fisherman in coastal Tamil Nadu to a shepherd in the snow-capped mountains of Jammu and

Kashmir, to a Naga family in the distant North Eastern village to a traveller in the sandy desert of the Rann of Kutch travelling on his camel or an adivasi residing in the forests of Chhattisgarh. All of them are Indians and are part of the collective “We.”

We have got a lot from our heritage of which we should be proud; but we have also got a few things that present hurdles to the unity, sovereignty and fraternity of our nation. These are caused by social, economic and political inequalities. Many of these we have inherited historically or have been caused by our past mistakes. Our Constitution initiates actions to rectify many of these blunders. It guarantees universal adult franchise, equality, secularism, and preventing discrimination based on caste or any other social parameters. It also makes special provisions for the deprived sections of our society.

Today, it is important to talk about the Constitution because a power representing negative nationalism is emerging which wants to change our Constitution. Even when the Constitution was being drafted, these same people were opposing it. They have a problem with the ideas of justice, plurality and equality which are the essence of our Constitution. The Constitution does not approve of their ideology of one thought, one worldview, one religion, or a singular framework of ideas. The main difference between us and them is that they oppose the Constitution while our positive nationalism considers the Constitution to be its guide and mentor. Positive nationalism attempts to build a unity, a passion for building a new India that is grounded in the values and ideals of the Indian Constitution.

7. Positive Nationalism and Social Justice

In the ideal of social justice, there is no place for discrimination based on colour, race, gender, religion, community, caste, region, language or any other cultural or social marker of identity. It ensures justice for all and gives

each one of us the right to live a life of dignity, justice, equality and fraternity.

Just distribution of resources and equal opportunities are two constituents of social justice. So far Indian society has been unsuccessful in delivering social justice. For centuries, resources and opportunities have been inequitably distributed in India. It is because of this system that a section of society has achieved hegemony over others. As a result, a large section of the population lives a dehumanized existence including dalits, adivasis, minorities, backward classes and women.

In creating this social division and discrimination, the caste system, religious fanaticism and patriarchy have played an important role. Our society, divided on caste basis as *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras* and the untouchables, could never achieve any kind of unity. This kind of division has not been eradicated even till today. Even today the people belonging to the dalit and the untouchable community are living a pitiable life. For centuries, they have been kept at the lowest rung of society with no fundamental human rights. Till adivasis were not part of the mainstream, they did not have to face atrocities similar to the dalits. However, the moment their water, forests and land resources came to the notice of the mainstream, the oppression of the adivasis also started inexorably. The status of women has been even worse. The society which pretends to give the status of a goddess to a woman is yet to give her the status of being human. The biggest problem before minority communities to date is their security and safety. The fundamental entitlements, like education, health and employment are still far out of their reach. Buddha, Kabir, Ramdas, Jyotiba Phule, Savitri Bai Phule, Fatima Sheikh, Ramabai, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and innumerable others have fought against social discrimination but the fact that it is still persistent cannot be ignored.

To empower the disadvantaged groups, our Constitution takes certain proactive steps. The most significant among them is the instrument of 'Reservation'. As soon as the Constitution was adopted in 1950, the dalits and the adivasis were given a reservation of 15 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively, in government jobs and educational institutions. Starting from 1990, as per the recommendations of the Mandal Commission, 27.5 per cent of reservations were provided for backward classes in India. Recently, in 2019, the central government has made provision of 10 per cent reservation for the EWS (Economically Weaker Sections) of Society.

These are important facts for all of us to know. It is significant to be aware that whenever we discuss about reservation, two groups are formed- one pro-reservation and another anti-reservation. Both these groups have their logic and understanding. The pro-reservation lobby limits their discussion to the opportunities and equal distribution of resources according to the constitutional provisions. They also claim that only reservation can provide the oppressed castes with their rightful dues. Whereas the anti-reservation lobby argues that if reservation was meant only for ten years, then why is its term extended time and again. They advocate for discontinuing reservations on this basis.

We do not accept any of these views. We believe that more than thousands of years of discrimination and oppression cannot be undone in just ten years. Therefore, reservations must continue; but at the same time, there should be constitutional amendments which would benefit the needy persons of every caste. I want to ask the anti-reservation lobby why do they not oppose the special status enjoyed by the higher castes under the Varna system for thousands of years before the Constitution came into force? At the same time, I wish to tell the pro-reservation lobby that reservation alone will not solve the problem. If people think that just by

reservation, we can reform the lives of the oppressed, then they are wrong. Those underprivileged who have remained outside the ambit of equitable distribution of opportunities and resources, reservation is a miniscule respite for them. Therefore, the time has come when together we must devise ways by which the ugly discrimination in Indian society can be ended as soon as possible.

A large part of the fight for social justice in India is connected to its politics. In the post-independent period, especially since the 1990s, a new chapter commenced in this struggle to dispense with social discrimination. What started with the noble goal of ending social injustice and securing the dues of the marginalized has over time got derailed like other type of politics. Today, the political parties who used to champion the cause of social justice have got so trapped in the discourse of dynasty politics, casteism, regionalism and corruption that the goal of social justice is a far-fetched dream for them.

I believe that social justice cannot be achieved merely by the efforts of the political parties. To achieve social justice, people belonging to all strata of society need to come forward so that people from all castes, religions, gender, language and region who are underprivileged can be mainstreamed. If we think that India belongs to everyone alike, then we should not have any problem in accepting that the poor, labourers, workers, farmers, dalits, adivasis, underprivileged, minorities and women are all equal sons and daughters of India. We have to create a system where there is no discrimination, all are equal before the law, doors of progress are accessible to everyone and where social justice is available for everyone.

This vision of social justice is a defining part of the ideology of positive nationalism. It is against any kind of privileges as well as any kind of discrimination, injustice or inequality towards anyone. Positive nationalism, clearly believes that

without social justice, political and economic justice cannot be established.

8. Positive Nationalism and Political Justice

Political justice is about justice in the field of politics and its related domains. Conceptually, in a democratic society, political justice has special significance. India is the largest democracy in the world. That is why it is even more significant for us to talk about political justice. India is a nation of diversity where people belonging to different languages, dialects, religions, castes, regions and cultures live together. In political representation, this diversity of India needs to be reflected, but it is not so.

India is called the “nation of the youth” as 65 per cent of the population comprises youth, yet we see there is hardly any representation of youth in the political sphere. The same holds true about women, who constitute half the population of the nation but their representation in politics is lamentable. The farmers, workers and minorities are even less represented. Positive nationalism believes that till the people belonging to different sections of society are represented in our democratic political system, our democracy will not realize its potential.

A related field of political justice is “freedom of speech.” For a successful democracy, freedom of speech is a must. In recent times, this freedom of speech has been greatly curbed. The people in the government who support negative nationalism are wary of the Constitution as it guarantees freedom of speech and gives it to us as one of our fundamental rights. They try their best to stifle the media which tries to voice the concerns of the people. They are trying to promote an alternative media which, instead of asking pertinent questions, promotes negative nationalism and instigates hatred amongst the people. Positive nationalism looks at

freedom of speech as an inalienable political right. It aims to create an independent media against the power-drunk people in government and media houses who are trying to spread hatred. Only an independent media can fight for the freedom of expression for the common man.

There was a time when one joined politics to do social service, but nowadays it has turned into a business. Money is invested in politics for a profit motive just like in a business. The nexus between big corporate houses and political parties is no secret. This politics based on money, muscle and power is only for the good of business tycoons and not for the common people. The political parties receive heavy donations from these corporate houses during elections. It is interesting that the party in power at the Centre, which claims to be the most nationalist, is trying to sell everything to these corporate houses. This is one of the reasons that we call them negative nationalists.

In India, most of the decisions related to our lives, our society and our nation are taken politically. But sadly, we do not pay serious attention to these decisions. That is the reason Indian politics is full of criminals, casteists and corrupt people. As a result, people have gradually lost interest in politics. A large section of our youth calls itself 'apolitical.' At most times, they do not have any opinion about political matters. This is the result of a conspiracy by the negative nationalists, who do not want the educated and patriotic people to enter the arena of politics. As opposed to it, positive nationalism is an ideology that is fighting against those who are abusing their political power for selfish ends. Positive nationalism appeals to all those apolitical people to engage actively in politics so that the Indian democracy can truly espouse the voice of the masses.

9. Positive Nationalism and Economic Justice

To make our nation stronger, self-reliant and powerful, economic justice is as significant as social and political justice. Without guaranteeing economic justice, political and social justice cannot be ensured. In simple words, it means employment for all. From this goal of economic justice, right now we are miles away.

Our nation is going through a terrible phase of unemployment. Not only are the new entrants not getting employment but the currently employed people are also losing their jobs. It is not only true of the private and the unorganized sector but also of the government sector. The way the present government is selling government enterprises to private companies may exacerbate the crises of unemployment. The government is also thinking of privatizing organizations like the Indian Railways which has always been a profit-making undertaking.

There was a time when the Indian economy was regarded as one of the fastest-growing in the world; but recently, the GDP has fallen by 23.9 per cent and has broken a 40-year record. The small and the medium industries which were considered to be the backbone of the Indian economy are in the worst situation. Demonetization and GST had already wreaked havoc on this industry and commerce, and now the present Corona pandemic is taking its toll. The current Corona situation has increased the unemployment problem by 24 per cent. The central government policy of privatization is hell-bent on making the problem worse. In the name of self-reliance, doors of self-surrendering are being opened to the people suffering from unemployment.

Today, a negative environment is being created by saying that for a country as large as India, it is not possible to employ everyone. India is very well endowed geographically,

naturally and culturally. It is a unique country in the world. The number of rivers, mountain ranges, the extent of fertile land, the diversity of seasons, the intensity of monsoon, the richness of minerals, the bio-diversity that India can boast of, few other nations can. The intellectual ability and the human resource that nature has gifted to us, very few other nations have. That is why the sons and daughters of India are contributing internationally to great discoveries, inventions, philosophies of human betterment and in the administration of global institutions.

We believe there is positive energy in every son and daughter of Mother India. We need to make a garland by stringing together their energies. The string that holds the garland will be the thread of positive nationalism which will synergize people, energies and thoughts to build a strong nation. If all the positive energies and resources can be combined, new thinking will arise. This new thinking will lead to greater knowledge, making way for the invention of new technologies. We will be able to compete with the world in technology, industry and science. At the same time, we will be able to solve the problems of our nation. If we channel the natural and human resources, the intellectual and manual workforce in an affirmative direction, it would lead to new industry, business and progress.

Positive nationalism has two chief pillars: unity and love among people and universal participation of people in nation-building. If half the population of the country is unemployed, it means half the nation is not contributing to the progress of the nation. If a nation has to progress, then we must ensure the collaboration and partnership of everyone. I call this shared responsibility, employment or *rozgaar*. Without envisaging involvement of all through employment for all, we cannot imagine building a strong and powerful India.

I can see that with appropriate technology, apt use of

natural and human resources as well as workforce we can start such businesses and industries which can ensure employment for everyone. I suggest, in the case of technology, we need not blindly follow other nations. Instead, we need to develop India-specific technologies. The technology should be eco-friendly and labour-oriented. India is a labor-intensive economy and we need to remember it while developing appropriate technologies. The technology developed should show respect to our workforce and be an instrument of nation-building.

10. Positive Nationalism and Conservation of Nature

The existence of human beings, rather the existence of the whole world, depends on nature. Despite knowing this, the attitude of humans towards nature has been selfish and problematic. The misuse of natural resources, the felling of trees, changing the course of rivers, release of harmful gases in the atmosphere are harming nature in multifarious ways. We tend to consume a tremendous number of products in this lifestyle. One of the greatest threats to nature is our consumerist culture. Most of the products we consume are harming nature due to the improper disposal of their by-products. The irresponsible treatment of nature will make the world unfit for human existence one day. Positive nationalism teaches us a balance between nature and man. It urges us to be eco-sensitive and coexist with nature.

India is not only a socially and culturally diverse nation but its diversity is also manifested in its natural resources. Very few nations are endowed with such diversity of nature as India. India boasts of glorious mountains like the Himalayas, the Deccan plateau, fertile Gangetic plains, the Doab region and the Thar desert. It has perennial rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Indus, Brahmaputra, Godavari, Kaveri, etc. along with many seasonal lakes and waterbodies. The

physical features of India are such that when people in Kashmir are keeping themselves warm by lighting a fire, the people of Rajasthan cover their faces with large turbans to protect their faces from the harsh sun. When Meghalaya is deluged with rain, there may not be a single cloud in the sky over Punjab and Haryana. When people are sunbathing on the beaches of Goa during winter, the tea garden workers in Assam are waiting for the sun to shine.

These special physical features do not impede our developmental processes but are opportunities for prosperity. All we need is to use appropriate customized technology to harness these resources. We must create suitable eco-friendly industries and job opportunities in tune with the uniqueness of nature while keeping intact nature and its diversity in order to make people self-reliant in many regions. This way we will be able to stop the needless migration of people towards cities in search of employment. We shall also save the cities from economic pressures and environmental degradation.

Positive nationalism does not stress only on improving the system, but also tries to bring a change in the consciousness and sensibilities of the people. It believes that environmental degradation cannot be arrested merely by changing the system. The people also must change their thoughts, behaviour and lifestyle. We must stand up against consumerism which is fuelled by overexploitation of nature. Gandhi ji used to say that "nature has everything to fulfil the need of human beings but not enough to fulfil their greed". Positive nationalism is an ideology opposed to the consumer culture which is the result of our greed and lust. It advocates a lifestyle where the coexistence of nature and human beings can be achieved, which is in favour of both humans as well as nature.

11. Positive Nationalism - Foundation of India's Future

Many ideologies have evolved with the progress of human civilization. Each has claimed to better human lives, society,

the nation as well as the world. With changing times, these ideologies also kept changing to replace the outdated ones to address the new circumstances. In different ages and periods of human evolution, different thought processes have dominated. There was a time when feudalism was the universal way of running the world. However, with the passage of time, capitalism, consumerism, socialism, and nationalism were born and held sway over different parts of the world. The process of older ideologies being replaced by new ones is a continuous one. The evolution of positive nationalism is the result of this ongoing process.

The basic essence of positive nationalism is unity. It celebrates the unity achieved by Indians through thousands of years. Negative nationalism is trying to mar this achievement by spreading hatred and divisiveness. Those who are creating discord among Hindus and Muslims today, to retain a hold on power can go to any extent. Tomorrow, they will not hesitate in creating discord within Hindus to fulfil the same objective. That is why for maintaining the unity and integrity of India and for building a foundation for a strong India, we must embrace positive nationalism which reiterates our pluralism.

Positive nationalism is deeply dedicated to the values and essence of the Indian Constitution. It believes in promoting healthy and strong democracy, freedom of speech, the tradition of debate as well as the right to protest and dissent. It also believes that without ensuring social, political and economic justice for its people, India cannot become a powerful nation.

Positive nationalism is a proponent of changing both people and the system. A system works well only when the people have the right mentality and sensibility. That is why it tries to combine the long legacy of science and spirituality in India to ensure the progress of India.

India is a young country. Positive nationalism summons the youth to join the process of nation-building. It is not that Indian youth have not contributed to this cause earlier. Whether it was the freedom struggle, the J.P. Movement during the emergency, or the fight against corruption launched by Anna Hazare, Indian youth always participated in these struggles with great enthusiasm.

The sad reality is that the people from the old regime have thereafter taken over again and have started ruling the country. That is why positive nationalism appeals to the Indian youth to fight not only for changing the system but also to build a new system of governance. Youth must join this 'mission for change' both for destroying the old order as well as for the creation of the new order. They are not two opposite poles, but two parallel processes, to be carried forward together. The aim should be to uproot discrimination and establish equality. This new system based on positive nationalism will be the fulfilment of the dream of the martyrs of our freedom movement and the basis for a powerful India of the future.



Ideology of the Contemporary Times

For decades a heated debate is going on the subject of ideology. For centuries, in different circumstances, different types of thoughts have evolved. These thoughts also known as ideology, have played an important role in the progress of mankind. Let us understand the meaning of ideology.

The thought processes have been different in different ages, in different societies, countries and civilizations. Only one type of thinking has not continued to exist from the very beginning of human civilization. We must pause and look back at the events of the past, evaluate the history and the solution envisioned for the future. When all these are put together, a thought process is created. That path through which we plan to solve the problems of the future is called ideology.

The question of ideology has not arisen for the first time in the world. In the past 200 years, known as the modern age, along with the development of science and technology, two types of ideologies were born. One was capitalism and the other was socialism. We also call them by other names such as rightist and leftist ideologies. There is another issue with them. Both talk about the nation and nationalism in their own way.

Normally, when we talk of ideologies, people think you have to be either left or right. If you are neither, questions are raised about your affiliation. People do not understand that there can be something beyond these two camps. I will take you somewhat back into history. When there were no leftist and rightist ideologies, even then individuals, societies and systems existed and also progressed. Today this dilemma is faced by not only India but the whole world. The capitalist

ideology is taking the form of imperialism of the powerful nations. Despite owning the maximum wealth of the world, they are not satisfied. They want to deplete the natural and human resources of other countries and enhance their power further.

The second ideology is socialism. It has also carried out many experiments and given some solutions. But even this ideology is falling short of meeting the challenges the world is facing today. The socialist model of the Soviet Union was shattered to pieces. It happened because it could not meet the requirements of the modern age. Something useful to us at a particular time in life may not always be useful to us.

For example, when you are a small child, your parents get us tiny clothes which look very beautiful and are very useful at that time. After you grow up if your mother asks you to wear the same clothes, will those suit you? Will they meet your needs? Will they be socially acceptable? It is the same about thinking. Thus, the same thinking will not always be relevant.

The problems with which our country, society and the world are grappling today, cannot be solved either by capitalism or by socialism. We have to find a new way, suitable for the new age. It is the challenge before all the thinkers of the world. We have accepted this challenge and have brought forth the concept of positive nationalism before everybody. Normally, we think that thoughts originate first and later get transformed into behaviour. This is true but not completely. The thoughts are also the outcome of behaviour. Watching the ongoing events and evaluating them, the human mind captures thoughts. We learn from experience and string these experiences into the thread of our thoughts.

Newton gave the law of attraction. This law did not originate from him. The law of attraction, with which we are familiar, already existed in the world. Newton observed it, analysed it and understood it. He realized, 'This is it. It is

caused by the law of gravity', and the law was born. At a personal level, I think the whole world is trying to find a solution to the crisis we are facing today. Capitalism has reached its highest limit. The USA is the richest country in the world, yet it is suffering from economic depression. It is worth thinking, why the richest country is suffering from depression.

Capitalism has never found a solution for poverty in any country. The more a country is capitalistic, the more poverty, unemployment and inequality are observed there. Capitalist ideology has only resulted in economic crises everywhere. It may be the 1970 oil crisis or the great global economic depression of 2008. Capitalism makes the rich, richer and the poor, poorer. In the meanwhile, the other model of socialism, the Soviet Union, disintegrated and became redundant in no time. In the organization of socialism, there have been many problems. With the result, the countries which were socialist either broke down or turned towards capitalism. Nowadays, we see very few examples of socialist countries. The main reason for the decline of socialism is their tendency to compete for profiteering with capitalist countries. We live in a capitalist society and this is an undeniable truth. Does it mean that we have to accept it? Do we have to reconcile with that? Not at all. We have to evolve such an ideology that can find the solutions for the problems of the day. I would like to assert that not only for our country but also for the problems of the entire world, positive nationalism has the answers.

The second point I would like to talk about is the system. Any organization runs with a system. Our family also runs according to a system. Our society, state and nation are also systems. These are mini-systems. These are affected by the larger systems which are prevalent in the world. Today what we speak or what we do is not decided by us but by these world systems. Political scientists call it cultural hegemony. When our country was subjugated, our minds were free but now when the country is free our minds are enslaved. We cannot think independently.

Currently, there are three powerful systems in the world. These are: the World Bank, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the GATT (General Agreement of Trade and Tariff). Today, why are the farmers and workers of India committing suicide? The main reason is GATT. As per the ten-nation treaty, of which India is also a signatory, the farmers of developed countries can be given a subsidy of up to 26 percent on water, seeds, fertilizers, electricity and pesticides. However, the poor and developing nations are giving only 10 to 13 per cent subsidies. This is not decided by India but is decided by the USA and other connected foreign institutions. In India, thousands of small-scale industries and factories are operating. It is by virtue of these that despite the American recession, India remained impervious.

Another issue I want to discuss is Special Economic Zones and Industrial Corridors. Due to these, India which is a labour-intensive country, is engaged in manufacturing of capital and technology-intensive goods. This is aggravating the danger of unemployment. The Indian policies of privatization and GST are the agenda of the World Bank and IMF. This is the agenda of neo-liberalization. Our policies benefit only a handful of people who want to control the world markets. Whatever hurdles they meet in their way, are removed with great fanfare. The farmers were already weary but the new laws made by the Modi Government in the name of the welfare of the farmers and the workers, have put them into deeper trouble.

I want to ask you a simple question. For example, who brought railways to India. You reply the British. But for what reason? Were the goods trains run for Indians? Was the Railway network developed for the facilitating the industrial development of the nation? No. I will tell you why? Before the industrial development of India, the world underwent an industrial revolution. There was a time when the whole of Europe was plunged in the dark ages but Indians had advanced technology. This is before the advent of the British.

You would have heard the name of Dacca, the present capital of Bangladesh. The weavers of Dacca used to produce a fine muslin cloth. That muslin was so fine that a bale of forty yards could be fitted inside a matchbox. Just think what kind of technique could produce such a cloth. The British came and went but they could not produce that type of muslin. Instead, they chopped off the thumbs of the master weavers and craftsmen disabling them and destroying the fine muslin industry.

A recent study tells us that the British plunder of India amounted to over 50 thousand trillion rupees and the count is still on. Our industry was decimated and our craftsmanship destroyed one by one by the British. After the Industrial Revolution, the British started the textile manufacture. For sustaining their industry, they first destroyed ours. They took raw cotton from India for feeding their textile mills. They sold the finished cloth made with Indian cotton to Indians. They started railways and goods trains to ferry across the British-made cloth and other goods. They started the railways for promoting their business. The same is the case with GST and Industrial Corridors. These have been introduced to India to destroy the local industry. These will not improve the Indian economy.

