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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

One of the banes of governance in India is that its body politic has to be in a perennial election mode. This is due to historical developments when political instability at the centre and states made it impossible for legislatures to complete their terms, made worse by the indiscriminate use of Article 356 to dismiss 'unfriendly' state governments. Synchronous elections of Lok Sabha and state legislatures were last held in 1967 and going by present trends of political stability reinforced by provisions of the anti-defection law, it is likely to be the last. But should this state of affairs be perpetuated?

India Foundation with the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library hosted a one-day symposium on the subject 'One Nation One Election' inspired by Prime Minister Modi raising this important issue for the nation to ponder. This issue carries some papers presented at the seminar highlighting different aspects including substantial legal and constitutional ones. One thing came out clearly – voters vote differently for parliament and state legislatures even when such elections are held simultaneously and no class of party, national or state-level, would be particularly advantaged or disadvantaged. Any fears that such elections are backed by national parties for such reasons are unfounded.

We also carry a detailed report on the India Ideas Conclave whose theme was 'Democracy, Development & Dissent.' This event has become a flagship event of the Foundation with its emphasis on policy-oriented debates and analyses. The quality of our speakers and participants has continued to grow and it provides much food for thought for policy- and opinion-makers. This issue also carries reports on different activities of the Foundation including bilateral dialogues, civic receptions and articles of interest.



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Desirability and Feasibility of Simultaneous Elections

*Dr. S.Y. Quraishi



On November 26, we celebrate the Constitution Day. On this day in 1949, our Constitution was adopted. It was promulgated on 26th January 1950. On 26th November 1949, six articles of the constitution regarding the election commission were also promulgated. Initially they were differently numbered from 289 to 295; later on they became Articles 324 to 329. The Election Commission of India was born on 25th January, 1950, i.e., a day before India was born as a Republic. That is the importance framers of the constitution gave to elections.

One Nation, One Election is a very beautiful concept. We have been talking about it as simultaneous elections. When Prime Minister Modi on 19th March 2016 was addressing party workers, he talked about it. Media went to town saying he floated the idea. Actually he had not floated the idea, but had only flagged the idea, which has been known for a long time.

The Prime Minister talked about the cost – Rs.30,000 crores - being spent by political parties. Rs.4,500 crores is spent by Election Commission on election management. This also actually does not reflect the entire cost because many of the costs are hidden. For example, the 1,10,00,000 people who conduct the elections for ECI - their salary is not calculated. Their TA, DA comes from their normal budget, it is not calculated. Only the extra costs, i.e., the honorarium ECI gives, the machines, stationary, movement, logistics – those are the costs which are included.

Second, the Prime Minister mentioned that there is work paralysis, which is largely true. And then he talked about saving the party workers' time because party workers were spending too much time and money in electioneering. He also talked about holding simultaneous elections at all three levels— Panchayats i.e., local bodies, States and Parliament.

PM Modi only flagged issues, which have been

**This article is the summary of the address made by Dr. S.Y. Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India at the symposium on 'One Nation, One Election' jointly organized by India Foundation and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library on 26th November, 2016.*

there for sometime. Law Commission, as far back as in 1999, had recommended in detail that staggered elections are very cumbersome, that they were creating problems and that there should be simultaneous elections. L.K.Advani was a strong proponent of it. In a blog in May 2010, he strongly recommended that there should be simultaneous elections and he also offered a solution saying no-confidence motion must also accompanied by a confidence motion. BJP manifesto itself in 2014, talked about simultaneous elections. ECI in 2015, when asked to give its comments to Parliamentary Committee, suggested that it was a very good idea if there is consensus and legal and constitutional amendments are taken place. And Parliamentary Committee on 17th December 2015 came out with recommendation. So, it has a long history.

Mr. Vasanth Sathe (of Congress) had recommended it for decades. This concern has been voiced by all political parties at different times. Therefore, it should not be coloured by any political considerations. It is a general concern and it has to be taken in that spirit.

Parliamentary Standing Committee in its 79th report talked about massive expenditure on separate elections. It says that the model code of conduct leads to policy paralysis. Delivery of essential services is adversely affected. Burden of deployment of large manpower on election management disrupts the normal functioning of offices. All four concerns are very correct. One more reason that is being missed is the scourge of casteism and communalism. Because of elections, people who do not know their caste or have nothing to do with it are reminded of their sub-sub-sub caste. Vote bank politics perpetuates the caste system. Communalism and polarization are

happening because we are perpetually in election mode. After elections, things become very normal and peaceful.

The other reason in favour of simultaneous elections is the matter of freebies - free bicycles, free laptops, free TVs, etc. All political parties are agitated. But they do it because it is a very competitive environment. One party spends money, because the other party is spending money. One party gives ticket to a criminal, because rival party is giving ticket to a criminal and therefore they have to put a bigger criminal. Now it becomes the level playing field of the rich and the criminal. This is a vitiation of the electoral process, which was not intended.

The root-cause of all corruption in the country is electoral corruption. When crores are spent, crores are to be collected. Everybody knows how they are collected. Because of frequent elections, corruption gets perpetuated. 80% of the fund collection by political parties is cash collection, and that is very dubious. Whether cash comes from liquor mafia, real estate mafia or is it foreign money, we do not know. At this time of demonetization, it is also a great opportunity for electoral reforms. If electoral reforms happen, it would be very good fall-out of demonetization.

There are some counter points as well. To say that because of model code of conduct, every service is paralyzed is an exaggeration. All that ECI disallows is new policies. What stops the governments from announcing new policies in four years and eleven months? Why do all the bright ideas come only on the eve of elections? That is ECI's only objection. Everything on-going must continue.

Governments may not like to work in normal

times. But, the moment elections are announced, they start sending all the files to election commission whether it is coal allocation or steel plant or something. ECI is flooded with files. ECI only says, no new announcement will be done, which would seduce the voter. That is all.

But is it true that since ministers go out for three months campaigning, minister's office is closed and work stops. Since the entire district machinery, DM, SP and down the line is involved in election related works, normal work comes to a standstill.

I am not in favour of painting the Election Commission as obstructionist. Once I got a call from Cabinet Secretary, when Shri Pranab Mukherjee was the Finance Minister, saying they want to increase MP LAD scheme from Rs. 2 crores to 5 crores a year. The expenditure would be 8,500 crores. I was strolling in my lawn. We had five elections – Tamil Nadu and others. I said, go ahead. There is no problem except that the matter has to be kept in abeyance in these five states. Within half an hour, the Finance Minister announced this scheme quoting the conversation saying he had spoken to Quraishi and Quraishi had allowed except in these five states. If Rs. 8,500 crore decision can be taken in telephone in 30 seconds, to say that ECI stops work, is not true. But it is true that in the field, things do come to a standstill.

There was a case with regard to disruption of schools because of elections in Delhi. The matter had gone up to the Delhi High Court in 2007. The High Court ruled that teachers cannot be deployed. That would have upset election management totally. ECI went to Supreme Court and Supreme Court said teachers will have to be deployed because without them elections would not be

possible. At the same time SC said there should be guidelines so that work of the schools does not get disrupted. So, if there is a single teacher school, ECI would not disturb.

ECI gives election timings in such a way that in March there are never any elections. There are lots of things in place to ensure that there is minimum dislocation. Article 324 (6) says that the President of India and Governor of the states would provide Election Commission of India with whatever staff they may require. And law requires elections to be managed only by government servants. So, where does ECI get the staff from? After Right to Education Act, teachers were debarred from doing any other thing except election and census work. Census come once in 10 years and elections come more frequently and that is why it is in limelight.

Why are simultaneous elections not feasible? What is holding it back? The terms of Lok Sabha and Vidhana Sabhas do not coincide. 5 out of 16 Lok Sabhas were prematurely dissolved in 1970, 1984, 1990, 1998, and 1999. Legislatures lately have been completing their terms because of the anti-defection act and Supreme Court coming down heavily on misuse of article 356 in *SR Bommai* (1994). Unfortunately coalition era has come to stay. The current government is an exception. After 25 years, we have a government with clear majority. Otherwise for the last 25 years, it was government with 20, 25, 30 parties. Apparently, that will continue because regional parties are becoming stronger by the day. What is the safeguard that coalition would not break down? Vajpayee government fell down in 13 days. There is also instance of his government losing the confidence motion by just one vote.

There are many arguments against simultaneous elections and in favour of the continuation of the present system. It makes the politicians accountable. It keeps them on toes. Politicians who meet the people only during elections do not remember the promises made to voters. If they are to meet people more frequently because of frequent elections, they may not forget the promises. When Rs. 30,000 crores come into circulation, there is creation of many temporary jobs like painters, transporters etc. Money circulation is good for economy.

Election Commission banned defacement of public and private properties. After 10 pm, loud speakers will have to go off. There used to be 500 – 1,000 vehicles in processions. ECI stopped all that. Only 10 vehicles would move in convoy. When ECI banned moving of 500 vehicles, how much of petrol are we saving? How much of pollution and traffic jam we have safe guarded against? ECI also banned use of plastic. Many criticize that ECI has killed the festival of democracy. But voters love ECI discipline. Voters' participation in elections is the index of festival of democracy. ECI had started voters education division. Some criticized saying educating voters is not the job of Election Commission; only conducting elections. But it is very much the job of ECI. Legitimacy of our politicians comes from the legitimacy of our election process.

In our country people who lose vote by one vote also trust the legitimacy of elections. CP Joshi lost elections by one vote. He called the returning officers to request for recounting of postal ballots, which was done. Second time, his request was for physical tallying of votes total, which was also done. Third time he called to thank the returning officer

for conceding to requests saying that the process was very legitimate. The side story is that his wife did not vote in those elections. His wife and daughter went to temple to pray. The lessons are – every vote counts, you cannot take your own family for granted. On the day of polling, the most important temple is the polling station. He was a potential contender for chief minister-ship and later won parliamentary elections and became a minister at the centre.

Our electoral system is healthier than that of Americans. Hillary Clinton had said that Indian election is a global gold standard.

There is another benefit of staggered election to law and order. Six months before elections, ECI enquires all DMs and SPs about pendency of non-bailable warrants. ECI asks them to bring it down to zero. ECI ensures catching hold of illegal arms and ammunition, also asks for deposit of legal arms. Lowest crime rate is ensured in the election period.

Local and national issues get separated. It may not be true to think simultaneous elections would be of benefit to national parties, it can also be a loss to them. Clouding of local sentiments with national sentiments may be counter-productive and that needs to be analysed. Niti Aayog had come out with a document listing the pros and cons of simultaneous elections, and it is a good document to take the discussion forward.

Prime Minister was talking about simultaneous elections at all three levels. But many normally forget the Panchayat elections while discussing the idea. I went as an election observer to Kenya, where seven elections were happening simultaneously.

What was there in the minds of the framers of the constitution? They visualized simultaneous

elections. They discussed the role of the Election Commission. They thought of part-time election commissioner. They grudgingly gave one full-time election commissioner. Within eight years, mid-term elections came in Kerala as the government fell. Vision of simultaneous elections had broken. In 1971, many state legislative assemblies were dissolved and elections had to be held.

What is the stand of the Election Commission? ECI said it would be happiest if there are simultaneous elections. Media gets so much TRP ratings and business during elections. Now elections are stretched for as much as three months. Election commission and political parties would be happy if they are completed at one go. Election Commission said simultaneous elections are a good idea so long as political parties agree, which is the crux. Logistical challenges like requirement of too many EVMs would be there.

People criticize holding elections in seven or nine phases. But election commission doesn't want loss of lives and takes adequate security measures to protect law and order. Bihar CM Nitish Kumar said that if needed, we must hold elections in 10 phases but deploy para military forces. That statement is very significant, which means that the chief minister of a state did not trust his own police. He expects police to come from outside. Because it is a reality, that state police has become police of some particular leaders rather than police of the state. Central forces are limited. Hard bargaining happens for deployment of forces. Forces are drawn from border areas and from terror affected areas.

