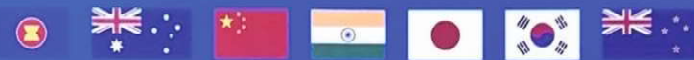


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NOVEMBER 2019

The 8th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Intersessional Ministerial Meeting



2019年8月3日 中国·北京

August 3, 2019 Beijing, China

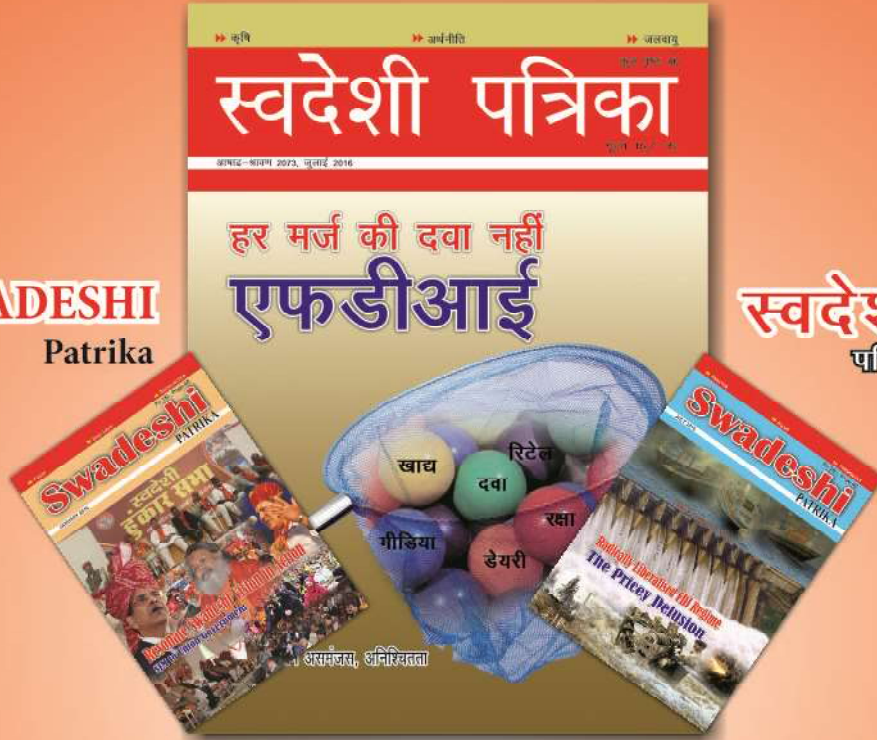


Say No to RCEP



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Letter to Editor

Dear Editor,

The Swadeshi Patrika of the month of October 2019 was a good read. It focused on multiple new insights. The article on education vouchers was interesting. It focused on tools to improve school education. Extrapolation of this article is to aspire for world class ITIs urgently and not restrict focus only to IITs. The polytechnic institutes of countries which own high ranking universities are doing a lot of research and patents. For example- In China, polytechnic institutes are contributing research papers of the same level as its leading universities. But we are not doing enough to raise the aspirations of our ITIs. The bridge level education and training institutes are lost while resources are concentrated on enhancing school education or on creating world ranking universities.

The skill development programme of the government is facing challenges and a world class ITIs spread over the country is a solution. It should focus on developing customized skills which can culminate in good research papers and patents and at the same time engage itself with the skill development programme.

The article titled "Contribution of Ancient India in Art" authored by Prof. Nandini Sinha Kapur makes the portfolio of articles published in Swadeshi Patrika rich. It gave rise to an idea that the historians and architects can come together to highlight the science as well as arts of heritage building and stimulate interest of readers by their articles.

– Alok Singh, Delhi

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The views expressed within are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of Swadeshi Patrika. Swadeshi Patrika often present views that we do not entirely agree with, because they may still contain information which we think is valuable for our readers.

Quote-Unquote



The Iron Man of India, Sardar Patel forged our unity and integrity. His courage and leadership remains an inspiration for the entire country. We will forever remember his services to the nation.

Ram Nath Kovind, President, Bharat



The country took the decision to scrap Article 370 (which provided special status to J&K), which had only given separatism and terrorism to that state.

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, Bharat



India's position has been consistent and clear that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. China is well aware of our position. It is not for other countries to comment on the internal affairs of India.

Raveesh Kumar

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson, India



Our country will be pushed into import dependence jeopardizing our nutritional security as is the case as is the case in many Asian, particularly, South Asian and South East & Far East Asian Countries.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

National Co-convenor, SJM

Birth Centenary Year of Rashtra Rishi

Nation will celebrate Birth Centenary year of Rashtra Rishi Dattopant Thengadi starting from his birth day on November 10, 2019 with a Public Meeting addressed by PP Sar Sanghchalak of Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh in Nagpur. Smt Sumitra Mahajan, Former Speaker Lok Sabha, who is also Chairperson of Dattopant Thengadi Janma Shatabdi Varsh will preside over the program.

Rashtra Rishi Dattopant Thengdi ji established many organizations, but the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) have been more under focus. While the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh has emerged as the largest trade union in the world today, the BKS also has a huge presence, in the field of agriculture in the country, where agriculturists are generally not organised. Swadeshi Jagran Manch has emerged as a major platform to fight against the menace globalisation. In view of the economic challenges facing the country SJM is constantly working to pressurize the policy makers, keeping a close watch on the issues arising out of globalization and rising influence of multinational corporations.

The philosophy and thinking behind the creation of these organizations, having deep impact on every sphere of society, is also very esoteric. At a time when the workers' organizations were dominated by communist organizations or, say, communist parties and to a lesser extent, the Congress party, establishing of BMS created a deep imprint on the labour movement. BMS, under the guidance of Thengadi ji worked towards protecting the rights of labour without compromising the national interests. This gave a special identity to BMS, because prior to that labour movement under communist organisations, meant class struggle and anarchy. Strikes and lockouts were normal outcome of the same. The slogan of 'Desh ke hit mein karenge Kam, kam ke lenge poore dam' (will work in the national interest, but press for rightful wages) speaks tons about the motto of BMS. With the establishment and expansion of the BMS, public support for communist thinking receded and finally we see that communism is taking the last breaths in the country and base of nationalist thinking has been expanding wide and far. Instead of class struggle and anarchy, emphasis is on nationalism and patriotism is the theme and objective of dominant labour movement.

On the other hand, there was also a general absence of organization in the farm sector. It's well known that there is lack of uniformity in the status of farmers in our country. Some of the farm area is irrigated, the rest is not. Land holding of some farmers is big, while for others it's small. Different types of crops, soil and other geographical conditions, come in way of organising farm sector. After the establishment of the Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), efforts were made to resolve the problems of farmers with nationalist feelings. Slogan of the BKS is 'Desh ke hum bhandar bharenge, lekin dam pure lenge' (We will fill the stock of the nation, but will take remunerative prices). Today, the BKS is working towards protecting the interests of farmers, in the most vigilant manner, fighting not only towards better prices for farmers, but even against toxic agriculture, promoted by business interests.

In the 1990s, when the foreign economic invasion intensified in the garb of globalization and new economic policy, a mass movement emerged in the country against the same. Dunkel's proposals in GATT and later WTO became the symbols of this economic invasion and agitations were taking place in every nook and corner of the country. In such a situation, with the vision of Dattopant ji, Swadeshi Jagran Manch came into existence. The objective was to take along all forces, which can carry a result oriented and focused campaign against the imperialistic powers, namely, rich countries and their corporations; and keep economic and political sovereignty intact. The Swadeshi Jagran Manch was not structured as an organization but as a platform. A forum in which people and organisations from all walks of life who agree with the ideals of Swadeshi can come together and give issue based fight against imperialist forces and fight together in a coordinated manner on issues of national importance, breaking even the boundaries of ideologies.

Thengdi ji had a far sighted vision that he realized that no single organization would be sufficient and capable to fight against the economic imperialism of the developed countries. People and organisations from all walks of life and all sectors would have to join hands and fight for the same. Workers, peasants, students, domestic industry and intelligentsia must come together in this fight. So Swadeshi Jagran Manch was created as a platform and Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, Vidya Bharati, Laghu Udyog Bharti, Sahakar Bharti, Grahak Panchayat, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad and many others were asked to come forward and joined their cadre with SJM. Apart from socialist, nationalist, Gandhian organizations, individuals from left ideology also started coming closer with the Manch (SJM). SJM, even today continues to be a platform of people and organizations of Sangh Parivar and also from different ideologies. Diverse organizations of peasants and laborers, organizations and individuals of various industry bodies and businesses easily get associated with the Swadeshi Jagran Manch. That is, everyone participates naturally in the struggle for economic freedom with SJM, while maintaining their own identities.

His unambiguous opposition to economic imperialism whether it is communist imperialism or a capitalist one, building movements against them, freeing labour movement from the clutches of communists; and many other works undertaken and successfully accomplished by this 'Maha Manav' will be remembered fondly in the history of India.

Emerging Issues in RCEP

RCEP: Death knell for Dairy in India

Government is contemplating to finalise RCEP-FTA (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership -Free Trade Agreement), a trade block which includes China, Australia and New Zealand, apart from 10 ASEAN countries, Japan and South Korea. New Zealand and Australia are negotiating very hard with India to reduce duty on dairy products so that they can get an access to India which is the world's largest market of dairy products.

It's unfortunate that officials of Centre of Regional Trade (CRT) under Ministry of Commerce have been supporting the offer to reduce tariffs on milk and its products, by twisting the data of India's milk production and projecting a huge shortage of milk in India in coming 10 years. They are also projecting shortages of fodder, roughages and water for animal rearing and showing unrealistic export opportunity within RCEP countries despite huge non tariff barriers and low price of New Zealand dairy products. Milk producers and processors have been pleading with the Ministry of Commerce, presenting some hard facts, which are deliberately ignored by bureaucrats and consultants, pushing the deal.

Niti Aayog's Working Group Report (Feb 2018) on Demand and Supply Projections towards 2033 for Crops, livestock, Fisheries and Agricultural Inputs, the demand for milk will be 292 Million Metric Tonnes, against which India will produce 330 MMT milk. Thus, India will be surplus in milk products and the question of imports does not arise. NDDDB and even international organisations like FAO and IFCN have confirmed and have projected a similar trend.

The same NITI Aayog report further suggests very good agricultural production which will ensure availability of roughages and fodder for milch cattle even in 2033.

NZ with population of 48 Lac produces 24 MMT milk by employing 10,000 farmers and exports 93% of it. On the other hand, 10 crore families in India depend on dairy industry for their livelihood.



Signing of RCEP would mean loss of livelihood for 10 crore families engaged in dairy industry. It would cause more outflow of foreign exchange by way of royalties.
Dr. Ashwani Mahajan



Even if NZ exports only 5% of its produce, it will be equal to 30% of India's production of major dairy products like milk powder, butter, cheese etc.

Same holds true for Australia where less than 6000 farmers produce 10 MMT milk and the export more than 60% of it. Then why should India include dairy products (HSN 0401 to 0406) in RCEP and allow import at lower duty? Is it to double income of farmers of Australia & NZ?

Interestingly, Indian consumers are getting milk at the cheapest rate globally and milk producers are getting highest share of consumer rupee (more than 80%). Our producer price of milk is comparable to Oceania's producer prices.

It's beyond doubt that signing of RCEP would mean death knell if dairy in India, because:

There will be reduction in procurement price of milk from farmers due to cheap imported milk powder from NZ. Today, farmer gets nearly rupees 28-30 per litre of milk, from milk processors from cooperative and even other private players. Procurement price for farmers would come down drastically, if imports are allowed through RCEP.

This may result in approximately 50 million rural people losing their job as they will be forced to quit the unremunerative dairying.

This will prove to be the most suicidal step by Government of India since independence. We must understand that once dairy industry is troubled, this step will result into the biggest food security threat as we will be permanently dependent on imports for dairy products like in case of edible oils

Respected Prime Minister

must know that doubling of farmers income will remain only in dreams, Indian dairy farmers' income will actually be halved, ultimately forcing to leave the milk production.

Further, we must know that dairy is mostly run and served by women folk. Impact on dairy would also shatter dream of women empowerment.

India's dairy industry is worth US\$100 billion currently and is projected to double this size in next decade if Government policy remains supportive towards the rural milk producers.