India before the 1990s was different from India after the 1990s. After the 1990s the international pressure and the hold of the capitalists on Indian natural resources has seen a meteoric increase. The way water is selling in bottles today, in the same manner, the rivers are being sold. Several rivers have already been purchased by the corporates. Large scale sale of the water, forests and land to corporates is being undertaken.

Friends, nature has bountifully endowed this country. The extent of fertile land we have, very few countries can match that. The number of rivers which flow here, do not flow in other countries. The amount of manpower we have, very few countries have that. God has given so much brain power to

us that it is playing a seminal role in steering the world forward. Our country got liberated in 1947 but we did not liberate ourselves from the British system. 90 per cent of our systems are still following the old British ways which were made for helping the British and not the Indians.

As a part of running the government of Delhi, I am telling you, the bureaucratic system created by the British is not at all in the interest of the common man. Even today I see if a common man has to get something done, the officer frowns and scoffs. No officer wants to work for the common man, except for a few honest and efficient officers, who love their country and its people. The officers who work for the public are looked down upon. This system is represented by those who cause maximum harassment to the public. The smartest ones are those who keep the files circulating unendingly. It is not due to the lack of mental or individual ability, it is due to the deficiencies of the system and thinking.

It is the same in the case of our legislature, executive or judiciary. The highest agency to render justice in this country is the Supreme Court. For 90 per cent of people, it is impossible to approach the Supreme Court to obtain justice. They cannot get justice in this country, for filing a suit is infinitely complicated. Thus, the challenge of changing the present systems is looming large before us. During the freedom struggle, we dreamt of a new system. Changing the old system and ushering in a new one is a revolution. For this, we waged the Indian struggle of independence. In 1947, we attained independence. We became free from the British political rule but we did not get freedom from the economic and administrative system set by them. Even today, we are enduring that system. After independence, India was supposed to be a mixed economy but it retained its capitalistic thinking. If we want to create a new order, the old order must go.

The country has so far followed the capitalistic model. It treats capital as the most important element and labour and

society are neglected. The other model which we have seen is a socialist model which is opposed to capitalism. The question is what should we follow? What should be our economic policy? Positive nationalism presents an alternative economic model before us.

Positive nationalism demands a different economic order. For development, we need both capital as well as labour. We need an economic order where alongside capital, labour is equally involved and respected. Both are needed for production. Even if technology reaches its acme, we cannot do away with labour. This has to be accepted. The worker should get a fair wage and the right price for his products. Wealth must be distributed equitably between the labourer and the manufacturer.

India does not lack wealth but its people lack liquidity. I want to give an example. When we increased the minimum wages in Delhi, many shop owners and factory owners came to meet us. We had a dialogue with them. Those who were opposed to our effort argued that if we increase the minimum wages, the businesses will collapse. There may be some initial difficulty, but where India stands today, there is only one way. We have to improve our markets. If we wish to improve the markets, then both buying and selling are important. Without both buying and selling, our businesses cannot progress. So, when we say workers should get higher wages and the farmers should get a better price for their crops, there is well-deliberated economics behind it. We are not making up these statements. If we want to develop India into an economic superpower, we will have to strengthen the market forces.

Who constitutes 90 per cent of India's population? The workers and the farmers. How do the markets prosper? Through the buyers and sellers. If there are higher sales, the markets bloom. If workers have purchasing power, so where will they go to buy their goods. The market. If a farmer does

not have purchasing power, his child will keep crying but he will not be able to buy him even a toffee.

When they go on a buying spree during Eid, Diwali or Holi, then our traders get busy. The traders wait for the festival season. This is because during this time of the year, people bring their savings to the market. Imagine if they have cash to spare all the year round. That shall be good for everyone.

Do you think labourers and farmers are happy to wear a single vest for three years? But their economic condition is such that they are forced to do so. If their income increases, there will be more sales in the market. The shopkeepers and businessmen in this country will become stronger. The businessmen will need more goods to sell. And these goods have to be manufactured somewhere? Those will come from factories. If the demand increases, then production will increase. Our capital base will become stronger.

Even more important is that if demand increases, the purchasing power increases and sales increase. If sales increase, the business will gain strength, if the business gains strength; then production will be strengthened. When the production is strengthened, then employment will increase. In economics, this whole process is called an investment multiplier.

Today our youth is at a loss without employment. There is only one way to end unemployment, and that is to increase the purchasing power of the farmers and workers. For increasing the purchasing power, India needs to formulate a National Employment Policy and implement it strictly. With that, employment will be generated and youth will prosper. There is no other alternative. We will have to move towards the theory of a balanced economy. To uphold the principle of balance, we need to bring balance in life as well as in the economy. This is the avenue for India to emerge a super power.

India is the youngest country in the world. The average age in the rest of the world is on the increase but India is going through a period of demographic dividend. We have more youth and working population in the age group of 15-64. Demographic dividend indicates increase in productivity arising from the expanding base of the pyramid from an increasing youth and working population (ages 15 years to 64 years) and the reduction of the dependent population (ages less than 15 years and more than 64 years).

In the end, I wish to say that, in this country, the goal for everyone should be to change the present order into a new order with the help of a revolution. Thousands of sons and daughters of India are leaving the country and going elsewhere to make a living. They also dream of being in India. They dream of a system where Mother India could recognize and utilize their talent. India could establish a new standard and new energy in the world. We should all move towards that dream. As we move towards our goals, we encounter great hurdles. Two mountains are impeding the revolution. One mountain is the Congress Party and the other is the BJP - the Bharatiya Janata Party. This country has already uprooted the Congress Party.

The BJP is under the misconception that the country stands with it. But this country is waiting. It is waiting for the false promise of 15 lakhs to materialize. It is still waiting after so many people have died on the streets due to demonetization. It is waiting after seeing the migrant labourers return back to their villages walking barefoot for hundreds and thousands of kilometers. It is waiting even after being crushed under unemployment. It is waiting despite the sale of government companies to private players. It is waiting for that moment when a force will be born in the country which will deracinate such a power. This is because the country does not want anarchy. It has dislodged the Congress and now if it displaces the BJP, a vacuum will be created in the country. This is not the desire of the nation.

The country is waiting for a successful and effective alternative. The country needs the alternative ideology of positive nationalism. People hope that our country will develop. For this we need two things. Our organisational and ideological power should be strong. The struggle that lies ahead is a long struggle. If we do not have a strong mental resolve, then it will be difficult to rein in our hearts. The *Desh ki Baat* Foundation was founded to fight this ideological battle.

What is the level of world power and what does it want? What is the organisational structure in India? How is it managed and how can we bring in a new organisational structure? We will have to ponder over all these questions but we will have to surely understand and also make other people understand that in today's times, the BJP is only making an empty pretense of nationalism.

People take offence when something like this is said. The country was enslaved 25 per cent under Manmohan Singh. Our natural and human resource were sold off for peanuts. This is still not so monstrous. The Narendra Modi government has sown the seeds of hatred in the name of development. Under the alibi of Hindu-Muslim conflict, all government institutions are being brokered to private companies.

The British tried their level best that in the Indo-Pak partition, only Hindus should remain in India and all Muslims should go to Pakistan. The British were at the pinnacle of their power at that time. Even they could not evict all Muslims from India to Pakistan. This is in the essence of India. The soul of India will remain immortal even if hundreds of organizations like BJP and RSS combine all their efforts. We need to remain vigilant about this.

The real matter of concern is that these people are trying to enslave the nation. They are in the process of selling the nation. Our mentality is such that if a Hindu calls a Hindu

names, there are no riots. If a Muslim calls a Muslim names, there are no riots but if a Hindu says something about a Muslim or a Muslim says something about a Hindu, riots are sparked. When Congress indulged in such activities, there was a lot of hue and cry. Today when they are mortgaging the nation chanting nation-nation, the people are oblivious of what is happening. This is their patriotism. The pseudo-nationals that we have in our country today, if one of them calls you a traitor, then you should be assured that you are a true patriot. Today's circumstances are worse than the era of emergency in the '70s where a court case was filed against whoever raised his voice against the government. Today Dabholkar, Pansare, Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh are assassinated because they speak against the government. It seems that if things remain like this, in days to come, every patriot will be charge-sheeted for sedition. We will have to remember that despite the British government trying Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev for treason, their patriotism did not diminish in any way.

We should not oppose BJP for the sake of it; neither should we oppose Congress just because we have to. We need to oppose their political ideology. Congress was working towards selling the nation under the capitalist ideology and BJP is taking forward the same project under the guise of nationalism. The British tried to erode our sensibility through the Muslim League and RSS. Today under a well-planned strategy, the imperialist forces of America and Israel are drilling the ideology of negative nationalism into the psyche of each and every individual. We will have to extricate the ideology of these pseudo nationalism from the minds of the people and for this the strength of conviction should come from you. This cannot be achieved only through movements on the streets. For this, we will also have to prepare an ideological force. We will have to create an ideological team which can disseminate the truth among people from a calm and systematic perspective.

This is because if a falsehood is repeated a hundred times, people tend to accept it as truth. This is a tall order but we are left with no shortcut if we love our country, if we are honest towards it and if we are dedicated to its progress. We will have to transform the thinking of the people in order to build a new nation. We will have to cleanse the poison which is defiling their minds. We need to change their mindset, otherwise we will have to expend all our energy grappling with very petty matters.

All of us have the responsibility of conduiting the energy of the country in the service of the nation. We have to shoulder this responsibility and we do hope that we will erect a complete order in an organized, modern and composed manner. Every team member of *Desh Ki Baat* Foundation, whoever he or she is and whenever he or she lives, should have the same philosophy. There should be no weakness in thinking. The person may be devoting 1 hour or 24 hours. There may be a crunch of time or resource. The thought process, however, should be exceptionally strong. The strength of the the idea. The strength of the organisation on the basis of the idea. We have to put together an entire army in the whole country based on thoughts and ideas. The day this army will be born, believe you me, all roads will open for a 360-degree change.



Need for Change in Women's Status in India

Not only in India but almost in all nations of the world, women have lived as second-class citizens. They are rated less than men. In most societies, women have been deprived of many social, economic, political and religious rights. Women comprise half the population. They constitute 50 per cent population around the globe. If it is so, then the obvious implication is that they are also the claimants to 50 per cent of the resources and opportunities. But in reality, to date, in this male-dominated world, their share of resources and opportunities is meagre and pitiable.

In different parts of India women's participation in the fields of education, health, employment and politics is not adequate. It is proved by the 2019 World Economic Forum Report in its 'sexual disparity index'. In terms of sexual disparity, the position of India is at the 112th place. Another report from UNICEF says that one-fourth of women in the age group of 15 to 40 suffer from malnutrition and over 50 per cent of them suffer from anemia. These statistics indicate that in our society women are apportioned less food than men. In homes, this type of discrimination in food distribution can be easily seen among young children. Compared to daughters, people pay more attention to the upbringing of sons. They educate boys more than the girls. The girls are educated only to the extent that they can look after their families or at the best, take up some small insignificant job.

There was a time in our country when a woman was burnt alive on the funeral pyre of her husband and made into a *sati*. With time, this custom has been eradicated but the cruelty

perpetrated on women has not ended. On the one hand our society deifies and worships women as goddesses, while on the other, they are lynched on the charge of being witches and whores. They are burnt alive for dowry. They are raped. They are assaulted with acid attacks. The saga of cruelty of women does not end here. To ensure that they are not born, they are killed in the mother's womb.

We are familiar with these acts of violence against women. They appear every day in newspapers, TV channels and social media. A large part of violence against women is still not visible. No one talks about it openly. Today the whole country is talking about rape, and it is important to discuss this issue, but the problem is that we are talking only about the rape taking place outside the homes. Who will talk about the rapes inflicted inside the house? Who will discuss the rape perpetrated by family members? Who will talk about that? Who will talk about the rape performed by the husband after marriage?

The question is who is responsible for the appalling condition of women in society today. Who is responsible for the inequality in treatment and the mindset of thinking of them just as a body or an object? Some people say men are responsible for this and some say women themselves are responsible because at the core of whatever harassment befalls women, there is a woman. For example, in cases of dowry, it is the mother-in-law who wreaks the maximum torture. For female feticide, women exert the most pressure. It is also argued that women wear provocative clothes which increase excitement in men.

I believe that in Indian society there are three types of causes for this alarming situation of women. These are the psychological causes, economic causes and political causes. The first is the psychological cause. We can also call it the thinking or mentality which our society has developed concerning women. All women are made the same but we have a different attitude towards our own sister who is also

a woman as compared to someone else's sister. How does our thinking become different in the two cases? What is the underlying reason because a woman is a woman, after all? The anatomy and morphology of our sister is of a woman and where the other woman is concerned, her anatomy and morphology are also the same. However, what are those factors which bring a change in our perspective? I have hardly ever heard that a man looks at his sister with wrong intent under the influence of liquor or madness. This is because when we are born, it is indoctrinated in our minds that this girl is your sister, and slowly and gradually this fact is fully imprinted on our subconscious, which operates our mind. Our body does not respond first, it is our subconscious which comes into action and then exercises its control on the whole mind. Then our body starts functioning accordingly. What men are told right from childhood that this is your sister and this is your mother largely influences their behaviour into adulthood. From this we draw the inference that if our family instills balanced teaching in our minds in childhood itself, then it governs our conduct throughout our life.

What a tremendous influence the counselling that is given in childhood has on us can be understood from this example. For example, four children are born in a hospital- the first is the son of a Hindu, the second the son of a Muslim, the third of a Sikh and the Fourth of a Christian. Now you interchange these four children born from the wombs of four different mothers. Let the child of the Sikh be brought up in the Muslim home, the Muslim child in the Hindu home, the Hindu child in the Christian home and the Christian child in the Sikh home. The parents do not know that their children have been interchanged. When the children grow up, so then what shall be their identity? They shall imbibe the identity of the family in which they are brought up because at the time of birth we are not born Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christians. This identity emerges from the upbringing the child receives. A child turns out to be a Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh or a Christian accordingly. Then one day the child asserts 'I am a Hindu' or

'I am a Muslim' or 'I am a Sikh' or 'I am a Christian'. This is how all individuals assume these identities. There is no other way of our identity coming into being. Nature sends us on Earth in the form of human beings. Now we can see that the upbringing can make such a lot of difference- we are born Hindu but when brought up in a Muslim family, we turn into a Muslim.

Now the question arises that normally the child is counselled by her mother. The mother will transmit her own beliefs to the child. And how will these beliefs of the mother change? The mother herself does not change her beliefs. Her beliefs are influenced by the beliefs that are upheld in the society, in the family, the system in the country. She does not think a particular way in her childhood. In her youth, she must have thought differently. However, when she is defeated in her collisions with the family and the society, it is then that she strikes a compromise. She contemplates how she may have to compromise the same way as she had to compromise after her initial struggles. In tune with all this, she moulds herself for future circumstances.

So, the mother will transform the beliefs of the child and what influences the mother's mind- the system. Thus, till the system within the society is not reformed, the thinking of the mother will not change. In that case, whether it is a son or a daughter, it is next to impossible to modify her or his opinions. Thus, if we penetrate to the core, then we find that the root cause is the system. We can understand how our psyche develops by the fact that we are not offended by most things which a friend says to us. But wife is outraged by anything that a husband says to her. If in a given instance, the friend is telling a woman the same thing as the husband, she will be amenable to the friend but not to the husband. Similarly, if a man is being given the same advice by a friend and his wife, he is likely to listen more to the friend than the wife. This is perhaps because we accept a friend with all respect, dignity, flaws and merits, but we fail to do that in relationships. When

we stop understanding in relationships, the scope for dialogue is lost. When dialogue is lost, conflict is born. This is because we do not want to agree, we only wish to dictate. In this clash, authoritarianism is born. If the one dictating is a woman, then the authority of the woman. If the one dictating is a man, then the authority of a man. Authoritarianism is always geared towards domination; it owes its existence to oppression.

In our society, various systems have come and gone. Different societies have adopted different systems. We can hardly deny, however, that the system of male domination has always been powerful. And the patriarchy has reduced the women to second-rate citizens. Women have had to nurture their talent within the framework of patriarchy. The truth is that wherever women have the opportunity in the existing conditions, they have exceeded men in terms of physical and intellectual capabilities. Wheels of change will not turn if patriarchy is replaced by matriarchy. The present day patriarchy is, of course, no good. Thus, I feel that where we are poised today, we need to usher in a balance in the system.

I feel that whether it is a father-daughter relationship, or a mother-son relationship, husband-wife relationship, or any other relationship, if the relationship is friendly, where there is mutual acceptance of weaknesses and admiration of strengths, if we are able to cherish such a relationship, then despite all responsibilities and burdens, our life will remain on track. Conditions keep changing in life. There are several types of relationships even within a single family. I think that there should be an amicable rapport in all these relationships. This is what generates the possibility of a dialogue, and the dialogue is the only way through which we can negotiate difference of opinions. Through the dialogic practice, we can not only understand each other, but also convince each other. If such a practice is established, harmony shall certainly prevail in families. Else, after fighting all your battles, after retreating

from everywhere, when you seek refuge in the family, you shall not be at peace even there. My experience says that of all the people of today who live in families, 90 per cent of them have at some point or the other contemplated leaving the family. However, they have no place to go, as there isn't an option or alternative. So, they eventually adjust in the family. Thus, I reiterate that a balance is needed in our way of thinking. The key to success in this context is to cultivate a gracious empathy in all relationships.

I believe that we need to instill a broadminded camaraderie in all relationships, whether that of husband and wife or mother and son or father and daughter. This refines our psyche. It hones the sub-conscious mind that operates us. If we train our sons and daughters right from childhood, or we train our students in whichever position we hold, then it polishes the sub-conscious.

Nowadays, the rising crimes against women are debated though several contentions. There is an attempt to justify these crimes by arguing that if women have god-gifted beauty or that clothes women wear make men excitable or scientifically speaking, the male-hormone rouses men easily, so how are men at fault? The shifting of onus continues by saying that women are physically weak, they have been so created by God, women are women's worst enemies etc.

All these arguments are normally prevalent in our society. When you meet your friends, I am sure these arguments do crop up. When you meet relatives, there also these arguments are repeated. This mind set is common to all segments of society- high society, middle class, well-educated class or less-educated class. For example, I cite this example very often, that if a girl is being harassed in your community on a daily basis by some hooligans, then nobody raises a hue and cry. But the day she retaliates by slapping the miscreants, then no one says what a brave girl she is. On the contrary, she is slandered with barbs like she is being too brash or too

insolent. When she shows what she can do, then we collectively try to put her down. Her family members are pressurized to control their daughter as she has learnt to rebuff.

I refute the argument that women are physically weak. Who do we mean by 'weak'? One who has no control over self. If men cannot control their hormones, so men are weak. If you get angry, then you are weak. It is a sign of your failing. So, we need to review this definition of a weak person and a strong person. Mahatma Gandhi was a strong person. This is because he had the courage and endurance to present his other cheek if someone slapped his one cheek. To assault is not an indication of courage. This society and this creation is riding on the steam of women's resilience today.

Beliefs that are engendered in women are engendered by observing the society. The philosophy which is rooted in society today has been sown by men. Thus, women also imbibe male mentality. When a child is born in our family, it is commonly observed that till the age of 12, the daughter is more capable and active. She is more compassionate. She goes around doing all the chores in a very brisk manner. However, as she grows, we plant fear in her. I strongly maintain that as compared to the fear that women have, men have 10 times greater fear for their daughters, their mothers and their wives. Because they know the reality of the human society. Women may not know the psychology of men so much as men know each other's psychology. A man knows, and therefore gradually, he starts dominating his daughter, his wife out of this fear. He tortures the women a hundred times during the course of a day, and eventually the women come to accept it. This is how the mind of the woman is enslaved. If you remember, people in villages put feet in shoes fearing that otherwise the feet will grow very big.

In most homes, you must have seen that a daughter pleads with her mother to allow her to go as far as the neighbourhood

shop, or to go out with her friend, or to go to the market. The father, however, does not consent. The brother does not consent. Why is the father scared? Why is the brother scared? Why do they not have the guts? Actually, there are two reasons behind this paranoia of men. First, the patriarchal sense of honour. Father-brother-husband feel that if their daughter-sister-wife steps out of the home to go to the market or to any faraway college, then she will talk to her male friends and she will meet whoever she likes. This will bring disrepute to their family, there will be gossip and scandal, our honour will be tainted. The mother still shows the courage to allow her daughter to cross the threshold but the patriarchal mind set of the father-brother-husband imprisons her in the house under the anxiety of what the world will say. I believe that we should trust our daughter-sister-wife rather than denying them freedom for the sake of some vague sense of pride.

The second reason is of the safety of the women in our family. This is because men know the reality of this human society. He knows the truth about this system. He knows the psyche of men. He reads news of heinous crimes against women every day. A deep seated paranoia about women's safety ingrains itself into him. This paranoia is begotten by men only. So the remedy to it will also have to be found by men.

I emphasize that women do not need safety. Men should first secure their minds. The father should develop the courage to send his daughter into the outside world with as much conviction as he sends his son. Social reform will happen on its own. Let men rid themselves of their inner demons. And how will that happen. Not simply on a wish. A different ethos is needed for that. No single person can create that ethos. A concerted effort is required for that because if you alone show the courage to send your daughter out and there occurs a mishap, then the whole village will gang up against you to say that look what your over-confidence has done.

I think that in a family, first and foremost, the father shall have to alter his thinking. Men will have to alter their thinking. I make a straightforward appeal- throw out your inner demons, make all possible efforts for that. There are womenfolk in all families. Let them go out. See how the fear vanishes slowly and gradually. If still it persists, then try and make collective efforts to uproot the very cause of that fear. There is no point in hiding behind the fear. The fear shall have to be surgically removed, and for that the first step is to accept that yes, there is a disease. The disease is less in women, and more in men. Men are more in the grip of fear. They need to figure out how that fear can be exterminated.