If adequate security forces are available, we

can complete the election processes by reducing the number of phases.

Parliamentary standing committee did not talk about Panchayat elections, which meant surrendering of 1/3rd of the formula. But any benefit – even simultaneous elections at two levels - is a good benefit. Niti Ayog had suggested one-time curtailment of tenure of some state legislative assemblies and enhancement of tenures of some. The suggestion is very worthwhile.

Advani's suggestion of having a confidence motion along with no-confidence motion is not a feasible one. Normally the opportunity to form government comes to the next largest party after the ruling party. Hypothetically assuming there is a no-confidence motion against BJP government at present, the next largest party is one with just 44 seats. Legally and constitutionally, it would be unfeasible. It would amount to cheating the voters. The party, which was rejected by voters, cannot be given power by the Lok Sabha.

There is a need for constituting a think tank to evolve a road map to conduct simultaneous elections, to evolve a formula that can muster consensus of all parties. There is no ceiling on expenditure by political parties. There is ceiling only on expenditure by candidates.

There is a need for ceiling on both - expenditure by candidates as well as expenditure by political parties so that there can be a level playing field. Also, if adequate security forces are made available, election process can be completed in shorter duration of time. The concern of large scale expenditure of money and time can be addressed to some extent by these steps.



Need for Electoral Timetables in India

*Bhupender Yadav



Before we discuss simultaneous elections, we should understand what the purpose of elections in a democracy is. The reason political parties are given an opportunity to contest elections is so that they can form a government and work for the welfare of public. However, in our country, without a timetable for elections, political parties are perpetually in election mode.

Let me share a personal experience. In 2013, we started preparing for Rajasthan assembly elections in April-May. Since elections were in October, model code of conduct was imposed in July-August. By December we formed our government and presented an interim budget in

February 2014 before Lok Sabha elections were announced. By June 2014 the national polls were over but before we could begin working, local body polls were announced and model code of conduct was imposed again. So from May 2013 to Feb 2015, Rajasthan government was continually in election mode.

This reminds me about Gandhi's statement on means and ends. Our end is to have a government that works for the people for a period of five years but the means we have chosen are not delivering it. Even political parties are contesting elections based on short-term, immediate issues and not long-term policies that will deliver sustainable benefits to the public- just look at their manifestoes

**This article is the summary of the address made by Bhupender Yadav, National General Secretary, Bharatiya Janata Party, at the symposium on 'One Nation, One Election' jointly organized by India Foundation and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library on 26th November, 2016.*

and vision documents. To fix this problem, we must first arrive at a consensus that elections are just a means, not an end. Therefore, it is imperative that they should happen as per a fixed schedule causing minimum inconvenience to the ultimate end of delivering governance. When we have Lok Sabha polls in 2019, there will be about 26 states where elections will be due since May-June 2018. Those states where such elections are due, can hold elections in two batches of 2.5 years each. This can be the beginning of the process of setting up a timetable for elections.

Ultimately the biggest beneficiary of such a timetable will be the public because it will greatly curtail the influence of money in politics and policy-making. Simultaneous elections will also enable a level playing field. If the state has to provide platforms for political parties to debate and discuss respective ideologies, issues of good governance, it is a welcome step.

Transparency in electoral spending is a must. Either we strictly implement the cap of Rs.40-50 lakh on electoral spending to propagate one's ideology or completely do away with a cap while ensuring that all expenditure is accountable. Removing a spending cap will also ensure that the public knows how much money power is being flexed by respective candidates.

What if a government is not able to complete its term and falls prematurely? Maybe we can have a simultaneous confidence motion in favour

of a new formation along with a no-confidence motion against the present government. Else, maybe we can have an alternate arrangement for the remaining term.

For example, in Rajya Sabha if a seat falls vacant before the fixed term of 6 years, we have elections only for the remaining term. Can we do something similar for state assemblies and national parliament? How will any such arrangement reflect the will of the people? Another issue is the conduct of bye-elections in a regime of simultaneous elections. We will have to fix a designated time during the year when all bye-elections are held. What about anti-defection law and what will be the role of the Speaker?

These are issues on which we need to have a healthy public debate and any one person (including me) cannot decide what the best course is. My purpose here is just to highlight these issues. My larger point is that as a nation, we need to start working towards a timetable for elections and bring transparency in electoral funding. Countries all over the world are coming around to the importance of this idea. For example, Britain passed a law in 2011 that fixed the national electoral calendar.

Finally, I want to reiterate that our mandate should be to deliver a stable government and good governance between elections without being prejudiced on the issues of caste, religion, language and other fault lines. For this to happen, we need to seriously undertake electoral reforms in the country.



Ensuring Fixed Term to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies

*Bhatruhari Mahtab



When Lok Sabhas were being frequently dissolved, the then President of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, came up with an idea that pre-poll alliance will get precedence, if it has a common manifesto, to a coalition that comes after the election, in the event that the coalition gets an invitation to form government. I think from then on, Shankar Dayal developed this idea, after receiving suggestions from the Supreme Court. 1996 to 1999 were turbulent years for India's democracy. People were repeatedly asked to vote and the country continued to give a fractured mandate. This was happening for the first time showing clearly that there was no party, which was competent enough to form a government with absolute majority.

This had happened earlier in respective state legislatures as well. Even today, Jharkhand stands as a politically volatile case. Orissa witnessed fractured mandates till 1977. From then onwards, repeated governments enjoyed full majority. In 1961, when Biju Patnaik led the Congress government to power, it had full majority of 80 members in a house of 140. But at that time also his government lasted only for two years and four months. Subsequently, there were two chief ministers, during the remaining tenure of the Legislative Assembly. So, with absolute majority also there is no guarantee that the government would continue. If there is fractured mandate, more volatility can ensue.

Figures at times educate us about a situation

**This article is the summary of the address made by Bhatruhari Mahtab, Member of Parliament in Lok Sabha from BJD, at the symposium on 'One Nation, One Election' jointly organized by India Foundation and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library on 26th November, 2016.*

that was prevalent at that period of time. But the basic question is that this issue has now opened for debate. It needs to be told in public. How many times promulgation of Article 356 has happened till 1967 and between 1967 and 1994? So, what is the crux of the problem? And how does one address the problem? With a full majority in the Lok Sabha, it would be the right time to propagate that idea of one election among the public at large.

It is time to try and establish a national consensus that there should be attempts to avoid frequent elections. There was a time in 1990s when there was a general complaint regarding frequency of elections. I will tell you some hard truths. I have contested elections seven times. And during this period, I have learnt that people love elections. People want that their candidates come to their house so that they can ask questions. Also, there is a wrong notion that black money is freely spent in elections. Rather, black money turns white during elections. These are hard facts, however unpalatable they may be. But this is the problem and we have to address that problem.

Leave aside assembly elections and parliamentary elections simultaneously. In Panchayati Raj and Municipal elections, the voter has to vote for his/her ward member, has to vote for Sarpanch, has to vote for Samiti member, and also vote for Zilla Parishad member. One has to cast four votes in the same room at four different tables. They are all paper ballots. 90 to 95% polling is witnessed in some cases.

There are some political parties, which deposed before the Parliamentary Standing Committee of law and justice headed by Dr. Nachiappan, saying that there would be confusion if simultaneous

elections are to be held. They said that in Lok Sabha people vote on determination for national perspective. Some political parties might take advantage of and regional parties and smaller parties might be rendered losers. But Orissa had proved this concern wrong.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee went for election in 2004, six months before the completion of his tenure. Orissa was supposed to have elections in 2005 and one more year of tenure was remaining for the house. Naveen Patnaik too decided to have state elections one year before schedule to have them along with national elections. The election commission agreed. Simultaneous elections were held both for Parliament and Orissa State Legislative Assembly. It proved beneficial to BJD.

What happened in 2004? Bharatiya Janata Party did not come to power. They lost miserably in Parliament. BJD did not lose. It formed the government in Orissa. Its strength also increased. Though it contested only for 12 seats out of 21 seats, its strength increased from 9 to 11. It lost only one seat. Bharatiya Janata Party came down. Congress got 6 seats. People at large decided. Perhaps they got a sense of the direction of the wind. BJP was out of power. In 2009, there was no BJD alliance with Bharatiya Janata Party. BJD was fighting on its own. It went to election. It increased its number in simultaneous elections for assembly and also in parliament. In 2014, when there was strong northerly wind, BJD could withstand the wind. BJD increased its strength not only in Assembly, but also in parliament. It lost only one seat out of 21.

How could this happen? It is not a matter to be discussed, deliberated in political science class.

This is a matter to be deliberated specially by those who say, if we have simultaneous elections, so-called national parties would prevail, national issues will prevail and regional parties and small parties will just fade away. It doesn't happen. At least Orissa has proved that wrong. Tamil Nadu has proved that wrong. West Bengal has proved that wrong. To a great extent, Telangana has also proved that wrong.

So, when a citizen of this country goes to vote, he knows for whom he is going to vote and for what reason. And that is the reason why, we maintain the sanctity of the mandate that the citizen gives or elects for five years. Can we fix the term of the house? If term of the house is fixed, can we fix the date of the election? That on such and such date next election would be held. We know how elections are held in the United States.

I have submitted a private members bill in Lok Sabha on 2nd May 2016. It would come up for discussion and deliberation in the house. I have suggested three amendments to the Constitution. And the first amendment is related to a government losing to a no-confidence motion. In Law Commission's Report of 1999, it is recommended that if at all a no-confidence motion is moved, it should also be simultaneously moved for a confidence motion. Articles 75, 164, in respect of the parliament and also the state assemblies, must be amended. Similarly, one more amendment is necessary to Article 326 (A) in order for Lok Sabha and all state legislative assembly elections to be held simultaneously.

We have heard former Chief Election Commissioner of India Dr. S.Y. Quraishi say that Election Commission is competent enough to hold

simultaneous elections provided certain things are given to them – security forces and other things. It can be done. It is a very encouraging statement that Election Commission can conduct elections within 33 days. I think for the first time this thing is being said. Earlier I did not read it anywhere.

In 2014, after elections it used to come in news papers that I would lose. I went to my leader and said, this is going to happen, what should I do? He said forget it and go to some other place and relax. The more you stay in your constituency, the more tense you would be. But ultimately when the results came, my lead was more than 2 lakh votes. However, I suffered during that one month period, the gap between the polling date and declaration of results.

It was a private discussion I had with the Prime Minister, but I can share with you. Last year, the session was going to commence and Prime Minister was to go to campaign in certain states. A news item had come in some newspapers that he would be very busy campaigning for the party instead of attending the house. I was tempted and I asked him, "Sir, don't you think it is necessary we should have simultaneous elections both to state legislative assemblies and parliament so that it would save time and energy and also to a very great extent, will minimize the cost." He said, "You want it? You want it?" I said, "Yes we want it. Yes it should be done." He said, "First ask Khargeji".

Mallikarjun Kharge was sitting just across the table. I do not know whether he would vouch for it today or not, but that day, he said that all of them want simultaneous elections. But when their written statement was sought by the committee, the Congress party said, "The proposal of holding

simultaneous elections, ideal as it may sound, is impractical and unworkable and can lead to a scenario where the necessary balance in Indian democracy given the diversity of the country is lost.”

I think it is workable. I believe it can also protect the diversity of the country. Some say it is ideal, but not implementable. But it is implementable. Our constitution is dynamic, a living document. People of this country through their voice have made dramatic changes in the constitution that was conceived in 1949 and 1950. I have also proposed that we can also try to bring adjustment related to the elections so that we can lead to a situation, perhaps in next 10 to 15 years time, where all state legislative assembly elections and Lok Sabha elections can be done in one go. The more we deliberate the more we discuss in public, it will have an impact on the respective political parties. And a voice will come up.