Milk, as the largest agricultural crop of India (150 million metric tonnes), certainly deserves better treatment at the hands of our Commerce Ministry negotiators. Signing of RCEP would cause a major unrest among our rural folk, as their livelihood will certainly get adversely affected. Government must understand that sacrificing the interests of the poor and vulnerable sections of the society, in the name of engaging in trade with rest of the world, is a bad politics. Honourable Prime Minister can ensure to avoid any unrest amongst our rural producers across the country and protect their future.

Underlying Dangers in RCEP's Investment Negotiations

The information of the negotiators at Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement accepting the suggestions of other countries regarding rules on investments; is disturbing for us in the Swadeshi Jagran Manch. The details coming in public domain suggest that these provisions are not only detrimental to the interests of the economy, but are also contrary

to the stated position of National Democratic Alliance regime.

These provisions are meek surrender of the sovereign rights of any country to seek the transfer of technology from the investing companies, training to their domestic partners, and removing the cap on the quantum of royalties which domestic companies can pay to their foreign partners. The conglomerates from South Korea, Japan and even China will gain, and India is bound to lose in this. This is ante to the spirit of NDA regime's ambitious Make in India plan, and for integration of domestic industry with the global supply chains.

We can't afford foreign investments in our economy, without any real benefit for the domestic players. If MNCs are not helping their partners to improve their know how and want to repatriate a large part of their revenue to their global coffers; the FDI will become more detrimental for the society.

The issues were flagged by the commerce ministry (during first regime of PM Shri Narendra Modi). Swadeshi Jagran Manch has learnt that last year, the commerce and industries ministry prepared a cabinet note, seeking provisions to curb the outflow of the transfer of royalty and other technical fees by multinational conglomerates. The 2009 annual outflow of nearly \$5 billion swelled to \$20 billion in the last fiscal.

Capping the outflow is actually needed. The provisions, negotiators agreed—if they did—will accelerate the outflow of foreign exchange and would also exert pressure on the balance sheets of the Indian entities of these MNCs as well; along with robbing the shareholders of their fair share of

the dividends. Obviously, this will widen the current account deficit and create more pressure on the forex exchange rates. And the history tells us, this will never accelerate the investments in the country.

If the information coming in the public has some truth, this will be a meek surrender to country's legal provisions of pushing the investing companies to adhere to these requirements. The experience with the other bilateral investment agreements is; the foreign investors pushed Indian government to litigation in the name of non fulfillment of the conditions of these investment agreements and sought hefty compensation. As the investment grew, so did the litigation.

To curb this, the first regime of PM Narendra Modi either invoked sunset clause in nearly 90 existing investment agreements or renegotiated them. The provisions of safeguarding domestic interest were invoked. There is a need to not only do national debate before agreeing to such provisions; but the present establishment must take stakeholders in confidence about the safeguard mechanism. The present structure and provisions are very difficult to accept; would do more damage than resolving any existing challenge.

The forthcoming blogs will also examine the other hazardous provisions agreed or negotiated at RCEP rounds. The next in line will be; on the fallacy of the argument on safeguards, including Auto Trigger Safeguard Mechanism.

Fallacy of Proposed Auto Trigger Safeguard Mechanism

In the last one month, the Ministry of Commerce and Industries is trying to sell Automatic Trig-

ger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM) as 'one-shot protection plan' for the domestic small businesses and farmers from the adversities of entering Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP. Either these negotiators are unaware of ground realities, or are deliberately trying to misguide. The ATSM is not only a faulty mechanism, but also requires massive corrections at the backend. It will be of very little utility for us, and will actually complicate the scenarios at ground. It remains fallacy of the safeguard mechanism, which would do anything but safeguard the interests of Indian farmers and their interests, along with those indulged in small businesses.

Obliviously, we see a few possibilities of implementing such a safeguard mechanism without falling foul of our RCEP partners, who want nothing but barrier-free markets. We cannot allow an abject surrender. We have been emphasising about the need for evidence-based policy making. Sadly, these officials/negotiators are overlooking all the evidence to back the no-RCEP case. They are busy marketing that this safeguard mechanism empowers the host country to go back to pre-RCEP level, if the import surges beyond an agreed benchmark. The complications begin, as soon as this sentence culminates.

The RCEP requires the member countries to cut down their tariff on majority of products, and in many cases to zero. India already has trade deficit with 11 out of 16 member countries of RCEP negotiations. Given our range of vulnerabilities, which will get accentuated manifold after the steep reduction in tariffs, we don't think

we will be able to make extensive use of auto trigger. Since ATSM could be applied once threshold limits are reached, we need to calculate threshold levels. The normal way of calculation of the threshold level is the average of the last three year's import figures. Since there is already very high import from ASEAN and China the threshold level would be very high. Further, an increase in imports in the subsequent years would push up the threshold level. For instance, the average of last three years is 100 and an increase in the 1st year crosses the average figure say 150. Then there, the new threshold will be determined for the second year of FTA is taking into account the import of figure 150. This would keep increasing the threshold level.

Further, the remedy under ATSM is applicable prospectively; this gives an easy escape route to exporters from RCEP countries to export in high volume to India and stockpile the goods and escape the consequences of ATSM. Interestingly, the shipment already in high seas is exempted from this mechanism. There are enough evidences available, on how the exporters game the system by exporting large quantities just when the trigger is about to be breached.

Further this is temporary, say for 9 months. We are not clear that what will happen after the second 9 month extension.

So what it does is that imports will increase relatively steadily rather than all at once whose structural impact is still the same.

Domestic industry sinks.

Industry is not expected to set up capacity with temporary measures in operation.

[Continued on page no. 10]

RCEP Summit: Can Government make a deal?



India's concerns have to do with the consequences of an RCEP deal for domestic industry. India is already a net importer from the region. With domestic industries already taking a hit from cheap imports, many fear that a free trade agreement-bringing tariffs to near-zero levels-will increase the 'dumping' of foreign goods in India.

Anilesh S. Mahajan

Since 2013, 16 nations, including the 10 members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and six of its free-trade partners-India, China, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand-have been locked in negotiations over a supersized trade deal. Known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the deal attempts to form the world's largest economic bloc, with a combined 39 per cent of global GDP. The deadline for negotiations is November 4, when the heads of state meet for the RCEP Leaders Summit. Even at this late stage, India's position is complicated, because a deal will have serious consequences for domestic industry.

As of October 10, negotiators had agreed on 21 of 25 chapters of a proposed RCEP deal. The remaining four chapters-relating to investment, e-commerce, rules of origin and trade remedies-are yet to be agreed upon. Tariffs are a key sticking point, with India demanding that a larger number of sensitive items qualify for an 'auto-trigger mechanism' (whereby import duties automatically increase beyond a threshold). India also wants to use 2019 as the base year for calculations and to hammer out individual tariff rates with RCEP members. The majority of RCEP members say that once tariffs are reduced, they should not be increased; that 2013 should be the base year for calculations (as that is when negotiations began); that rates should be largely uniform across countries; and that an 'auto-protect' trigger should only apply in exceptional circumstances.

India's concerns have to do with the consequences of an RCEP deal for domestic industry. India is already a net importer from the region. With domestic industries already taking a hit from cheap imports, many fear that a free trade agreement-bringing tariffs to near-zero levels-will increase the 'dumping' of foreign goods in India. "Of the products [being traded between these 16 countries], China is already dumping 40 per cent in India. After RCEP, expect more dumps,"



cautions Biswajit Dhar, trade economist and professor at JNU. Abhijit Das, who heads the Centre for WTO Studies at Delhi's Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, explains that India is not price-competitive on a large number of products and could find a zero-duty regime hard to negotiate. "This would pose severe risks to the manufacturing sector," he says.

For instance, one specific fear is that RCEP will lead to dairy products from Australia and New Zealand flooding the Indian market. Giriraj Singh, minister of animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries, and his deputy Sanjeev Balyan are vehemently opposed to the deal, and have asked commerce minister Piyush Goyal to keep the

dairy sector out of negotiations. Giriraj Singh's ministry is not even an outlier-agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, textiles minister Smriti Irani, steel minister Dharmendra Pradhan and mines and minerals minister Prahlaad Patel have either opposed the deal or sought more protection for farmers and domestic industry.

Many in the BJP and the Sangh parivar are wary of an RCEP deal. "RCEP will be extremely difficult for us to explain to our constituency, especially when the economy is still dealing with the impact of demonetisation and GST," says a top BJP leader. This is why RSS affiliates like the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and Bharatiya Maz-

door Sangh are dead set against the deal. On the other side of the political aisle, Congress leaders met at Sonia Gandhi's residence on October 25 and decided to join the RSS chorus against the deal.

For now, India is opting to slow-walk the negotiations. The PMO has not yet announced a travel plan for the prime minister; PM Modi is expected to meet other heads of states to resolve pending issues before the scheduled signings on November 21. In the meantime, on November 2-3, commerce minister Goyal is expected to join negotiators to attempt to reach a consensus on the remaining thorny issues. □□

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/np-front/story/20191111-rcep-summit-can-modi-make-a-deal-1614336-2019-11-01>

[Continued from page no. 8]

Emerging Issues in RCEP ...

Most importantly, considering the poor infrastructure of ports and import data management system India is not in a position to deploy ATSM quickly.

It is unwise that ATSM is being sold to the industry as being the remedy against import surge, and as a protection for domestic industry. We should understand that domestic industry requires protection from price dips actually. However, ATSM means to address import surges alone, but does nothing to price dips. Further the period of application will be short. The import surge will raise the trigger in subsequent year, making its application more difficult after ATSM is used once.

Practically, it will be impossible for us to implement even vol-

ume trigger, without causing significant damage to farmers' & small businesses' interests. On the infrastructure side, the mechanism will require prompt country-wise trade data, for it to be effective. Otherwise imports above and beyond threshold will keep coming and we will not be able to do anything for 2-3 months. These scenarios are good enough to narrate the fallacy of these safeguards.

Globally, at the FTA, there is a very little experience of auto trigger. The similar multilateral TPP, too had auto trigger in respect of just 5-6 products. TPP is now defunct after the Donald Trump regime pulled the US out of this negotiation. As it was not implemented we cannot say anything about its efficacy. But its limited use, in-

dicate the suspicion of the negotiators there too. Moreover, our ITA experience is not great. We will be repeating the same mistake, but this time on an economy wide level. If we sign RCEP, we can bid goodbye to Make in India and also to Digital India.

Shortcomings of ATSM make it as a theoretical safeguard against without any practical use. The most important issue is that the government does not take into account the lack of competitiveness of the Indian manufacturing sector in comparison with the RCEP participating countries especially China, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN. This is a structural issue which needs an industrial policy approach and cannot be addressed through band-aid solutions like ATSM.

Commerce Ministry should not push India into premature de-industrialization showing the fallacy of ATSM. □□

Fiscal policy and the growth slowdown

Several economists have recently argued for increasing public expenditure, through deficit financing, to address the current growth slowdown. This argument rests on the premise that increased government spending would enhance purchasing power in the hands of consumers and firms and, thereby, increase aggregate demand to bolster growth.

I want to unpack the analytics of this argument. For those who consider the current slowdown to be “cyclical” (I don’t), this is an obvious textbook prescription — spend more during downturns, less during upturns.

This argument is misplaced. First, public spending has, in fact, been expansionary over the past few years. While on-budget fiscal expansion at the Centre is limited by the perceived need to keep the reported fiscal deficit/GDP ratio under control, off-budget borrowings have easily crossed 1 per cent of GDP, even by my conservative estimates that are much lower than those reported by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Second, some commentators repeatedly, and wrongly, assert that the 3 per cent fiscal deficit target is arbitrary; they seem ignorant of the reasoning embedded in every report of the Finance Commission and fiscal responsibility and budget management since 2003, that with financial savings at around 10 per cent of GDP, the public sector borrowing requirement is no less than 7.5 per cent of GDP, even discounting off-budget borrowings. Further increases in public sector debt would only add to the high cost of capital that is sought to be lowered on the monetary and credit policy side. Gains on the fiscal swings mean losses on the monetary roundabouts. Glib allusions to “counter-cyclical” policies without considering these realities is irresponsible.



When growth is dependent on demand, government increases its on consumption or investment expenditure by taxing private income.