I request all of you, especially men, to talk amongst each other, that this fear that we have, how can we get rid of this. You should have a discussion. No need to involve outsiders. The close family circle of relatives and friends will suffice to discuss how can we eliminate this fear that torments us day and night. We do not fear criminals as much. But we remain forever frightened for our daughters, our mothers and our sisters. How will men be able to weed out this fear? Think of a way out. Because I think when men make a headway with this, decks will be cleared for women on its own. This will generate a new energy which will pave way for their progress.

The family is a laboratory. Generally, the mentality of the family is inherited by the sons and daughters of the family. So, the thought process you see in them today, has been bequeathed to them by us, by men, by the family. If there is improvement in the way men think or the family thinks, then take it from me, women will prove to be a step ahead of you and excel in every sphere of life. They are God gifted to excel. Men must acknowledge this.

The father will have to transform the male dominated temperament. To transform this temperament, the equality of sons and daughters will have to have to be instilled in them right from childhood. The body is not the source of

strength, we must understand. The mind is the real source of strength. A frail and fragile person can sometimes accomplish what a stud cannot do. Because it is the mind which has to be solid. We have to bolster the attitude of the sons and daughter from childhood. We have to reinforce the idea of equality at all levels. First in the family, and then in the school.

In our society, the regard that a woman has with a man is not just owing to natural and biological reasons, but also owing to the economic reason. Willy-nilly, along with a filial relationship, there is also a pressure that lives are dependent on the male breadwinners. This makes us ignore the misdeeds of sons. We tend to think if the son will revolt, then what will happen to my life. Also, that the daughter is a guest in the house, she will ultimately go to live in her husband's house.

I strongly contend that in order to empower women, their economic capacity will have to be changed and strengthened—whether through jobs, or through property or through bank-balance. Whatever the asset, but economic independence for women is a must. The lack of this independence does not just imply suffering for women but even men have to endure several hardships. Our lives are organised around economic systems, and thus, I believe that every man and every woman in this society, irrespective of caste, religion, region, or language, should enjoy a minimum economic guarantee. We can claim to be a civilized society and developed society only when there is an economic guarantee. Conversely, every man and every woman should have a minimum participation in nation building. This means he or she will get this much, and he or she will perform this much. It is only thereafter that his or her talent, capability, knowledge or science may be applied. In future, the minimum economic guarantee will certainly pave way for better man-woman relationships.

Along with psychological and economic reasons, the third important reason is political reason. Since this is the binding thread in all these reasons, so till this is changed, nothing

will change; economic system will not change. If economic system will not change, then the mentality of the mother will remain the same. If the mother's mentality remains the same, the upbringing she gives will not change. This situation is antithetical to any possibility of holistic change. Thus, we must understand this intersectionality. We have to penetrate to the core of each of these reasons - the very foundations have to be laid again. That is the revolution that will show a new road, a new society, a new mind. The balance and prosperity which we have all been searching for in the family and society will also emerge from this.

We are not at par economically in the natural order of things. But the theory of balance applies to every family- whether rich or poor. You go and see in any part of the world that whatever is cooked in the kitchen- even if it is just salt and chapatti- it is given equally to all family members. The pudding and other delicacies made on festivals are also given to everyone. This depends on the situation and condition. In this world, some families may have exceptions. There are exceptions to all norms. But by and large, if there are 12 dishes and 20 bowls on the platter or if there is just salt and chapatti, whatever there is, is equally distributed among family members. This is what holds the family together because every family provides for a minimum economic guarantee under all circumstances to each member of the family.

This system of minimum economic guarantee shall have to be instituted in the country. That is how a balanced view point will develop in the society. Why are family members ready to give up their lives for each other? Because they are assured that the family shoulders their responsibility through thick and thin. But the country does not. So, people do have a sentimental dedication towards the nation, but not a lasting one. If the country will extend minimum economic guarantee to its citizens, then certainly people will be more patriotic towards their nation.

We tell our children to think about the nation. But a lot many people who pretend to think about the nation are not really thinking about the nation but they are invoking the nation for their politics and vote banks. If this nation assumes the responsibility of minimum guarantee in the manner of the family, I can say with certainty that then we would not need to preach to anyone. There is no other guarantee that the government needs to take. Like the family is ours, so the nation shall also become our own. The feeling of belonging will develop on its own. I feel that if we need to improve man-woman relationship, then the viewpoint shall have to change. This applies to patriarchy as well as matriarchy-whichever order it is. The only resolution lies in creating an equilibrium in viewpoints.

As all of us know, our brains are divided into two halves. The growth of one of these is effected through earning knowledge, through informing, advising and counselling. Like I said, we have to advance the right thought in the school as well as the home. We have to break the chain of wrong thinking that has been going on from generation to generation. We know that earlier girls could not step out of homes for schooling. The fear was that something would go amiss. Men harboured this fear, not women. Today, the number of women attending schools runs in crores. Today you will see girls going to school on bicycles on the roads of every village. Earlier if a woman in a village rode a bicycle, it was considered to be a miracle. Today, it is so common. This is because we have transcended our outdated thought. We have found courage. If any girl from a village went to school, then it raised a few eyebrows. If two went, then it raised more questions. Today, however, ten are going. Today, on the other hand, if a girl is not going to the school, villagers accost their parents as to why they are stopping the girl.

Today, the ethos has changed. The mind set has changed. This is the effect of the ethos. The system is greatly responsible

for creating this ethos. The government also significantly contributes towards this. Therefore, today in this country, the guarantee for women's education should be borne by the government, whether the parents are willing or not. The education of women will have to be made compulsory. This will exert pressure on everyone's minds. When parents send out their girls to school, their courage also amplifies in general. They start appreciating certain things. I will repeat that we need not treat exceptions as norms. Even when the daughters were confined within the threshold, even then there were instances of rape and violence. Today when millions of women are going out to attend school or to work, even then these crimes are happening. On the basis of these episodes, the mentality of putting women in lock and key is actually what needs to be locked- and this mentality afflicts men more than women. Thus, if we check the negativity that plagues the minds of men, then the freedom of women will enhance surely.

The school and the family are the primary instruments for building this ethos. But the biggest instrument is the government. The society, the government, the administration and the system have to be pressed into service to curb the many people who you meet who blame their lack of self-control on the male hormone. Some people are converted through counselling. But some have to be dealt with strictly. Some sadists are stimulated by violence. If all this is not being managed, then we need three things badly to bring it under control: first, we need to have very stringent laws. The second problem which we have seen especially in Delhi that despite such a mass movement after the Nirbahaya rape case, the way the fast-track courts should be functioning, they are falling grievously short of that. So stringent laws need to be backed up with a robust system of fast-track courts. We need them to ameliorate the society. Some people heed the law, while some heed love and some heed fear.

You must have seen often that if a car hits us when we are travelling on a bike on the road, we are not enraged as much as when a rickshaw puller even brushes past us. This is because your instincts tell you that you can dominate this person. Our mind is not so random. It reacts only upon comprehensively evaluating the situation. That is why we need harsh laws and fast track courts in this country. It goes without saying that there will be a commensurate increase in women's confidence in registering a report in the police stations with the increase in the number of women police officials therein. Thus, we need the presence of women police officials in every space in India. It is only through this deterrent and assurance that things will begin to look up. If we are really serious about women upliftment, then we shall have to commence the multi-pronged process of reforming social, psychological, economic and political arenae simultaneously. This new strategy will produce the new woman, the new woman will yield a new human, and the new human shall be the harbinger of new India.



Need of Secularism for India

When we discuss the importance of secularism for the strength of the nation, then the key words that appear are 'nation, religion, strength and secularism'. Let us first focus on the word 'nation'. What is a nation? The followers of Hindu religion or the followers of Islam or the followers of Christian religion or the followers of any other particular religion do not constitute the nation. A nation is that where subscribers of diverse religions, languages and cultures dwell.

What is the main relationship between nation and religion? People practicing different religions may be living in a nation and people practicing a particular religion may be living in several nations. For example, people following Christianity live not just in England, but live all over the globe. People following Buddhism live not just in India, but live in many other countries of this world.

Today, there is an internal conflict in the debates raging in the country and the world. When the human civilization developed on this planet, when settlements developed in jungles or on the banks of rivers, then human beings followed which religion? Today, the way we know religion, was non-existent then. As various streams of thought, ways of life and civilizations evolved, they came to be denominated by this term 'religion'. From the various streams of knowledge extant in the world today, we know that all religions profess that Bhagwaan, Allah, God are one and the same. We have not heard from any scripture, theology or teacher that God is not one by many. If that is so, if the Creator of this universe is one, then where lies the problem in believing in this? When everything is the same, then from where has this difference

crept in? Every religion owes its origin to this quest about who created this universe. Was there such an omnipotent force that could create the cosmos- the one which all religions believe to have been the creator of this cosmos? We may pray to Bhagwaan, or to Allah or invoke Him by some other name, but we should at least concede to this basic given, and once we do this, all mutual conflict will be wiped out. If the creator of all is the same, then how can there be any differences among us?

This is an inviolable contemporary truth that it is possible for a country to be strong when its citizens stand united. Conflict, hatred, and fragmentation erode the power of every country, state, community and family. In order to steer the nation towards its true potential, we will have to inhibit the scattering and fragmentation through individual efforts. We shall not be able to impart strength to the nation till we eradicate the social, intellectual, national or communal disintegration.

There is another way of arresting this decay and that is to respect the Indian Constitution. It is enshrined in the constitution that we may have diverse values and ideologies, but still we are human beings and human beings are equal. So, either we follow the Constitution or we follow the core basic of every religion. The acrimony will end. The web of this acrimony is actually the web of vested interests. Constitution and religion transcend the vested interests. It is the system laid down by selfish people which is actually not ready to abide by any ethics.

Our contention is that in the present times, we have the Constitution which has been drafted by human beings. It is a culmination of the long story of the freedom struggle. Let us have faith in it. However, if we wish to commence our journey with God, then also all are equal, and all have equal rights. Since we are the children of the same God, so there is no scope for discrimination anywhere. Thus, both religion as well as the Constitution lead down the road of equity and equality.

All other roads of any other type shall have to be shunned certainly.

What is secularism? When the issue of Christianity interfered with the power of the state, then the secular thought was born. This is not a concept that is meant to be applied at an individual level. The Constitution does not state that an individual has to be secular. It states that states and governments have to be secular. All religions should be equal in the eyes of the state. A misleading argument is often advanced that secularism means atheism- that is, not subscribing to any religion. Becoming a non-believer. Secularism as a concept is meant for the governments so that they provide equal opportunity to everyone. If someone knocks at the door of the judiciary, so then she or he should have the right and belief of getting justice irrespective of the religion she or he belongs to. Similarly, the person should have the same assurance that there will be no discrimination in the police station. The policies of the government are binding on every one, the concept of secularism is binding on the government. The authority of the state should be as egalitarian as God is. God is the one master of all the diverse communities who have different values and different beliefs. In Christianity, the sub-sects of Catholics and Protestants are also under the same God's grace. In Islam, Shias, Sunnis, Deobandis and Barelavis are devoted to the same Almighty. The same God guides the upper castes, the backward castes and the dalits in Hindus.

We have enforced the Constitution. This has created a practical and moral force for providing a life of dignity to one and all. If we wish to proceed on the road of progress, we shall have to institute a system of justice for all. No country can proceed on that road till its people are animated by the effusion of love. Each of its citizen is an equal participant in the progress of that nation. Today, we can see that only those countries have really progressed who have paved way for wide involvement of its people in national development. If

someone is really a well-wisher of the Indian nation, then that person will have to be serious about the respect for religions and human development. This can happen when all of us are on the same page mentally. There should be no favouritism. Favouritism towards a particular religion constructs the wall of hatred. So, not just towards any religion, there should be no favouritism towards any individual as well. It is not easy to define religion. Hindu religion has been practiced in this country since times immemorial but still equality evades the followers of this religion. Even today the entry of a dalit is considered to defile that temple where it is believed we all worship the same God. At an individual level, secularism clearly implies that if you offer prayers five times a day, by all means pray eight times a day if you so wish. If you meditate in the morning, meditate at night too. If you go to the temple during the day, go in the evening as well. You may make a home in the church or make a church in your home. Please be ten times more devoted to your religion- this privilege is enshrined in the nation. You are entitled to retain your philosophy, tradition, language, culture- but there is not one percent scope of imposing all that on any other.

This was the primary conviction with which the story of the Indian freedom movement unfolded. After a long struggle, India learnt the hard way that we can succeed only by learning a few lessons from the past. The fracas that has plagued the tow sects of Christianity- the Catholics and the Protestants- has been for far longer that the fracas that has prevailed between the Hindus and the Christians. The rift that exists between the Shias and Sunnis in Islam is far wider than the rift that exists between the Hindus and Muslims. This country chants Hindutva. It forgets that the conflict between the Shaivites and the Vaishnavites has been far more intense than the conflict between the Hindus and Muslims. The Buddhist religion that emerged in India has been wiped out while it is alive in so many other countries of the world. How did it disappear from India? History is also witness to the fact that

many idols of Shiva have been demolished. Many Brahma-Vishnu temples have been destroyed.

Religion has not been around since eternity. First human beings were born, then followed religion. Since civilizations and cultures originated in different geographical locations, so we started speaking different languages. If we subtract the language factor from the entire world, so does it take away much? If we have to talk only in sign language, is that difficult? Languages are a by-product of the development of civilizations, and development of lifestyles. History throughout the world reiterates that in the ancient times, human beings worshipped nature. They worshipped the Sun. Slowly and gradually, people started thinking, "but who is the creator of all this"? Except for a few man-made things, how did this Universe come into being? How is it running? From all these mysteries, spirituality was born. God was born. This theology developed at different places, so Gods also became different. The Bhakti movement in India with Kabir, Raidas, Meera and Dadu argued and stressed the need to realise that ultimately God is the same. Thus, anyone who honestly believes in God and in the Constitution can never be a votary of inequality in any way. Only through this does the road to dignity and progress for all becomes a reality. The country also gains strength only through this. The state, therefor, must remain secular. Human beings should assimilate humanity in their very core. That is how the country will develop.



Caste, Reservation and Social Justice

There is a lot in the Indian civilization, culture and heritage that is appreciated and adopted not just by the Indians, but by the entire world. At the same time, however, there are certain things in our civilization, culture and heritage that thwart our unity, mutual amity and brotherhood, and which justify the exploitation of one human being by the other. What we denominate as 'caste' is the word for this divisive factor in the Indian society.

We believe that the caste system originated from the varna system of the ancient times under which the four social strata of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Shudra and Vaishya were envisaged. As per this system, Brahmins were entrusted with education, knowledge and preaching; Kshatriyas with governance and defence; and Vaishyas with trade and commerce. The Shudras were handed the work of serving these three social strata. Apart from these four strata, there is a fifth one as well- which comprised of those called the 'untouchables'. Their plight has remained the most miserable. They were compelled to live on the southern margins of the village periphery. Even the shadow of these people was treated to be unholy. The earliest mention of this four varna organisation can be found in the Purusha hymn of the Rg Veda. Later, the same organisation was refined and expressed in the Manusmriti. Manusmriti is so elaborate that it even expounds the different punishments to be meted out for the same crime to the members of different varnas. It treats women and children also in an extremely insensitive manner.

Today, the innumerable castes that we see in the Indian society are somehow associated with one or the other of these four varnas. Barring a few exceptions, it is impossible to change the hierarchy of these castes and varnas. The person continues to belong to the same varna through life and through death in which she or he has been born. In this caste arrangement, the lower the caste, the more challenging its life is. Those categorised the 'shudras' and the 'untouchables' are apportioned the smallest share in resources and opportunities.

If we discuss the tribes, then their case has been different from the above mentioned varnas and castes. This can be attributed to the aloofness of the tribes from the mainstream. It is owing to this distance that in tribal societies we do not find any discrimination on the basis of caste as we do in the societal mainstream. However, with the passage of time, as mainstream influences infiltrated the tribal regions, the tribals also came to be exploited. The rebellion mounted by the tribals for reclaiming 'jal, jangal and zameen' (water, forest and land) is a retribution of that.

India has a long tradition of resistance towards the caste system. This tradition boasts of luminaries like Kalidas, Kabir, Raidas, Jyotiba Phule, Dr. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi. The endeavours of all these people may not have eradicated the caste system totally, but its grip has slackened certainly. The point to note here is that the one force that has dented the hold of the caste system the most is the Indian Constitution. The Indian Constitution not just prohibits the discrimination of any kind but it also facilitates the provision of justice, opportunities and a fair share of resources for the deprived communities. The reservation available to the underprivileged as an instrument of the Indian Constitution is founded on the principles of equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

The Indian Constitution takes a few important steps to ameliorate the condition of communities which traditionally have been victimised under the caste system. The most important among these is reservation. Since the Constitution came into force in 1950, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have been granted reservation in government jobs and educational institutions of 15 per cent and 7.5 percent respectively. In the decade after 1990, following the recommendations of Mandal Commission, a reservation for the other backward castes (OBC) was also demanded. Later, 27.5 per cent reservation for other backward castes was implemented. Recently in 2019, the Central Government has made a provision for 10 per cent reservation for the economically weaker sections (EWS) of the unreserved category.

These are the facts that all of us must know. We must note that whenever we debate reservation, generally the opinion gets divide along two lines- one which supports reservation and the other which opposes it. Both the groups have their own arguments and their own wisdom. We often see that those in support of the reservation tend to limit their arguments exclusively to the policy of reservation, as if reservation itself is enough for ensuring the just distribution of resources and opportunities due to the marginalised classes. On the other hand, the people who decry reservation chiefly advance the argument that why has the time period of 10 years initially decided for reservation been extended? They advocate the discontinuation of the reservation policy on the basis of this reasoning.

We think differently from both these groups of people. I believe that the inequality of over a thousand years cannot be set right in a period of 10 years. Thus, the time has not come to dispense with the policy of reservation. However, the time has come for effecting some amendments in this policy so that its benefits percolate to the very needy of every

section. I wish to submit to those who oppose the reservation that before the Constitution came into force in India, a particular section for over a thousand years enjoyed special privileges on the basis of the varna system- why do we not oppose that? Those who support the reservation, I wish to submit to them, only reservation will not change much. In my opinion, if you are thinking that we can uplift the quality of life of the underprivileged exclusively on the steam of the reservation, then you are wrong. Reservation is not even a drop in the ocean for the huge segment that has been left out from an even distribution of resources and opportunities. So, the time has come when we collectively search for a few more ways to eradicate the discriminatory malpractices in India as soon as possible.

As an ideal, the principle of social justice dismisses each and every form of discrimination prevalent in the society. Whether the discrimination is on the basis of colour, race, gender, religion, community, caste, region, language or some such social identity. As against these discriminations, social justice presents that view of justice which underlines the right of every human being to live in an egalitarian, just and harmonious society free of discrimination irrespective of her or his social affiliation.

There exists in India an entire canon of those fighting for social justice that includes the likes of Budhha, Kabir, Raidas, Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Fatima Sheikh, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ramabai, Mahatma Gandhi etc. When we look at the freedom movement, we find that while on the one hand, we were locked in an economic and political battle with the British, on the other, a mission against social discrimination for social fraternity and harmony was also going on. It is owing to this that the Indian Constitution included social justice as an integral value.

A major part of the Indian freedom struggle is associated with the struggle for social justice. Post- independence,

especially during the nineties, a grand chapter in the politics of social justice was added. This politics of social justice originally meant to eliminate social discrimination and to ensure the rights due to the marginalized people. However, like other types of politics, it got fraught with all kinds of discrepancies. Today, political parties swearing by social justice are so entangled in the web of dynastic politics, caste politics, regional politics and corruption, that the objective of social justice is a far cry for them.

I do believe that the objectives of social justice cannot be attained through party or faction. All the sections of the society will have to come forward for this and work for the betterment of all who have been left out from the mainstream of development irrespective of caste, religion, gender, language or region. If you sincerely believe that this country belongs to everyone, then you should not hesitate in accepting that the poor, the peasants, the farmers, the dalits, the tribals, the backward, the minorities and the women- all are the citizens of this country. They are all the sons and daughters of Mother India. We shall have to devise a system which contrary to the caste system does not perpetrate any discrimination; which looks at all with equality and which paves way for universal development and social justice.

Generally, when we talk of social justice then some people say that reservation is ensuring justice while others say that reservation is causing injustice. Some people focus on the injustice inscribed in the caste system. Some other people try and bring out instances from history as to when and who were discriminated against. Social justice is an important issue in the Indian Constitution. However, I would like to draw your attention to those three points on which we commonly avoid discussion. Despite all arguments and counter-arguments, don't we all agree that all should receive justice. Injustice remains a wrong irrespective of which person, which community or which system perpetrates it. Whether injustice

is being done to a dalit or an upper caste, a forward or a backward, a Bengali or a Gujarati, a woman or a man or a child, it remains a wrong. Across all the diversity that we see in the form of caste, religion, region or language, if anyone is suffering from lack of justice, then this is not right. There should be a guarantee of justice for all.

Now the question is that who shall ensure this justice. Till now, there have been three types of traditions which have been looked up to for justice. First, the religious order, which most people abide with. The religious order claims that those who seek its blessings, receive justice and redemption. We see, however, that not even there, do people get justice or redemption.

The second tradition is the Constitutional tradition- the strength of our society. Normally all of us are cognizant of the caste system in the society. Today the flag bearers of the caste system assert and misguide that they seek justice for the people of their caste. Activists from the upper castes do not acknowledge that the dalits and the backward classes have been at the receiving end of injustice for centuries. They feel that the introduction of the reservation policy has led to the injustice against them, that their potential is being suppressed. On the other hand, the entire dalit and backward section feels that they have been suppressed for centuries. They have been treated worse than animals.

The third institution which can provide justice is the political system. When the religious order failed to ensure justice, when the social order also failed, then the modern thought was born that we need a system which can ensure justice for those who have been denied justice. This is where monarchy was born. This is where governments were born. Through the medium of the Indian Constitution, the government and the powers provided for many systems to deliver justice. These systems had a long-lasting effect on the Indian society. If there is even a small relief for the dalits and

backwards in the society, then believe you me, it is a good omen for the future of this country because in some form or the other, those who have been repressed for so long have at least managed to receive some justice.