On 17th April 1998, when Atalji’s government had fallen by one vote, it was not Giridhar Gomang

who was the culprit. He had been vilified and our party BJD had been at the forefront making the allegation. He belonged to the Congress party. He did not defect. He was the chief minister of Orissa that time and he did not resign from the Lok Sabha. There were three members of National Conference in Lok Sabha. Omar Abdulla, Prof. Soz and there was one more member. Prof. Saifuddin Soz voted in favour of the no-confidence motion. Whereas Omar Abdullah voted against the no-confidence motion, he was with the government. The other member abstained. Prof. Soz was rewarded later on.

It is necessary that we must have simultaneous election. We should have national and international outlook. The prerogative is not only with national parties. People also think about the country. They also want a strong government in Delhi. That is the reason why, they may vote differently for the state and for the centre. There is need not only for simultaneous elections but there is also a need for fixed term for respective houses.



A Case for Simultaneous Elections

*Swadesh Singh & Sushant

Introduction

The kind of electoral exercise that we witness in India is unparalleled in the world. Due to the sheer size of electorate and the expanse of our democracy, this electoral exercise does not only assume gigantic proportions, it also leads to huge electoral expenditure. To add to the existing woes, our general and state elections are not held simultaneously, thereby one part or the other of our country is always electorally alert. The Election Commission of India is on its foot throughout the year because of this. This is the situation when we are not taking account of local elections for panchayat and urban municipalities. The ever-rising electoral expenditure on the country because of this can prove detrimental to our governance and developmental goals.

One of the pillars of Indian democracy is the periodic organisation of free and fair elections. The nature of our elections to be free and fair is threatened by the rising cost of elections as political parties and candidates who contest look out for other sources to cover these costs. It is an open secret that this contributes to political corruption as pointed out by many studies. The frequent elections are also an ever increasing administrative burden for the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Simultaneous elections at the Parliament and state assemblies level have been mooted out by

many as a remedy to this problem of Indian democracy.

History of Indian Elections

The first election after Independence was held simultaneously for the Parliament and State Assemblies in 1952. The practice was followed without any hitch in three subsequent elections held in 1957, 1962, and 1967. This was mainly because non-Congress regional parties (except Communists in some places) were not as powerful and influential as Congress and thereby were not in a position to dislodge it in the legislatures or in general elections. Things after 1967 changed. It was on account of both state and national politics due to which elections to parliament and state assemblies were delinked. The Fifth General Elections were due in 1972. But in early 1971, Indira Gandhi dissolved the Lok Sabha, and held the Fifth Lok Sabha elections in March 1971. The Assembly elections took place as scheduled in 1972. This is how the initial delinking of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections took place. Due to irresponsible and politically motivated use of article 356, many state assemblies were dissolved in between leading to finalisation of this delinking process.

Simultaneous elections have become exceptions rather than rule. As a result, the Election Commission is busy throughout the year conducting polls in some part of the country or the other. Apart

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from general elections in 2014, we had legislative assembly elections for eight states: Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha and Sikkim. In 2015, we witnessed elections in Delhi and Bihar. In 2016, five state legislative assembly elections took place: Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Puducherry and Assam. That is, in a span of three years (2014-2016) we have conducted one general and 15 state assembly elections.

Countries Conducting Simultaneous Elections

- England has chosen to hold general elections and local government elections on the same day since 1997. But, in practice, local elections are delayed if polls to European Parliament have to be held.
- Italy, Belgium, and Sweden are some countries that conduct general and local elections together.
- In Canada, municipal elections are on fixed dates while provincial and federal elections take place at any time. The Canadian Prime Minister and provincial Premiers have a right to call elections at any time during their tenure of five years. This right could be used by them to prolong their stay in power by going to polls when their popularity is rated high. This led to the rise of “fixed election date” movement a decade ago. It succeeded in introducing set election dates in eight out of 10 provinces. At the centre, the Fixed Election Date Act was adopted in 2007.
- In South Africa, national and provincial elections are held simultaneously. Municipal

elections are not linked with these.

- In India, the question of a fixed tenure has been discussed several times without arriving at any consensus. In 1999, the Law Commission recommended that the cycle of elections every year should be put an end to.

Now we will discuss the issues that arise due to delinking of national and state elections.

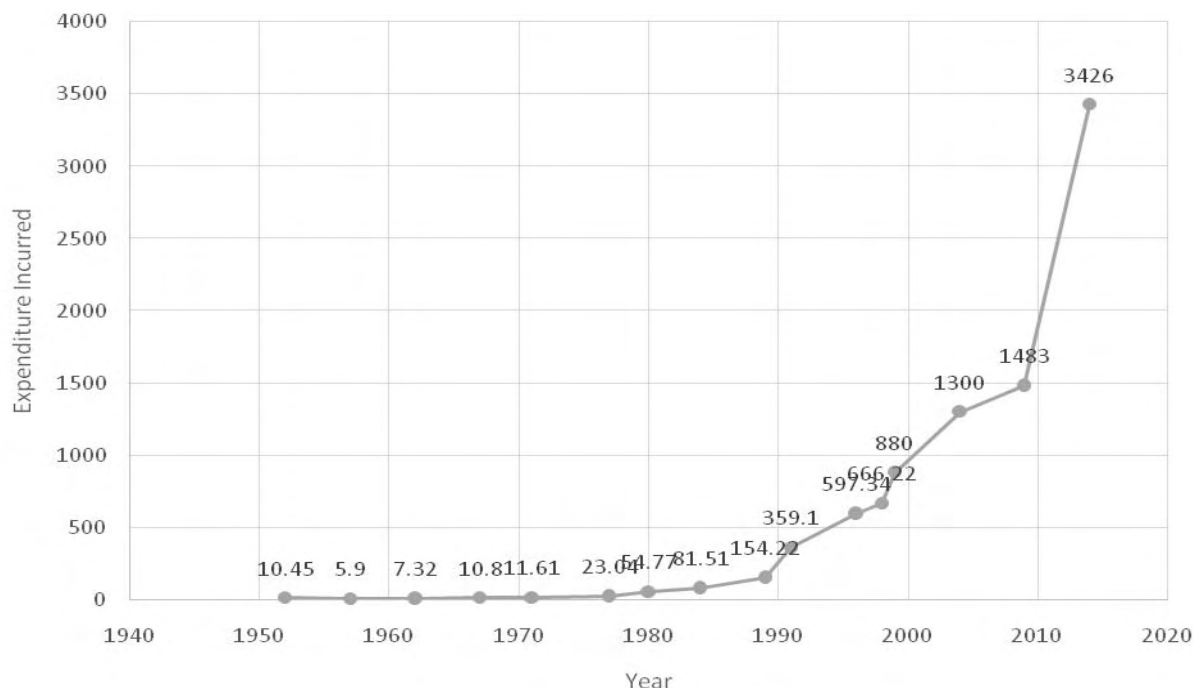
Rising Electoral Expenditure for the Government

The expenses incurred by the Government in preparation of electoral rolls, I-cards, election booths & officers etc is significant. The table below indicates expenditure incurred on Lok Sabha Elections in various years as available on the website of Election Commission.

Year	Expenditure Incurred (Provisional) (Cr Rs)
1952	10.45
1957	5.90
1962	7.32
1967	10.80
1971	11.61
1977	23.04
1980	54.77
1984	81.51
1989	154.22
1991	359.10
1996	597.34
1998	666.22
1999	880
2004	1300
2009	1483
2014	3426

Source: Election Commission of India

The graph below depicts the data mentioned in the table above.



2014 elections were the most expensive Lok Sabha elections ever, entailing a cost of Rs.3,426 crore to the national exchequer, a substantial jump of 131% over the Rs.1,483 crore incurred in the 2009 polls. In 1952, the cost of elections per elector was 60 paise which increased to Rs 12 per elector in 2009, a 20-fold hike.

Rising Electoral Expenditure for the Political Parties

Electoral expenditure of political parties as per details given to ECI for 2014 elections.

Political Party	Expenditure incurred (in Rs)
BJP	7,14,28,57,813
INC	5,16,02,36,785
NCP	51,34,44,854
BSP	30,05,84,822

Source: Election Commission of India

The funds collected by the political parties also show a significant rise. The EC report indicates that funds collected by national political parties increased by a whopping 418 per cent in the past 10 years. It is an open secret as to what form of political corruption takes place in fund collection by various parties.

This situation was no different in 2009 when cash accounted for 75% of the money raised by the

Congress and half of that of the BJP. BJP spent Rs 448.66 crore in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, while the Congress spent Rs 380.04 crore. Data analysis shows that only 24 per cent of the total election funding the Congress received was made through cheques and demand drafts, the remaining being in cash. The BJP, however, received close to half (49 per cent) through cheques and demand drafts.

The funding of political parties increased by 35.53 per cent from Rs 854.89 crore in 2009 to Rs 1,158.59 crore in 2014 general elections. The poll expenditure jumped in recent years as over a period of 10 years, as the spending by national political parties during the Lok Sabha elections went up 386 per cent. Altogether, the political parties exhausted Rs 858.97 crore on publicity, Rs 311.8 crore on travel, Rs 104.28 crore on other expenses and Rs 311.47 crore on expenditure towards candidates.

According to a projected expenditure estimate of Centre for Media Studies (CMS), Rs 30,000 crores would be spent by government, political parties and candidates in 2014 elections. A study carried out by CMS on poll spending says

“unaccounted for” money pumped in by “crorepati” candidates, corporates and contractors has pushed up the expenditure to elect 543 MPs. Out of the estimated Rs 30,000 crore, the exchequer will spend Rs 7000 to Rs 8000 crore to hold the electoral exercise for the 16th Lok Sabha. While the Election Commission is likely to spend around Rs 3,500 crore, the Union Home Ministry, Indian Railways, various other government agencies and state governments will spend a similar amount to put in place means to ensure free and fair polls.

In India while we have ceilings for the expenses to be incurred by a candidate in their constituencies, there is no such ceiling on the use of money by political parties. The money spent by political parties is not added to the candidate’s expense statement. Another data (published by Association for Democratic Reforms) which gives a good idea about the increasing expenses of the political parties and candidates is the amount received by candidates from their respective political parties. To make matters worse, election expenditure statements have to be submitted only by national and recognized regional parties; the rest are exempted from it.

Table: MPs’ Declaration of Aid for Election Expenses from the Party

S. No	Party	Total Lok Sabha MPs	No. Of MPs who have declared receiving aid from party	Total amount declared by MPs as received from party	No. MPs to whom aid was given by the party	Total amount declared by party as given to MPs
1	BJP	282	229	Rs 6,589.22 lakhs	159	Rs 4,875.03 lakhs
2	INC	44	18	Rs 403.60 lakhs	7	Rs 270.00 lakhs
3	NCP	6	6	Rs 279.70 lakhs	5	Rs 250.00 lakhs
4	CPI	1	1	Rs 21.83 lakhs	0	Rs 0
5	CPM	9	9	Rs 265.46 lakhs	4	Rs 128.50 lakhs
Total		342	263	Rs 7,559.82 lakhs	175	Rs 5,523.53 lakhs

This data is still limited to national elections. One can imagine the scale of problem if we add up the electoral expenses incurred during various state elections happening almost every year.

From the above data presented in this section, one can imagine and make a fair estimate of the gigantic proportions our electoral expenses have assumed. It's a burden for the government, taxpayers, political parties and the candidates.