Rathin Roy



Fiscal expansion on purportedly Keynesian grounds can be secured through the balanced budget multiplier. When growth is demand constrained, government taxes private income and increases its own consumption or investment expenditure to boost aggregate demand. Thus, increased taxes finance increased public spending, with a net positive impact on aggregate demand. This does not work if taxes are not elastic or if the fiscal machinery is demonstrably unable to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio at will. So, the implicit assumption (justified in the Indian context) is that this is not possible; the second best solution must be adopted — government must borrow more. I wish new-born Keynesians would make this explicit.

The question then is: On what should government spend this extra borrowing? India has long been in a situation where over two-thirds of central government borrowing is for revenue expenditure. Borrowing for public investment sounds like a good idea but the fact is that a lot of public investment (like defence), involves spending on imports; a further chunk has been deployed for financial investment, not fixed capital formation. Fixed capital formation at the central level is too small, and the time lags in executing such investment too long to make a difference, even if the magnitude is temporarily doubled.

Government can borrow to increase revenue expenditure on transfers. This would alleviate the problem as long as the macroeconomic assumption is that there is capacity underutilisation across the economy. But I have been pointing out for some time now that the Indian economy faces a struc-

tural demand problem driven, inter alia, by the lack of wider participation in economic activity, limiting effective aggregate demand, even as growth slows in extant sources of demand for things measured by the “leading indicators” (automobiles, FMCG, consumer durables) of the economy. Add to this the problems faced by the financial sector, poor transmission of credit policy, and a public sector and public administration that is, collectively, a deadweight drag on productivity (with a few

Central government could monetise and deploy assets to boost aggregate demand by pursuing laudable structural policies like doubling farmers' income and scaled up investments in renewable energy and affordable housing.

honourable exceptions) due to years of neglect of necessary administrative and structural reforms.

In these circumstances, transfers will, at best, facilitate a temporary increase in aggregate demand in sectors other than the leading indicators. The supply response to this will persist only if such transfers financed by borrowing are maintained over the medium term. This is because the aggregate demand increase is powered only by transfers, not increases in income. Since the problem is

structural, it will not go away, simply by boosting generic aggregate demand through transfers. Hence, permanently increasing government borrowing to pay for transfers would only reinforce the structural demand problem.

And should I even bother pointing out the negative consequences of such persistent fiscal imprudence, and the historic price India has had to pay for this, across our history? The addiction to deficit financing seems to afflict so many policy commentators, with the result that (as former CEA Shankar Acharya wrote in, “Fiscal deficits — a short history”, March 8, 2017, Business Standard) the historic record of central government on deficit financing resembles that of an alcoholic struggling to keep addiction at bay.

Of course, an asset rich, but revenue poor, central government could monetise and deploy assets to boost aggregate demand by pursuing laudable structural policies like doubling farmers' income and scaled up investments in renewable energy and affordable housing. This government has shown willingness and fiscal appetite for such initiatives, but not, yet, the political will to address the binding constraint — the regulatory and institutional legacy hurdles that inhibit the speedy execution of these initiatives. Event management can distract from, but not permanently mask, execution failures. Addressing these hurdles that do not cost money should be the central focus of economic policies when faced with a structural slowdown that has deep domestic roots. □□

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<https://www.nipfp.org.in/blog/2019/10/16/fiscal-policy-and-growth-slowdown/>

Rescue biodiversity first

Come November, India is about to enter key negotiations on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) at its eighth general body meeting in Rome. But what is at stake? All of India's future as these talks may impact the country's biodiversity and germplasm relating to food and agriculture. In the delegates' own words, "The ITPGRFA, adopted in 2001, is a global response to promote the conservation of plant genetic resources and to protect farmers' rights to access and have fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their use." But let us examine the agenda behind this treaty.

As per ITPFRA/Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) data, India is the top destination for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGFRA), numbering 725,117. Briefly put, these negotiations are about how other countries can access all these PGFRAs at the minimum price possible. It is also to be kept in mind that India is a signatory to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and Nagoya Protocol, which cover all of its biodiversity already. These two treaties protect bio-piracy and have worked favourably for a biodiversity/germplasm rich country as ours.

The first issue in the discussion comes from Switzerland, which has been advocating a "Multilateral System (MLS) to cover all other plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in accordance with Article 3 of the international treaty." One should consider that Switzerland has only 39,953 accessions stored with it. Given that India has one of the highest stored ascensions in the world — 395,001 — we would legally be bound to contribute all of them to the treaty. In this sense, we will become one of the biggest donors, too. But is this economically sound



India has a crucial decision to make. Should it conserve its biodiversity and germplasm for future generations or surrender its heritage to corporations and foreign treaties?

Indra Shekhar Singh



and in the interest of the nation? After the emergence of climate crisis, Brexit and Trumpism, it may not be the best option.

Regarding the Swiss proposal to cover all other PGRs for food and agriculture, India should think of its national interest first and only those crop species should be included and PGR accessions designated, which are already available in the public domain (ie accessible to everyone). Article 1 of the treaty should also explicitly declare the crop species, which we do not want to make available under the MLS. In fact, all crops, for which we have geographical indication (GI) for now or for the future, should be excluded from the treaty. China is currently not part of this treaty and is negotiating on its terms to make inroads. India should do the same. Our only bargaining chip is our vast plant genetic resource (PGR), let's not allow it to be taken without any benefit to our country. The US recently joined on the insistence of the private sector and in a matter of years, it is the chairperson. So the treaty is heavily influenced by big global agricultural corporations and geopolitics.

India has held a conservative position until now and given only 26,530 accessions to the MLS. But we are not the only ones. A cold and wet island off the north-west coast of Europe, the United Kingdom, has a total of 834,451 accessions, out of which it has put only 44,069 accessions in the MLS. Before considering the inclusion of all PGRs in Annexure 1, the Government of India and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) must



The MNCs and foreign companies, which will access the PGRs from the Indian collection should maintain strict compliance with national legislations, especially related to protection of Plant Varieties and farmers' rights authority.

analyse how many PGRs have been accessed by Indian firms through MLS and how much we have contributed to other nations. A policy paper needs to be published on this so that citizens are aware of the benefits.

NBPGR must also work out the economic, agricultural and social benefits of Indian seed companies under MLS. It must also make sure there is no vagueness or secrecy regarding these negotiations. We need a clear plan of how

if we contribute our PGRs, the MLS will reciprocate in nation-building.

The MNCs and foreign companies, which will access the PGRs from the Indian collection, should maintain strict compliance with national legislations, especially related to the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Seed Act, seed rules and other prevailing legislations. Otherwise we will see a situation where Indian farmers are growing cotton and the mills of Manchester are making the cloth. Ultimately, Indians will buy their own cotton at 400 per cent times the actual price. This model will be emulated for seeds, too. In this case, especially as some nations allow for patents on seeds, our germplasm can be patented as part of a foreign product. Then the same seed must be sold to Indian farmers. We must think carefully and ensure Indian legislations go with all our germplasm, too.

There is also an attempt to introduce international union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) convention through

this treaty. India should advocate farmers' rights in ITPGRFA in accordance with provisions of their rights available under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001. Any dilution of farmers' and breeders rights must not be negotiated/accepted, especially when we are not signatories of the UPOV.

India must seek an expansion of the MLS in such a way that PGR-rich countries get appropriate benefits and advantage for conserving and preserving germplasm. This can be done through capacity-building, development and expansion of Research and development (R&D) activities in India and in other PGR-rich nations. We can propose that every State should have ex-situ and in-situ PGR conservation project funded by this treaty.

Speaking of funds, the other critical issue is of the corpus (FAO trust fund) created for sharing benefits. India must first strongly urge to be on the board committee of this fund and also ensure that there is adequate representation from PGR donor countries. This can be done according to the availability/contribution of PGR resources. The project allotted for conservation and R&D should be commensurate with the PGR donations. The Government of India and NBPGR must also analyse that during the last seven to eight years how many projects for PGR activities have been funded under the ITPGRFA trust fund versus other countries.

We have to stress on the fact that monetary benefits arising after the commercialisation of PGR should be made directly to the PGR donor country. In addition,

the product developed using the PGR should be made available to the donor country, especially to the farmers, at relatively lower costs. There should be relaxations for public institutes like ICAR and small and medium companies of India, too.

The meeting in Rome will also discuss the dematerialised use of PGR. With advancements in technology such as gene editing, Digital Sequence Information (DSI), physical plant material may not be required to develop new varieties.

Given the threat of climate change, we cannot allow for rampant exploitation of our PGRs only to participate in foreign treaties. We should learn from China and be more conservative and nationalistic in our approach towards our biological heritage.

Gene sequences will be enough. While the world and organisation such as the CBD are doing expert studies on them, India should support that DSI and other future technologies (CRISPR) should be added under the benefit-sharing scheme so that our efforts in conserving PGR are not left out.

But perhaps the biggest elephant in the room is: Who is India really negotiating with? Is it the developed countries or trans-national big agricultural corporations in the garb of countries? Such corporations are present in each country today, including India, and are lobbying to have access to PGR

through a second channel. In fact, through their Indian subsidiaries, they are even consulting with the Government for a softer stance on ITPGRFA. And why would they do that? Because nations such as India expressed sovereign right over their PGR and have many restrictions for foreign MNCs to access Indian biodiversity under the Biological Diversity Act. If the Swiss proposal is accepted, Indian legislations will be bypassed and all doors to PGR will be opened to them without restrictions — all for a nominal percentage of profits.

Once they have Indian PGR available to them in any part of the world, we will see the emergence of "seed sweat shops", much like clothes sweat shops in countries like Bangladesh. The design is European or American, raw material is Indian and clothes are made in Bangladesh for a few cents an hour and then sold in boutique stores for thousands of dollars. Countries with the cheapest farm labour costs will be selected to mass produce seeds and then the produce will be exported to nations which can pay higher prices. Indian farmers and women, who have preserved seeds and biodiversity, may be alienated and all of their biodiversity commercialised by big agricultural companies of the developed world.

Given the threat of climate change, we cannot allow for rampant exploitation of our PGRs only to participate in foreign treaties. We should learn from China and be more conservative and nationalistic in our approach towards our biological heritage. □□

(The writer is Programme Director for Policy and Outreach at the National Seed Association of India)
<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2019/columnists/rescue-biodiversity-first.html>

GHI ranking a misnomer

UNDP praises India on poverty cut

Extreme poverty in US, EU, globe see 46 p.c. hunger rise



India bashing, particularly on poverty or hunger, is passion. It earns you eminent awards and simultaneously global hunger index (GHI) can be hyped or misinterpreted, it turns the ancient civilization into a morbid culture and “scholars” own the right to deride it.

It’s a wonder why such studies particularly by Amartya Sen or Abhijit Banerjee are not done on the US and European situations. Their own statistics suggest rise in poverty in the US or EU, particularly France, Germany and the UK. The Brexit itself is ascribed as a fall out of large immigration and fall in living

standards ushering in high poverty.

Another wonder how could they miss the 2018 UN accolade on India. The UNDP heaped praises for India being the first country for which progress over time has been estimated in tackling poverty.

Being a critic of the government in India is fine. But overlooking reality for churning out easy theses should not be fashion. Eminent economist Prof AM Khusro, who charted out the planning path for many decades since the Nehruvian era, was concerned about absolute poverty and not mere percentage. India for its sheer rising population remains high on this score despite the number reducing in percentage terms.

It is easy to criticize governments but solutions are not that easy. Even the GHI has not been interpreted correctly. The article would discuss it.

Critics of India missed the headline in the Washington Post – Extreme Poverty Returns to America on December 21, 2017. This is about a UN report, obviously after the post-Lehman sub-prime crisis. Philip Alston, the United Nations special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, filed it after wrapping up a 15-day tour of the United States.

His team visited Alabama, California, Puerto Rico, West Virginia and Washington, D.C. The findings documented homelessness, unsafe sanitation and sewage disposal practices, as well as police surveillance, criminalization and harassment of the poor. The rise in poverty, they found, disproportionately affects people of color and women, but also large swaths of white Americans. The report concluded that the pervasiveness of poverty and inequality “are shocking-



Indian poverty has become a fashionable topic to bag eminent awards but they keep quiet about return of poverty to US or EU.
Shivaji Sarkar

ly at odds with immense wealth (of the US) and its founding commitment to human rights.”