The reservation system has provided a solution, but justice in Indian society cannot be safeguarded entirely on the basis of reservation. If we try and analyze closely, then we will find that to date all the instruments which are there under the aegis of the religious order, the caste system, the political system, the Constitution mandated reservation system, the Preamble of the Constitution or all the many other legislations have not collectively succeeded in providing unmitigated justice to the people. Thus, the justice is incomplete and partial.

We shall have to think realistically that the social essence of the reservation policy is meant to provide opportunity to people but it cannot and it has not encompassed all the dalits. The reservation policy has made it possible for the backward classes to make progress but these avenues are not opened and cannot open to one and all. The system which is in place today has been successful only in part in bringing social injustice to the dalits, the backwards, the women, the minorities and people from different castes and religions. Beyond that, it has exhausted its potential.

Today there is a conspiracy. This prevailing system is a source of injustice and thus, we should rise up in arms against it. There is an instigation in the whole nation that you are the victims of injustice, and so you should take up cudgels against it. What will that accomplish? You promote and publicize us, you establish our power and governance, and you shall have your justice. I wish to very humbly submit to you that this route is no longer viable in India for extending the elusive promise of social justice.

So we shall have to ponder as to how we can warrant social justice. I feel that this is possible, and for this we need a new consciousness and a new thinking. We shall have to

envision the guarantee of social justice from scratch on the basis of that new realisation. It is only through this that a new system can develop in which injustice shall not exist at all. If we shall cultivate a new mindfulness, then a new power will emerge; the new power shall throw up new solutions and that may lead us to undiluted social justice. We need the ideological consciousness of positive nationalism in this society for this. The guarantee of social justice is the only way for bestowing peace and happiness in the lives of citizens. We need only to think how if do away with the caste-based discriminations in villages, then surely there shall not remain any hindrance in their way to progress.

If we desire the development of India as well as our own development, then we all need to contribute. We can offer the guarantee of everyone's development, if a positive consciousness develops in all of us that social justice is as important for us as it is for everyone else. We need to empathize that if we have been feeling the pinch for the last 70 years, then how painful it must have been for that section which was being exploited for centuries. We shall have to realize this and others will also have to realize this and the oppressed shall also have to realize this. If you carry out the survey in a dalit locality, then we shall discover that the benefit of the reservation had managed to reach only five out of 100 people. The counter-argument that is given is that if we discontinue the benefit of these five families, then the other 95 will be vindicated; all shall become equal. I beg to think differently, however, that the protagonists of the Indian society, the Indian politics and Indian philosophy need to deliberate on the fact that in view of the challenges that we face today, we shall have to find a way that along with the five families who are receiving the benefit of reservation, the rest 95 should also not stand compromised. I think there are two ways of doing this. The first is that in this country every child should have the guarantee of high quality education at government expense. The first ray of light penetrates any

darkness with this guarantee of high quality free education. The second route is of the guarantee of minimum economic justice to every citizen. This is because my experience tells me that economic inequality has a major role to play in social inequality. It may not be the only factor, but it is a major factor.

If you want to put an end to economic inequality, then we certainly need to strengthen the Indian economy. We can do this by sustainable development and through the invention of region specific technology. There is no other nation in this world which enjoys as much diversity as India does. This makes us believe in the bright economic future of India. Let us put our collective energy in the ancient vision and dream of India- "let all be happy, let all be healthy/ let all be blessed, let no one know misfortune". We can realize this dream of India and I do hope that if we channel our consciousness and willpower in a positive direction, then we will find the bliss of universal happiness.



Solution for Unemployment in the Indian Economy

Today the whole world is worried about the problem and the solution of unemployment in India. Our country is passing through a phase in which not only are new people not finding employment what even those who are employed are facing retrenchment. This situation exists not just in private or sectors but the jobs of people in government organizations are also in danger. Unemployment crisis is getting exacerbated by the way the present government is selling government enterprises and institutions to the private sector.

The rate of employment has touched 22 per cent in the Corona period, which is the highest in the entire history of independent India. The growth rate of GDP has also nosedived to - 24 per cent. Indian economy has never been in such dire straits. The declining trend in the GDP has adversely affected the labour-intensive sectors like agriculture, construction, manufacture, textiles, leather etc. This in turn has deprived millions of people of their livelihoods. In 2020, between the months of April and August, more than 2 million people had to lose their jobs.

We cannot really treat the Corona virus as a scapegoat behind this immense economic crisis. India has been facing the problem of unemployment and a shaky economy from even before the pandemic. Over the past few years, the growth rate of GDP of India has been consistently falling and today, it is in the negative scale. One thing has become absolutely clear from the Corona crisis that the two sections which are primarily responsible for sustaining the country are the

farmers and the labourers. The farmers and the peasants comprise 90 per cent of the Indian nation. The machinery of the whole nation collapses whenever their work is interrupted. Covid-19 related decisions of the government ended up causing the greatest distress to both these sections.

Labourers were forcibly divested of their livelihoods. They were compared to walk for hundreds of kilometres to reach back their villages. Innumerable labourers had to lose their lives due to the ill conceived policies and responses of the government. Under the guise of the Covid-19 pandemic, many state governments passed the bill to dilute the labour laws for two to three years. This step of the state governments intensified the crisis for the labourers who were already the worst victims all the pandemic.

The chief reasons behind the dilution of the labour laws were allegedly to attract foreign investment, to create ease of business and to strengthen the role of the investors. The lobby of industrialists laud these steps as encouragement to manufacturer and revenue. In reality, in the name of ease of business and increase in productivity, the government actually snatched away all the benefits from the labourers which they had achieved from a relentless struggle of over 70 years. The labour laws have not come into force in a vacuum, there had been struggles on various occasions for them to see the light of the day. These amendments may perhaps create ease of business in India but in the long run, that impact on the Indian economy is going to be grave and frightening. You can never advance the Indian economy by ruining the peasants. If the labourers will not be paid their minimum wages, then the consumption will go down, and the economy will slow down. These changes will also create problems like increase in child labour, informalization, and loss of the basic dignity of the labourers.

Along with this, the central government has expunged the 44 labour laws replacing them with four labour codes. When we analyse these codes closely, then it becomes evident that

they are written entirely for the purpose of the profiteering of industrialists. Their implementation will aggravate the exploitation of labourers. Why is India legislating laws which are for the benefit and convenience of the affluent class? We need to carry out deep research on this topic.

India does not lack monetary resources but the lack of disposable income with Indians is a big lacuna. Economic disparity has been continuously increasing in India. As per a recent report, 1 per cent ultra-rich people in India possess more than four times the combined resources of the 70 per cent very poor of India. This means that approximately 100 billionaires of India are monopolizing four times the total income of 100 crore Indians. This amount is greater than the annual budget of India. The main reasons behind this disparity are the growing corruption, exploitation of labourers and insecurity of livelihoods.

If we take stock of the various measures taken by the present dispensation, then we will see that this government has devoted itself to promoting just the affluent class. Increasing economic disparity and injustice have been the consequences. In the last one year, though there has been no mention in the media headlines, but the very rich have enjoyed a waiver of a loan amount to the tune of 68000 crores. However, when we discuss the loan waiver for farmers or the policy of minimum economic guarantee, then the economists reject them as bad economic policy. All this reminds us of a statement by the economist Thomas Piketty that from the British Raj, now India is moving towards Corporate Raj.

Why are people compelled to work for INR 5000 to INR 8,000 a month despite willing to work hard? Why are the farmers in India committing suicide? Why does not the government the small-scale industry economy? If today our economy is sick, the main reasons are that we do not have independent economic policies. India is still a slave

economically. The economic system of India is controlled by World Trade Organization and GATT.

The Indian Parliament needs to develop this courage that it would not frame economic policies under outside pressure. First and foremost, Indians will have to announce that it is going to develop the economic policy for its people based on a self-reliant perspective. India cannot dream of economic resurrection it does not acquire the capability or autonomy of framing its economic policy. The India Government is always under external pressure because it is not able to take an independent stance with respect to either education, industrial, foreign, environmental or technological policy.

India needs an alternative model for economic development to deal with the problem of unemployment. We need to frame the National Employment Policy to handle the problem of unemployment in India. Before going into the details of this policy, I wish to share a few things about the Indian economy:

Indian economy is constituted by three types of activities:

1. agricultural activity
2. manufacturing activity
3. service sector

Formal as well as informal workers are employed in all these three sectors. Around 90 per cent workers are employed in the unorganised sector. Every economy of this world has traversed a particular graph of progress. When the agricultural sector begins to develop, then in order to reap its benefits, a large section goes to the manufacturing sector. When the manufacturing sector develops, another sector goes to the service sector. Most economies of the world have charted this course.

The Indian economy on the contrary has pursued a very different course of development where in the three decades after Independence, when the agricultural sector had grown

only to a limited extent, the Indian economy had already moved into the manufacturing sector. The growth rate of the manufacturing sector and the people working in the manufacturing sector are stagnating at the same point over the last 40 years. Owing to the declining trends in the manufacturing sector, the Indian economy turned towards the service sector. The New Economic Policy was introduced in the 1990s after which our economy started promoting investment in the service sector. The manufacturing sector lagged behind. The problem with the economies which promote the service sector is that service is always dependent on manufactured products and thus the manufacturing sector cannot be ignored. The kind of jobs that we are getting in the service sector today are mostly contractual and informal. We did not pay much attention to either the technology or manufacturing and technology which we developed was not amenable to the workers. Thence the current situation- despite its huge labour force, India is manufacturing goods which involve capital and technology.

I propose the National Employment Policy as the solution to the problem of unemployment in India. We need to design and implement the National Employment Policy for agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors. Now the question is how this policy shall be framed? We will have to work on six cardinal principles behind this policy:

1. National Employment Policy for agricultural sector
2. National Employment Policy for uneducated and unorganised sector
3. National Employment Policy for educated and organized sector
4. National Employment Policy for women
5. National Employment Policy for self-employed professionals and craftsmen
6. National skill policy in accordance with National Employment Policy

National Employment Policy for agricultural sector

India is an agriculture based economy. If we eliminate the farmers, the country will be lost as well. Earlier when the agrarian society dwelt in villages, there was a caste based organization due to which, all sections could not develop equally. If you look at the economic system of those times, then we find there was a lot of poverty and the incomes were very low. In this economy, there was a section which did not work on the fields- like the zamindaars. This was because they had the proprietary right to the land which freed them from the need to work. They considered manual labour beneath their dignity. The poor farmer of that economy has still not been able to liberate itself from this system.

India has not been able to rid itself from the zamindari organization to date. We now have a section of intermediaries who buy the yield of the farmers for 10 per cent and sell it for 100 per cent. Governments have been promising to address the issues of the farmers for decades, but no government has come forth with any solutions. The farmers toil, sweat and till in the fields. They should receive a guarantee in the form of a minimum support price. Under the National Employment Policy, the minimum support price guarantee shall have to be enforced in all states in India. India has not yet implemented the Swaminathan Committee report of 2006.

The main cause of the agrarian crisis is low productivity. 44 per cent people work in the agricultural sector but only 15 per cent share of the GDP comes from this sector. In order to increase the productivity, not only will the farmers have to become more conscious, but the agriculture employment policy will have to be enforced with a clear-cut plan and objective. If you look at the history of China, the agriculture sector proved to be more effective in eradicating poverty as compared to the industrial and service sectors. We can improve the situation in the agricultural sector by deciding the minimum support price, enforcing the minimum support

price throughout the country and offering subsidy in the agricultural sector. This will help in the management of the rural economy. This will encourage rural industrialization, which in turn, will favourably impact the entire rural economy. This will help in redressing the twin problems of poverty and unemployment.

India needs to develop 'Mini Technology Centres' for farm technologies which will help the farmer to increase their productivity. They will guide the farmers on complex issues like which crops to grow and which methods to follow. In this way, technologies will be tailor-made to the needs of a particular region and its farmers.

The farmers of India today suffer from a lack of markets. We need to develop mini government markets so that the intermediaries who pocket the profits of farmers are eliminated. In India, we grow crops according to the climate of various regions. We grow spices or sugarcane or paddy accordingly. Some states grow paddy twice a year. In such states, government can promote the rice industry. In the same manner, we need to develop local industries keeping in mind the produce of the farmers. These industries will boost the rural economy. The government should decide at least the minimum wages for the farmers. This will increase its buying power and of course, industries and livelihoods would be the immediate beneficiaries.

Along with agriculture, India needs to develop other agriculture related job opportunities in order to improve the rural economy. More than half the agricultural labour force is either landless or almost landless. If we try and diversify the job opportunities available in the agricultural sector, we will do a big favour to rural industrialization and development. Strategic investment in rural economy with the help of capable and industrious population can go a long way in triggering small-scale rural industrialization.

The National Employment Policy for agriculture sector will have the farmers at its core. Rural job opportunities will arise out of agricultural development and dairy, vegetables, fruits, poultry and fisheries will develop simultaneously. We must develop the National Employment Policy for the agricultural sector on the rubrics of implementing minimum support price, eliminating touts and intermediaries, and increasing agriculture-related job opportunities in villages.

National Employment Policy for unskilled and unorganised sector

93 per cent of India's workforce works in the unorganised sector. This large chunk is working on contractual basis without enjoying any security in terms of wages. Either the labour laws are not applied or not implemented if applied.

We should implement the minimum wages guarantee for the labour working in India. In India a rural employment guarantee scheme already exists but we also need an urban employment guarantee scheme in order to address the problem of unemployment in India. This will enhance the income and purchasing power of the labour working in the cities. Where will the go when that purchasing power is increased? Let us think. The woman in the family who makes do with two sarees in a year will now be able to buy four with this increased income. It's not that the children in this family have any extraordinary desires. Perhaps the family will now be able to fulfil if not all, then at least a few, simple needs of the children. If the income increases, its direct impact will be visible on businesses and markets. A shop which today has two employees shall then hire four. When the demand rises, then we need suppliers to meet this demand. Since now we shall have to manufacture more goods, industries will also grow. Owners who have one unit may have four units tomorrow. Today, small scale units are dying. This is because there is a lot of struggle for small traders in them. Neither can they bring the shutters down, nor are they really thriving. However, when the traders' business will boom, then

industries will also boom. This is the reason why we certainly need employment guarantee in the cities as well. This will bring in a lot more revenue in the government exchequer. When money shall be in circulation then obviously the economy of the country shall benefit. India follows an inverted duty structure in its overseas trade policy whereby in comparison to the raw materials, there is a lower tax rate on the finished goods. As a result of this, instead of manufacturing goods in the country, it is preferred to buy goods from abroad. We need to rectify power tariff policy so that industries grow in India and workers manufacture goods from raw materials. Apart from this, in order to develop self-reliance in technologically advanced goods, we need to enforce reverse engineering mechanism on many items. National Employment Policy will stress on the technology used in manufacturing.

The sectors which involve more labour than capital we need to kick start them through a special package. We need the special package for food processing, leather, shoes, wooden furniture, construction, textiles and apparel sectors. Special packages designed for IT sector should be so designed as to be able to achieve economy of scale in that sector. We need to develop labour-centric mini technology which keeps in mind the local needs of the different regions of India.

Most of the manufacturing done in the labour sector is done in micro, small and medium sectors. Things have hit rock bottom in MSME. The revival of the sector is not just important from the point of view of jobs but also for improving the manufacturing economy and for raising demand in India. India has 1450 modern industrial clusters and 4500 traditional manufacturing clusters. We need finance in order to run these clusters in an integrated manner. By focusing attention on capital intensive sector, a priority-based loan policy should be adopted. Thereafter we should adopt incentive-based lending in which the more the production, the lower shall be the interest rate on loans sought in future. The performance

of the cluster shall determine the encouragement-based incentive. At the same time, in order to promote the rural economy, regional special markets should be established. These markets boost the rural economy and the purchasing power of people which in turn shall expand the cluster. As the clusters grow, so will the jobs.

We need LMIS (labour market information system) or in other words employment centres through which job givers can directly contact the job seekers. India has innumerable unemployed people and innumerable companies which are looking for workers- we need to bring this whole system on a level platform. These employment centres shall prove to be a boon to both the the workers and the recruiters.

Thus, the National Employment Policy for unskilled and unorganised sector should incorporate minimum wages guarantee; industrial policy should be designed according to the skill of the workers. Apart from enforcing minimum income guarantee in every sphere, the workers in the unorganised sector shall be able to find employment through a combination of several policies like urban employment guarantee scheme, special package for labour intensive industries, development of manufacturing centre clusters, package for micro, small and medium enterprises, new technology for sector specific productivity and creation of employment centres.

National Employment Policy for skilled and organised sector

The biggest stratum which seems to be suffering from the problem of unemployment in India today is the educated stratum. Jobs are available, but the salaries in these jobs are very low just like the situation of the people who work in the agricultural sector in the villages. The rate of educated unemployment in India has been continuously increasing over the last 10 years. The number of educated unemployed has doubled in the last six years. A research study reveals that approximately 5 lakh engineers are graduating every year in

India since the last eight years, and as against that, not even 2.25 lakh new jobs are created in a year.

Lakhs of educated people who quit the agricultural sector and migrate to the cities do not find any jobs in the cities. A large segment of the youth aspiring for jobs is getting educated in India. However, employment opportunities are not available to them. They are compelled to either go back to the agricultural sector in the absence of good jobs or they have to choose the alternative of working in low paying industries away from their homes.

Today the system that has developed, the whole scenario in it tells us that the largest educated unemployed community is to be found mostly in the cities. We need to pay attention to urban industrialisation in order to solve this problem. We also need to develop those openings in the service industry which can accommodate a majority of educated workers of this country.

We should develop the employment policy keeping in mind the telecom, IT, banking, insurance, pension, tourism and transportation services. There are around 5 crore workers in these sectors. If we ensure economic justice guarantee in the sectors of this kind, then the educated youth shall be attracted towards them and the sectors will grow even more. The educated youth is fully dedicated when they get jobs and guarantee for jobs. It is otherwise always distracted by the fear of losing the job.

We shall need curricula both at school and college level in order to develop entrepreneurial attitude among the educated youth. These curricula should introduce students to different professions and help them to evolve as job creators from job seekers.

At the same time, we also need to augment the number of government jobs. If the government will succeed in developing schools, hospitals, police and judiciary, then jobs created herein

for the educated youth would help them support not just their families but also support the nation. India spends only 4.6 per cent of its GDP on education and 1.6 per cent of the GDP on health care. The education share of GDP needs to go up to 10 per cent while the Healthcare share of GDP needs to be made 6 per cent.

Thus, the National Employment Policy for skilled and organised sector shall focus attention on those lakhs of young men and women who have received good education but are still in search of jobs. The National Employment Policy for skilled and organised sector can be developed on the rubrics of urban employment guarantee, opening of employment centres, promotion of labour-intensive segments in the service sector, inculcation of the entrepreneurial approach and creation of jobs in health care and education through public investment.

National Employment Policy for women

Almost every woman works in India. For the work they do, either they are paid the wages or they are not. Women take care of the domestic activities. Women help in agricultural activities in the villages. They go out to work in offices in urban areas. Women who shoulder both the responsibilities-taking care of the home as well as contributing to the income of the house- are crushed under a double burden.

The National Employment Policy for women aims to provide the rightful dignity to women. We need to initiate minimum income guarantee scheme for women so that women are economically independent. Along with this, a provision for zero interest loan for the women who wish to set up their own business needs to be ensured. These initiatives by the government will translate into women empowerment and their participation in economic activities. In the year 1987, a historical report on working women titled 'Shram Shakti' was issued. The report stated that all women are workers because

they create and reproduce. The report further said that the patriarchal mindset of the society designates only the caretakers' role to women. In order to be able to formally and extensively implement the recommendations of the report we need social upliftment, strong judicial system and easy availability of credit from the banks.

Women comprise 50 per cent of the total human population. However, the share of women's participation in livelihoods of all kinds is the least in India in comparison to the rest of the world. Girls are not able to work despite having received quality education. We need to incentivize jobs for women in proximity to manufacturing clusters so that opportunities open for the girls in the rural areas who are not allowed to work in big cities because of the restrictions imposed upon them by their families. They will learn the local technology and the tricks of the local trade to be able to work in those spheres which are traditionally popular in rural economies.

We need to develop a conscious strategy for the development of women entrepreneurs. We need to provide the right skills and atmosphere for making women economically independent and successful. Women who work in small scale industries need to be trained in entrepreneurship so that they can expand their businesses.

Avenues should be created for women in the agricultural sector. We need to create livelihoods in agriculture and agriculture related professions for those women who have spent their entire life labouring on the same chores. Self-help groups have proven to be very successful for women in many parts of the country and the governments need to promote them vigorously so that they become a part of an active policy.

Thus, we will need to develop the National Employment Policy for women keeping in mind a minimum income guarantee, special employment programs, zero interest loans for women-run enterprises, agriculture-based livelihood for women in the rural areas, promotion of self-help groups and

jobs near manufacturing clusters and designing skill-based professions for the women populace.

National Employment Policy for self-employed skilled craftsmen

We have seen many people around us who do not work under any owner or master. In a manner of speaking, they are self-employed but still they are poor and helpless. Such people include plumbers, tailors, cobblers, barbers, masons, carpenters, launderers, guards, domestic helps, milkmen, tea sellers, food stall owners, Ola-Uber drivers, Swiggy- Zomato riders and door to door salespersons. All these people are self-employed but their incomes are very low. We need to organise these self-employed workers. We need online markets for them. A minimum income guarantee also needs to be enforced for all of them.

Today the people who work online through phone apps are called workers in the gig economy. Financial security of all these give workers is always under threat because they are not legally covered under the labour laws. We need legislation and laws for these self-employed workers. Also, they need trainings and incentives.