Policy Paralysis Due to Code of Conduct

The model code of conduct (MCC) is a set of norms which has been evolved with the consensus of political parties who have consented to abide by the principles embodied in the said code in its letter and spirit. It comes into effect the moment Election Commission of India announces an election schedule for polls and stays in force till the end of the electoral process. Under the code, governments cannot do anything which may have the effect of influencing voters in favour of the party in power. Grants, new schemes / projects cannot be announced. Even the schemes that may have been announced before the MCC came into force, but that has not actually taken off in terms of implementation on field are also required to be put on hold.

Due to these stringent guidelines, which comes into effect for 45 days after the schedule for elections are announced by the EC, the whole country (during the times of general elections) and states (during elections to state assemblies) come to a virtual standstill. The normal functioning of the government is hampered. It leads a situation of policy paralysis. It has become a model for

inaction. Designed to prevent pre-poll populism by governments and political parties, the frequency of its application has turned the Election Commission's model code of conduct into a charter for non-governance. There are many examples as to how application of Model Code of Conduct for elections causes policy paralysis, however, we have listed a few prominent ones.

Even if status quo is maintained on the code of conduct, there are ways to ensure continuance in decision-making. One solution stems from the way the Delhi High Court decided the dispute over the new telecom policy - by making its continuity conditional on its clearance by the next Lok Sabha.

Instability

Connected to the above issue, the delinking of elections also leads to a situation where we witness instability at the national level. When elections happen, it involves the whole machinery of government. The party in power cannot afford to look away and even the ministers of highest ranks get involved in the campaign process. In the Bihar elections we saw that even the PM was not spared and was actively engaged in the hectic campaign process. This leads to hampering of normal functioning of the government and negatively affects the governance of the country. Among the parties, the BJP organized the highest number of election rallies — 850 — which were addressed by the party chief Amit Shah, several union ministers, Chief Ministers, party's MPs and other star campaigners.

Lack of Bold Decision-Making

If a party which is in power at centre loses

election in a state, it is projected by the opposition as the results have made severe dent on its mandate to rule. This also leads to loss of confidence in the ruling regime. A negative atmosphere is created which contributes in affecting the governance of the country in an adverse way. A loss in a state election in the middle of the tenure of a government at national level is rapidly projected as a loss of credibility and hence all efforts are made by the strengthened opposition to stall any new reform measures.

Security Issues

Fearing outbreaks of attacks by Maoist rebels, terrorist violence and communal clashes between communities, the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2014 mobilised some 200,000 security personnel – comprising 175,000 paramilitary forces and 25,000 state police officers - across the country to protect polling stations and safeguard election results. In the previous general election of 2009, the central government-provided security deployment consisted of 120,000 personnel. These figures do not include the hundreds of thousands of other provincial police and local security forces that were deployed to polling stations across the country. This added feature makes our elections more expensive and the fierce competition in elections may also lead to loss of lives at many places. With the elections happening so often, these features have become a recurrent theme of our democratic process.

Recommendations Made in this Regard

- In the first annual report of the Election Commission submitted in 1983, the then chief

election commissioner R.K. Trivedi had observed: “The commission is of the view that a stage has come for evolving a system by convention, if it is not possible or feasible to bring about a legislation, under which the general elections to the House of the People and legislative assemblies of the states are held simultaneously.”

- 170th report of Law Commission of India on ‘Reform of the Electoral Laws’, 1999 mentioned in this regard the following:

This cycle of elections every year, and in the out of season, should be put an end to. **We must go back to the situation where the elections to Lok Sabha and all the Legislative Assemblies are held at once.**

- One of the reform proposals mentioned in National Commission to Review the Working of Constitution is: “Hold State level and parliamentary level elections at the same time. This would reduce election expenditure.”
- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice headed by EMS Natchiappan submitted its report on the Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. The Committee noted that the holding of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and state assemblies would reduce: (i) the massive expenditure that is currently incurred for the conduct of separate elections; (ii) the policy paralysis that results from the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct during election time; and (iii) impact on delivery of essential services and (iv) burden on crucial manpower

that is deployed during election time.

- There have been demands to hold the two elections together as it can save money, time and resources and ex-Chief Election Commissioner HS Brahma recently said that he is not averse to exploring the possibility.
- President Pranab Mukherjee, during his lecture to school students on the Teachers' Day (5 September) had endorsed the idea of holding simultaneous Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies' elections. President Mukherjee had said that with some election or the other throughout the year, normal activities of the government come to a standstill because of model code of conduct. "This is an idea the political leadership should think of. If political parties collectively think, we can change it", he had said.
- The Election Commission has supported the idea of holding simultaneous elections to Parliament and State Assemblies, in a letter sent to the Law Ministry in May, 2016. This is the first time the poll body has officially expressed its willingness to conduct Lok Sabha and state polls together. The ECI wrote, "In so far as the Election Commission is concerned, the issues involved in holding simultaneous elections are not insurmountable for it. If there is political consensus and will across the board, needless to say, the Commission supports the idea of considering simultaneous elections".

- The Niti Aayog's discussion paper, 'Analysis of Simultaneous Elections: The What, Why and How', bats for simultaneous elections stating that frequent polls change the focus of policy making because "short-sighted populist" and "politically safe" measures are accorded higher priority over difficult structural reforms.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself has floated a very pertinent idea of having simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

Conclusion

Despite all the difficulties and occasional setbacks that we face, one of the admirable features of Indian democracy is the consistent and fairly high voter participation in elections. This undoubtedly reflects the deep entrenched belief of Indian people in the democratic traditions of this country. We should not return this favour by burdening our citizens with sky-rocketing electoral expenditure and the ill-effects that comes with it. India, being a developing country, can ill afford to bear the huge expenditure involved in electoral exercise. From the above discussion it is evident that the issues that we are facing now in terms of spiraling costs of elections, administrative burden on government and Election Commission and governance deficit resulting from these can be better resolved if we revert back to our earlier electoral system whereby we had simultaneous elections for both parliament and state assemblies.



Need for Electoral Reforms in India

*Arjun Sinha

Introduction

The 2014 general election ushered in a new phase in India's electoral history. It was the first time in three decades that a single party won majority in parliament and the first time in India's post-independence history that a non-Congress party obtained an outright majority. This marked the onset of stable and decisive political choices, at sharp contrast from the coalition era of the 1990s.

However, while the stability question in our governance seems to be answered for now, several challenges to the political health of our country still remain. Our political system is extremely fragmented, with nearly 15 candidates contesting each seat in 2014. States like Haryana see political competition rise to as high as 23 candidates per seat. This fragmentation increases the political choices and as a result the amounts of money needed to be spent in an election cycle.

Rising electoral costs lead to parties relying on high net worth individuals. In the 2014 national election, 79% of the Congress Party's candidates and 73% of the BJP's candidates had declared assets greater than Rs 10 million. This not only creates a barrier of entry for talented leaders without significant financial capabilities but also leads to selection of a class that is not representative of a country with an annual per capita income of INR 79,920.

The 1990s and 2000s also saw centralisation

of power by parties, with the rise in family run units supported by legislation and policy changes such as the anti defection laws. This has affected internal party democracy and dismantled traditional cadre units. As a result, these parties are prone to relying on candidates with their own grassroots machinery -either contractors with business interests in the constituency, dynastic politicians or criminal elements.

Over the past ten years, the number of sitting members of parliament with criminal charges has risen from 24% (in 2004), 30% (in 2009) and 34% (in 2014). While the number of dynasts in the 2014 Lok Sabha has reduced to 21% from the earlier level of 29%, we still see certain parties, such as the Indian National Congress, with nearly 48% of their successful members with political lineages.

The knee jerk response has been to treat symptoms rather than the disease. The ECI has sought to increase restrictions against the participation of criminals in elections or limit the use of finance in elections. However, these low-level changes cannot look to improve the health of the Indian political system. Any long lasting reform must amend the rules of the games, on how political parties and candidates contest elections, and raise finances. This article will focus on the key changes that need to happen for our election process to be more transparent.

a. Reforming campaign finance: Increasing transparency, closing loopholes

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Historically, parties have been financed by contributions from friends, family and supporters or philanthropic. Corporate donations were legal from the inception of the Representation of the People's Act in 1951.

It was only in 1968 that donations by corporate entities to political parties were banned. While the official position was to prevent the role of black money in politics, the popular view has been that the move was to block the rise of C Rajagopalachari's Swatantra Party and its liberal economic agenda. However, instead of clamping down on corporate donations, the move only led to funding being driven underground.

To undo some of this damage and promote disclosure of interests, political parties from 1979 onwards were permitted to claim exemptions from income and wealth taxes, as long as they filed returns listing donations of Rs10,000 and above, along with disclosing the identity of the donors. Changes in 1985 sought to incentivise companies to disclose their donations by granting income tax exemptions for contributions. In a fragmented political landscape, donors saw greater interest in maintaining anonymity rather than taking advantage of tax exemptions.

Therefore, the immediate need is for an increased transparency in campaign finance. An opaque system promotes various undocumented quid pro quo systems. This is especially problematic in a country where the government plays a large role in the economy. Conversely, political parties would obviously find it more efficient to raise finance from a small pool of donors rather than a large base.

A trend seen even in developed jurisdictions such as the US, where a recent study demonstrated that merely 158 family interests controlled 50% of the early political funding of the 2016 elections.

However, along with reforming political parties our policy makers need to realise the true cost of campaigning in India. With an average population of 22 lakhs in each parliamentary constituency current expenditure limits allow a candidate to only spend INR 3 rupees to persuade a voter. As a result, while candidates on paper seem to conduct campaigns within prescribed expenditure limits, it is rarely the case in practice. In 1999 the National Election Audit conducted by CSDS estimated that the two principal national parties spent nearly four to six times of the cap. Moreover, misreporting by candidates also undermines the strength of the electoral institution.

In addition, the nature of campaigning itself is changing over time. Campaigns were fought by each candidate in their respective constituencies as representatives of the party. The electoral law framework recognised this model, and sought to regulate expenditures by each candidate, and not the party. However, current political dynamics require parties to share their vision of the nation with their voters based on a single agenda. This increases the role of the presumptive prime ministerial or the state chief ministerial aspirant thereby making the party's expenditure (currently uncapped) more relevant.

The ECI should look to either raise the limits imposed on candidates to realistic levels—or alternatively, consider removing caps on

expenditure with better reporting and funding norms in place. These measures can be achieved by amending section 77 (to amend the timeline for calculating the expense limits) and section 77A (to amend the information required to be disclosed by individual candidates and its frequency of disclosure) of the Representation of Peoples Act. Similar to the UK, the ECI could look to create a long term and near-term campaign periods, and prescribe separate caps for this period (to the extent such caps are realistic).

Along with tackling the rising costs of campaigns and the role of money in elections, the Election Commission should also focus on disseminating greater information to our citizens. The ECI should impose frequent and true disclosures from both parties and candidates. Currently, Indian parties are not required to disclose the source of any income below INR 20,000. Leading to situations such as the Bahujan Samaj Party's disclosures in 2014 stating that it had received no donations larger than INR 20,000. As recommended by the 255th report of the Law Commission of India, a new section 29D to the Representation of Peoples Act can mandate the disclosure of donations even below INR 20,000 (to the extent the donations exceed 20% of the party's total contributions / or INR 20 crore whichever is lower). In addition, the current section 29C of the Representation of People's Act would need amendment to create an obligation on parties to disclose audited financial statements within six months of every financial year, and submit expenditure statements within 90 days of an election.

Once the ECI can increase reporting compliance from parties, the goal should be to reduce the ability of an entity to influence political parties. This can begin with restricting donations from vested interests, such as entities with government contracts. Instead of capping expenditure, the ECI can also look to limit the donations. Caps on donations should exist on each transaction as well as on an aggregate basis in a financial year. Relying on definitions of associates and group companies, the ECI can look to create separate limits on donations by group and affiliated companies. This would force parties to broad base their sources of funds and return to the earlier model of funding parties through donations by cadre/ supporters.

b. ***State funding of elections: Is it a viable solution to murky campaign finance?***

State funding as an alternate to private campaign funding has been gathering support over the years. There are various models of state funding currently in practice globally. Some countries, such as Japan provide parties with a direct transfer of funds based on the number of voters. Germany on the other hand looks to match donations based on the number of votes awarded in the previous election.