The poverty in the US has risen from less than 10 percent to 14.8 percent, as per US census report, in 2014. It now claims to have reduced to 12.7 percent in 2016 and 12.3 percent in 2017.

Michael Dauderstadt, former director of the Economic and Social Policy of Germany's Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), basing his study on Eurostat, the EU's statistical office, says, “National poverty rates in the EU vary between over 25 per cent in Romania and less than 10 per cent in the Czech Republic. For Germany, the figure is 16.5 per cent (2016). The official Eurostat figure for the EU as a whole is 17.3 per cent, which puts poverty in the EU only slightly higher than the level in Germany. However, if a proper EU-wide poverty threshold is calculated, the figure comes out significantly higher”.

Indeed these studies on western poverty cannot win awards from the institutions in the West.

India making strides under Prime Minister Narendra Modi needs to institute an award, more inclusive and superior than most western ones which have a tendency to deride India. They bash India as they fear if India rises in economy and esteem, the west may start tottering. And they choose poor Indians to glorify or deride Indian poverty. Despite lots of problems, in percentage terms poverty has come down.

Through different governments since the 2004, Atal Behari Vajpayee rule, over 270 million people in India moved out of poverty and the poverty rate near-

India making strides under Prime Minister Narendra Modi needs to institute an awards, more inclusive and superior than most western ones which have a tendency to deride India.

ly halved from 55 percent to 28 percent in a ten-year period, according to the 2018 global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of the UNDP.

The MPI also mentioned that 1.3 billion, almost 46 percent, are thought to be living in multidimensional poverty the world over.

The critics seeking headlines ignored the incongruous comparison between 2014 ranking of 55 among 76 nations and 2017 ranking of 102. The GHI report did not include 44 countries with “low hunger” scores (0-10). If these were included, India's ranking in 2014 would have been $55+44 = 99$.

Data sources for calculating 2017 GHI scores are from 2012-17, of which NDA and Congress (UPA) share power for two-and-a-half years each. Even the International Food Policy Research Institute says, “Concluding from this comparison that India slipped 45 places in the GHI ranking is not only erroneous but also a gross misrepresentation of facts”.

It is a different issue that a concerned society does not take pride in slippage. As per GHI, India has 14.5 percent India's population undernourished, 21 percent of children are wasted – children with low

weight against their height; 38.4 percent children are stunted and 4.8 percent die before the age of 5.

Everyone knows these are national concern since the First Plan. The UNDP has always expressed satisfaction at India's progress. On the whole, the 2019 GHI report found that number of hungry people has risen 785 million in 2015 to 822 million. It further states that ‘multiple countries’ have higher levels now than in 2010 – subtle way of stating the post-prime meltdown impact, and approximately 45 countries are set to fail to achieve “low” levels of hunger by 2030 UN sustainable development goal target.

The UNDP finds 46 percent of the global population in abject poverty. It is concerned about falling standards in affluent US and Europe. It wonders why the Donald Trump's US administration is so sensitive to criticism. The truth is the US administration is failing to check the misery of its people and US official Nick Haley saying UN has no right to look into it.

Hunger is a global issue. It increases as corporate globally are controlling governments. The exploitation has increased and the banks the world over are being looted leading to their failures and levying of high irrational charges and reduction of deposit interest rates.

India is no exception. Much of the present industrial slowdown is because of irrational incentives to corporate and allowing them to loot people's bank deposits.

Strong course correction is needed. Still the government remains pro-people in India despite occasional faltering. The country, however, need not be jittery by the ilk of Sens and Bannerjees. □□

Mahabalipuram dialogue was part of a striving for more balanced India-China ties

Every prime minister since Rajiv Gandhi has tried to bridge the trust deficit between India and China first created by the 1962 war. No one has had to do this more than Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the era of not just 24×7 television but instant social media coverage. Diplomatic engagement of this sort in these times has perforce to be a spectacle. If the Howdy Modi “walkaround” with United States President Donald Trump was one kind of spectacle, the “talkathon” at Mahabalipuram with Chinese President Xi Jinping was of another kind. However, it would be mistaken and churlish to view these events as mere spectacles. Prime Minister Modi has mastered the art of in-your-face diplomatic engagement not just in the world of new and instant media, but one that is increasingly characterised by a multipolar balance of power.

The 1962 war was caused in part by differences over delineating the border between two newly created republics. It was also occasioned by Jawaharlal Nehru’s hubris and Mao Zedong’s desire to show India its place. Resolving the border issue is key to bridging the trust deficit. However, over the years, two other issues have come up — China’s relations with Pakistan and the large deficit in bilateral trade.

Responding to India’s closer relations with the US, at a time when US-China relations have deteriorated, China has developed its own risk-mitigation strategy by strengthening its partnership with Pakistan. While India does not appreciate the China-Pakistan nexus, it also recognises the fact that China is not the only country that uses Pakistan to keep India off balance. All major powers have done so, and continue to do so.

If India can warm up to a Trump who is willing to chat up Imran Khan and



Given Xi’s 100-year perspective, both countries have to learn to live with year-to-year bumps while journeying together towards a new Asian Century.
Sanjaya Baru



flirt with the Taliban, why should it get all shirty with a Xi who does the same? Pakistan offers itself willingly to the highest bidder. No one will help India remove Pakistan from its equation with the world if India itself will not do enough to achieve that objective.

A second factor that added to the trust deficit has been the trade deficit. While India supported China's membership of the World Trade Organisation, it feels China used the multilateral trade regime to acquire access to the Indian market without providing equal access to China's. This is only partly correct. India's inability to export more to China is part of an overall lack of global competitiveness that requires solutions at home. However, by erecting non-tariff barriers in products where India has a competitive edge, China has contributed to a view in India that it seeks to "de-industrialise" India. In contributing to this view, China has politicised an essentially economic issue. The new high-level bilateral economic and trade dialogue agreed to at Mahabalipuram should help bridge this deficit.

India's priority in seeking good relations with China is no different from her interest in seeking good relations with other global powers — to secure a global and regional environment conducive to India's own economic development.

When Chinese interlocutors have sought my explanation for closer US-India relations I have always insisted that India seeks the same level of engagement with the US that China already has — given the US's more developed business-to-business and people-to-people relations with China.

Despite the trade war, the US

Through Wuhan and Mahabalipuram conversations and similar ones India seeks stable and predictable relations with China.

still buys more from China than from India. Better US-India government-to-government relations are a more recent phenomenon triggered by China's rise, the challenge of jihadi extremism and the prosperity of Indian Americans in the US. It remains to be seen how invested the US would be in India's long-term rise.

Over the past decade, India has slowly come to terms with the widening power differential with China and is building defences to deal with it. The best defence remains a stronger, more productive and competitive economy built on the foundations of a better educated and skilled people. While India does its homework, stable and predictable relations with China would help. Through the Wuhan and Mahabalipuram conversations, and others that will follow, India seeks precisely this objective.

Many Indian analysts object to China's unhelpful role in India's desire to seek membership of the United Nations Security Council and the Nuclear Suppliers' Group.

But China is not the only major power that likes to keep the door to exclusive clubs closed to aspiring members. As for India's membership of NSG and the nuclear deal, US support was entirely due to President George W Bush

Jr who over-ruled naysayers within his own administration and the US Congress to favour India.

If Modi can turn Xi into a friend, like Manmohan Singh turned Bush around, China too may change its stance. Which is why the new informal format for the Modi-Xi dialogue is important. It is President Bush who wiped out decades of distrust between India and the US.

Can Xi do that for India-China relations? Trust between nations must begin at the very top.

By speaking of a "hundred year plan" for cementing relations between two ancient civilisations, Chinese President Xi Jinping has made two points. First, he situated the current phase within the long history of our civilisational engagement. Second, he made the important point that it would take time for a more balanced relationship to get established between China and India given the extant power differential caused by China's spectacular rise since the beginning of this century.

The next decade is, therefore, crucial for India. It has to regain economic momentum and strengthen its own human and strategic capabilities as a modern, knowledge-based nation. China's power flows precisely from these attributes.

The Modi-Xi engagement must be viewed as part of a multi-polar engagement with all major powers — including the US, European Union, Russia and Japan — aimed at enabling India's resurgence. Given Xi's 100-year perspective, both countries have to learn to live with year-to-year bumps while journeying together towards a new Asian Century. □□

This article first appeared in the print edition on October 14, 2019 under the title 'Xi's 100-year promise' The writer is Distinguished Fellow, Institute of Defence Studies & Analysis, New Delhi

What of primordial faith?



Judicial ban on hoary rituals including sacrifices of animals have been integral parts of traditional tribal religions question if outlook a lot about secularism and constitutionalism.
Sandhya Jain

In Tripura, the Molsom tribe celebrates Sangkrak puja during Magh (January-February). Sangkrak is their Kula Devata (clan deity) and goats, chicken, pigs, (sometimes buffalo) are sacrificed by the priest. At least 14 animals are sacrificed as Chaudha Devata (14 gods) puja is part of the ritual. More animals are offered if the community wishes, after which the meat is cooked and distributed as 'prasad' (sacred food).

The sacrifice of life – for sharing one's good fortune (harvest) with the divine – is conducted with utmost sobriety and piety in temples, or open altars. There is nothing voyeuristic

about it: life is returned to its source, for renewal. The hoary traditions of India's diverse communities are sanctified by tradition and sometimes mentioned in sacred texts. The Yajur Veda mentions animal sacrifice that is today mostly linked with Shakta (Devi) traditions widely prevalent in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Odisha, where Durga puja during Navratri is accompanied by animal sacrifice to commemorate the slaying of the asura Mahisha, who took the form of a buffalo.

Hindu dharma is not a canonical faith like the Abrahamic creeds. It is not codified as the immutable word of a particular God as conveyed through a messenger. The tradition is sacred in itself; changes are sanctified as desired by the age. The existence of a text does not prevent change; absence of one does not negate hoary beliefs and practices.

Flawed equivalence led the Tripura High Court to ban sacrifice of animals in State-run temples, on the eve of Durga Ashtami. The shocked state government is considering an appeal before the Supreme Court, while a scion of the erstwhile royal family said the court cannot overrule promises made at Accession (September 9, 1947) whereby the state government would continue sponsorship (including sacrifice of animals) of several traditional tribal pujas in 14 temples, including Mata Tripureswari temple and Durga Bari.

Responding to a Writ Petition(C)(PIL) No.2/2018 by Subhas Bhattacharjee (who is unlikely to use the Tripura precedent to force the issue in West Bengal), the Tripura High Court on September 27, 2019, declared bali (sacrifice) a "social evil" and "against the Constitutional mandate and spirit".

At a time when more and more State Governments are taking over the management of cash-rich Hindu temples and diverting monies offered by devotees to their deities to non-religious purposes, the Court ruled that the State can

regulate or restrict any economic, financial, political or secular activity associated with a religious practice. The Government may participate in religious activities “which are secular in nature” (whatever that means) but, the “act of the State of offering one goat every day, for a sacrifice in the Mata Tripureswari temple and other temples on certain occasions, lacks the essence of economic, commercial, political or secular character and hence, the action of the State in offering such an animal for sacrifice is neither permissible under the Indian Constitution nor any statute”.

The court asserted that the “right of offering an animal for sacrifice is not an integral and essential part of the religion, protected under Article 25(1) of the Constitution”. Declaring that the “State has no religion other than constitutionalism and the expression ‘person’ under Article 25 has to be in reference to natural person”, as in the case of the Supreme Court’s verdict in Sabarimala, it ruled that the “withdrawal of such practice would not tantamount to any change, fundamental in character of the religion”.

Pointing out that human sacrifice was stopped (by King Gobinda Manikya, 1660-1667, 1671-78), the court ruled that the 500-year-old tradition of sacrificing animals in Tripureswari Devi Temple, either by the State or by an individual, is not an essential part of the religion and is not protected under Article 25(1) and held it to be against the principle/doctrine of morality and health, and also against the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act, 1960. It called the practice viola-

Does judicial ban mean that non-canonical traditions of non-monotheistic faiths are subordinate to judicially determined “constitutional values”.

tive of Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

Though constitutional provisions are subject to legislative amendment and to varying interpretations by courts at various times, the Tripura High Court declared, “Constitutional values are to be embraced and not to be superseded by personal beliefs”. This means that non-canonical traditions of non-monotheistic faiths are subordinate to judicially determined “constitutional values” that are not mentioned or defined in any law.