More often than not, the banks are not keen on extending loan facility to groups of craftsperson. We can introduce incentive-based loan facilities for such groups. Minimum wages need to be affixed for workers in the gig economy and they should also enjoy job-based security. Even today, we have many self-employed people who do not operate through any app but earn their livelihood through personal relations. Plumbers, electricians, launderers are some such people. These people should be able to avail loan for their tools and instruments so that they can expand their businesses. As has been discussed earlier, India needs an urban employment guarantee scheme which provides job security and increases productivity of urban workers.

Self-financed workers like cobblers, caterers, barbers etc. are masters of their crafts. All of us are acquainted with some

or the other craftsperson who excels in her or his work but in order to profitably leverage that skill, she or he does not possess any formal degree. Employment policy should encourage formal recognition of the skill already acquired by and present in craftsperson. Government has a 'prior learning' policy for them. However, very few people know about this policy. Large scale implementation and improvisation of the policy should be incorporated in the ambit of the National Employment Policy.

Thus, the National Employment Policy for self-employed craftsperson should take care of training for technicians, facility of loan and credit, minimum income guarantee and social security guarantee. Along with this, it will encourage that the local craftsperson who are masters of their own craft are provided recognition through a formal degree.

National Skill Policy in accordance with National Employment Policy

The total population of India is 138 crores and the total number of people working in India is 47.1 crores. Out of this workforce less than 60 per cent have passed class 8. We will have to extensively reform the education system. We need to provide technical education apart from teaching subjects like general knowledge, mathematics, history etc. Students should have the guarantee of getting jobs upon leaving schools. We will need to make the economy skill-based.

Less than 5 per cent of the Indian workforce can be formally counted as skilled whereas the same figures are 96 per cent for Korea, 80 per cent for Japan, 75 per cent for Germany, and 74 per cent for China. In order to improve this figure, the Government of India has the 'Skill India' policy. We have spent approximately 20,000 crores on this policy. The training imparted under this policy results in jobs only for 17 per cent—this means that out of a 100 people who receive this training, only 17 land a job. How will the trainees get the jobs when there are no jobs? Those who do get jobs, their average salary

is between INR 10000 to INR 12000. The reason for the training not translating into a job and if it does, then into a low paying job, is that what is taught in the training is inadequate. Business magnates tell us that there is a huge gap between India's skill policy and the needs of the industry.

The foremost need in this policy is to shift focus from quantity to quality. Many institutions are established but the training imparted is of such a shallow nature that despite the training, students do not become eligible for jobs. There should be a process of quality check and control in these educational and training institutions.

Indian companies have been free riders in the Indian education system. Students learn in the best government funded institutions and the company's employ these trained persons. The expertise of these students comes for free to these companies. The most talented and intellectual students graduating from IITs and IIMs work for these corporate houses only. We need to levy a skill tax through which the educational sector can be funded. When the employers are benefiting from the skills of students from public funded institutions, then by paying the skill tax, the employer should also contribute towards the education of students in these institutions. Trained professionals will be able to find jobs easily only when the skill policy is synchronised with the employment policy.

The solution to India's problem of unemployment lies in the implementation of these six pillars of the alternative model of National Employment Policy. It is an extremely deplorable matter that the youngest nation in the world is afflicted with the problem of unemployment. It seems that providing employment to the youth of the country does not figure in the government agenda at all. Whenever we discuss the problem of unemployment, our minds are diverted to the official line taken by the governments in this matter that there has been a population explosion. So how can everyone get employment. This makes people think that when resources

are limited and the claimants innumerable, then of course, there has to be unemployment.

The population can play a significant role in the economy of India. However, we need to ponder over this with a cool and clean mind. At a time when the average age is increasing in the other nations of the world, India is enjoying the demographic dividend. India happens to be the country with the highest number of young people. As stated in a report by a foreign research company 'Boston consultancy', as the world shall face a shortage of 48 crore workers in the year 2030, India will have more than 25 crore workers. India can compensate for the shortage of workers through its talent pool. All that is needed is to make these workers trained and educated. We need to negate the WhatsApp University 'population a bane' type of false propaganda and to enlighten the people that it is the governmental policies which are responsible for exacerbating the unemployment crisis. If we reform these policies, we shall certainly find a solution to the problem of unemployment. Had the population been the sole reason for impeding progress, then China would not have become the biggest exporter to the world.

In order to develop India in accordance with its conditions and sectors, we need to take lessons and inspiration from the world to invent our technology. We are buying finished products from the world instead of manufacturing by inventing. The economists in our country have sufficient know-how to advise the government that technology needs to be developed according to the topography of different regions. For example, hilly regions of our country like Uttarakhand, Himachal, Jammu-Kashmir, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh need a different technology. Desert regions like Rajasthan need a different one. So do the flora and forest rich regions like Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu etc. Only when we develop technology in keeping with the topography, can we hope to

increase industries and livelihoods. There is a lot in these areas which is still untapped.

Now the question arises that from where will we get the money to implement this policy in the country. We have a regressive tax system in this country where most of the tax that is collected is indirect tax. Indirect tax is that tax which is levied equally upon all citizens of the country. Whether it is a billionaire or a farmer or a labourer, each one pays the tax at the same rate on food, clothing, shelter and other fundamental requirements. On the other hand, in a country of 130 crore population, only 1.5 crore people pay the income tax. India has the lowest rate of the income tax paid by the uppermost class in the whole world. In order to kick start the economy of India, property tax needs to be levied on the uppermost class of India. The IRS suggested to the present government to levy a one-time 40 per cent cess on people with an income of more than one crore in order to tide over the Corona crisis, but the government rejected the proposal. Instead, it instituted an enquiry on young officials for making this proposal public. I maintain that not only will the wealth tax and inheritance tax kick start the Indian economy but also help in putting India back on the path of progress.

Jobs can be guaranteed if the government works on the six strands of the National Employment Policy. Whether it is the economy of India or the economy of any other nation in the world, circulation of money is the key to its operation. If there will be no liquidity in the economy, then the situation so produced is termed an economic slowdown. This is because what is being denied, is the participation of the people. Therefore, the second thing that needs to be done is to create a circulation economy. India is a very big market; the biggest market is that which has the maximum number of consumers. Despite the poverty in India, America has the assurance that if it is able to capture the Indian market, then what it manufactures in America will be supplied to India, and its income will skyrocket. The economy of China also rests on

the fact that if its supply to the world comes to a halt, then from where will it get its income. The big companies of the whole world have their eagle eyes set on India because India is a very big consumer country. If the world is recognising this, then why does not this country?

In India, policies are made from a point of view that the government should somehow be able to complete its tenure of 5 years. It is because of this that attention is never paid to educational medical or employment policies because the impact of these policies is only felt in the long run. The need of the hour is to replace this myopic thought and implement the National Employment Policy with a firm resolve and strong political will power. India can emerge as a superpower if we work on the National Employment Policy in this country replete with social diversity. If we need to take forward this nation, then we shall have to invest in the future of the youth of this country. If we look at it from a broad perspective, then the National Employment Policy is the road to steer India slowly and steadily to its destined status of a superpower.



Destruction of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Generally, when we discuss the issues of different countries on international platforms, then different countries are found to face different types of problems. For example, the economic problem in America is different from the economic problem in Africa. Similarly, the social problem in India is different from the social problem in China. However, when we look at the environment related issues, then we find that this is a problem common to the whole world.

The term environment has been derived from a French word "Environia" which means to surround, that is, environment is the blanket of all the natural constituents that surround the individual, society, state, country, and the continent. Air, water, forest, earth, flora and fauna comprise these constituents. Along with these, the small and big creatures which live on these constituents are also a part of the environment. Human beings are also a part of the same environment. Nature has a balanced ecosystem for the survival of all organisms. All the living organisms and the natural elements are connected to each other in an explicit or implicit manner. Any disturbance in even a single link in the chain is sufficient to disturb the entire chain. Let us imagine a ship which is assembled with the help of innumerable nuts and bolts. If one nut comes off, then it does not make much of a difference. If a second one comes off, even then perhaps there is not too much effect. However, if this process continues, slowly and gradually, the main parts of the ship will grow weaker and the ship will get dismantled and drowned. In

the same way if we will keep on destroying the animate and inanimate components of nature, then our environment will also be destroyed one day.

We paid heed to environmental destruction on an international level after the '70s. If we estimate the extent of this environmental destruction, then we will find that the indiscriminate bid to progress by the developed nations of the west after the industrial revolution has caused the greatest damage to the environmental ecosystem of this earth. Today when the developed countries are becoming conscious of the environment, then their environment unfriendly concept of development should not be emulated by developing countries like India. This rat race of progress has poisoned the air of Europe to such an extent that as per a report, in the year 2005, 310000 citizens of the European Union died of air pollution. In India, water pollution is caused by the release of untreated water by industrial units into rivers and as per a report in India, 15 lakh children die before the age of five of water borne diseases every year. Rise in the earth's temperature, ozone depletion in the atmosphere over the Antarctic continent, climate change, rise in the level of the oceans- all these are the consequences of the pollution caused by human beings. United Nations has organised several conferences from time to time to address this issue of the rising environmental pollution like the Stockholm conference (1972), Rio Summit for Earth (1992) and the Paris Pact (2015) etc.

To consider a contemporary example, the Corona pandemic has today home isolated countries, organisations and policymakers. Today they are not able to understand how to deal with this pandemic. In the end it is said that there is no other way but to boost your immunity. The ball is ultimately tossed in the nature's court. The immunity of human beings depends upon their environment, climate and eating habits and all this we get from nature. So let us not forget that by

damaging nature we are threatening each and every living species. When we do not embrace a balanced point of view, then progress turns into devastation.

Now you may be thinking that should we get left behind in our project of development due to the protection of nature and environment? I believe that we need to deliberate on this issue calmly. If we will espouse development singularly, then there will be a problem; and if we will champion nature singularly, then also there will be a problem. We need a medium path, a golden mean. Today India needs to proceed with a balanced environment friendly system. Today we need sustainable development in which we can conserve the environment along with pursuing industrial development. We need to promote environment friendly technology for this and I maintain that green technology can certainly be fostered. India has natural resources in abundance and given an opportunity, the citizens of India can innovate on the basis of the geographical configuration and natural resources of a region. This will be in the interest of not just nature but the whole humanity.

We may be thinking that what shall be the nature of this new technology and what is the problem with the old technology. I believe that most of the technologies currently in use are those which have been now discarded by the developed countries and our country makes use of these in the name of modern technology. Instead of focusing on indigenous technology, we mindlessly borrow and apply foreign technology. I am advocating for a new technology because it is very urgently needed today. Today we use mainly two sources of energy as fuels in our daily lives. First, the sources of energy which have been created from the events of millions of years and which are called non-replenishable sources. These will become extinct in a few years. These include coal and petroleum. The use of these fuels also causes pollution in the environment. Secondly, we have the replenishable sources of energy in nature which are infinite

and if used through sound technology, then they cause very less pollution, like solar energy.

The government should bear its citizens in mind while framing policies to deal with important issues like environment. The Indian government presented a revised draft of environment impact assessment recently in which the period of consultation with the general public was reduced. The environmentalist community expressed its dissent over it. I am of the firm opinion that the issues which affect the very breath of the people should not be handled in such a hasty manner. Water, forest and earth belong to all of us and a just utilisation of all of these should be ensured. We cannot pander to the profiteering motive of a few people lest tragedies like Bhopal gas tragedy repeat themselves. Today international companies are watching the abundant resources of India with greedy eyes. They wish to rob us of them.

We need to develop a positive attitude for a policy driven utilisation of natural resources. We will have to prioritise the sustainable management of natural resources, whether it is at the level of the government or at the level of the gram sabha; whether by the city dwellers or by the rural population. We will have to understand that nature has everything to satisfy human needs, but it has nothing to quench its lust. Whatever assets I have today, while using them, I am mindful that these assets should not only be equally divided among the various members of my family, but there should be some savings also for the future generations. We need to think about natural resources in the same manner. We shall be true to the spirit of "the whole world is my family" only by reflecting like this.



Scientific Consciousness and the Indian Psyche

Whatever we are experiencing in India and the world today, is certainly a product of science. Nothing else perhaps has been responsible for simplifying human lives as science has been. We know that humanity lived in the forest and on the banks of the rivers in its earliest days. It faced many challenges at that time and the struggle to overcome those challenges was in fact the unfolding of science. Knowledge can be of several types- like we gain knowledge by seeing certain things, by hearing certain things and by reading certain things. The knowledge which we gather on the basis of information converts into science upon investigation and evaluation.

Hearsay may turn out to be true, or it may be untrue. The written word may turn out to be true, or it may be untrue. However, when we research, experiment and verify what we have read and heard, then it attains the level of science. The probability of error gets minimised then. Therefore, experimentation is of vital importance in science. We research and experiment on anything and everything in a laboratory. The conclusions which emerge upon research and experimentation are denominated as science. The inventions and discoveries that we know of today are all the gifts of science. The first things that we use upon getting up in the morning have been created by science. What we eat and wear also have been produced by science. All the means of transportation have been generated by science. Science has given us all the facilities and amenities that we enjoy in our lives.

The scientific temper made a great contribution towards the development of the civilizations established by human beings on the banks of rivers. The curiosity of humankind empowered this temper. In the history of the world, the discovery of fire, the invention of the wheel, the practice of agriculture and the contraption of the engine have facilitated the modernization of the human world. In other words, all these inventions and discoveries have seen the light of the day because human beings did not look at phenomena in a conventional manner. They looked at them from a different perspective and this is what we call the scientific consciousness today.

India is passing through a period of conflict at the present moment. We do appreciate science, but we also respect tradition to some extent. Today our society is neither fully traditional, nor is it fully scientific. Some forces propel us stubbornly towards tradition, while some needs drive us towards science, because tradition offers no solution for their fulfilment. Thus, it is imperative for us to ponder whether the Indian society has always been like this? The answer is no.

The civilizations of the world were shrouded in the dark ages with respect to science. The development of science even in Europe which is considered to be the father of the modern period took place after the 16th century. Descartes, Spinoza, Kant etc. philosophers were born. Darwin, Bruno, Galileo etc. scientists were born- but this history goes back only to the 16th century. America was born even later. Against this backdrop, the civilizations in Egypt and the Indus valley are two ancient civilizations where knowledge and science existed much earlier. India and Egypt were twin centres where a lot of work was done on knowledge and science.

The roots of the scientific temper in India on a social level go back to our history. If we evaluate the pattern of settlement in cities of the Indus valley civilization, we find that it was

organised in a scientific manner. In the Vedic period, the Indian society had the four Vedas. How were these created? Concurring with everything does not produce a new reasoning; it does not engender a new idea. Ayurveda is not a contemporary science but an ancient text. It is based in argument and reasoning. Had we just adopted and imitated, we would not have discovered this new science. We had some problems. This new science offered remedies to those problems. As I say very often, when religion proceeds on the lines of argument, then it becomes a philosophy; from this philosophy, science is born.

I want to make it clear that there is a big difference between knowledge, religion and superstition. Generally, when we talk of the scientific temper, we club religion, superstition and ritualism together. Religion, however, is different. Superstition and ritualism are not the same as religion. Superstition and ritualism are antithetical to science. In comprehensive terms, religion has not been contradictory to science. However, if you look at religion and science in the present context, there is a binary between the two. Where science is keen to give recognition to the latest inventions, religion is stuck on its endorsement of the most ancient of notions. Religion is something which we adopt. It is possible to adopt reasoning in the process. You can also adopt scientific temper in the process or you may adopt superstition in the process. What you adopt, depends on you. That becomes your religion. Slowly and gradually, religion has come to represent superstition and ignorance.

Secondly, who is the Creator of this universe in the scriptures? In our country, we have exerted a lot in search of this Creator. In India, we have the Charvaka philosophy which says there is no God. In India, we have the Buddhist philosophy. Mahatma Buddha was also born on this land who gave a new thought about this Creation and human relationships. He postulated new ideals in which the work ethic was the most important. He brought forth knowledge

propounding a nature-based order. Mahaveer was also born in this country who give us the important ideals of ahimsa (non-violence) and syadawad (pluralism). Nyaya, Sankhya and Yoga philosophies were also born in the Indian civilization. This country has produced Mimansa, Vedanta and Vaisheshik philosophies. How were all these philosophies born in India? They were born from reasoning. They are born from a quest for a new path. When we accept that something is the final truth, then all arguments come to an end. When arguments come to an end, then philosophies come to an end. With that science also comes to an end. And that is where the road to progress for this world also ends.

India has not always been like this. The philosophy of Saint Kanad was instrumental in developing the atomic theory in India; the tradition of yoga was also founded by Patanjali in ancient India. Aryabhata propounded the formulae of trigonometry and astronomic calculations. The people of India then had the strength to accept all modes of reasoning in their society. But today, especially after the British colonial slavery, there is a fear in our hearts. Psychologically, we have stopped reasoning. And slowly and gradually, we have shifted towards superficiality.

Today we resort to shortcuts when we are not able to find a solution to any of our problems. We do not bother till our businesses are doing well or our car is in perfect order. However, when we find ourselves faced with challenges to which there seems no solution, then we more often than not find solace in superstition.

In a nutshell, the fact of the matter is that the science that we talk about in India was actually born in India. The reason was that we could go to any extent to satisfy our curiosity. However, this tradition disintegrated upon the British arrival in India. We lost all the knowledge that we had accumulated. We lost our self-confidence and even today, psychological servility rules our mental framework.

The knowledge which was gained in Egypt or in the world was not in the English language. If China has discovered something, then even that was not in English. Knowledge and science are not dependent upon any language. However, in India, there prevails the myth that if children have to progress, they need to be taught in English. Knowledge and Science are no longer the prerogatives of any language. The consequence of the deep-rooted servility in our minds is that we are neither able to jettison tradition nor are we able to adopt science. This is because we are bonded by tradition. But we also wish to espouse science. Even the poorest of the poor agree with this position. So does even the most fanatic person- whether she/he is a Hindu fanatic or a Muslim fanatic or a person belonging to any other religion. All agree that children should get an education which will lead to their progress. Despite this they are scared of abandoning tradition. Thus, for every Indian, it is imperative that we learn but what is even more imperative is that we revive the glorious Indian tradition of the scientific consciousness, of intellectual debate, of calling a spade a spade and understanding along with reading and writing. We need to work on that.

Whatever is the positive aspect of the Indian society is today getting suppressed. We are trying to embrace negative things in the name of culture and tradition. We are embarrassed in adopting Buddhism. We are embarrassed in adopting his scientific consciousness as well. It is still a fad to have a decorative statue of Buddha in our homes. But it is difficult to follow into his footsteps. There are many followers of Mahaveer also in India. But they do not want to align with his philosophy. We hesitate in internalizing that philosophy. My thinking is that the knowledge and science which we are seeing in the world today, we need to be at par with all of that. However, I feel that India will develop self-reliance and self-confidence only when the masses here will be able to harness once again the positive energy of the Indian society.

The scientific consciousness which has been a part of the Indian society and the Indian tradition is a great Indian heritage. Some countries have produced one or two philosophies. Our country, however, has produced several. We were able to develop science based on the same philosophical and rational foundations when many civilizations of the world were wallowing in the dark ages. These accomplishments bedimmed slowly and gradually. Other considerations took their place and the British subjugation served at the last nail in the coffin. India has been ruled by a great Emperor like Akbar and if we read about him, we will come to know that he had the courage of instituting a religion like 'Din-i-Ilahi'. He introduced a new tradition and regime in the whole country. Thereafter it dawned on him that the progress that should have taken place in the society under a united or central control is not happening. Then, he turned his attention to 'Din-i-Ilahi'. He started reforming the mind. He did not go very far but he still tried his best.

He was born in the very same Kashi there were innumerable devotees of Kailash. A number of strands of the scientific consciousness owe their origin to India and Indian tradition. Kabir did not imbibe this consciousness from England or America. Kabir succeeded in rejuvenating the endangered Indian heritage, tradition and culture.

What I wish to say is that India needs to awaken the positive aspect of its heritage. We invoke the RSS in this context again and again because it is an influential organisation. However, the direction in which it is working with respect to Indian civilization, culture and nationalism is negative. It wishes to abandon the scientific consciousness and the great power of the Indian society which have the potential to make India the greatest nation tomorrow; and in its place, it wishes to impose superstition and self-destruction on the Indian society. Our society cannot advance along these lines.

I repeat that every individual has positive as well as negative strength. In the same way, India also has positive

strength along with negative strength. The dominance of the negative strengths is slightly greater today. This does not however mean that the positive strength has vanished. Positive strengths are also alive. They are also working in their own way. They are making a difference and minds are changing with the passage of time.

There is a long custom of superstitions and conservatism recorded in the chronicles of Indian history. However, we will find that the Indian society possessed a tradition of positive and scientific consciousness much stronger than that legacy, especially before the common era, and we need to revive it again. We shall succeed if we conjugate this tradition with our knowledge and science and the needs of the modern world. This is because the consciousness of the Indian society will not awaken till the society inculcates a scientific temper.

Today we will see that Indian men and women are active in all the spheres of the strides that knowledge and science have made across the world. Indian citizens are not devoid of talent. The circumstances that prevail today- social, political and economic- are responsible for not according an appropriate place to the highest thinking minds. They are compelled to immigrate to other places from India. We need to create a conducive environment, in the development of which, the political will is the greatest factor. Social and economic conditions will change if this political revolution is afoot in India. An environment will be created for the men and women of India with first rate minds who shall be able to make new headways in the world of knowledge and science and pave way for the creation of a new India. They will be able to take our glorious tradition forward. They can set new benchmarks for knowledge and science in the whole world.

Today we need to analyse why the development of the scientific consciousness in India is so slow. Article 51 (A) of the Indian Constitution states that it is the duty of every citizen of India to "develop the scientific temper, humanism and the

spirit of inquiry and reform". The youth of our country shall have to demolish superstition and conservatism with reasoning and scientific point of view. They need to keep mental servility at bay. This is because only when our mind is free, will it be able to accept new ideas. New ideas will lead to a new thought process, and this thought process will be able to resurrect the scientific consciousness.