However, a common funding support for parties based on population may not reflect support for parties. A common pool would result in more popular parties being forced to receive the same amount as a far unpopular organisation. Funding parties based on the votes received would be backward looking, recognising past performance and not current support. Moreover, parties would still need to raise finance privately and then be reimbursed

to an extent based on their performance. Another form of state funding currently being discussed is the subsidisation of goods and services. Even here, the choice of state funding may not be useful for the parties. Firstly parties depending on the nature of their support base may choose alternate mediums of campaign. Some may rely on social media, while other more on traditional on ground means of outreach. The efficient allocation of financial resources should best be left to the parties in question. The ECI identifying private sector partners has its own set of challenges in terms of proprietary.

One solution of state funding that does resolve some of these challenges is currently being piloted in the city elections of New York. The city has agreed to provide a 6:1 grant ratio for every small donation raised by a candidate. This recognises the current popularity of candidates and allows those with lesser resources to raise the finances required to match well-funded campaigns. However, in India any such model would first require greater financial transparency and discipline from candidates and political parties.

c. *Case for state regulated political party reform*

While it may be useful to add new layers of regulation and compliance, as the NCRWC report on Electoral Reforms and Political Processes notes, no electoral reforms would be effective without reforms in the political party system. Currently, section 29 A of the Representation of the People requires parties to incorporate democratic rules in their constitutional documents at the time of

registration. The model guidelines provided as a part of the application form mandates parties to create standards for democratic decision making, appoint elected officers, and regular turnover of organisation position holders. Moreover, as per the model guidelines, parties ideally do not grant veto powers to an individual, and mandate fixed terms for position holders.¹ The ECI now needs to be empowered to conduct regular audits to confirm the parties' compliance with their internal constitutional documents, and the organisation of internal elections. In fact, in 2011, the Law Ministry had already prepared a Political Parties (Registration and Regulation of Affairs) Bill. Section 6 of the Political Parties Bill required all political parties to form an executive committee to oversee the implementation of democratic norms and intra party elections at all levels. However, after being drafted, the Political Parties Bill saw little to no subsequent debate.

d. *Empowering our guards: giving teeth to the ECI*

As things currently stand, the election commission has limited powers to take action against candidates or their political parties. For example, in 2009, on a misreporting in electoral expenditure by Maharashtra based politician², the ECI was unable to take direct action against the candidate. The corner stone of electoral governance in India, the Model Code of Conduct is technically not legally binding and any compliance by parties or candidates is only voluntary. In 2013, the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, had recommended granting legal status to the Model Code. Penalties for non-

compliance can include withdrawal of the party's tax exemption status, financial penalties in the range of INR 25,000 for every day of non-compliance. Similar to the approach taken under financial legislation, any mis-reported donation or receipt of a donation from illegal sources should attract a penalty between 3 to 5 times the underlying amounts. In addition, the ECI should also have the power to derecognise repeat offenders or those entities that are found guilty of grave offences.

Along with granting greater regulatory power, it would be necessary to ensure greater independence. This can be granted by granting the other commissioners the same constitutional protections granted to the CEC under Article 324. As recommended by the 1990 Goswami Committee and the 255th Law Commission Report, appointments of all the Election Commissioners (including the CEC) should be made by the President in consultation with a three-member collegium - of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice of India.

e. Synchronising India's elections

India's continuous electoral cycle, which

averages around 2-3 elections a year imposes a high cost on parties. A continuous electoral cycle also diverts the attention of incumbent from governance. The imposition of the Model Code of Conduct, which prevents governments from issuing fresh policy, has unquantifiable costs on the economy.

Therefore, the need of the hour is to synchronise state and central elections. The key concern is that a popular central government may create a down ballot effect, and increasing support for the parties even in the state election. There may be some truth to this view. A recent study by the IDFC Institute noted that in a simultaneous election nearly 77% of all voters choose the same party/ alliance for the state and central election. In addition to reducing informed political choice, it would also reduce the role of the Rajya Sabha, which acts as a counterbalance to the lower house.

Therefore, instead of a single national and state election, the ECI can look to organise elections in two cycles. This would reduce the time spent on campaigning. In addition, a mid-term election would act as a referendum on the central government's performance.

References:

¹Article IV: *Organs of the Party (Organizational Structure): Powers and Functions of each of these organs (Decision making power should reflect democratic spirit – no veto power) Method of appointment (and terms) of members to each of the organs (Not more than 1/3rd members can be nominated; Tenure should be fixed not exceeding 5 years; Periodic elections within 5 years maximum)*

Article V: *Office-bearers of the Party: Powers and functions of each of these office-bearers (Decision making power should reflect democratic spirit – no veto power) Method of appointment (and terms) of each of these office-bearers (Should be elected; Not more than 1/3rd can be nominated; Fixed tenure not exceeding 5 years for everyone; Periodic elections within 5 years maximum)*

²Ashok Chavan v. MadhavraoKinhalkar SLP (C) NO.29882 OF 2011.



Imprints of Colonialism in Our Political Discourse

*Ram Madhav

This subject, 'Imprints of Colonialism in our Political Discourse', is coming rather 75 years late. We should have settled this issue 65-70 years ago at the time of the Independence itself like many other countries. There was an excellent opportunity at that time to choose a different path. But we did not.

The Great Democracy Debate:

Not that nobody had thought about it. There was enough brainstorming over what would be the model that independent India should be following. Two different views emerged. One was that of Gandhiji who had always talked about Gram Swarajya and Ram Rajya. Those who think that those concepts were utopian must understand that given a chance Gandhiji himself or many others who were with him on those issues would have certainly developed a blueprint for the same.

Talking of others behind Gandhi, one name that comes to the mind immediately is that of Ram Manohar Lohia. Lohia was originally a diehard fan of Nehru. But on the question of the governance model he became a bitter critic of Nehru and supporter of Gandhiji. Like Gandhiji, Lohia too wanted a model that is indigenous and gels well with Indian genius.

Nehru viewed democracy and Westminster model government as the best option for independent India. He called it the 'second best available form'. The best, according to him, was

'yet to be invented'. Although not flawless the Westminster model democracy was seen as the available best model for India after Independence.

In that, interestingly, Nehru got the support of Dr. Ambedkar who believed that the Westminster model parliamentary democracy offered greater accountability to the masses although it is not good for political stability.

Gandhiji was not opposed to democracy, per se. But he was concerned about the majoritarian streak in democratic polity. "Democracy is an impossible thing until the power is shared by all, but let not democracy degenerate into mobocracy", he used to warn. History tells us that at a time when the world prided over democratically elected leaders like Roosevelt and Churchill, the world had also produced Hitler and Mussolini through the same institution. That is why Gandhiji used to emphasise that true democracy is where 'the power is shared by all' and where 'the weak enjoy as much power as the strong'.

Lohia detested the Westminster model as a wholly incompatible one for India. He was particularly uncomfortable with the argument that it brings in accountability. Lohia's view was that the Westminster model does not score high on accountability factor. Our experience in last seven decades proves him right.

A Written Constitution:

However we finally decided in our wisdom

**This article is an excerpt from the speech of Shri Ram Madhav, National General Secretary, Bharatiya Janata Party & Director, India Foundation at the Lokmanthan 2016 in Bhopal on 12th November, 2016.*

that we follow the British Parliament and adopt the Westminster model. The model derives its name from the place from where the British government operates, the Palace of Westminster in London. The British introduced to us this model through the Government of India Act of 1935.

Once that decision was taken, it was also decided that we should have a written Constitution. Interestingly, the world's oldest democracy, Great Britain or the UK, unlike most modern states, does not have a codified written constitution. Even during their two centuries' rule over India they did not follow any written constitution. UK has an unwritten constitution formed of Acts of Parliament, court judgments and conventions. The United States of America has a written one that was adopted in June 1788 at the Philadelphia Convention. It was more like a social contract between the thirteen states that came together to declare freedom from British colonialists.

In the past history there were no records of Indian rulers depending on written constitutions to run their kingdoms. Even the much talked about Manu Smriti was never a codified constitution of any kingdom. It was like a contemporary moral code to be voluntarily accepted or rejected by the people. Our rulers mostly used to have an Amatya Sabha – Assembly of Ministers – drawn from eminent experts, which would advise the ruler in matters of governance. Their wisdom and experience used to be the guiding light of the statecraft.

Our ancestors conceived an ideal stage as the one where there won't be any state at all.

'Na Raajyam Naiva Raajaaseet –

Na Daandyo Na Cha

Daandikah Dharmenaiva Prajaah Sarve –

Rakshanti Sma Paraspam'

(There won't be any state nor will there be any king; Nobody to punish and nobody to be punished; People will protect each other on the basis of Dharma). Karl Marx also said something similar when he talked about the proletarian dictatorship giving way to withering away of the State.

However, post-independence, we toiled for three years to come up with a comprehensive constitution for India. Dr. Ambedkar played a crucial role in drafting this new constitution. The Constituent Assembly comprised of great stalwarts who had thoroughly examined each and every clause before finally ratifying it on November 26, 1949. In the end, we created a constitution that is not only comprehensive but also the best in the democratic world. It reassured every section of the Indian society, including the most marginalised sections, that the country would hereafter be guided by the rule of law.

It is almost seven decades since we started this journey. A big dilemma bothers us all. Is the Constitution supreme or are the people manning it?

Eminent commentator of the American Constitution, Joseph Story had warned that, "The constitution has been reared for immortality, if the work of man may justly aspire to such a title. It may nevertheless perish in an hour by the folly or the corruption or negligence of its only keepers, the people". It sounds as though the people are the real guarantee for its success.

Even Dr. Ambedkar had said the same thing about the Indian Constitution. "The Constitution

can provide only the organs of the state such as the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of these organs of the state depend are the people or the political parties that they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics..”, he said.

Implicit in these two statements is the fact that Constitution by itself is not a guarantee as long as the holders of it are not good people. This is undeniably our experience in the last seven decades too.

The Three Pillars:

Look at the three pillars of our democracy – Legislature, Executive and Judiciary.

Legislators have today become all-powerful which is against the very ethos of this country. Chanakya had said that the king should lead the life of the last man in his kingdom. As for the Amatyas, he himself presented the ideal through his personal life. But today’s situation is just the opposite. The legislator, an MLA or an MP is extremely powerful. The Legislature has even usurped the powers of the Executive. Even to appoint a primary school teacher in a village or a constable in a police station nothing moves without the approval of the local legislator. This very nature of concentrated power is the major attraction for many unscrupulous elements to get in.

The panacea lays in dis-incentivising the legislative positions. In many countries in the world, the legislators enjoy all the powers only within the four walls of the legislature. Outside, they are like any other common man. Can it be imagined in India?

The second pillar of the Executive, the Octopus like bureaucracy, has also become an uncontrollable institution. The almost 20 million

strong bureaucracy, with certainly some honourable exceptions, is today the most unaccountable institution of our government. Art 311 and several court judgments give the bureaucracy greater immunity. They are not only unaccountable but also their jobs are largely secure. From Delhi to a Galli their reach and stranglehold is unthinkable. This one institution of the Westminster model has done far more damage to our governance than any other institution. Major reforms are needed in making our bureaucracy work effectively. Lateral entry is one such reform to be thought of. Similarly, we needed to create different cadre services for different jobs. For example a Sanskriti Service can be created to handle departments that deal with ancient wisdom in HRD, Culture, Tourism etc. We should be able to tap local talent for local development.