The court issued a blanket ban on sacrifice within any temple in Tripura and ordered the district magistrate / collector and superintendent of police of all districts to ensure compliance by installing CCTV cameras in the temples and placing the video recording before the court every month. It is questionable if the Constitution permits courts to undertake such tracking. The Tripura judgment approvingly cites the Supreme Court’s verdict on Sabarimala (2018) that trampled the religious sensitivities of devotees in pursuit of a reformist agenda of giving equality to women of a particular age

group, who did not want this “liberation”.

The issue of locus standi is relevant. The Tripura bench hailed the petitioner as a retired judicial officer, but there is nothing on record to show that he was a believer. Yet he has ensured codification of “essential” religious practices in Hindu temples and tampered with the very nature of the faith.

Indian courts are increasingly wading into Theology, to the detriment of Hindu dharma. In the Shirur Mutt case (1954), the Supreme Court enunciated a doctrine of essential religious practice and ruled that the “essential part of a religion” should be ascertained with reference to the doctrines of that religion itself. But now Courts are deciding the “essential” in an interventionist manner.

Five centuries of sacrifice in Tripura temples makes the ritual “settled usage and custom”. The fact that the State Government shouldered this responsibility in 1947 means the deity(s) should have been treated as a juristic entity(s) with the right to its special puja-paddhati. Indeed, the diversity of Hindu tradition entitles all deities with distinct rituals to be treated as denominations under Article 26 of the Constitution.

Finally, the most distressing part of the judgment was the comment that sacrifice cannot be permitted as Tripureswari temple is being promoted as an “international tourist destination” for people of all beliefs and faiths. Henceforth, the imagined tastes of tourists will dictate the worship of Devi. Is this an essential part of secularism and constitutionalism? □□

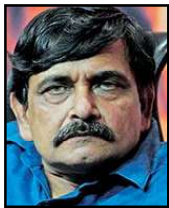
(The writer is Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; the views expressed are personal)

Why Modi's "Ab Ki Baar, Trump Sarkar" Helps India

After the Houston triumph, Narendra Modi has emerged as the Henry Kissinger of Indian diplomacy. He has achieved what no other Indian Prime Minister could, bringing the US to India's side in its fight against Pak-sponsored Islamic Terrorism. The bonhomie and camaraderie displayed by the two great leaders of two great democracies have opened great possibilities and hope for India and the US.

Narendra Modi as Prime Minister since 2014 has been trying to leverage the Indian diaspora as a great diplomatic asset. The Houston event marked the coming of age of this strategy when Modi and Trump, holding hands, strolled across the stadium greeting the 50,000 people of Indian origin with an unambiguous political message. Modi said "Ab ki baar, Trump sarkar", more as poetic rhetoric than an endorsement of Trump for the American presidential election, now only a year away. For his part, Trump said he would be the best-ever friend for India in the White House. Trump obviously is aware of the bumpy Indo-US relations in the past seven decades. Often, the US has sided with Pakistan, which was a NATO country and unlike the Russian republic which always stood steadily by India, the US used to vacillate and hyphenate India and Pakistan.

Call it Modi's diplomatic coup or Trump's policy shift, the US-India relation today is on a different footing. Trump said everything that India wanted to hear. Without naming Pakistan, Modi said the US in 9/11 and India in 26/11 faced a terror attack from the same source. While India is still debating if terror has a religion or not, Trump was forthright in saying that the US will stand strong with India in fighting Global Islamist Terror. The debate on border security and illegal migration is hot in India. Trump's forceful stand on both issues is identical to



Indian Prime Minister Modi has emerged as a Master Diplomat in bringing USA to the Indian side in our fight against Pak-sponsored terrorism.

**Dr. R.
Balashankar**



Modi's stand. Trump was very eloquent on the benefits provided by his administration to the Indian diaspora rule. He also emphasized cooperation on defence, energy security and the Indian contribution to America's economic growth and job creation.

Modi and Trump lavishly praised each other. What was significant however was the chemistry between the two leaders. Both highlighted their achievements in their respective countries and stressed how the new dimensions of their friendship will benefit both countries. Modi asked the diaspora to give a standing ovation to Trump for his commitment to fight terror. Modi in his speech said Trump considers him a tough negotiator. Both leaders said they are learning a lot from each other. How this new diplomatic equation will work to India's advantage in

the long run depends on many factors including the Presidential poll outcome next year.

That is why some critics suggest that Modi should not have openly sided with Trump. But that is not how diplomacy works or big powers respond. Modi considers India a big power. And he believes in taking big risks. As Prime Minister, he has turned diplomacy India-centric and ideology-neutral. That is why, after the Balakot air strike and the abrogation of Article 370, he could rally nations behind India and isolate Pakistan.

Republican presidents have been more India-friendly than Democrats, though the buzz in India has always been pro-Democrat. Some say that with his endorsement of Trump, Modi has confused the four million Indian Americans in the US. But what Modi has achieved is that for the

first time, the Indian diaspora has been recognized as a significant factor in the US election. This is commendable leverage, and only few ethnic groups have this advantage there. Pakistan for instance, does not enjoy this advantage.

Unlike Pakistan, we are not looking for aid. Our canvass is larger and it is political and strategic. Technology transfer, cooperation on space and defence, a strategic partnership against the shenanigans of China and Pakistan are the areas in which Modi is looking for US support. The message from "Howdy, Modi" is loud and clear on all these aspects. Modi has got what India wanted. He has made Pakistan irrelevant in India's diplomatic engagement the US. This will also impact the Indian position globally. □□

(Dr R. Balashankar is Member, BJP Central Committee on Training, and Committee on Publications and former Convener BJP National Intellectual Cell and former Editor Organiser.)
https://www.ndte.com/opinion/why-modis-ab-ki-baar-trump-sarkar-keeps-india-2106120

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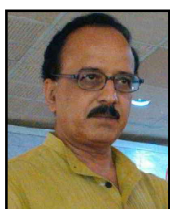
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Make most of farm subsidies, grow food safely



While Punjab and Haryana face a crisis resulting from water-guzzling cropping pattern, Queensland province in Australia has established a fund offering financial support to farmers who demonstrate reduction in water usage. Why can't a similar stimulus be given to the farmers in Punjab to switch to less water-consuming crops?

Devinder Sharma

ACCOUNTING for over 25 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), intensive agricultural practices over the past few decades have not only deepened the agrarian crisis, but also taken a huge toll on the natural resource base. While the realisation that agriculture is a predominant reason for the climatic aberrations the world is witnessing is gaining ground, the world is slowly seeking a change in the way farming is being practised. The call for safe and organically produced food is growing.

At the base of the environmental crisis afflicting agriculture are the massive subsidies being pumped into agriculture that have left behind a trail of destruction. This is the price the world has paid, often unknowingly, to keep food cheap so as to keep economic reforms viable. According to a study conducted by the Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU), 2019, a global coalition of scientists, experts and economists, cheap food comes at an enormous 'hidden cost' on human health, natural resources and environment. Estimated at \$12 trillion — equal to China's GDP — the report warns that half the world may remain undernourished by 2030 if business as usual continues. The report goes much beyond ascertaining the reasons leading to the farm crisis and lists 10 measures that need to be adopted for transformation.

While growing undernourishment or 'hidden hunger' will be one of the tragic outcomes, the devastating impact it will leave behind by way of destruction of natural resources and the climatic havoc wrought will be nothing short of an ecocide. The report, Growing better: Ten critical transitions to transform food



and land use, estimates \$700 billion a year is what is being spent on growing food. The figure may still be higher since it becomes difficult to decipher every explicit and implicit farm subsidy being provided. But before you form an opinion, let me make it clear — not all these subsidies go to the farmers. They hardly get a minuscule proportion as direct income support.

Yet another study has on the basis of producer subsidy equivalent (PSE), which measures the amount of support received by farmers, worked out that the richest trading block — Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and China — leads the table in 2016-17 with an annual subsidy support of \$235 billion and \$232 billion, respectively.

As the lead author of a report, The first 10 years of agreement on agriculture of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which was presented at the Hong Kong Ministerial in December 2005, my estimate was that more than 80 per cent of these subsidies (at that time, the WTO had worked out close to \$360 billion of farm subsidies that rich countries paid) actually went to agribusiness companies. Mostly for export-driven agriculture, these subsidies were for intensive farming practices which had devastated soil health, contaminated the ground water, and were also for clearing rain forests for cattle rearing and palm oil plantations, raising bio-fuel crops, industrial livestock farming, processing and trading which had not only polluted the environment and decimated biodiversity but also produced unhealthy diets.

Only one per cent of the \$700

billion of global farm subsidies a year had gone in for environmentally safe farming practices. In India, too, less than one per cent of the annual subsidy support goes for regenerative agriculture or for organic and holistic agriculture. “There is incredibly small direct targeting of subsidies at positive environment outcomes, which is insane,” Jeremy Oppenheim, principal at the Food and Land Use Coalition, told The Guardian, and added: “We have got to switch these subsidies into explicitly positive measures.”

The challenge, therefore, is enormous, but small baby steps taken in the right direction can lead to a visible transformation in how food is safely grown.

Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed to the farmers to shift from chemical fertilisers, the scientific fraternity thinks that such a move will jeopardise the gains of Green Revolution. On the contrary, as per a paper published in Nature (March 2018), China was able to increase crop productivity — by an average of 11 per cent — in the rice, wheat and maize cereal crops by reducing the application of fertilisers by 15 per cent.

But this remarkable turnaround happened when a mission mode approach was followed over the years with 14,000 workshops, engaging 65,000 bureaucrats and technicians as well as 1,000 researchers. Meanwhile, it has also announced to achieve zero growth in fertiliser and pesticides subsidy by 2020. There is no reason why India cannot take a cue and re-orient the state agricultural extension machinery towards organic practices. At the same time, take firm

steps to reduce fertiliser subsidy every year.

Besides cutting down on fertiliser subsidies, China’s effort is also to promote the use of crop rotations, crop residues and keeping the land fallow. Picking on the highly successful strategy of setting up demonstration plots at the time of Green Revolution, China has at least 40 sustainable agriculture demonstration farms. Not enough, but shows a determination to move away from chemical farming. Similarly, while Punjab and Haryana are faced with a serious crisis resulting from the water-guzzling cropping pattern they follow, Queensland province has established a \$500 million (Australian) fund offering financial support to farmers who demonstrate reduction in water usage. Why can’t a similar stimulus package be given to Punjab farmers to switch from paddy to other less water-consuming crops? If Rs 1.45 lakh crore stimuli can be given to the industry, there is no reason why a similar economic package cannot be given to the farmers.

But essentially, it has to first begin by ensuring that agricultural universities undertake a complete redesigning of their research programmes, shunning chemical inputs. This will require a mindset change, which may take some time, but is not impossible. At the same time, the budgetary support for agriculture, too, has to shift to ecological farming systems. At the global level, the FOLU report strives to redirect at least \$500 billion of agricultural subsidies towards sustainable farming, poverty alleviation and ecological restoration. A tall order, but certainly attainable. □□

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/make-most-of-farm-subsidies-grow-food-safely/>

Perils of plastics planet

The Prime Minister has made a right noise about banning single use plastics. The facts are life threatening. By 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Whereas in 2014 plastic production in the world was 311 MT, in 2050, according to the World Economic Forum, it would hit 1124MT. By weight ratio of plastic to fish in the ocean was 1:5 by 2014, in 2050 it would be an alarming 1:1. For these two years the respective shares of plastics in carbon budget would climb from 1% to 15%. Delhi generates more than 9,000 tonnes of garbage every day, three forth of which is wrapped in banned plastic bags. It generates about 600 tonnes of plastic waste every day. Whole of India discards 15,000 tonnes of plastics daily, of which 43% is single use. Single use plastics are a sinister menace. Plastic has replaced aluminium, steel and natural fibres like jute and hemp in many industries. But it remains beyond the pale of established waste collection system for recycling purposes and floats on the surface of earth and ocean for centuries. In turn it does damage to our marine life, fisheries, farming, and therefore us, the homo sapiens. All stake holders consumers, producers, and the regulator have to contribute to tackle the horrifying spectacle. Alas, till now the intent and action both have been rather sparse. Why does human mind not think consciously and urgently about environmental damage, compared with, say, terrorism? This is because as social mammals we only think about living beings and their evil designs. If global warming had been unleashed on us by a ruthless despot, we would have been more concerned. Second, if a violation fails to transgress moral boundaries, it may not alarm our brain. No human society has moral rules about atmosphere chemistry. Three, the threat is still lurking somewhere in future. We get concerned about a clear and contemporary attack, and not to something which is not even in our line of vision. These, and then some more, reasons have therefore at best led to green washing. To convert consumers



While the campaign to save planet earth from demon of plastics is laudable, a gradual and sustained effort would prove to be more fruitful.
KK Srivastav



we need to adopt a marketing approach. Engagement with 'activated' customer is needed. This requires knowing what, as regards environment friendly substitutes of plastics, does he want, at which price preference, with what price performance trade off, and with what kind of underlying appeal (functional, emotional, or social). Based on these answers, the marketer needs to create environmental improvement through innovation in market structures, material usage, and scouting services. Customers intimacy and competitive advantage need to be looked at from new strategic frameworks; and cooperation along the whole value chain needs to be ensured so as to incorporate the impact of climate on their changed shopping pattern.