The Constitution and Protection of its Core Values

A Constitution is considered to be a document containing those rules and regulations on the basis of which the governance of any country is conducted. It determines the fundamental structure of political and administrative organisation of a country. However, the Indian Constitution cannot be treated as merely a collection of rules and regulations. India expressed through the Constitution its sovereignty, independence and capability for self-governance to the entire world after a long period of British Raj. Along with this, it presented to the citizens of this country, a comprehensive road to progress and a ray of hope and promise.

We need to appreciate a few things in the context of the Indian Constitution and its values. The most important among them is the need to understand what is the real significance of the Indian Constitution. The Indian Constitution has not existed since times immemorial. During the British Raj, the British assumed that the people of India will not be able to write a Constitution and they threw a challenge to this effect. Later when India became independent, it wrote its Constitution. The world looks upon the Indian Constitution with great respect. The Constitution is a kind of contract between the citizen and the government under the aegis of which the powers of the government can be restrained so that the government does not abuse its powers and the citizens also fulfil their responsibility of working towards the progress of the country.

Constitution is a legal contract in which the government is directed to ensure equal rights for every citizen, that is, it will not discriminate with any citizen on the basis of religion, gender or any other consideration. The government enjoys many rights through the Constitution but the Constitution also makes it obligatory on the government to protect the Constitution guaranteed rights to equality, to freedom, against exploitation, and rights to religion, culture and education to citizens.

A country makes a new beginning towards a new future whenever it creates a Constitution based on what it has learnt from the negative and positive experiences of the past. In this new beginning, a new direction is inscribed for the onward movement of the nation. It is a contract which is binding for both the government as well as the citizens. Constitution provides powers to the government and the citizens but it keeps both under check as well. We cannot say that the rights of the citizens enshrined in the Constitution did not exist earlier. Most of the human rights and citizens' rights are natural rights. Countries which do not observe their Constitution are kept in the category of failed nations. These countries derail from the path of progress. The country which follows its Constitution is able to progress.

Despite the Constitution being so important for the nation, yet there are still some people in our country who feign ignorance about its importance. There was a segment which did not like the Constitution when the Constitution was written and it openly opposed the Constitution. These people wanted Manusmriti and its principles to form the basis of the Constitution. However, the Constitution Council comprised of extremely progressive and liberal minded people who embraced the liberal, democratic and socialist principles of the western world. They rejected untouchability and they rendered everyone equal. The people who opposed the Constitution had many objections, foremost among them was secularism- for instance, the fact that everyone alike got the

right to enter the temples. Laws were enforced for universal entry to the temple which the conservative order felt was an intrusion in their religion. The people who believed in inequality could never digest the principles of equality. The arguments extended by the Constitution Council in favour of the positive provisions of the Constitution so that there was no disparity in the society maintained that if we wished to establish equality, then we shall have to institute special provisions for the deprived and underprivileged communities. In view of this, provisions from para 14 to 18 were included in the Constitution. Ambedkar stated at that time that upliftment of the backward segment is not possible only through Constitutional equality, we shall also have to achieve social and economic upliftment.

It is imperative to contextualise the present grave problems of unemployment, economic crisis, poverty and education against the backdrop of the Preamble of the Constitution. Today, the youth just cram the Constitution to pass an examination, and in their active life later in future, they see and hear the word 'Constitution' as it is invoked in the bureaucratic circles. On the other hand, we should know and remember our Constitution just as we do our scriptures- the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Gita, the Qoran, the Bible or the Guru Granth Sahib. It contains the solution to all the struggles ever waged for social, economic and political problems. It reflects the wisdom of our ancestors which can take us a long way on our road to progress.

The nation does not run on the basis of Qoran, Bible or any other scripture. The country beats in the hearts of each one of us. The nation is run only and only on the basis of the Constitution, without which we cannot even imagine the nation. If we start running a nation on the basis of a scripture, then people who follow another scripture shall become strangers. Similarly, if a country starts running on the basis of caste or language, then people of other castes and languages

shall become strangers. Thus, a nation can never run on the basis of any scripture, caste or religion.

The best way to manage a nation is through the Constitution. The Indian Constitution is a compilation of values that have emerged from the various struggles in the history of human civilization. The Constitution, therefore, is the only real road for the advancement for the nation. What is the Constitution? The Constitution paves way for progress by bringing together the people of the nation. It resolves all conflicts that stand in the way of progress. This is what is a Constitution. If we are interested only in Bengali, Punjabi, Malayali, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian, then there are many ways, but if we are concerned about the nation, then the Constitution is the only solution.

There are several paragraphs in the Constitution which have been added from time to time. A paragraph is neither the first word, nor the last. Human civilization and culture have a long history. Even without these paragraphs, human civilization has continued to evolve. Tomorrow if these paragraphs are not there, the society will write new paragraphs for its survival. These paragraphs cannot delimit the lifestyle of any citizen of the society. However, these paragraphs are needed for the co-existence of several lifestyles. Accordingly, the Constitution is there to serve that purpose. The biggest problem in front of us today is that there is a conspiracy to override the Constitution. Hence, it is the foremost duty of the people of this country to conserve the Constitution and its values.

The opening line of the Preamble of the Constitution says "We, the people of India...". This is a beautiful line. The fundamental premise to manage the country is the Constitution and what does the Preamble of the Constitution say? "We, the people of India...". This creates a team spirit and this can also be considered to be the basic value of positive nationalism which is embedded in the Constitution. When

the Constitution opens with "We, the people of India...", then whether it is a fisherman born on a sea shore in Tamil Nadu or a family living in the hilly extreme frontier region of Jammu Kashmir, or a Naga family living in the dense jungles of Manipur or an Indian eking out a livelihood in the desert of Kutch- all these get assimilated in "We, the people of India...". In this way, the diversities of India fall into the unity and unanimity of India. People who look different, who speak different languages come to belong to one nation. People who profess different religions come to belong to one nation.

Indian Constitution treats rich people, poor people, people from different regions, languages or cultures as the people of India. Only the Constitution can take the country forward. Making a theocratic state does not ensure progress. It is a fact that there has been a lot of bloodshed in the world because of religion and thus, there never can be peace in the world if there is not peace among religions. We see that even within a religion, there are many conflicts within its various factions. Shia and Sunni clash with each other, Vaishnavites and Shaivites clash with each other. Protestants and Catholics have a long history of enmity. There have been many wars between religions or sects of religions.

This Constitution has been drafted by the people of India. We, the people of India, want to make India a sovereign country. A sovereign country is that country which can follow any foreign policy it wishes to. No country can direct it regarding which policy decisions to take. We can take our own decisions. We have full freedom and right to legislate any law. However, that laws should not violate any fundamental right. No foreign power will decree what relation we will maintain with any other nation.

In the present times, the sovereignty of the country is being compromised because today the policies which are made in the Parliament are all influenced by the superpowers. Today, the political and economic policy of India is under their diktat. This is the reason why we have sudden demonetisation in

India- this certainly is not the product of any so-called patriot's vision. Demonetisation was an assault on the overall sovereignty of India. We did not need demonetisation in India. This was imposed on us by the World Bank and IMF. There was a similar pressure on the earlier governments but they did not implement it, the alleged patriot however enforced it; and in this way, compromised the very first line of the Constitution's Preamble. We open doors of the defence ministry itself for foreign investment. Ministry which hitherto was impregnable, today in the name of investment, companies from any part of the world can become privy to the internal security arrangements of our country. Under the guise of patriotism, the first and foremost value of the Constitution is being compromised, which can jeopardize even the internal security of the country.

The ideal of socialism enshrined in the Constitution emphasizes that there should not be any concentration of wealth. The resources present in the country should be so distributed that they provide benefit to one and all. One has to say with a heavy heart that today 1 per cent of this country's population controls 70 per cent of its resources. This means that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. The inclusive and all-round development of the country is not possible on the model of nationalisation, and I can say it with even greater certitude, that it is absolutely not possible through the model of privatization. We need to implement on the ground strongly and forcefully a mixed economy for the holistic development of the country. This means that the private and governmental systems should both work together. The so-called nationalists of this country are not ready to adopt the socialist philosophy of the Constitution and thus are instrumental in making rich, richer and poor, poorer.

It is a very unfair prospect if one of the four children of a family is getting milk but the others are told to compete for it. The value of socialism that we have in our country cannot

make the Tatas, Birlas, Adanis and Ambanis and the slum dwellers equal to each other. But it can at least bring the guarantee of minimum economic equality to all the citizens. Over and above it they can exploit their talent. 80 per cent of the population of this country is living in adversity today, making ends meet for even two square meals with difficulty. There is no paucity of resources in India. I believe that in the country we will have to learn from the pros and cons of the various experiments that have taken place in the world to accomplish progress and prosperity for all. India can emerge to be a superpower only when we maximise its resources keeping in mind it's geographic, social and economic diversity. Positive nationalism wishes to extend the guarantee of an optimal use of talent along with the guarantee of equal opportunity so that a holistic development is possible.

The Constitution has the spirit of secularism inscribed in it. The countries which have proclaimed a particular religion as their national religion or state religion have failed. We have witnessed the examples of many Islamic Nations and Nepal, which at some point in time, was a Hindu Nation. A state becomes a theocracy if a particular religion becomes the state religion, and this does the most damage to that religion itself. When a country declares a religion to be its national or state religion, then it will interpret the religion to its own advantage, control it, define it and also organise it. This is the reason why it is felt that for the freedom of religions and for the efficiency of governments, the two should not interfere with each other unnecessarily.

India is the world's largest democracy. We elect our government every 5 years. There are several flaws in a democracy. Even today, political parties lack internal democracy. Democracy is dependent on elections. Attempts being made to conduct free and fair elections are mere eyewash today. Many things are prohibited during election campaigns but we all know that even the election commission turns a blind eye to the money and liquor which is so freely

distributed in the last days of the elections. Most politicians rave and rant about caste, religion and region during elections. They are worried about only the strategies adopted in the last three days before the elections. Elections are won by buying votes, creating communal discord and applying similar legerdemain. Today there exists an unholy trinity between elections, money and liquor. The very foundations of democracy are being eroded by these things. We need to remain vigilant and alert towards these dangers.

Our Constitution forcefully advocates for social, political and economic justice for all. We all know that in this country justice is done, is bought, and is delayed. In case of some injustice with an ordinary person, it is an impossible task for her or him to go up to the Supreme Court. The judiciary exists because people who have nothing and no one to listen to, should also be able to apply for justice. Only a handful, however, are able to approach the Supreme Court, because justice today has become a business. A rickshaw puller cannot even enter the gates of that Court where the fee of the lawyers runs into lakhs. If he succeeds in entering the Court somehow, will he be able to meet with the lawyer? It is an extremely tall order for that person to summon the courage to even think about something like this. We need to make a guarantee for each and every citizen of the country for true, total and timely justice. This is because even today in Courts, files are shifting from table to table for generations; there have been dates after dates without any solution. Every rule has an exception but in India, in the matter of justice, it is less a rule and more an exception.

Many people have neither money nor influence. One is able to avail of the services of a good lawyer and justice only on the basis of money and influence. The fact of the matter is that justice has gone missing from the very seat of justice. So much so that there came a time in the history of this judiciary that the judges themselves had to organise a Press Conference; they realised that people are not getting justice when they

themselves were denied justice. The foundations of this system go back to the British Raj. At that point in time, the judiciary did not intend to mete out justice to the people. On the contrary, the objective of the British judiciary was of ruling the Indian people and to curb the Indian revolutionaries.

As important issue is of the legalese used in the judiciary. It is mandatory that the legal proceedings are carried out only in the English language in the Supreme Court and High Courts of all the states. Many people have to face a lot of difficulty because they are not conversant in the English language. If a Bengali speaking person gets the facility of carrying out the legal proceedings in his or her native language, then it will become much easier for her or him to speak, read and understand. It is not such an impossible feat to accomplish, but in India you get justice only in English. There is no plausible connection between justice and the English language. There is an urgent need today to reform the legal system in India. The fundamentals of the Constitution have not just to be conserved but they also have to be developed in relevant ways.

Today the whole executive is in the grips of the bureaucracy. It interprets the Constitution in equivocal ways to use it to its own advantages. This has happened because we have not been able to prepare the bureaucracy to serve in India after independence; they still consider themselves to be the masters. Even today the mindset is that the Indians have to be controlled. Whenever there is an opportunity to pass orders or strictures, the bureaucracy asserts itself but when it is called upon for selfless service, it retires and retreats. There are innumerable notings on the files about this objection or that objection when it is a matter of social welfare. Corruption, however, opens all doors and files are approved in a split second. There are some files which shuttle from table to table for generations after generations. Now we have the INR 2000 currency note. Earlier even an INR 500 currency note was sufficient to tweak the rules.

We need to decimate those political parties which consider the Constitution to be voter manufacturing machine and means to gain power. They will not let even an inch of change to materialise if administrative reform is not effected in our country. The bureaucratic system does not work towards implementing the Constitution in letter and spirit but towards acting as an obstacle in its implementation. Only when this bureaucracy is reformed and when there is a political change will we be able to apply on the ground the core essence of the Constitution. India can certainly emerge as the greatest nation when with the right intention, we infuse the grassroots of this nation with the philosophy and quintessence of this Constitution that has been begotten by the Indian freedom struggle and movement.



Democracy, Media and Freedom of Expression

We are witness to all that is going on in the world today. No TV channel viewer is so naive to not understand what a particular TV channel is showing and why is it showing that. I will take you a little back in history before we discuss anything about the conditions prevailing in the present media. Generally, we say that there are four pillars of a democracy- legislature, executive, judiciary and journalism. As of now presently there two regimes in this world. One is democracy which hinges on the people, the majority and the masses. The process of being concerned about, to understand it and make attempts for people's participation in it is called democracy. On the other hand, there is an equally strong, or sometimes even stronger, regime- and that is the economic regime. It is very difficult to perceive when the four pillars of democracy crossover from raising their voices for the democracy to cashing on the economy. This is the reason when we try to understand the whole landscape, then we find that the economic regime runs parallel to the democratic regime.

Delving into the pages of history, we find that the common people were under the rule of monarchy. With the emergence of the modern age, monarchy converts to economy. The struggle between the people and the capital is an age old one. Therefore, if we fail to see or turn a blind eye to the role of money power and political economy in the role of the media today, then instead of being a discerning critic, we will just be like a political party, a political power, or a political leader who have vested interest in the media.

I firmly believe that whatever may be the form democracy in India today, whichever party may have come to power in India after independence, but since then to today, the country has been running not on a power system but on an economic system. Even after independence, power is economy's serf. This is because resources are needed to run a government and resources are needed to win elections and to come to power. The masses do not have these resources. The capitalists give these resources and thus, in the long run, the media favours the power and the capital; it is controlled by the power and the capital. There is no hope for a free and fair media which will speak for the masses till a solution is found to this. Thus, looking at the present state of the media, one can say that the idealisations about the spirit of democracy and the responsibility of the media written in the books are today limited to the books. Today there is an invisible order which controls not just India but the whole world about which no one dares to write in newspapers or in books. It is true that from even before the birth of journalism and the birth of the human civilizations in India or other places of the world, people have needed a medium to disseminate their ideas because a person cannot physically reach everywhere. Media was needed so that thoughts, ideas, knowledge and science could be spread far and wide. We see that the civilizations of the world have adopted various mediums of exchange of information from time to time.

India had mediums of information exchange even before the invention of paper or the publication of newspapers. Our saints, seers and teachers used to visit different places, deliver sermons, and engage in intellectual debates. All this led to the widespread dissemination of ideas. However, if we take a look at the monarchic rules thereafter, we see that bards were kept in courts whose work was to sing exaggerated paeans, victories and glories to the kings. They were hired to dilute the discontent of the masses against the king. People used to write on papyrus leaves or on copper plates in the

olden times. In the modern period, especially after the industrial revolution in England, new research was carried out to develop different technologies. This led to the development of new mediums. As a result of that, newspapers were printed on paper on a large scale with the invention of the printing press.

People did not have resources of different types at the time of all the huge people's revolutions in history- whether in Russia, China, France or America. Today we have the facility of telephones, trains, buses, but at that time people did not have the modern means of transportation and communication. By and large, the lives of the people were rooted in one location. Today we are able to know and meet people from different parts of the world. There was a time when most people travelled only by foot and they had no means of knowing the world beyond their peripatetic reach. They did not know their own country or their own region beyond the places they could access by foot.

The hero of the Russian Revolution- Lenin- achieved the massive feat of bringing the whole of Russia together. At that time Lenin said that 'newspaper is more effective than a canon'. This is true because weapons do not bring about a change or a revolution, even bodies do not- it is the ideas which do it. And the first medium of mass communication turned out to be the newspaper. The newspaper has played a very significant role in revolutions like the Russian, American and Chinese revolutions.

In the 1857 uprising in India, people made the chapati and the lotus their secret modes of communication in the absence of the newspapers. Not many newspapers existed at the time of the first war of Indian independence in 1857. Modern means of transportation also did not exist at that time. Ascetics and hermits used to travel across the country to circulate freedom related information. They used to traverse the whole country and reside at different places.

The revolutionaries of 1857 made the chapatis and the lotuses their media. Chapatis and lotuses were sent from one village to another. Offering the lotuses to the nawabs and the kings bore the proposal that if they accepted the lotus, they agreed to take part in the revolution. The nawab or the king who refused the lotus was considered to be a vassal of the British. The chapatis were for the masses. Each village was entrusted the duty of making the chapatis and sending them to the next village. All who partook of the chapatis were considered supporters of the revolution and those who did not were considered traitors. Now this village had the duty to make the chapatis and send them to the next village. The message of the mutiny was broadcast with this secret medium of the chapatis and the lotuses. And all of us know that these pioneers and preceptors succeeded in uprooting the foundations of the British company.

People worked in their own way in the manner of the media to awaken the consciousness of India. As the Indian freedom struggle progressed, the rate of publication of newspapers also increased. Presses were established. The non-violent philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi as well as the revolutionary philosophy of Shaheed Bhagat Singh were propagated through the means of newspapers and literature. History tells us that Shaheed Bhagat Singh used to pen a column in a newspaper titled *Kirti* under the pseudonym "Chhadm". The British were mortally scared of newspapers and magazines. Because a bullet shooting out of a pistol would kill one, but words issued in a newspaper would stir many. Thus, the British were always banning newspapers, confiscating their property and shutting down presses. In the eyes of the British, the owners and editors of newspapers and magazines were the biggest seditionists. Newspapers played a very important role in uniting the north and the south and the east and the west of India during the freedom struggle in India.

Like I said earlier the conflict between monarchy and democracy went on in its own way. The struggle for Indian Independence went on in its own way. In the decade after 1990, the world changed drastically. After the communist revolution, the best and the strongest power to raise people's voice was the government in Russia. America became the strongest capitalist government. The communist country of the USSR fell in the 1990s and the dominance of capitalism was established across the globe. The role that media has played has been of revolution and rebellion; of exposing the truth even in the face of power and pressure. We see the emergence of the modern media with the emergence of new technology. This media appears to be less interested in being the voice of the people and more in muffling that voice. Journalism before the 1990 served as the champion of people's rights. Journalism after the 1990 was purposely fashioned to compromise those rights.

A system is deliberately created which can simply not be sustained by the masses. And it is foolhardy to expect such a system to work for the masses. This empire of the electronic media which is financed by the corporate houses can never be expected to serve the interests of the common people. This is because a large capital goes into its organisation. The corporate houses pump this capital and thus wield a lot of influence and power. They are compelled to toe the line of the people only in the one eventuality when their credibility stands questioned. This is because every powerful person takes to posturing whenever its credibility is threatened. We find the media today in the same situation. Corporate houses immediately show the door to any journalist whose conscience start acting up after years of tutelage and if she or he gathers the courage to speak the truth.

The third point that we have today is the social media. It offers a new medium of expression. You can write what you like on these platforms. There are many positive aspects of the social media but we need to understand its negative aspects

also carefully. The more I think and analyse about it, I reach the conclusion that while the electronic media compels us to think, the social media has started making us indifferent. The social media is sedating and controlling our minds.

The one thing that is the most powerful tool in weeding out the tyrannies of this world is the human mind. No king, tycoon or regime has been able to enslave the human mind in any part of the world. Some or the other human mind always revolts. It is the human mind which steers the body from one direction into another. Apart from holding the capital, the other mischief that the electronic media has started doing, is of disabling our capacity to think. And I feel that the social media is very dangerous in this context. Whatever is your grievance or your anguish- vent it on the social media- and that's it. Not just in India but in the entire world, social media has created an ideational vacuum which has depleted the prowess to think of communities and societies. Such a scenario can be devastating for societies, states and nations. Thus, we will have to conserve those minds which still think about this world and humanity. The numbing of the mind also cripples the body. That is why I submit to you that save the mind if you wish to save the democracy and the welfare of the people. We must accept that social media is a two-edged sword and we should use it with a lot of vigilance so that it becomes a boon and not a bane for the society.

We are not pitted against the media, the legislature, the executive or the judiciary. There exists either a democratic order or an economic order- we protest against the injustice ingrained in the economic order. Within this scope are all the media, which can be positive as well as negative. For example, if the British shot from their pistol, our revolutionaries were martyred. But if the same pistol was used by the revolutionaries, it exterminated the enemies of the nation. Thus, this system is a medium. It can work for the common people and it can work for the businessmen. The real question is who holds more power. Many people ask today what can

be done about the existing state of the media. My response is that let us preserve our minds. After a whole day of tweeting on Twitter, hyphenating on Facebook and listening to the noise and din of the TV channels, we will have to spare an hour or a half to think about ourselves, the humanity and the society. The health of the mind is the only way to save the media and the nation and to build a new order. The whole system will collapse if the human mind will dissipate because the system does not engender human beings but human beings can engender any system. Only when the mind will continue to function, can we think of better media and a better nation.

Revolutions do not depend on electronic media, print media or social media. In the first war of Indian independence in 1857, the revolutionaries did not have any mobile, telephone, bus, train, newspaper, electronic media or Facebook-Twitter type social media. But even then, we waged and won a fight for truth. It is imperative to warn the media about the direction it is taking but it is not heeding those warnings because it is controlled by capitalists and these capitalists do not care for the masses. Capitalism stands on the exploitation of the masses. We will have to respect those minds which love this country, this world, this humanity. We shall have to ponder about some new way out. We have to create an alternative media whose foundations and strength are exclusively in the masses.