Talking of the above two pillars, one major departure needed from the colonial system is decentralisation. Our Constitution is unitary in nature with certain powers divested to the states. Even in that, the Centre creeps in through the Concurrent List. Genuine decentralisation is needed in order to effectively govern the country. India’s ancient tradition has been one of decentralisation and insularity of the communities from the activities of the king. Kings used to wage wars but the commoners would go on with their daily lives unhindered.

Prime Minister’s call for cooperative federalism is a right step in that direction. However this decentralisation should further extend to village panchayats also. Through 73rd and 74th Amendments we attempted to empower our panchayats. But that has remained half-baked with

both centre and states not willing to cede powers. Through Panchayat Raj reforms, the villages got some extra money, but no powers. In the ancient Indian system the Gram Sabhas – village self-governing units – enjoyed greater freedom and powers. We need to tweak the existing system to allow for greater powers to local self-governing units. That allows us to move in the direction of less governance and less corruption. As it is said, the best government is the one that governs the least.

The third pillar of judiciary also needs major reforms. Our judiciary is fiercely independent. We should not only respect this independence of our judiciary but also zealously guard it. But we shouldn't turn a blind eye to the vagaries of this third pillar. Its inefficiency, tardiness and inaccessibility command urgent reform. Moreover, our judiciary practises self-procreation. Judges produce judges. A more balanced and judicious system must be found in place against this practice. National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) is one such good initiative. But unfortunately, there is no agreement between the judiciary and the legislature over its structure.

Electoral Reforms:

Besides the three pillars of our colonial Westminster system, a major reform to be initiated is the electoral reform. First past the post system that we adopted might have worked well in the initial years when the Congress party was the biggest pan-India party and it had the support of majority of the countrymen. But the present political fragmentation leading to electoral fragmentation

calls the validity of the first-past-the-post electoral system itself into question.

A situation in Jharkhand some 15 years ago, described by Late Pramod Mahajan, aptly sums up the lacuna. On a visit to a foreign country as part of a delegation, Mahajan had to introduce his delegation members from Jharkhand that included the Chief Minister also. The introduction went something like this: 'Here is so and so whose party is the largest in Jharkhand Assembly, but he is the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. Here is so and so whose party is the second largest but it supports the government from outside. Here is the third largest party, which is a part of the ruling coalition, but decided not to join the government. Here are the members of the fourth largest party who are ministers in the Cabinet. And this man is the lone member of the fifth party in the Assembly and he is the Chief Minister'.

Such miracles happen in our system leaving it totally unrepresentative of the most important element – 'will of the people'.

Greek philosopher, Plato was never fond of democracy. But he wanted philosopher kings to rule the kingdoms of the world. By philosopher kings, he meant intelligent and benevolent people. Joseph Story too warned that if good people stay away from politics thinking that it is murky and the bad capture power, even the best constitution in the world would not be able to save America.

Let me end with Plato's warning to the good people: "One penalty for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors".



Make-in-India for Strategic Self Reliance & Building a Globally Competitive Industrial Base

*Dr. Pratyush Kumar

India's 70th anniversary finds the world's largest democracy living in challenging times, in a complex and dangerous geopolitical neighborhood. Regional powers and rivals are pressing ahead with aggressive plans to challenge India's longstanding airpower superiority, which has been the cornerstone of India's national defence since 1971. This has required India to continue modernizing its defence capabilities.

Over the past 70 years, India has relied largely on import and technology transfer from the Russian Federation (erstwhile USSR), France, and

the UK for most critical tactical airpower needs. The model for Transfer-of-Technology (ToT) has essentially been transfer of build-to-print drawings to Defense Public Sector Undertakings (DPSU) such as Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). While this model has served a useful purpose, it has also left critical gaps forcing India to carry the dubious moniker as the largest arms importer in the world.

ToT Model with DPSUs have Outlived their Utility Relying on ToT with DPSUs has generally led to vertical integration of manufacturing of full



- Licensed production at DPSUs
- Build-to-Print drawings
- Vertically integrated



DPSUs

Challenges

- Over reliance on kits
- Under-developed India vendor base
- Customer Satisfaction - Maintainability, Reliability, Availability
- Slow production rate
- Under-emphasis on design and development
- Cycle of tech licensing

**This is the summary of the address made by*

Dr. Pratyush Kumar, President, Boeing India at the India Ideas Conclave at Goa on 4th November, 2016.

aircraft platforms without significant development of India's domestic vendor/supplier base of components. This has led to bottlenecks in production capacity leading to significant gap between demand and supply. It has also forced huge over reliance on knocked-down kits imported from the source countries. By some accounts aerospace DPSUs import over 60% of their output.

This has also led to under-development of design and development capability in India, so that every new need forces a new and self-reinforcing cycle of fresh ToT and continued reliance on imports.

At the same time, Indian defence services have found platforms coming out of such production lacking in maintainability, reliability and availability, resulting often in less than 50% mission readiness of most critical platforms.

As India looks ahead, historical ToT with DPSU is unsustainable; a different model must be explored to keep defence capabilities contemporary, to build an indigenous industrial capacity, and to reduce over dependence on import.

A Proven Production Model

Modern Aerospace & Defense (A&D)

platforms require billions of dollars in development. They need a complex production system - global in scope with multilayered deep capability. Several countries, notably the United States, the UK and France, have developed a tiered production model where A&D majors such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Dassault Aviation, and BAE provide overall systems integration supported by a cadre of Tier 1 suppliers for components such as engines (GE, Pratt & Whitney, Rolls Royce, and Safran), avionics (Honeywell, Rockwell, UTAS, Thales), aerostructure (Triumph, GKN, Leonardo), and radar (Raytheon, Telephonics, Thales).

Each of these Tier 1 suppliers is a highly specialized A&D giant who in turn deploys a large network of Tier 2 suppliers spread across the globe. Tier 2 suppliers, in turn, rely on a bevy of other sub-tier suppliers, many of whom are Small and Medium Enterprises (SME).

System integrators do the overall design and development of the platform. They do the final assembly of the aircraft, testing and certification constituting about 30% of the value. A tiered vendor base contributes the remaining 70% value of the platform.

Such as system has proven to be quite



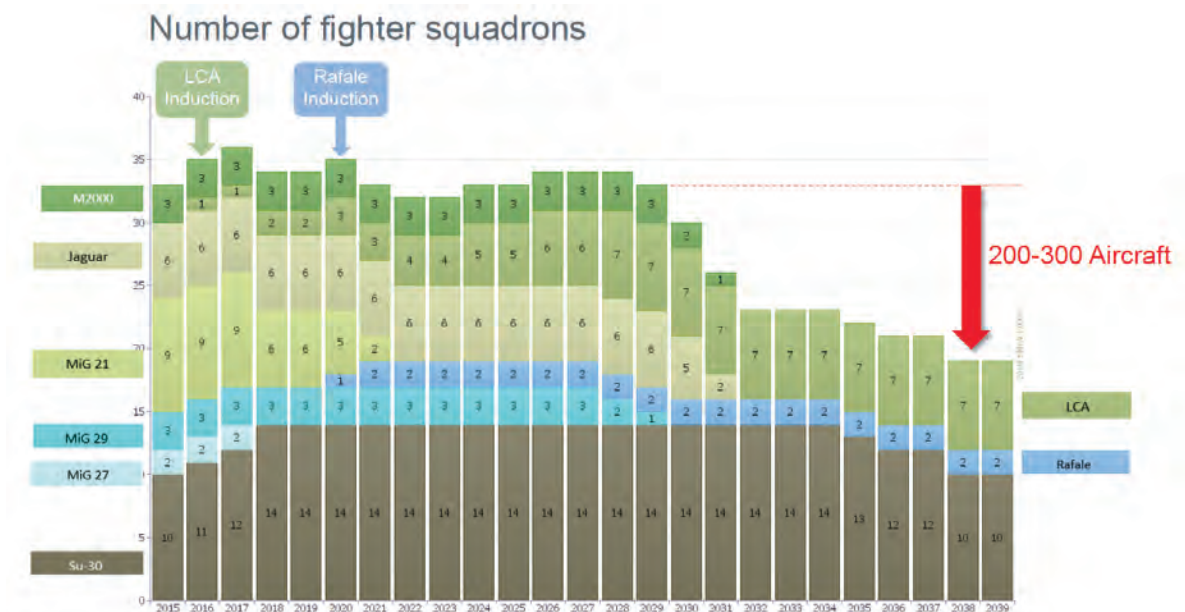
successful and sustainable and has enabled stakeholders to:

- Distribute investment across many suppliers so no one company is left holding a big check.
- Diversify development risk by distributing work packages in manageable chunks across the vendor base.
- Broaden industry involvement and expertise enabling the full power of private sector enterprise to contribute.
- Allow specialization on specific domains such as engine, radar, and avionics which are highly complex and need continuous improvement.

As India plans for the future, it must take a fresh look at developing its own version of this kind of tiered structure that will allow private enterprise to participate and enable the public sector to build new capabilities. Of course

managing such a tiered and deep vendor base requires new capabilities of supplier management, supplier quality, and program management. The systems integrator is ultimately responsible for the platform and thus the quality of each and every one of its direct (Tier 1) and indirect (Sub-Tier) suppliers. This is not an easy skill set to acquire; it needs a systematic, thoughtful, and long-term plan, leveraging new programs and opportunities and breaking the historical cycle of ToT through DPSUs. India must look at model where the public sector and private industrial base co-exist, each contributing to India's capabilities and continuously upgrading and modernizing their processes and operations.

Any new aircraft procurement India undertakes must be structured to "jumpstart" India's domestic aerospace manufacturing capabilities and the development of this tiered system as much as possible. The goal is not to



replace or leave behind the existing DPSUs in aerospace, but to develop a deep and robust private sector supply chain to complement and strengthen DPSU operations and that includes a substantial DPSU manufacturing role going forward.

India's Challenge and Opportunity

By many accounts, India will face tactical airpower shortfall approaching 300 aircraft in the next two decades. This is a watershed moment both for India's national security and its economic development.

Today's decisions will determine whether and how India can close that gap. Most vitally, it is critical to replace retiring fighter jets to maintain the current 33 squadron strength with new fighters that have a qualitative advantage. And that advantage must be built into a forward looking "development spiral" that keeps India's air force ahead of the curve as rivals upgrade and enhance their fleets in coming years.

As Prime Minister Modi's 'Make in India' initiative has demonstrated, the most reliable way to ensure India's long term economic, political, and national security is to develop its domestic capabilities – which in the aerospace context means pushing high quality, high value work down into a tiered private sector supply chain. And the best way to do this is to carefully structure the next procurement of tactical fighters to maximize long-term technology transfer and aerospace supply chain benefits, working with an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) that knows how to operate in India and is fully committed to making a cutting edge technology transfer process work.

In the foreseeable future, India's biggest

challenge will be countering potential threats on two fronts. Just matching the upgraded capabilities of F-16s that operate in the region will be insufficient. This means selecting a partner that can provide an aircraft that can outfly even the most advanced jets like the stealthy J-20, is affordable enough to ensure a large enough buy to provide tactical defense across the long and volatile western front, and can serve as the foundation for development of a "bottom up" industrial aerospace economy that will propel economic development forward – a contemporary aircraft platform that will remain cutting edge and preserve India's airpower superiority for the next 40-years.

Aircraft Capabilities and Overall Force Structure

Indian air superiority is vital to the nation's security and to preserve the regional strategic balance. Any new multirole fighter must sustain and extend India's historic airpower advantage.

Many experts have observed that when maintenance and operational availability are taken into account, the true size of the IAF drops to below its current 33 squadrons. And that figure includes large numbers of obsolete or limited capability aircraft that would contribute little if a conflict should erupt. Without a new procurement, and even factoring in the introduction of the Light Combat Aircraft and the limited fleet of Rafales currently under contract, the shortfall is predicted to grow to 200-300 aircraft by 2038.