Producers have a huge role in transforming the way plastics are produced and used. Single use plastics packaging and consequent mismanaged plastic waste have become a giant heap due to skyrocketing production hike of plastics in 2000. The world currently generates 300 million tonnes of plastic waste each year sans the capacity, infrastructure, or collective willpower needed to manage it. 8 million tonnes of plastic waste flows into the ocean annually, while mismanaged waste remaining on land triggers public health crisis among vulnerable communities. According to a joint report by McKinsey, Ellen MacArther, and the WEF there are negative externalities worth a whopping \$ 40 billion, due to plastic usage, actually exceeding the manufacturers' profits. Though India is not a big plastic polluter, given its low consumption level, the plastic industry is slated to grow

at a steady rate of 10.5% annually between FY 15 and FY20. To be sure, however, the mismanaged plastic waste out of the total waste generated in India is nearly 2% as against only 0.9% for the US. This 2% figure translated to 33.1 million pounds of plastic everyday, of which only 19.8 million is collected and recycled. Conscious of this fact lately companies like HUL, ITC, Coca Cola and other in India have pledged to adopt 100% recyclable packaging by 2015 and eliminate single use plastics packaging. At the local level, social entrepreneurs are delivering concrete changes, converting plastic waste into reusable material and finished products.

We need to revolutionize the way plastics are made, consumed, recycled and reused. Let us admit that substituting single use plastic—especially plastic bags is virtually impossible. Moreover, substitutes like cotton bags may not be environment friendly after all, given their carbon footprint. All substitutes of plastic are either more expensive compared to plastic or are less easily available. Thus we need to first address the issue of mismanaged plastic waste. Plastic packaging, for example, comprises 40% of global plastic production. We need to create a new plastic economy by transitioning to a circular economy model for plastic production, consumption, disposal, and reclaim. This would involve adoption of innovative packaging materials designed with sustainability and empowerment of consumers to reuse, recycle, and compost plastic products after initial use. For all this waste management facilities will have to grow manifold to address the waste problem. This

would drastically reduce negative externality of plastics, according to McKinsey. Currently the rate of recycling for polyethylene is only 10%. Plastics recycle at the rate of less than 40%, compared with 80% steel and 75% aluminium cans.

The momentum behind plastic action is unstoppable. Prime Minister, no less, has been the most prominent global leader calling for phasing out of single use plastics. His words certainly carry weight. The national conversation has shifted to single use plastics. State sponsored awareness across cities, states, and all over India is being created. We must, however, be cautioned against promoting lofty, yet unimplementable, ideas. The union govt. amended the plastic waste management rules, 2016 in March 2018, with the aim to completely phase out single use plastics by FY20. But what about the 4 million workers, employed in the industry? And why would switching take place if consumers are not provided affordable, easily available and really green and sustainable alternatives? What about producers' balance sheet if they have to use costlier substitutes? Finally, the whole of India lacks an organised system for management of plastic waste, leading to widespread littering. No wonder the PM had to postpone a ban on plastic bags, cups, plates, small bottles, straw, and certain types of sachets which otherwise would have clipped an estimated 5-10% from India's annual consumption of about 14 million tonnes of plastics.

A war cry makes for good optics, but in this matter a calibrated and gradual approach would prevent faltering. □□

The author is Associate Professor, Delhi University

The socioeconomics of Single-Use Plastic

There is a robust relation between social behavior and economic activity. If an activity scales up economic movement then it may or may not necessarily be adding value to social behavior, rather on a few occasions it might deplete the value arising out of new social behavior. Consumption of anything- whether it is food or clothes or entertainment is one among many social behaviors. Dependency on single-use plastic is also an example of social behavior. The objective of any economic activity is to optimize the value and maximize the profit.

The economic model of “low margin and high volume” is hugely impacted by supply chain cost. The single-use plastic has its own dominant role everywhere in the supply chain- starting from manufacturer, as well as raw material supplier to the end-user. The important constituent of supply chain cost is the packaging cost and the logistic cost among many other cost components.

The single-use plastics are referred to many varieties of plastics. The plastics are widely used as packaging materials by almost every business. Variants of single-use plastics are also used to package chips, biscuits, and chocolates and such packages are not recycled or reused. The plastic bottles which are used to pack water, oils and other food items are recyclable. Few of the common single-use plastics are plastic grocery bags, plastic straws, plastic cups, plastic glasses, plastic sticks for cotton bud, multi-layered plastics, plastic bubble bags, and plastic tapes. Even a simple product such as a shampoo sachet whose volume is 5 ml and is sold for one rupee by the retailer to the end-user has a huge dependency on single-use plastic. The manufacturer of shampoo sachet receives raw materials or chemicals in plastic bags, the manufactured shampoo sachet whose volume is as low as 5 ml is packaged in plastic and further bunch of such sachet is trans-



The one rupee 5ml shampoo sachet, fifty paisa hair oil, and many other such products which feed on single-use plastic have troubles ahead.

Alok Singh



shipped to different locations and here also plastic has a role, further the retailer supplies additional plastic carry bag to the end-user. The plastic packaging material assures safe, leak-proof, and convenient handling to the manufacturer and it is convenient to the end-user as well. This convenience is of short term at the cost of long term disadvantage. These single-use plastic are the culprit to environment as well as to society.

According to the UN Programme on Environment- the single-use plastic bags might take 1000 years to decompose. India alone generated about 26000 tones of plastic wastes every day during the year 2017-18. The single-use plastic has made the overall cost of delivery cheaper for big manufacturing facilities and these big manufacturing facilities may be located anywhere in the world to transship their products anywhere in the world. One of the important factors to determine the location of the manufacturing plant is to exploit the opportunity created by labor arbitrage i.e. wherever the labor is cheaper the location is profitable and hence is attractive to the manufacturer or the investor. The manufacturing facility can use the same raw material and the same packaging material irrespective of the location of the manufacturing plant in usual circumstances.

The single-use plastic as a packaging material has the least role to play in the decision to install the plant. Now the labor arbitrage is weakening due to mass-scale automation of the manufacturing facility. The automation is capital intensive and hence the breakeven point, sustainability and the profitability of such a facility

need a high volume of inventory turnover. Now things are changing, and it is changing everywhere. The new component of business system dynamics is the role of "single-use plastic"- which has been taken for granted for too long during the earlier decision making process at the cost of the environment and society. The logistics truly marks the business facility and its location, and the logistics and packaging which consume a high volume of single-use plastic will have to look for alternatives. The alternative for a material that matches the characteristics of lightweight and low volume is a challenge to the industry which had tak-

These single-use plastic are the culprit to environment as well as to society.

en single-use plastic for granted. The move to discontinue single-use plastic will impact the whole business system dynamics. This policy will have a role to determine the location of the plant as well as the capacity of the plant. The business model of low margin and high volume to serve people at the bottom of the pyramid is at threat. The one rupee 5 ml shampoo sachet, fifty paise hair oil, and many other such products which feed on single-use plastic have troubles ahead.

The government of India has set an ambitious target to completely eliminate the uses of single-use plastic by the end of the year 2022. The sanction on single-use plastic

started on 2nd of October 2019 which was the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The respective state government has come up with variants of the sanction to be imposed. Broadly the single-use plastic can be categorized into three categories- ban, buyback, and exemption. The exemption is obvious to those single-use plastics which are engaged in the medical system- like medicines or hospital supplies or anything related to health care. The buyback is a condition that may be imposed on the manufacturer to recycle or reuse the plastic which has been used anywhere in the whole supply chain engaged to transship its product to the end-user customer- the simplest example can be potato chips packet. The ban is related to complete withdrawal of single-use plastic from the system- for example plastic carry bags.

The buyback restriction will impose additional costs on the overall logistics. It will be a challenge to the business model of high volume and low margin. There will be a shift from labor arbitrage to logistics as criteria to decide the location and capacity of the manufacturing unit, with the underlying assumption that single-use plastic has a role in logistics. The e-commerce companies will have to redesign their business model to be competitive and the same is true for other businesses as well. It will also create opportunities for low shelf-life products and hence localized unit- for example – use of leaf plates instead of disposable plates. The world without single-use plastic will be a boon to the philosophy of indigenous production and dignified consumption.□□

Co-existing: A way of life

Ancient Vedic-Hindu civilization which was eco-friendly has now given way to a polluted air and has destroyed natural bio-diversity, the cost of development. – Radha Choube

I was looking at Chandrayan- II landing and chilled with thrill of it, “Yes! We conquered the moon” henceforth India is space superpower. I was thinking how technology have changed human life in short period of time. In my childhood days we heard stories of Neil Armstrong’s landing on moon and wondered whether our country ever make it? And here I’m a proud Indian cheering for our scientists.

Life has taken major shift; the goal post has changed. Once amused with pager and cordless phones now kids are playing with smart phones. We had Chandamama who was friend, philosopher, guide in our stories, here is new generation laughing at our stupid imagination and calculating gravity on moon. What a change!

Alas! But no change comes with cakes and cookies. We have to pay prize the cost of development and we paid indeed! Now no sparrow comes to play in my home yard neither crow makes nasty noises. Sun is overheating, rain delayed and over pouring. Its washing away mountains and plains. Air is difficult to breath, land is less and less fertile.

A drift in our approach towards nature and bio-diversity has brought back a negative reverse effect on mankind. We the ancient Vedic-Hindu civilization have been one of the eco-friendliest, bio-sustainable and mutually co-existing society.

There are hymns in Vedas and Upanishads praying for good health, purity, prosperity and peace of entire mankind. Our ancestors were great thinkers who understood the delicate balance between nature and human being. To maintain this balance, they introduced various worships of God which involved the surrounding fruits, flowers, color, food. Every God have their own animal vehicle. In this way a close relation was built between God worship and protection, preservation of natural surroundings. As normal human psychology works, they try to please their selected God and to worship them they try to maintain order of God’s natural choices. But in recent times with technology and some influence from western world this intent of worship and to preserve nature for God both are declining.

A new trait of selfishness is observed where human wants to exploit nature for his own benefit. Carelessness is everywhere. Cutting trees, mountains,

dumping chemical waste in water bodies, over use of plastic. Planting trees which are foreign in origin. These foreign trees are not natural to Indian atmosphere; they don’t flower like Indian domestic plants. They don’t provide assistance in pollination, nest building. Due to unavailability of proper pollinating agents and breeding of birds, insects the natural spread of seeds is not done. Thus many beautiful Indian flowering plants are reduced to nothing.

What is solution to this problem? Should we abandon all physical growth and go back to primate life? Doesn’t seem convincing. The challenge of the moment is to develop such technology, society which is physically developed, emotionally stable and biologically co-existing. We all can find our means and ways to maintain this balance. Educating street vendors for not using one-time plastic, educating kids from school age to be responsible and contributing towards nature, promoting paper/cloth bags, creating awareness through various social media platforms and social events are a few ideas which can be done. In our culture we believe Panchmahabhuta as basic elements of life. The Air, Water, Earth, Space, Energy. All these natural elements have lost balance and are polluted. We can take up any one element discuss its importance in life, factors causing pollution, how to control these factors and what can be done on individual level to address its restoration to normalcy. Let this be a talking point on dining table, in garden games, in school activities, in event management, in life.