Even the best of the people shall be evicted the day they will cross the line if the media does not stand on its own. The alternative politics towards which the people of this country are heading makes us think about the need for an alternative medium, but this can happen only when we have an alive and kicking mind.

Intellectual servility is worse than economic servility and physical servility. There is no hope of redemption for a society which is mentally bonded. Despite all doors being closed, if one mind decides that it will break free, no storm can change its course. One mind, one person has the potential to divert

thunder and lightning- freedom of the mind, therefore, is quintessential to the establishment of alternative media.

I request all of you to take stock of the health and freedom of your minds if you wish to carry forward the people's struggle for justice and rights in the Indian democracy. There will be no ray of light if the mind becomes subservient. We can embark on a new road; we can try and build a new India even if the media is in chains. I am sure that no one till now has been able to rule over the minds of one and all. So hopefully, let the whole media system do the dance of death- it is from within this dirge- a new tune will be sung, a new sun will rise, a new media will emerge, a new human will be born and a new India will be built.



Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh

The Indian freedom struggle has been unique in the history of struggles against imperialist powers in the world. Its uniqueness is reflected in the freedom warriors fighting on various fronts who despite being ideologically different, kept up a united struggle for India's independence and betterment. Among these, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh are the most revered names. The three personalities had their own ideologies, methods and struggles but what tied them in the common thread of unity was the passion for India's independence and for building a strong nation and citizens. Today we tend to present them as opponents of each other and we very shrewdly gloss over the facts that bound them together. Here we attempt to bring to light the hidden facts to understand the legacy of the Indian freedom struggle fully and properly.

Let us first talk about Mahatma Gandhi and Shaheed Bhagat Singh. There were two main points of difference between the two. The first point of difference was about the methods to be employed in the freedom struggle. Mahatma Gandhi was a votary of non-violence. His methods included fasting, peaceful processions and bringing people together in constructive pursuits. Shaheed Bhagat Singh and his revolutionary friends believed that explosions are needed to make impact on deaf ears. He believed that the British could be routed through radical revolutionary methods. The second point of difference was regarding the demand for Swaraj. When Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress were demanding Dominion status of the British, Shaheed Bhagat Singh and his

friends where demanding total independence or Poorna Swaraj. A third point of difference arose in their supporters when Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev where executed. Supporters said that had Mahatma Gandhi so wished, their execution could have been deferred.

Let's take a look at the first point of difference. We all know that our opinions change with time. This happened with Mahatma Gandhi, with Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Dr. Ambedkar; in fact, this happens in all of us. Shaheed Bhagat Singh questioned the violent activities of the revolutionaries when he was in jail. He wrote in his famous essay 'Why I am an atheist', "The need to study echoed in the lanes and by-lanes of my heart. Study to be able to counter the arguments given by the opponents. Study to defend your opinion and to offer counter-opinion. I started studying. This wonderfully refined my erstwhile thoughts and beliefs. Sombre thoughts replaced the romance of adopting violent methods which was painfully prevalent in my old friends. Realism became our foundation. Violence can be justified only when it is the last resort in extreme circumstances. Non-violence should be the non-negotiable principle of all people's movements". This belief that "non- violence should be the non-negotiable principle of all people's movements" is basically a Gandhian thought, but Shaheed Bhagat Singh is endorsing the statement. Despite all ideological differences on this point, Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Mahatma Gandhi agree here; both support non-violence. To say that Mahatma Gandhi supported non-violence while Shaheed Bhagat Singh supported violence- this is, therefore, a partial and erroneous view. The truth is that, after a while, Shaheed Bhagat Singh also understood the importance of Gandhian non-violence.

There is another point here. Fasting unto death was an important weapon in the Gandhian non-violent struggle. The revolutionary faction did not quite support this method but it is interesting to note that Shaheed Bhagat Singh and his friends went on the longest fast in the history of the Indian

freedom struggle to demand their rights in the jail. This incident once again compels us to think that not only did Mahatma Gandhi and Shaheed Bhagat Singh have common ends, but the means they adopted towards the achievement of those ends were also alike.

The second point of difference was regarding the demand for Poorna Swaraj and dominion status. Initially Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress were demanding dominion status from the British whereas Shaheed Bhagat Singh and his revolutionary friends were demanding Poorna Swaraj. The Congress was influenced by the revolutionaries and in the 1921 Lahore session of the Congress under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru, a resolution demanding for Poorna Swaraj was passed. Gandhiji also supported the demand for Poorna Swaraj by violating salt laws at Dandi. Here we cannot negate the influence of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and his revolutionary friends on Mahatma Gandhi.

Now we come to the third point that prevailed among the supporters in which it was said that had Mahatma Gandhi tried, then Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev could have been saved from execution. This is entirely a misconception, the proof of which is that letter that Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Viceroy Irwin. He writes that "it is imperative to file a last appeal in the interest of peace. Even though you have told me clearly that there is no scope for any concession in the matter of the death sentence of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and the other two persons, yet when I met Dr. Sapru yesterday, he told me that you were considering some solution. If there is even the slightest possibility of reconsideration, then I appeal to you to either revoke the sentence or at least delay it till further deliberation. I shall visit you if I need to. Remember that compassion never fails." Even though Mahatma Gandhi's attempts to save Shaheed Bhagat Singh proved to be in vain, yet they were significant in bringing the two closer.

Now let us talk about Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar. The point of contention between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar was regarding their understanding of the caste system. There was a time when Mahatma Gandhi upheld that the varna system was the backbone of the Hindu religion. To eradicate the varna system meant to destroy the Hindu religion. Slowly and gradually, there was change in Mahatma Gandhi's thinking and he became an arch-opponent of untouchability and caste-based discrimination. Opposition to untouchability and caste-based discrimination also became integral to his creative pursuits. He termed untouchables Harijan. He appealed to the so-called high caste people to observe humane and dignified behaviour towards Harijans.

Dr. Ambedkar's understanding of caste was different from that of Mahatma Gandhi. He considered untouchability to be a product of the caste system. He believed that untouchability and caste-based discrimination cannot be eradicated without eradicating the caste system. In his book *The Annihilation of Caste*, he advocated for inter-caste marriages. He also emphasized the need to expunge those sections of Hindu scriptures which enforced the caste system. There was a time when Mahatma Gandhi severely disagreed with these methods of eradication of caste.

Mahatma Gandhi writes at a place that if there is any discrepancy between opinions expressed by him at two different places, then the latter opinion may be given precedence. Mahatma Gandhi adopted new knowledge and new ideas easily. This is the reason why Mahatma Gandhi opposed inter-caste marriages in his earlier days but later he announced that he will not attend any marriage in which either the bride or the groom was not a dalit. Not just this, he even organised such marriages in his Ashram. He writes on 7 July 1946 in *Harijan*, " If I could have my way, I would advise all high caste girls who come in my contact to choose a Harijan youth of good character as their husband". Here Mahatma Gandhi is aligned with Dr. Ambedkar, legitimising

his ways of caste eradication. Despite differences of opinion, Dr. Ambedkar also considered Mahatma Gandhi's presence in the struggle for independence indispensable. Mahatma Gandhi also respected Dr. Ambedkar's knowledge and passion to uplift the nation. This is the reason why he recommended Dr. Ambedkar's name to Jawaharlal Nehru to be included in the Constitution Council and also to appoint Dr. Ambedkar the first law minister of the country.

Let us try to evaluate the relationship between Dr. Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh. Shaheed Bhagat Singh was influenced by the revolutionary ideology while Dr. Ambedkar had faith in democracy, constitution and parliamentary procedures. Despite these differences, we see many similarities in their conduct. Both raised their voice for the welfare of the poor, the needy and the exploited of this country. Dr. Ambedkar considered the caste system and untouchability as the biggest shame of this country. Shaheed Bhagat Singh did not differ from Dr. Ambedkar on this issue. In his essay, 'The Problem of Untouchability', Shaheed Bhagat Singh writes, "We need to decide, first and foremost, that all human beings are equal and no one bears any stigma from birth or from division of labour. It is absurd to say that just because a human being is born in a poor sweeper's family, so he will remain a scavenger throughout his life and will be denied all avenues of progress. Our ancestors, the Aryans, have been very unjust towards them by ostracising them as low caste and consigning them to menial labour. At the same time, the Aryans were scared of a possible rebellion. By the propaganda of attributing the low caste status to the consequences of their sins in the previous life, they tried to contain the possibility of any rebellion. So, what can be done? You can only live your life in silence. Through this sermon of patience, these people were stifled for a long time. However, this was a heinous crime. They destroyed the humanity of the human beings. They destroyed the confidence and self-esteem of human beings. They unleashed a lot of repression

and inequity. Today is the time for the penance and retribution of all of this". Only a very few people like Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Dr. Ambedkar display this progressive thinking on the matter of caste.

The concerns of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Dr. Ambedkar were not limited to attainment of freedom but they went beyond. They did not want the crimes, atrocities and discriminations of the British period to repeat in independent India. In Shaheed Bhagat Singh's words, "I do not wish for an India in which the White British are replaced by the Brown British of India". Here we see that Shaheed Bhagat Singh is a visionary who envisages the creation of a new order along with the termination of the older one. A similar concern was voiced in the last meeting of the Constitution Council by Dr. Ambedkar where he said that, "We shall be entering into an age of paradox on 26 January 1950. On the one hand, there shall be political equality but on the other, the inequality in social and economic life shall remain. In politics we will practice the principle of 'one person one vote' but in social and economic life, we will refrain from accepting the equal rights of all people. Till when will this paradox continue? Till when will we continue to be evasive in accepting the social and economic equality. Our democracy shall continue to suffer if we keep on denying this equality for a very long time. We shall have to end this paradox as early as possible, otherwise the victims of inequality will rebel and tear apart the edifice of democracy".

Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh were mindful of creating an alternative structure alongside of the change in the extant structure. We can make this nation a heaven on earth by following Mahatma Gandhi's principles of truth and non-violence, compassion and brotherhood. In the words of Dr. Ambedkar, in the absence of social and economic equality in the country, only political equality cannot lead to progress. And lastly in the words of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, we may have gained freedom from

the White British but we still need to be free from the Brown British of this country.

In the final analysis we can state that Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh may have differences of opinion, yet all three were instrumental in very significant ways in achieving Indian independence and making India a better nation. All three envisaged a strong and beautiful India in which all would live with love and amity, all had equal rights and all were free from oppression and exploitation.

Even today many people extract the views expressed by Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh from time to time out of context in such a way that it appears that instead of fighting for Indian independence and the creation of a new India, they were busy fighting amongst themselves. But this is not true at all. There were two distinct trends that existed during the British rule- one trend comprised of the Indians who championed a feudal, casteist and communal ideology along with the flattery, praise and glorification of the British. This trend was followed by the kings, nawabs, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS. On the other hand, there was the second trend. It comprised of people who wished to build new and free India on the modern principles of equity, freedom and fraternity. The heroes of this trend included Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh.



Role of Youth in Nation Building

The two important parts of our deliberation on the participation of youth in nation building, of course, are one, nation building and two, youth. Youth is as old as humanity. The concept of nation building has appeared after the emergence of the nation.

The process of nation building refers to the collective efforts to steer the nation in the direction of progress by people belonging to diverse religions, castes, gender, regions, states, languages, origins, history and cultures. It includes accepting each other by forgiving conflicts, differences and injustices of the past. It means respecting the symbols, values and customs and traditions of each other. Nation building alludes to protecting the values of the constitution, respecting the law and order of the country and making concerted and dedicated effort for improving the educational, medical and economic facilities of the country.

We cannot confine the youth within any barriers, just the way we cannot confine the air into any container. We feel air by its movement and not by its stillness; in the same way the identity of the youth is its throbbing energy and vigour. An electron continuously revolves around the nucleus. Due to this, it not only saves its own existence, but the entire nuclear configuration. When atoms survive, so do the molecules. And in this way, all matter in this world survives. The whole universe owes its existence to the motion of that minuscule electron which is invisible to the naked eye. Imagine there shall be neither day nor night if the earth stops rotating on its axis. The earth will annihilate if it stops revolving around the sun. And in this manner one day the entire universe will

collapse. The prime reason for this universe's existence is motion. The youth have maximum energy, and maximum vitality. If stasis descends on the youth, that will not only destroy the youth but also arrest the building of the nation. The youth must take part in all spheres of nation building. They shall become like a river that has no flow in which unwanted algae, frogs and germs proliferate.

The youth is like a seed. If the seed is of good quality, a flourishing tree will grow from it. This tree shall bear luscious fruit. If the seed is of a poor quality, then the tree growing from it and the fruit growing on that tree shall also be inferior. The youth are the inheritors of the nation. They should be morally, spiritually, socially, economically and politically sound. Only then the nation will be morally, spiritually, socially, economically and politically strong.

The youth are like a bridge that learns and seeks advice from the earlier generations and provides guidance to the later generations. The youth have no religious, geographical, linguistic, regional and caste and gender-based limitations. The students of the whole country take to the roads to protest any injustice that may have befallen a student of the University of Delhi. They do not consider the caste, gender, state, region or language of the afflicted student. In the same way, students of the whole country launch a stir to ensure justice for a student victimised in Hyderabad University. The youth bridge the religious, casteist, gender, regional and linguistic divides.

We think of the youth first and foremost whenever we talk about nation building. However, it is sad to see that the energy that resides in the youth is today scattered and stagnant. It is divided into positive and negative types. Their minds are being filled with negativity. The project of nation building cannot accelerate when the youth have a negative mindset. A positive energy is necessary for nation building. Youth is capable of dismantling the rotten systems of the society and of building afresh thereafter.

When Swami Vivekananda was born, the youth of India was bonded by conservatism that it was not possible to pave way for a new India without breaking that bondage. People were confined within their caste boundaries. The concept and concern for the nation was extremely feeble. Ramkrishna Paramhans delved into the depths of the Hindu religion. He delved into the depths of many other religions of the world. He found that all religions have one undeniable ultimate truth- the truth of humanity- which cannot be discovered without thoroughly examining all religions. Ramkrishna Paramhans ignited the light of knowledge in Swami Vivekananda. This knowledge invigorated Swami Vivekananda who dared to break free of old customs and traditions and put together a new construct of the nation. Swami Vivekananda was not the only delegate in the Religion Congress of Chicago; there were many other scholars and experts from India and abroad. But it was Swami Vivekanand who could put forth with confidence that till the shackles of religion are removed, a new India cannot emerge. Swami Vivekanand invoked this knowledge and said that, " I believe in my country, especially the youth of my country. All powers reside in you. You can do anything and everything. Have faith in that; do not think that you are weak. Stand up and express the divinity that dwells in you. Thus, arise; awake and do not stop tell your aim has been achieved".

Our country was in the throes of British slavery. The youth stepped outside and they shattered these clutches. Shaheed Bhagat Singh writes in his diary from the jail that the youth shall have to participate in systemic change. I wish to share with you that we had two traditions- the first one has tried to reform from within the system and the second one has tried to break that system which had become obsolete, detrimental and hopeless. Bhagat Singh endorses the latter tradition- a healthy nation will not grow till we cleanse the sick system.

Vivekananda is synonymous with reformation by undoing all fossilized institutions. Bhagat Singh is synonymous with cutting through the clutter of obscurantist and obsequious institutions that stood in the way of a new India. Therefore, I call upon you to transcend all constraints to shoulder the responsibility of reconstructing India if you truly love your country.

We know that a foundation has to be laid before commencing any construction. We have to remove all the redundant things before construction. This only the youth can do. Human history also chronicles that the youth has been successful in doing that. The youth was instrumental in the French, Russian, Chinese and American revolutions. We find this clearly mentioned in history. The youth has also made a very sizeable contribution in the freedom struggles of the various nations of the world.

It becomes evident from various instances in history that the youth has done away with chains of servitude again and again. The youth has liberated the world from the stereotypes which have developed in the name of religion, caste, gender, state, region, language, origin, history and culture. This is because there is a dynamism in the youth which is as passionate as devotion and sacrifice. This is the fruit of its courage, thinking and vitality. But I believe that today the youth of India have to bear a twin responsibility. They not only have to weed out the older systems but simultaneously they also have to establish alternative systems in their place. The youth has traditionally given primacy to the mission of eradication, but it will have to give equal importance to reconstruction as well. This is because if reconstruction does not happen, then the vicious and the cunning re-infiltrate the system and the energy of the youth is laid waste. In India we have seen that the country got independence after a long history of sacrifice. The sacrifices of the youth of the country freed the country from British slavery. But the reconstruction project remained incomplete. This led to the resurfacing of the older order. Despite the country

attaining freedom in 1947, British systems continued. Similarly, despite the 1975 emergency being shredded to tatters, the older system recurred.

We observe a slowdown in the development of the country today. We have witnessed such slowdowns in India earlier as well. The 1975 emergency by Indira Gandhi led to one such slowdown. The youth resisted the atrocities of the emergency under the leadership of Jai Prakash Narayan. But then the old hats captured power once again. Today our country is passing through the same phase. A renewed attempt was made in the country after the Anna Hazare revolution. The youth of the country raised the movement impervious to rain, storm, heat, cold, sun or shade. The attempt was towards change but once again the status quo has prevailed. These reversals which have been going on- the return of the old order after a whiff of a revolution- but this will not happen anymore. Once again, this country is eyeing change. We have launched a fresh assault to uproot the corrupt system and the rotten structures. And this fight shall continue till we are able to create the new India of Shaheed Bhagat Singh's dreams.

I wish to tell you that the system that prevails in the country today has continued to prevail despite many elections and many parties. The British created a mentality to keep the nation subjugated and to exploit the people of this country. We have not been able to change this mentality even after so many years of independence. Governments and parties came and went, power changed hands, new leaders emerged but the same mentality of serfdom continued. Today, the biggest responsibility that the youth is expected to shoulder is to find courage. Step out of the old rut, and create a new league- only then resurgence will happen. Today reformation in the Indian context means knocking down the traditional ways and instilling them with new momentum. I submit to the young men and women of the country that you shall have to do away with your internal comfort zone as well for this.

The youth is considered the harbinger of change because it does not shy away from sacrifices. We are all attached to several things in this life. It is not easy to quit that which we become used to in life. But a young person is able to do this because his or her attachments are relatively few. The youth sacrifices to bring change but when there are affections and attachments, then sacrifice is a difficult proposition. The youth have the capability for sacrifice because their attachments are neither so long nor deep. Our expectations to hoard and receive grow with age. Thus, it is not just this country, but the whole world which considers the youth as precursors of change.

Today a negative energy broods over our minds and hearts- it has settled on our society. It has settled in our religion. It has settled in our nation. We will have to sharpen our introspection. Swami Vivekananda calls upon the youth of the nation to awaken its inner voice while Shaheed Bhagat Singh calls upon them to shatter the diseased systems of the society. Self-reflection produces a motivation and motivation can overcome the obstacles that dog the birth of the new nation. Nature has given you all the powers of creation.

Very few nations of this world are blessed with as many rivers as India has. No other country has the extent of fertile land that India has. No other nation of the world possesses the natural resources of the type that our country has. No other country of the world sees as many seasons as India does. And no other country in the world has the young blood that India has. The economies and infrastructure of many countries of the world are running on the steam of the sweat and slog of the sons and daughters of our country. The aptitude which has been given to the Indian mind by nature is one of a kind in this whole world. The sons and daughters of India have made a significant contribution to the development of most countries of this world. There is nothing that we do not have. I want to emphasize, however, there are many propagators and carriers of the negativity which

has penetrated us over the ages, but today there are hardly any takers of the positivity which was generated from Buddha to Kabir, Vivekananda to Bhagat Singh. In such a scenario, the only way to awaken the nation is to awaken your inner strength. Shaheed Bhagat Singh was relevant yesterday, is relevant today and shall remain relevant tomorrow. He said, "The fight will continue till the exploitation of man by man and of nation by nation is ended. It makes no difference whether the oppressor is the White British for the Brown Indian".

The youth dreams and makes new discoveries to fulfil those dreams. We need to train the youth appropriately. We need to further develop their capability and talent. Whenever the Indian youth has got the opportunity to show their merit and skill, they have come out with flying colours. The whole world began to take spirituality seriously when Swami Vivekananda got the opportunity to speak in the Religion Congress organised in Chicago. The country began to look at the game of tennis with a new interest when Sania Mirza got an opportunity to play tennis. Kalpana Chawla soared to new heights in the universe when given an opportunity. The world got innumerable new mathematical equations when Srinivasan Ramanujan got this opportunity. Sons and daughters of India have excelled at the helm of several major international IT companies. Young players have earned gold, silver and bronze medals in Olympic games for the country. The youth of our country have outshined everyone in all spheres like cinema, music, arts, literature, industry, technology, science, medicine, commerce, sports, agriculture, spirituality and social work.

It is not just India but the whole world which is passing through a phase of negativity. I assert with full responsibility that the youth in India shall have to come forward. They will have to catalyse their beautiful mind. They will have to fight their laid-back attitude. Your faces will beam with a different glow the day you overpower your despair. You will experience a different self-confidence. You will vibrate with

a different energy and this positive energy will resonate throughout the nation. This resonance will pave way for a renaissance that will not only toss out the outmoded systems but also herald the newer ones. This country will not evolve till its youth is filled with the passion to demolish and the passion to build anew. The youth will have to perform both the duties of destruction and creation. I believe that this is the key to the ascent of the Indian nation. India was the first one to pray for humanity- "May everybody be happy, may everybody be free from disease, may everybody have luck, may none fall on evil days". Perhaps we will be able to bring to life this aspiration of India. I reiterate that the participation of youth is the most important factor in rebuilding this nation with new vim and new conviction. I believe that if this new energy is channelled in the right direction, then gateways to the reformation and reconstruction of India will open, gateways to a new world and a new humanity will open.