Regional rivals, by contrast, are quickly modernizing, focusing procurement on highly advanced fighters and working to develop a quantitative and quality edge that could put Indian

air superiority at risk. In many cases, even the legacy aircraft fielded by India's rivals are superior to the IAF's older planes. As a result, the next Indian multirole fighter must be able to outcompete/overcome the capabilities represented in advanced aircraft like the J-20 and J-31, as well those in upgraded Block 52 F-16s. That means a survivable, multi-role, maintainable, high availability aircraft that can perform a wider variety of missions, outfly or at a minimum match the most advanced rival aircraft head to head. It also needs to be cost effective and available enough to ensure a high degree of readiness – ensuring India gets the very most out of its new fleet.

A detailed review of the full suite of design features, performance metrics, avionics, sensors, weaponry, and other features that contribute to an aircraft's overall performance is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a few key items merit particular attention.

Combat Extension Capabilities.

For some time to come, the IAF is likely to field fewer aircraft than the combined forces of its regional rivals. This makes it vital to select a multirole fighter with enhanced survivability and flexibility options that can allow the fleet to outlast larger rivals in a protracted conflict.

One key feature that allows a smaller force to take on larger rivals is twin-engine design, offering added survivability and increasing the odds an aircraft can remain airworthy and return to base even after a direct engine hit. When facing a larger force, the impact of every aircraft lost is magnified and the value of this added margin of safety cannot be overstated.

Other features bring similar “combat extension” value – such as “buddy” refueling capabilities that allow IAF frontline fighters to stay on station for longer periods of time. While a larger air force with a more robust fleet of dedicated refueling tankers may be able to forego this kind of fighter-to-fighter refueling capability. But for the IAF, looking to stretch limited funds across as many needs as possible, this is a vital force multiplier.

Finally, a substantial degree of stealth to maximize survivability and increase mission flexibility is valuable. While the general public tends to view “stealth” as a yes or no proposition, the truth is all advanced aircraft have greater or lesser degrees of stealth.

And while stealth may not be a primary consideration compared to the others identified, all things being equal, an aircraft with a higher degree of stealth will be more survivable and better able to conduct a broader range of missions. That generates more options for commanders and keeps losses at a minimum in any engagement where the IAF faces a larger foe.

Newer Technology, Extendable Capability

The IAF should strive to procure the aircraft that entered service most recently in order to stay at the front edge of the aircraft's development curve and technology upgrade spiral, and to obtain the longest window of likely service life between procurement and obsolescence. Procuring an aircraft with an older Initial Operation Service date risks locking India into fading or unsupported designs. India shouldn't get locked into producing

end-of-life aircraft with no future technology upgrade path.

Newer planes are more likely to have built in high-performance features and depend less on major retrofits. Built in stealth, for example, is generally superior to airframe treatments or modifications bolted on decades after initial entry into service.

More fundamentally, a new aircraft model is likely to be relatively early in its development “spiral” – the process by which aircraft manufacturers and advanced militaries strengthen and upgrade their aircraft to keep them at the cutting edge over their entire service life. An aircraft at the beginning of this process will have a far longer “top of the line” lifetime than one that has been in service for many decades and will inevitably face an earlier platform retirement.

Ensuring Qualitative Separation from Key Rivals

The most reliable way to ensure the IAF’s qualitative edge is to invest in a newer, more robust basic platform that potential adversaries are not able to field. While some argue that flying the same aircraft as rivals is a safe way to ensure that they do not surpass India’s capabilities, this is tantamount to a defensive crouch that essentially places the nation’s security at risk. And the problem becomes acute when potential adversaries have a significant experience lead on a platform – in a combat situation they can eke out more based on their experience.

By the same token, aircraft proposals that promise to engineer a qualitative advantage for India over potential adversaries flying the same

basic platform by limiting those competitors’ access to upgrades and enhancements should be viewed skeptically. It’s an easy promise to make at time of sale but a very difficult one to enforce over the long haul. Better to start out with a more advanced, newer platform and build forward from there.

Lifecycle Cost

Given the larger size of rival fleets and the IAF’s lopsided dependence on older aircraft, this procurement must bring as many advanced fighters on line as possible to close the potential 200-300 aircraft shortfall.

All else being equal, an aircraft that is more affordable over the long term is always better. That means carefully evaluating both up front purchase costs (once all discounts, offsets, and other factors are considered) and life cycle costs (including cost per flight hour and maintenance, upkeep, and depot requirements over time). A newer aircraft is likely to have lower maintenance costs and, over the long haul, easier and more affordable access to supplies and spares. Of currently available aircraft, Super Hornet has the lowest cost per flight hour in the U.S. inventory, including the F-16.

Another factor that can generate substantial long term cost savings is the availability of off-the-shelf variants that use the same basic airframe to meet airpower needs beyond the basic fighter bomb mission. For example, an aircraft with electronic warfare ready variants would bring greater economies of scale if India should in the future seek to acquire those capabilities.

Similarly, and more immediately, while no one expects the IAF to base its tactical airpower

decisions on the needs of the Indian Navy, it is clear that over time the Navy will need to upgrade and expand its carrier air wings. Selecting an IAF fighter now that offers a carrier ready variant would permit substantial cost savings and force integration benefits when that occurs.

“Make in India” and the Development of an Advanced Domestic Aerospace Capability

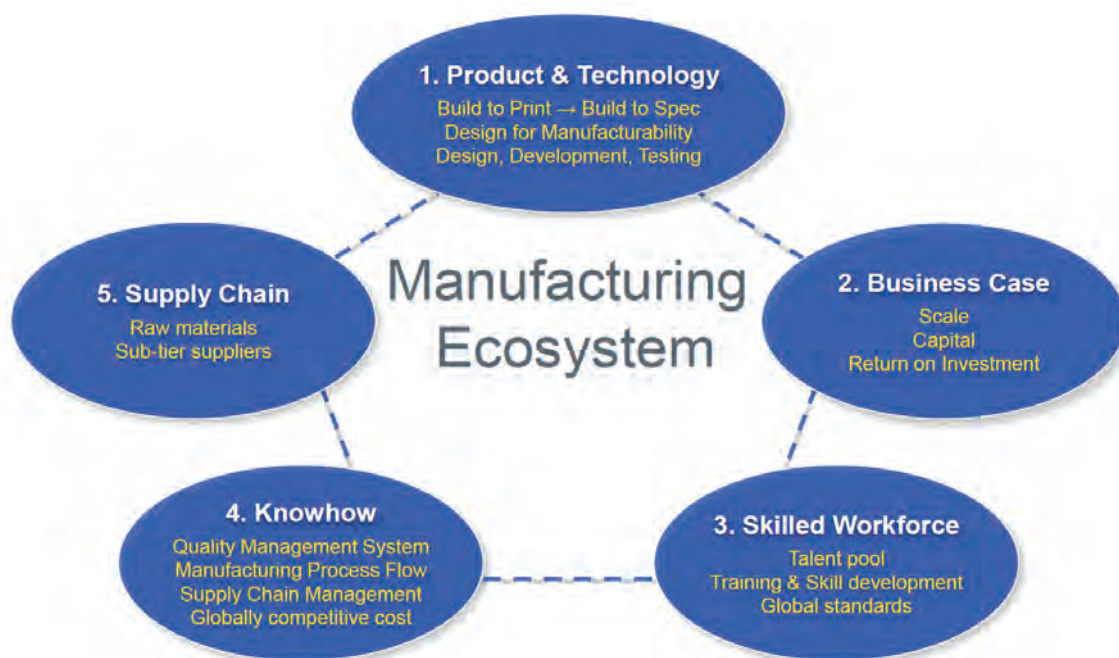
This procurement represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to jumpstart India’s domestic aerospace industrial base and accelerate the development of its advanced military grade manufacturing capability.

The importance of this objective cannot be overstated. Development of a modern aerospace capability and supporting tiered supply chain is vital for India’s long-term national security – as the only

way to reduce and eventually end the nation’s reliance on foreign suppliers of advanced defense systems. And it is a doorway India must pass through in order to develop advanced industrial capabilities that will allow it to compete in high tech markets around the world.

Prime Minister Modi’s ‘Make in India’ initiative is providing an enormous boost to the development of India’s modern industrial economy. But all prior ‘Make in India’ initiatives pale in comparison to the prospect of standing up a new cutting edge aerospace manufacturing facility to build one of the world’s most advanced fighter jets.

The IAF knows from hard experience how challenging it can be for manufacturers to live up to their ‘Make in India’ commitments in the context of advanced aerospace projects. For this reason, it is vital to select both an aircraft and a manufacturing partner that gives ‘Make in India’



the greatest chance to succeed and yield the most substantial domestic industrial gains.

Five elements must come together to create a globally competitive A&D industrial base in India that not only serves India's needs but is fully integrated into the global supply chains of major OEMs for the long term:

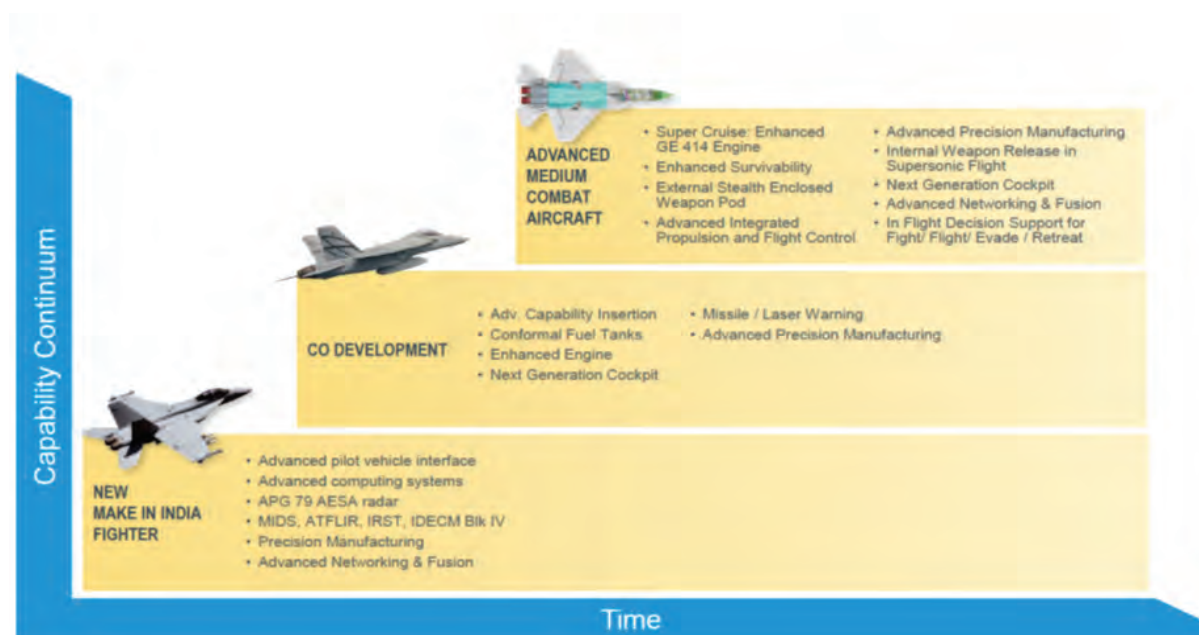
1.Product & Technology: A Long-Term Competitive Aircraft

For similar reasons, the aircraft itself must be a competitive new model fighter that can be expected to compete in and win international procurements for years to come. Leveraging global demand and international sales to drive up export volume in this way supercharges 'Make in India' by vastly extending the useful life of the manufacturing facility and the number of Indian aerospace workers who will be able to gain experience there.