The truth is nature was existing before advent of mankind it is with development of mankind and it will be there even after extinction of mankind. We cannot control and conquer nature as nature have created us. We can only creatively and constructively remold the natural elements for our daily life purpose. Not master it but to be grateful to it and respect it. Not to misuse and exploit it but to clean and preserve it. On planet earth human are most developed and powerful creature. Hence with great power comes great responsibility! Let’s walk an extra mile and understand the nature, its importance in bio-diversity and natural balance.

That’s the way of co-existing!

□□

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Glimpses of Economic Thoughts of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay

Deendayal Upadhyaya was the President of a party the roots of which were embedded in the cultural heritage of this great nation. There is no denying the fact that no party can today carry on the concept of modern welfare-state without a cogent economic policy. No party can attain political power merely on the strength of cultural, religious and traditional ideals, without closely working in tandem with the socio-economic philosophy that is germane to the nation. Hence, when Deendayal Upadhyaya assumed the leadership of Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). He tried to develop an economic policy in consonance with its cultural emphasis.

The Jana Sangh was accused of being devoid of any economic policy; but after the study of Upadhyaya's literature, it appears that probably his party and its workers could not articulate the economic philosophy of the party to the society. On the contrary, Deendayal Upadhyaya has written immaculately only on the economic issues. In the contemporary age of economic-centric cycle of events, his reviews, assessments and evaluations were thoroughly judicious, which are the subject matter of this chapter in the light of his basic economic thoughts and ethos. In addition to the contextual articles and lectures, the following books present his views on the subject:

- The Two plans: promises, Performances, Prospects.
- Bharatiya Arthaniti: Vikas ke ek Disha Economic Outlook with the Concept of Equality.

Deendayal Upadhyaya made his first economic exposition with 'Bharatiya Jana Sangh ke Arthaniti' in 1953, on the occasion of the U.P. Provincial Conference. This was primarily meant for the workers. But even before writings there



Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya worked for upliftment of rural and city poor through the concept of Nationalisation of infrastructure Industries and the Centralization economic and political power.
Prof. Nandini Sinha Kapur



took place some incidents took place that suggested his basic 'socialist' instincts. However, because of the evolution of his philosophical thoughts he later on, rejected 'socialism' in its technical meaning. But it does not mean that he on, rejected and relinquished his basic 'socialist' approach. Even before he joined BJS he became as a whole-time worker (pracharak) of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in U.P. While replying to the charge of the RSS being 'capitalist' he said: "It is absolutely preposterous to think that Sangh wants capitalists. Can lakhs of educated youth who have dedicated themselves to the cause of the nation and work day and night think of working for the benefit of a handful of Zamindars?"

He made many efforts to merge the zamindars with economic life but the Ram Rajya Parishad failed to join political powers. At that time, defending political ideals against Ram Rajya Parishad by Deendya ji is worth remembering. "Ram Rajya Parishad, by keeping itself separate from the United Front has proved that it represents only reactionary and capitalist elements, and its programmes are drawn, not from the cottage of Karpatri ji but from the palaces of landlords and Marwaris".

The public statement he gave in July 25, 1953 as General Secretary of the Jana Sangh regarding its economic programme is also worth mentioning, "Our economic programme is absolutely socialist. It is committed to end the inequality in the income and expenditure frame of different sections of the society. We want to establish a ratio of one between the lowest and the highest incomes. We not only want nationalisation of the



We not only want nationalisation of the infrastructure industries, but also want to apply this principle on those few who tend to monopolise them. The decentralisation of economic & political powers is our guiding principle.

infrastructure industries, but also want to apply this principle on those few who tend to monopolise them. The decentralisation of economic and political powers is our guiding principle. "In fact, it has been our demand that the ex-zamindars and jagirdars should not be paid any compensation. Though whatever is necessary for their rehabilitation should be done".

The detailed elucidation he presented towards end of that very year in the Provincial Conference of U.P. is only a detailed manifestation of the same state. We shall quote the following incident which helps in understanding his basic economic vision.

The labourers of the Kanpur Cotton Mill had gone on a strike against its modernization which they felt would result in the retrenchment of the staff. Supporting this strike, Deendayal Upadhyaya made an erudite commentary delving into the nexus between capitalism and modernisation, "The question of modernization is complex. It is not only related to the labourers (of this mill), but also affects economic issues at all India level. ...In fact, modernization is at the root of the establishment of big industries and a capitalist economy. Today, the science is constant-

ly trying to introduce maximum automation and minimising employment of human labour. Every such new invention brings a horrifying tale of unemployment. "Deendayal Upadhyaya wrote an essay on employment of human beings based on the case studies of the problems of vendors sans shops. He expressed his views as follows.

than man-power, and the number of shopkeepers, we have a good number of vendors who earn their bread on the market way side pavements, rehris, khomchasss etc. According to Delhi Municipal Committee rules, they cannot sell their articles Celesta at a fixed place.

There was also the question of keeping the city beautiful. The barrows, trollies, to this probbroken trucks and untidy khomchas spoiled the appearance of the capital. The Delhi Government has initiated a drive against the pavement traders. "While drawing a picture of these vendors and pavement traders, their inferiority complexes, the behaviour of the police with them, and the mass-psyche created by the whole scenario, Deendayal Upadhyaya concludes, "Today, just as we have the problem of land less cultivators, we also have the problem of the shop-less traders". □□

Dattopant Thengadi (Memories) (1920-2004)

Thane meets of RSS 1972

“Dattopant is our thought giver” said Shri Guru ji Golwalkar at the Thane meet of RSS held at Twatta Gyana Vidya Peeth of Pandurang Shashtri Athawale in 1972. Founder of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh Thengadi’s call was “Nationalize the labour, Labourise the Industry and Industrialise the Nation”. His clarion call was, ‘workers unite the world’ instead of workers of the world unite – a Marxist slogan. Indian ethos and cultural moorings found expression in Thengadi ji’s exhortations in Indian trade union movement so far dominated by leftists. Today BMS is the largest trade union in India.

The socio economic structure of West including its thought processes as well as Hindu concept of development delineated by Shri Guruji Golwalkar at Thane meet in his discourses continued for five long days. Finally Shri Guruji asked for preparing a strategy for sustainable developmental of India. Further he opined that manifestos must be such that country would follow it for years together while people restore confidence in it. Accordingly Thengadi ji presented a framework on the basis of those enunciations made by Guruji at Thane.

Year’s later Thengadi ji endorsed the views that “Westernisation is not modernisation and western paradigms are not universal paradigms”. More specific recommendations were made by Thengadi ji on Western market economy. He opposed stock exchange, speculative trade practices like derivative trade, forward trading, currency market etc. which are responsible for artificial price rise and contrived scarcities. To down load Integral Humanism of Deendayal Up-



*Thengadi ji
opposed stock
exchange,
speculative trade
practices like
derivative trade,
forward trading,
currency market
etc. which are
responsible for
artificial price rise
and contrived
scarcities.*
Saroj Mitra



adhyay one has to follow Dattopant Thengadi. Works of Guruji Golwalkar, Deendayal Upadhyay and Dattopant Thengadi move in same wave length without any contradiction.

Communism in reverse gear

Dattopant Thengadi being member of Parliamentary delegation led by Lok Sabha speaker Sanjeev Reddy visited Soviet Russia in 1968. After returning from Russia he declared that communism was in reverse gear in Russia. Later on despite CPM government ruling West Bengal he maintained that time was running against communism which was a historical fact.

Blue Print

Thengadi ji held that blue print should not be prepared without coming into power or nearing implementation stage. He cited most interesting and revealing instance of Savarkar seeking blue print from Lanin. Lanin declined the offer since his blue print for Russia could not be used for India.

Emergency in 1975

Before his arrest Jaiprakash Narayan created Lok Sangharsh Samiti with Nanaji Deshmukh as its convenor to fight against emergency in 1975. After Nanaji's arrest Dattopant Thengadi resigning from BMS took charge of Lok Sangharsh Samiti. Though police was in search of him Thengadi ji arrived in Kolkata on September 9, 1975 as part of his all India tour. In a close door secret meeting at night with Thengadi ji we discussed about prevailing situation in West Bengal and Odisha. There was fear everywhere and Indira Gandhi was drawing huge crowds in her public meetings. After hearing all these

During emergency days Thengadi ji moved throughout India with Ravindra Verma and met political leaders and Jaiprakash Narayan at Jaslok hospital in Mumbai.

from us Thengadi ji with much confidence told us that Indira Gandhi's regime would come to grid-ding halt within seventeen months. "Is it astrology, I asked? No, said Thengadi ji". Further he told that Indira Gandhi lacked the attributes of a dictator, "she believes none and no one trusts her". Thus she would fail." After my return from Kolkata I was arrested under MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) at Cuttack and was released seventeen months later in 1977 when emergency was lifted.

During emergency days Thengadi ji moved throughout India with Ravindra Verma and met political leaders and Jaiprakash Narayan at Jaslok hospital in Mumbai. The story of Thengadi ji's adventure during emergency is yet to be published. Being frustrated due to continuation of emergency some activists particularly Baikunth Lal Sharma of Delhi who became MP vehemently advocated for resorting to violence to overthrow dictatorial regime of Indira Gandhi. Thengadi ji rejected this idea and presented a document titled, "On Revolution". This document described violent movements held in different countries and its consequences. Finally Thengadi ji em-

phasized that peaceful mass agitation become successful in a democracy.

Though agitation against emergency remained non-violent political interests came in its way. In 1976 JP's health deteriorated and he asked Thengadi ji to propose somebody as his successor. Thengadi ji proposed name of S.M. Joshi a veteran socialist leader of Pune. Some days later Charan Singh met J.P. and asked him to name his successor. Thereafter Charan Singh came out with public statement that Jan Sangh was against him. Such statement created misunderstanding at that juncture. Though he was under police surveillance Thengadi ji undertook the arduous journey from Mumbai to Baghpat in UP to meet Charan Singh. Thengadi ji explained to Charan Singh that he proposed name of Joshi since JP was likely to announce his successor to follow him by remaining out of power politics. Before Thengadi ji could speak more Charan Singh embraced Thengadi ji and told him that he was like his younger brother. Such episodes were in plenty which Thengadi ji encountered to bring political leaders together. Once Indira Gandhi was defeated, emergency lifted and Janta Party came into existence Dattopant's mission ended.

Rajya Sabha

During his second tenure in Rajya Sabha (1970-76) Thengadi ji was invited for tea at Indira Gandhi's residence. There he was asked between Jan Sangh and Golwalkar whom he represents? "Golwalkar" replied Thengadi ji. Though he was offered Deputy Chairman Post in Rajya Sabha Thengadi ji politely declined the offer. □□

Don't sign free-trade agreement, SJM tells Centre

Activists of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch urged the central government not to take the proposed free-trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) forward. The organisation's members opined that such a move could severely dent the prospects of the Indian economy.

Sh. Satish from Swadeshi Jagran Manch said that all sectors including agriculture would be badly affected if India inked the proposed agreement with countries in the Asia-Pacific region. "Those involved in the dairy sector will be among those who will be adversely impacted. The price of milk will plummet once the agreement, which involves 16 countries, is finalised. One litre of milk is now sold for Rs 30, while it will drop to Rs 22 in the aftermath of the agreement. A kilogram of sugar, which costs around Rs 25 to Rs 40 now, will be sold for Rs 24. The Centre must take cognisance of the impact that such an agreement will have on the fortunes of sugarcane and dairy farmers," he said.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mysuru/dont-sign-free-trade-agreement-swadeshi-jagran-manch-tells-centre/articleshow/71655653.cms>

SJM launches protest against trade pact between 16 countries

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) announced that it would carry out 10 days of protests across the country to demand that the government does not sign the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a free trade agreement between 16 countries.

The announcement came a day ahead of the scheduled visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to India. In a statement, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch said it would submit a memorandum through district magistrates in all districts asking Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to sign the agreement.