Mission: *Desh Ki Baat*

Today we need to think about all those questions which await an answer even after so many years of independence and for which our ancestors laid down their lives. We got food even when we were slaves. We got sleep even when we were slaves. We got married even when we were slaves. But our ancestors could not tolerate the slavery. Millions of people sacrificed their lives for the independence of India. They sacrificed all that they had. They dedicated their whole life, and they renounced everything. India attained independence because of this sacrifice, penance and selflessness.

We are compelled to ask the question as to what we have done in all these years after independence because the lives of labourers and farmers have deteriorated and students with degrees are running from pillar to post for jobs. What can be the path of liberation for women who continue to be treated as second grade citizens after so many years of independence. Why are the people whose toil and sweat goes into the making of this nation in such an appalling condition? There will be no grain to eat if peasants and farmers do not till the field. The dazzle of progress which is seen in the world cannot by itself produce resources if workers do not work in the factories of the country. But why are the lives of the workers who produce the resources so hapless, and oppressed.

I agree that India has made several strides towards progress after independence but along with positive aspects, the journey of progress has also resulted in amassing a plethora of negative aspects. Today the whole nation, especially the youth, wants a resolution of those problems and is wandering desperately in quest of the solutions. It is struggling frantically

for the solutions. It is delving into the pages of history and grappling with the challenges of the future.

By way of offering a solution to these problems, it is being posited that if the country is converted to a Hindu nation, then all the problems will be settled. But can the Hindu nationalism or the negative nationalism solve the problem of unemployment of this country? Can the negative nationalism ameliorate the crisis of the students of India? Can negative nationalism redress the problems of the farmers? Can the negative nationalism help the dalits, tribals and the other backward classes? Can it assuage their humiliation? Can the negative nationalism make India a developed, prosperous and thriving nation? No, it cannot.

We need positive nationalism to make India a developed, prosperous and thriving nation. Many people may wonder that nationalism is nationalism- how can it be positive or negative? We need to deliberate thoughtfully over this. A human being is a human being but it tends to think both positively and negatively. The same way a thought may be positive or negative or a deed may be positive or negative. The consequences of that deed may turn out to be good or bad. In the same way, the culmination of nationalism can be negative or it can be positive.

The sons and daughters of this country are bothered neither about positive nationalism nor negative nationalism. When we fall sick, all that we need is a cure. If that cure is in Ayurveda, then we praise Ayurveda; if that cure is in allopathy, we praise allopathy. If an Unani medicine works, then we take that; if a homeopathic medicine works, then we take that as well. What we need is a remedy. The youth of the country also need a remedy.

Negative nationalism is claiming to provide a solution by contending that all the woes of the country will come to an end if this nation becomes a Hindu nation. What is Hindu nationalism? What is negative nationalism? Two different

types of nationalism were born in the world under two different sets of circumstances, viz. negative nationalism and positive nationalism.

Perhaps people will ponder how can we segregate negative nationalism from positive nationalism? The aim of negative nationalism is to establish dominance over others while the aim of positive nationalism is to fight for rights and justice. Negative nationalism operates to enslave others while positive nationalism strives for freedom. Negative nationalism proceeds to subjugate other nations when it has subjugated the people, societies and communities of the nation; in the process of this subjugation the world has had to face two world wars and genocides. Positive nationalism stands up for justice, rights, freedom and to establish humanity and fraternity in the world. Whenever we see that people are coming together to ensure justice, then that is positive nationalism. If people come together for collaboration and participation, then that is positive nationalism. If people are fighting for freedom, you can take it to be positive nationalism. If people are struggling for humanity, fraternity and equality, you can take that to be positive nationalism. On the other hand, if people are exerting to gain control over each other, then it is negative nationalism. If they are exerting to put down people or put them in chains of slavery, it is negative nationalism. If they are exerting to exploit or rob another country, it is negative nationalism.

Can negative nationalism solve any problems in the future? We need to flip through the pages of history to answer this question. According to the hypothesis of negative nationalism, a nation can become strong, move forward or unite to solve its problems, only when there is a single religion, a single language and a single race. Negative nationalism says that the heart should rule the mind. It depends on superstitions. Positive nationalism mandates that we should use the mind, the heart and the senses to understand and deliberate, and only then believe in anything.

I would like to quote two instances of negative nationalism from the history of the world. The first instance is observed in Germany where the leadership of Hitler was the epitome of the type of negative nationalism perfected there on the basis of one race, one sect and one religion. What was the consequence of that? First, millions of people were massacred in Germany. Blood was spilt of the sons and daughters of that country. Secondly, Germany got divided into two parts and thirdly, the hero who promised a great Germany was forced to commit suicide. The society is also poisoned when we poison our politics with negativity and the same negativity permeates in the individual self as well. Negativity can never lead to progress. It has destroyed earlier; it is destroying today and tomorrow also it shall be destructive. This is what we learn from the history of Germany.

The second instance of negative nationalism is witnessed in the partition of India after the freedom struggle of 1947 in which the principle of two nations is propagated that stated that people of two different religious cannot together build a nation. So, we need to form two separate nations if we wish to protect their interests. The country was divided in this way. 15 August 1947 is the day when the country attained freedom and it is also the day on which the country was divided. A new nation of Pakistan was cut out from India with the claim that this will pave way for the progress of one and all, guarantee of education for one and all and employment for one and all.

We all know the three consequences of forming this Islamic nation of Pakistan. Millions of people were killed in Pakistan in terror attacks. Pakistan was further divided into Pakistan and Bangladesh despite people following the same religion living in both the nations. Most leaders of Pakistan faced the cruel destiny of murder or suicide.

In the theocratic state of Pakistan, the citizens did not enjoy the guarantee of education, the guaranty of livelihood and the freedom of women. Pakistan could not emerge as a

developed and united nation and eventually faced fragmentation. Its fate was not very different from the fate of Germany. When the foundations of negative nationalism could not keep Pakistan or Germany intact, then how can they be of any use in India?

Nations did not remain united on the basis of religion, race or language in the past, nor can they remain united now. Theocratic states could not touch the heights of progress in the past, nor can they approach those heights now. I request all those young men and women to coolly and calmly evaluate and understand the histories of Germany and Pakistan who are under the misconception that by forming the nation on the basis of religion, they shall be able to access progress, prosperity and employment and India will emerge as the greatest nation in the world.

The other claim which the proponents of negative nationalism make is that they are the guardians of Indian civilization and culture. We need to scrutinize this claim deeply today. The youth of this country are participating in this mega-drive of negative nationalism under the illusion that even though the country may not progress, still at least our religion, society, culture and civilization shall be preserved. These young men and women need to glance through the pages of Indian history to understand what really is Indian civilization and culture.

Isn't the culture and tradition of the Indus valley civilization a part of the Indian culture? The culture and tradition that developed during the Vedic age, is that not a part of Indian civilization? The culture and tradition of the Jain period, is that not a part of Indian civilization? The culture that developed in the Buddhist period, isn't that a part of the Indian civilization? The bhakti movement in India of Kabir, Nanak, Jayasi, Dadu and Meera, is that not a part of the Indian civilization? The culture and tradition that developed between 1757 and 1947 during longest freedom struggle in the world, is that not a part of the Indian civilization? If we delete these

parts from the chronicles of Indian history, then the remaining portion of Indian civilization and culture can never be assumed to form the essence of the Indian history, nor can it be depended upon to safeguard Indian future.

Today it is being asserted that if you are a nationalist, then you will have to speak one language, follow one religion, adopt one culture and embrace one ideology and if your thinking is different, then you are a traitor. What has been our tradition? The Vedas are the oldest scriptures of India? India does not have just one Veda; India has the Rg Veda, the Saam Veda, the Atharva Veda and the Yjur Veda. The four Vedas would not have developed had India had a tradition of a singular thought process. India has the nine oldest schools of philosophy. These nine schools of philosophy were propounded by different saints and different scholars in India. If India has the atheist philosophy like the Charvaka philosophy, then it also has the theistic philosophy like the Vedanta philosophy. India is home to the Charvaka philosophy, it is also home to the Jain philosophy, the Buddhist philosophy, the Sankhya philosophy, the Yog philosophy, the Vaisheshik philosophy, the Mimansa philosophy and the Nyaya philosophy. Apart from this, even our Puranas are eighteen in number. What do the four Vedas, the nine schools of philosophy and the eighteen Puranas of India tell us? They tell us that our civilization and culture always had the freedom to engage in philosophies, thoughts, understandings and dialogues according to individual knowledge, wisdom and practice. Indian culture is the tradition of the four Vedas; Indian culture is the tradition of eighteen Puranas, Indian culture is the tradition of nine philosophies.

From the chronicles of Indian history, some people say that India was a golden bird once upon a time. India has contributed the knowledge of the digit '0' to mathematics. All this happened in the period when we had the freedom to think, understand and converse in plural ways. There existed

a different scenario before the emergence of Manusmriti. Our talents were eclipsed as we went on becoming orthodox according to Manusmriti. This paved the way for our slavery and it thwarted our road to progress. This is the reason I want to impress upon all the young men and women that when they think about Indian civilization and culture, they must see that we can build a new India only by conserving the positive aspects of this composite culture. India can never progress on the steam of negative thoughts and superstitions.

We need science as well as spirituality. While we need spirituality for the development and positive thinking of an individual, we need science and technology for the development of the nation. Neither can a person develop, nor can a nation, by following the path of orthodoxy and ritualism. Neither can Indians become strong, nor can the Indian nation. Therefore, if we need to advance the Indian civilization and culture, then we will have to revive the tradition from Buddha to Vivekanand and from Kabir to Bhagat Singh. I say this with responsibility that this tradition from Buddha to Vivekananda and from Kabir to Bhagat Singh is the glorious Indian tradition. This tradition is based on the greatest virtues of Indian civilization and culture; sacrifice renunciation and penance.

An individual, a society or a nation can progress only by distilling the positive aspects of its history. This is what history has taught us and this is what our future rests on. Therefore, I tell all you youngsters, that we have to consolidate the positive aspects of the Indian civilization and culture if we want to make a positive difference to our nation. We need to steer clear of the negative aspects.

You will be able to move forward when you divest yourself of your negative thoughts and vices. You will move forward only when you foster your positive energy. Destruction will ensue if you will only hold onto your negative energy. You will find progress, prosperity and happiness when you imbibe

and radiate positive energy. Negative nationalism is another name for ticking the negative rubrics of history. Positive nationalism is ticking all the positive rubrics of the traditions, faiths and cultures that instill in us a positive energy.

The third claim of the proponents of negative nationalism and Hindu nationalism is that they are the biggest patriots. We need to understand this claim. Exponents of Hindu nationalism were born during the Indian freedom struggle; they also formed their organisations. I wish to tell you that millions of people sacrificed their lives for independence of India in 1857. Those people were not influenced by the creed of Hindu nationalism. Kartar Singh Sarabha gave up his life by hanging to his death, he was not influenced by Hindu nationalism. Millions of young men like Madan Lal Dhingra, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan embraced the noose- they did not martyr for Hindu nationalism but they relinquished their lives for positive nationalism.

Even today the exponents of Hindu nationalism and negative nationalism are unable to zero down on one single icon from the Indian freedom struggle? Why did not even a single person originate from their ideology who sacrificed his life when people were fighting for the freedom of the nation? All said and done, in the final analysis, only one name is cited in this context- that of Veer Savarkar. Veer Savarkar led two lives. On the one hand, he is extremely influenced by the 1857 uprising which was fought on the basis of Hindu and Muslim unity but on the other, when he comes under pressure from the British in jail, then he tenders an apology to come out of jail. Thereafter, he becomes a propagandist for Hindu nationalism and Hindutva contrary to the tradition of positive nationalism of 1857. This is how the fire he had in him for the independence of India is doused and he falls out of the mainstream of the Indian freedom struggle. The question that arises is that why the people who are staking claim for nationalism and patriotism today could not create a

team of young men and women of their ideology during the Indian freedom struggle? Why were they ashamed of hoisting the Indian National Flag for a long time?

I want to emphasize that negative nationalism can establish dominance for a while; it can put some people on the chair; but it cannot save the civilization and culture of this country. It cannot instill the feeling, tradition, sacrifice and passion of laying down lives for Mother India. It cannot unify to strengthen the country. It does not have that capability. It is not a matter of opposing a person. It boils down to that ideology which ultimately does not offer a solution. It is utterly doubtful that an ideology which could not offer any solution in history and which could not offer one in the present moment even after rising to the topmost seat of power will ever offer a solution in future.

Since this ideology cannot offer any solution, so it has to spread hatred, it has to fan riots, it has to make people fight with each other. There are more problems when there are fights, struggle, riots and hatred. When the problems escalate, there will be more riots and more hatred. If the sons and daughters of India do not find a way out of the vicious circle of riots and hatred, then a day will come when we will hit a cul-de-sac, the exit out of which, none of us shall have.

It is also imperative to know how positive nationalism can offer a solution where negative nationalism offers no solution. This is because we cannot resolve any issue by opposing for the sake of opposing. We need a new philosophy, a new basis and a new initiative to find an alternative.

Like I said earlier, negative nationalism stands on the foundation of hatred and positive nationalism is grounded in love. The first principle of negative nationalism is to fragment. Negative nationalism is the formula of ruling over the nation by alienating the hearts of the people. Positive nationalism is the formula of integrating hearts so that a power is established which can offer some solutions.

What does positive nationalism say? It states that we shall have to connect people of different religion, castes, languages, regions, gender and orientations in a common thread of energy for the progress of the nation. We will have to go back to the Indian freedom movement to gauge the strength of that energy which will be generated when the entire human energy, natural energy and cultural energy of this country gets amalgamated.

This country was divided into different kingdoms and principalities. The seeds of the unity of the people of this nation were sown after the completion of hundred years of the rule of East India Company in 1857. The underlying tenet of the struggle which our ancestors waged against the British was positive nationalism. The nation begins to unite for the first time to fight the British in the first war of independence of 1857. The kings come forward; the nawabs come forward; the soldiers come forward; the farmers come forward and the young men and women come forward.

The energy and thought of positive nationalism have such extraordinary power that when it ignites in the heart of Bahadur Shah Zafar even in his ripe old age, a new devotion to die for the nation, a new enthusiasm and a new courage is born. The energy of positive nationalism inspires Bahadur Shah Zafar to fight, it resonates in the heart of Nana Sahib as well. It reverberates in the heart of the queen of Jhansi; it stirs Begum Hazrat Mahal; it animates Azimullah Khan; and it also agitates Tanya Tope.

The energy of positive nationalism inspired Ram Prasad Bismil to happily hang to his death. It is the energy which inspired Ashfaqulla Khan to die for the nation. Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil is a devotee of the Hindu religion; he believes in the Arya Samaj and he recites the Gita, but he steps forward to sacrifice his life for the nation. Ashfaqulla Khan follows Islam and reads the Quran, but he also steps forward to give up his life for his country and the freedom of his motherland.

Each one of the sons and daughters of this country possess some or the other vigour of positive energy. We need to thread this energy into a garland and the common thread which can string the different pearls together is called positive nationalism. Positive nationalism mandates the confluence of all energies because in our society equality does not mean homogeneity. We will have to secure the contribution and interests of people if we wish to win them over to the side of positive nationalism. You have to place each bead in its proper place when you cord together a necklace. If the beads in the necklace are arranged without due regard to propriety and coordination, it will look ugly and disorganised.

The philosophy of positive nationalism believes that a new philosophy will be born when we consummate the entire energy of this nation. The new philosophy will generate new knowledge and the new knowledge will generate new science. The new science will give rise to new technology. We will be able to compete with the world on the level of science and technology. We will be able to move ahead and find solutions to the present problems of the country.

I repeat that India does not lack anything. Very few other countries of the world have the extent of fertile land that India has. Very few other countries of the world can match the amount of natural resources and mineral wealth that India has. Very few other countries have the number of rivers that flow in India. Very few other countries have the kind of labour force that India has. Very few other countries have the intellectual talent that India has. Nature has given everything to the people of India. We can develop new industry, new professions and a new order of development by conjugating the human and natural resources which nature has bestowed on India and harnessing them in a new direction.

Philosophy of positive nationalism has two main aspects: first, unity and love among people and secondly, participation of everyone alike in the building of the nation. When I refer

to the participation of the people in the building of the nation, then I refer to the weaving of a fabric of development on the basis of positive nationalism in which all the people of the country have played a suitable role. We call this contribution employment. If more than half the people of a country are unemployed and their energy is not being utilised in anything, then it straightaway means that they do not have any involvement in the building of the nation. How can a nation advance when a large chunk of its population is denied participation in the building of the nation? Even today, in the villages, people find employment under MNREGA for three months and for nine months their energies go wasted. Half the population of this country comprises of women but there is hardly any contribution they can make to the building of the nation. They do not find any employment. Today in this country, a huge crowd is graduating from the colleges and universities which is unemployed. The issue is not limited to the fact that they are unemployed. The real issue is that they do not have economic rights and their energy is not being channelled into the process of the country's development. They are being deprived the opportunity of registering their rightful contribution in the building of the nation.

Today we are wandering in the whole world trying to be copycats believing that perhaps we can develop India by grafting technology from Japan. A new government that comes to power thinks that perhaps we can develop India by importing technology from America. This is entirely wrong. We need to adopt the important and useful aspects of the technology that has developed in the world. If we wish to accelerate the speed of India's development, we will have to develop technology in consonance with the natural resources available in India, the seasons and climate of India, the regional disparities in India, the talent pool of its sons and daughters and Indian knowledge and science. For example, for the industrial development in Chhattisgarh, we will have to develop technology according to the produce of its forest.

Through this, the sons and daughters of the country will be able to contribute to the development of the nation by finding livelihoods in their own villages, towns and regions. Everyone can get jobs and dignity. Believe you me that this economic participation can prove to be an empowering step towards the guarantee of social justice. In this way both the main aspects of positive nationalism- mutual accord and universal participation- can be warranted, through which all the people of the country can find work and respect and at the same time, render their contribution in the building of the nation.

Many of you will think that from where we will get the money to provide employment to so many people? This country has no dearth of money. A hundred people in this country have as much money as a thousand million people do not have. We need to build an economy in which the resources of the country are distributed equitably. We believe that the philosophy of positive nationalism will create a positive human being; from the approach of a positive person, a positive society will be born; and it is from this positive society that a positive nation will emerge. I wish to state with responsibility that the philosophy of positive nationalism can not only unite the people of this country on the basis of love and amity but it can also give them an opportunity to make a contribution to the building of the nation through their labour, wisdom, talent and esteem. The philosophy of positive nationalism can make India a thriving country. It can make all the citizens of the country prosperous and indeed, only a happy person and a happy country can pray for a happy world.

The ideals of Indian civilization and culture "May everyone be happy, may everyone be free of disease. May everyone have good luck, may none fall on evil days" and "The world is one family" conceived by the great saints of India in some positive moments can be realised through positive nationalism. Positive nationalism is effective in healing individuals, healing societies and healing those nations which are bent upon destroying each other. Through this positive philosophy, we

can move forward to build a new thinking and a new human order by aligning people and systems and nations and humanity with each other.

Positive nationalism upholds that all castes, religions and creeds have an equal place in the country. Along with that, we can strike a harmonious note with other nations through love and respect. All people can exist in peaceful co-existence. They can touch the heights of progress by following the principles of co-operation, brotherhood and happiness. In this process of unification, there will be no need for suicides, genocides or fragmentation. Positive nationalism can ameliorate the fragmentation in the world, country, society and individual by knitting everyone into a single thread. Positive nationalism is another name for a desire for universal prosperity.

Negative nationalism has struck roots in the minds of people of this country since times immemorial. From this we tend to think that the way it has taken years in the propagation of negative nationalism, is it going to take the same time in the dissemination of positive nationalism? The answer is no. This is because a solution presents itself in the hours of crisis and deeper the crisis, the more instantaneous and urgent the solution. Today the youth of the country- whether from Kashmir or Kanyakumari or Kutchh or Kohima- is extremely restless. They are all agitated about what shall be the future of this country if it continues to proceed in this manner. The only solution to this agitation and restlessness is positive nationalism which clears the decks for an inclusive and egalitarian country.

For the promotion and propagation of positive nationalism, the youth of the country will have to introspect and guarantee whether they are dedicated and determined for an intellectual revolution like this? It is easier said than done. We scream in pain if a small thorn pricks our feet. But try to imagine the powerful call of the motherland in the images of the heroes of the Indian freedom struggle- Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and

Sukhdev- who were walking proudly to be executed and smiling all the way, despite knowing that in a few moments the noose shall be tightened around their necks. We are not able to take a thorn and here they were, smiling at their martyrdom. They were the sons of this very country. The Queen of Jhansi and Begum Hazrat Mahal were also the daughters of this country. If you really want to do something for this country, then first and foremost, awaken your inner energy. The first condition for attaining the destination of nationalism is to awaken the inner positive energy.

I wish to appeal to all the sons and daughters of this country that it is much better to ignite your inner fire in the service of Mother India than live a daily death. Die having done something and live having done something. If you continue to live and die in a suffocating atmosphere, neither the country nor you can develop. You have the option of choosing your way of life.

It is true that the youth of the country have to lead a good life and then also has to fulfil the family responsibilities. Along with this, they have to improve the country. They will also have to allocate time for the building of the nation. A person has enough energy stored in her or him to do whatever she/he decides. It is in proportion to their resolution that new energy grows in them. I wish to submit to you that if we succeed in promoting the philosophy of positive nationalism in the country and in transmitting this intellectual revolution to the consciousness of the sons and daughters of this country, then certainly a positive energy will flow which will not only create a new India but also a new human being.

We need to transform the individual as well as the system for the creation of a new nation. The individuals run the systems and the beliefs and values of the individuals influence the systems. Therefore, the '*Desh ki Baat* Foundation' believes that we need to impact the individual as well as the systems. We need to bring forth a new human being and also need to bring forth a new India. We will have to prepare the sons

and daughters of the country for becoming the ambassadors of positive nationalism. I do believe that this road will lead us to a new light; it will lead the world to a new light. It will realise the dreams of millions of those martyrs who gave up their lives for the freedom of this country happily and willingly.

Inquilab Zindabad!

Gopal Rai

Founder: *Desh ki Baat* Foundation