Addressing the Prime Minister, the memorandum said: "As you are aware, the Government of India is moving forward to enter into a free trade agreement called RCEP, with other 15 countries, with a provision to reduce import duty to zero on 80% to 95% of goods. If this agreement is reached, it will have adverse far-reaching effects on India's manufacturing, agriculture and dairy, due to which not only will there be a huge adverse effect on the production due to increase in duty free imports in these areas, the possibilities of new capacities will also cease to exist."

The memo added that the government's 'Make-In-India' initiative would "come to a complete halt" with the signing of the RCEP.

"Most of our industries have either shut down or are on the verge of closure, due to the dumping of cheap Chinese goods for a long time. In such a case, the commitment of zero import duty on 80% of Chinese products in the RCEP is beyond comprehension. This will not only destroy our remaining industries, but will also hurt our workers' jobs and 'Make-in-India' will remain only a dream," it said.

Stating that the agreement would hit the dairy industry and farmers as well, the memo added: "Swadeshi Jagran Manch warns the government that if the government goes ahead with this agreement, Swadeshi Jagran Manch will be constrained to intensify its movement against the RCEP."

With negotiations going back till 2012, the RCEP is a proposed free trade agreement between the 10 ASEAN countries and India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/swadeshi-jagran-manch-launches-protest-against-trade-pact-between-16-countries/article29633564.ee>

Activist groups see red over FSSAI's new guidelines of working with private sector

The Alliance against Conflict of Interest — a group of organisations and individuals that includes doctors, lawyers, women and children's health groups and activists — has strongly criticised draft guidelines on "working with the private sector" by the country's apex food safety regulator. "It sounds more like facilitating the work of the private sector to interfere in the public policy-making rather than protecting the health and well-being of the consumers," said the alliance in a statement.

The body said that the move of a proposed partnership with the food industry in regulatory planning is a fundamental and institutional conflict of interest. FSSAI had issued the guidelines earlier for feedback.

The alliance has, however, stressed that the food industry has "no business to be part of implementing nutrition action."

"Going by this principle food industry should not be sitting on any table that talks about how nutrition/food/diet action be implemented," it said criticising the FSSAI for encouraging a culture of "self-compliance" by food manufacturers, the alliance said.

that evidence so far shows that the strategy has not worked in India.

Citing a study from 2014, which showed that overall nutritional quality of foods marketed to children had remained in the poorest category and thus posed high risk to contributing to obesity, the alliance said the lack of improvement in the nutritional quality of food marketed to kids is likely a result of the weak nutritional standards for defining healthy food.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/oct/29/activist-groups-see-red-over-fssai-new-guidelines-of-working-with-private-sector-2054059.html>

Ola, Uber's Surge Pricing Under Investigation By Govt; SJM Demands Review



Uber and Ola have been up against the Government for a long time about the surge in the pricing. Both the cab aggregators have been under the fire for their ridiculously high prices, some of which are not really very reasonable.

On the other hand, the Government recently agreed to the cab aggregators imposing a surge in the price, which definitely added to the confusion.

And now there is news that the minister for transport and highways has asked officials to look into the matter on the insistence of a right wing party.

Find out what went down right here!

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) penned a letter to the road transport and highways minister, Nitin Gadkari asking him to look into the surging in prices by Ola and Uber.

As per SJM Uber and Ola are obtaining profits under through surge pricing. He also quoted a survey that shows that customers from across the nation are facing numerous issues with the app-based taxi aggregators such as Uber and Ola.

Letter states, "We have demanded that Rs. 100 or an amount equivalent to 20% of the fare be credited in the customer's account in case of a driver cancelling a ride, no surge pricing on advance scheduled booking and basic customer service and app features

must be standardised in case of emergencies."

Letter says that as these cab aggregators started profiteering, SJM asked for a 25% cap on the surge pricing. In case of abrupt cancellation, SJM wants the cancellation charges to be paid by taxi app company or the driver, depending upon the case. There are multiple issues related to the pricing strategies of the cabs, and even the charges levied by the aggregators for cancellation of rides.

SJM says, "Just in the last two weeks, we received screenshots where a fare of Rs 2,000 was quoted in Mumbai for a six-minute ride. This is outrageous and plain profiteering by these platforms." The government also promised to come up with laws that approved surge pricing only if they are reasonable. Uber protested the Government's interference citing the reason that the drivers are earning less because of the fare restrictions put in place by the Government.

<https://trak.in/tags/business/2019/10/19/ola-ubers-surge-pricing-under-investigation-by-govt-rss-affiliate-group-demands-review/>

Local retailers lockdown Flipkart's zonal warehouse in Kanpur

E-commerce marketplaces such as Amazon and Flipkart have been facing the heat from brick and mortar stores recently. Trader body associations such as a Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) and All India Online Vendors Association(AIOVA) and others have been continuously raising the issue of deep discounting, predatory pricing and exclusive deals.

Adding to the protests, local leaders of Akhil Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal along with local retailers and distributors locked the biggest zonal godown of Flipkart in Kanpur yesterday.

The protestors sat outside with banners and did not allow normal functioning of business throughout the day and further claimed to march to Delhi if their demands are not heard.

They alleged that online marketplaces are employing unfair means to kill the business of physical stores. The political outfit claimed that physical stores



which make up as much as 30% of their annual sales during the festive season were damped by the deep discounting of products by Amazon and Flipkart during their respective festive sales.

As per a CAIT estimate, both companies have sold goods worth Rs 19,000 crores in just four days, which makes it clear that a large part of the business of brick & mortar shops has already been shifted to online portals.

There is a decline of about 60% in the business of mobile sector only, 35% in FMCG, consumer durables and in electronics goods each, 30% in electrical appliances as per CAIT's secretary general Praveen Khandelwal.

Protest by traders bodies against Flipkart and Amazon is gaining quick grounds across the country. Lockdown of godown in Kanpur by like Akhil Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal is indeed a bizarre incident. But the incidents show that brick & mortar retailers are prepared to fight tooth and nail against the e-commerce marketplaces.

The government had also taken the cognizance of concerns of traders bodies and small retailers. Commerce Ministry recently asked Flipkart and Amazon to furnish details of the top five sellers, business models and capital structure among others.

https://entracker.com/2019/10/local-retailers-lockdown-flipkarts-zonal-warehouse-in-kanpur/?utm_campaign=fullarticle&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=inshorts

Powerloom workers ask PM Narendra Modi to keep textile sector out of RCEP scheme

After women dairy workers of south Gujarat, powerloom weavers and textile workers from Surat and Bhiwandi in Maharashtra have started sending postcards to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to keep textile sector out of the purview of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) scheme.

Federation of Gujarat Weavers' Welfare Association (FOGWA) office-bearers stated that more than 50,000 weavers and workers from Bhiwandi and Surat have started sending postcards to Modi for exclusion of textile sector from RCEP scheme.

The postcards state that the RCEP scheme will bring powerloom weaving sector on the deathbed and render thousands of workers jobless. Cheap fabrics from China, Vietnam and Bangladesh would be dumped in the country, resulting in closure of small and medium weaving units.



Central government has proposed inclusion of textile industry under RCEP scheme allowing for free import of polyester fabrics from China, Bangladesh and Vietnam along with other countries in South East Asia.

Last month, FOGWA and Federation of Indian Art Silk Weaving Industry (FIASWI) had represented to commerce ministry demanding imposition of import duty on Chinese fabrics to protect SME sector in Surat. FOGWA stated that import of heavily under-invoiced fabrics from China has crossed Rs5,500 crore mark in the last one year. The imported fabrics are heavily under-invoiced and could be worth Rs10,000 crore.

FOGWA president Ashok Jirawala said, "After various representations, we feel that only Prime Minister Modi will understand the problems of the sector. However, we are writing postcards to the PM, praying to him to keep the sector out of RCEP scheme's purview."

Bhiwandi Weaving Association leader Punit Khimasia said, "Our textile workers have started writing postcards to Prime Minister. We intend to send more than 20,000 postcards with regard to RCEP scheme."

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/powerloom-workers-ask-pm-to-keep-textile-sector-out-of-rcep-scheme/articleshow/71529710.cms>

State delegation to protest against import of milk, dairy products

Following protests by farmers in various districts, chairman of Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) Balachandra Jarkiholi has said that he will take a delegation to the Centre to protest the proposed move to import milk and dairy products under the free trade agreement. He said that the delegation comprising of Animal Husbandry Minister Prabhu Chavan, Union Ministers from the State, and others will meet Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal next week and



persuade him to protect the interest of farmers by not allowing import from countries such as New Zealand and Australia.

"Cooperative societies Amul and KMF are very strong in India. We have already written to the Centre appraising them of the ill-effects of allowing import. In States like Gujarat and Karnataka, lakhs of women members of societies send postal cards against the move," Mr. Jarkiholi said. "Importing milk and dairy products will have a far-reaching impact on rural economy. The Union government plans to double farm revenue by 2022. Import will have a negative impact on farmers," he added.

In Karnataka, more than 24.82 lakh milk producers are members of the KMF. Annually, the federation procures more than 84 lakh kg of milk per day. In the previous financial year, the federation had a turnover of ₹14,466 crore.

A senior KMF member said: "The country has more than 10 crore milk producers and we are producing sufficient milk. If the Centre allows import of milk and dairy products, it will have devastating impact on the livelihood of farmers. Countries such as New Zealand export 93% milk products to other countries. Unlike other countries, India's dairy industry is labour-oriented. The system will collapse if the Centre allows import."

Hundreds of milk producers in Chamarajanagar took out a march against the proposal to permit duty-free import of milk and dairy products. The milk producers gathered at Chamarajeshwara temple in the town on Tuesday and marched to the office of Deputy Commissioner B.B. Cauvery, where they submitted a memorandum addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Dairy farming is one of the chief occupations in Chamarajanagar district with more than 41,000 families engaged in producing three lakh litres of milk every day.

In Mandya district, members of Kasturi Karna-

taka Janapara Vedike staged a protest on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway in Maddur. They blocked vehicular movement for a while, raised slogans against the Centre, and burnt the effigy of Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal. They termed the Centre's proposal a "death knell" for dairy farmers in the country.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/state-delegation-to-protest-against-import-of-milk-dairy-products/article29693526.ee>

Swadeshi: 50% consumers prefer desi brands over foreign ones

Nearly half of Indian consumers are preferring to own domestic brands over the international ones, a survey conducted by a US-headquartered consultancy firm has said. The preference is more pronounced in food and personal care categories, the survey of 3,000 Indians by the consultancy BCG has said.



The survey findings come at a time when nationalism is the dominant theme politically and repeated appeals are made to buy local goods over various media platforms. The survey said Indian consumers are "consciously" seek out Indian brands in at least one category.

"This is a far cry from the day when an Indian travelling abroad would be besieged with requests from family and friends to bring back international products," it said. It also said that more than a third are willing to forgo product purchases in order to be able to afford experiences that they find personally enriching.

The survey, which comes at a time when a fall in consumption has led to a dip in economic growth, also revealed that almost a fifth prefer to rent something that they previously would have bought.

It said that consumer behaviour is agnostic of the place in which she resides, adding that people in tier-II and III cities are likely to exhibit the same behaviour as those in tier-I cities.

Similarly, income levels are also least likely to have influence on consumer behaviour, it said. It also said that "social recognition" is the key motivation for half of the consumer behaviour.

"People in India are making no secret of the satisfaction they get by publicising their activities via social network postings," said Kanika Sanghi, a BCG partner.

□□

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/swadeshi-50-consumers-prefer-desi-brands-over-foreign-ones/articleshow/71602539.cms?from=mdr>

Swadeshi Activities
Swadeshi Mela
 15-21 October 2019 (Dwarka, New Delhi)

Pictorial Glimpses



Prant Sammelan, Himachal Pradesh

Pictorial Glimpses



Prant Sammelan, Jodhpur

Pictorial Glimpses



Swadeshi Activities

Protest against China Goods & Services

Pictorial Glimpses



Udaipur, Rajasthan



Odisha



Moradabad, UP



Jodhpur, Rajasthan



Jamshedpur, Jharkhand



Hapur, UP



Gwalior, MP



Bikaner, Rajasthan



Bhilwara, Rajasthan



Bharatpur, Rajasthan



Barmer, Rajasthan



Ajmer, Rajasthan

Dattopant Thengadi Janam Shatabdi Varsh (2019-20)



Prayag, UP



Jharkhand



Bengaluru, Karnataka