By contrast, an older model aircraft trying to eke out a few last sales before platform retirement is unlikely to be competitive with international buyers over the long haul, saddling India with a "white elephant" manufacturing plant that has little long term economic or "know how" value.

The chosen aircraft and manufacturing strategy must also lay a clear and direct pathway to the domestic design and production of a new Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

In large part, that simply means ensuring that procurement focuses on obtaining the most advanced technology available and putting in place an effective 'Make in India' manufacturing plan that accelerates development of an advanced manufacturing supply chain and boosts domestic aerospace capabilities. But in certain areas it is worth considering up front whether the selected aircraft and 'Make in India' arrangement will fill key gaps needed on the pathway to the AMCA.



Fluency with advanced composite materials has become a core manufacturing competency needed to produce cutting edge highly capable combat aircraft. This is a highly specialized field with a small number of military capable suppliers and an area where India must become self-sufficient if it is to domestically produce the AMCA. Care should be taken to ensure that this procurement results in meaningful skills and technology transfer in the area of composites.

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It is also vital to prioritize a two engine (2E) Make-in-India fighter to counter the growing threat on the eastern border while giving HAL chance to develop the Light Combat Aircraft. India has dual needs – finding a replacement for retiring one engine (1E) MIG-21s and maintaining a Force Balance for operational needs which calls for more 2E fighter/attack aircraft.

From a Force Balance point of view, IAF has

already determined that it requires 126 2E aircraft during the MMRCA AoN process. So with only 36 Rafale on order, there is a clear and present gap of 90 aircraft which will become even more acute in coming years.

Given the regional geopolitical situation, India needs an effective counter to J-20 aircraft, not just upgraded Block 52 F-16. Therefore, India needs to move quickly on the 2E aircraft decision, which will also give a timely boost AMCA development and send an important geopolitical message.

2. Business Case and Scale

Scale is a must to close the business case for developing indigenous capability. For example, developing a domestic engines capability is vital if the AMCA program is to yield a truly indigenous aircraft. Based on current specs and development plans, the GE F414 engine would be viable in the LCA, the Super Hornet, and the future AMCA. Taking advantage of a common engine would do much to advance a logical technology transfer

Build scale through commonality across platforms e.g., GE F-414 Engine for LCA, New Fighters and under development AMCA



agenda in one of the most complex and high-performance areas of aircraft manufacture.

3. Skilled Workforce – A Must for Aero-Space & Defense Manufacturing in India

Aerospace manufacturing requires uniquely tight tolerances and production has to be essentially defect-free. Therefore, it necessitates highly skilled factory workers and services capability.

To realize growth in aerospace manufacturing and achieve government's vision, Aerospace & Aviation Sector Skills Council (AASSC) estimates additional 90,000 trained workforce will be needed over the next decade. Aerospace sector not only needs engineers from multiple disciplines — ranging from computer science to mechanical engineering to materials sciences, but also requires skilled frontline manufacturing workers.

The government of India is addressing this problem through initiatives such as setting up the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and AASSC operating under the auspices of NSDC. India's vocational education and training institutions are in the process of addressing the requirements of the industry.

For similar reasons, India's new fighter must be built in India at an advanced top of the line manufacturing plant that uses the most current and forward-leaning technologies and processes. India must refuse to accept "last generation" technology or dated "hand me down" production facilities that will lock its domestic aerospace economy into a cycle of obsolescence for an industrial generation.

Indian aerospace workers who gain experience and skills working at this facility must learn the most advanced manufacturing methods and work with the newest processes and equipment available

to lay the foundation for a domestic aerospace supply chain and long-term capability that will ultimately perform most of the work on this new 'Make in India' fighter. There should also be a role to use this process to strengthen and modernize India's aerospace PSUs, who ideally would have some role to play in the end stage work bringing these new aircraft online.

As workers rotate out of this facility to start their own businesses and staff existing aerospace suppliers, they should be equipped with skills equal to those at any of the world's most advanced economies. This is vital with experts predicting India will need 90,000 trained aerospace workers to meet coming demand and currently producing only 4,000 qualified graduates a year.

4. Know How: The Right Partner Committed to Sharing Capabilities and ToT

The most important factor by far is selecting an OEM partner that has experience in complex local sourcing arrangements such as evidenced in the 'Make in India' program. Ideally it should be one that has a record of success in this regard.

The partner company must have extensive experience working through technology transfer issues, to ensure it can navigate its own domestic legal and national security review processes and understand and comply with Indian requirements, as well. Given the unique opportunity at hand, and the devastating opportunity costs for India if the local production and technology transfer components of the program do not succeed, choosing a reliable partner with a strong track record making 'Make in India' work is crucial.

For similar reasons, it is also important to select a partner that already has concrete, hands on

experience building its own aerospace components in India and working with existing vendors, suppliers, and partners. A manufacturer that has seen the value of building in India and that has an existing network of relationships with India's current supplier networks is more likely to hit the ground running.

By contrast, a company with no real pre-existing footprint in the country or one that has only participated in India's domestic aerospace economy when compelled to do so by 'Make in India' will be less likely to succeed.

There is also tremendous value in working with a partner that has both commercial and military aerospace experience and operations. The purpose of 'Make in India' is to develop domestic industrial capabilities – and the benefits will be far more substantial with a partner that can help boost both India's military and commercial opportunities and expertise. A partner with a broad diverse aerospace business will be better positioned to integrate nascent Indian suppliers and vendors into their global supply chain, particularly those who have done 'Make in India' work relevant to the

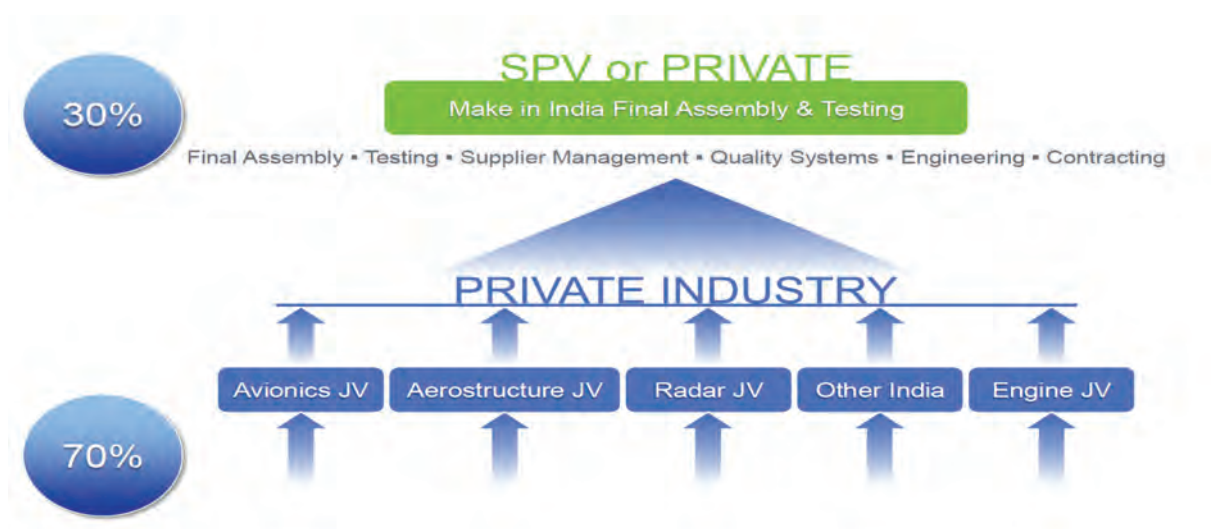
fighter aircraft they propose to supply for this procurement.

5. Supply Chain Co-opt Private Enterprise without Sacrificing Public Enterprise

At this time, HAL needs a fair opportunity to build LCA Mark 1 & 1a. Depending on HAL's performance, production decisions on a new 1E fighter can be made in a couple of years. In the meantime, to meet critical operational need of 2E aircraft in near-to-medium term, the immediate 'Make in India' fighter jet decision should be focused on 2E aircraft.

India wants to develop an alternative to HAL for military aircraft manufacturing and therefore wants to partner with private industry on the new 'Make in India' fighters. A key complication is how to develop objective criteria to select the partner, which won't be challenged by parties not selected. Any such controversy, or fear thereof, will drag out decision on strategic partner selection.

Also, there is risk that any such pre-selected partner may act as a monopolistic player



complicating negotiations. Therefore, it's best to go through the established Buy & Make category as defined in DPP 2016 and leave the choice of India partners to the selected OEM.

At this stage, while HAL's capacity is a concern as "they have more on their plate than they can deliver," it would be prudent not to rule out a possible structure where HAL or DRDO participates in a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with the selected OEM. To avoid distracting HAL, this SPV wouldn't be controlled by HAL and would require only minimal management oversight from them. In line with the earlier rationale, 70% of the value will be added by the private players feeding into the SPV which will do final assembly, testing, and certification totaling to 30% of value. Such a structure would enable future collaboration of next generation aircraft such as AMCA with HAL and DRDO. SPE with a global OEM can become conduit for delivering much needed manufacturing best practices for existing HAL factories.

G2G Approach is Preferable for Speed, Transparency, and Cost

There is a school of thought to ask for fresh Expressions of Interest (EOI) for 'Make in India' fighters. Based on the response to this EOI on level & depth of technology transfer and

indigenization, IAF/MoD will then decide on a government-to-government (G2G) procurement via Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) or decide to float a tender. Having been through a lengthy (10 year) and ultimately inconclusive tender process for MMRCA at the end of which India had to rely on a G2G transaction, it will be prudent to stay on the G2G path.

The G2G route also allows India to buy into huge procurement scale of big buyers like the United States. That brings unrivaled cost advantages; FMS deals tend to be more economical than competitive procurements given the scale advantages and cost plus nature of such deals. Besides, G2G procurement is transparent and avoiding delays and potential controversies.

India's ability to maintain its edge versus potential regional adversaries depends on expanding and upgrading its tactical aircraft fleet. A G2G approach prioritizing a two engine tactical aircraft for the 'inIndia' project is the best way to counter emerging threats and build India's industrial base and supply chain capabilities for long term development and growth. This will allow the IAF to get the best out of opt private enterprise while enhancing and strengthening the capabilities of its DPSUs.

References:

¹While it is common to refer to "Fourth Generation," "Fourth Generation Plus," and "Fifth Generation" aircraft in discussions of advanced airpower, these terms do little to clarify the issues. The available multirole fighters exist on a continuum of version "blocks", capabilities, attributes, and treatments that represent a much more fluid set of choices than the broad, rigid, "Fourth" or "Fifth" Generation categories suggest. For this reason, the analysis here focuses on specific capabilities and related considerations such as in-service dates and expected development spirals in comparing aircraft options.



India is My Home

*Taslima Nasreen



Although I was not born an Indian, there is very little about my appearance, my tastes, my habits and my traditions to distinguish me from a daughter of the soil. Had I been born 20 years earlier than I was, I would have been an Indian in every sense of the term. My father was born before partition; the strange history of this subcontinent made him a citizen of three states, his daughter a national of two.

In a village in what was then East Bengal, there once lived a farmer, his name was Haradhan Sarkar, one of whose sons, Kamal Krishna Sarkar, driven to fury by *zamindari* oppression, converted

to Islam and became Kamaal Uddin Sarkar. I belong to this family. Haradhan Sarkar was my great-grandfather's father. Haradhan's other descendents obviously moved to India either during or after partition and became citizens of this country. My great grandfather, a Muslim, did not.

Even though I was born well after partition, I wrote a number of poems and stories lamenting the loss of undivided Bengal, indeed undivided India, even before I visited this country. I simply could not bring myself to accept the bit of barbed wire which kept families and friends apart even though they shared a common language and culture. What hurt most was that this wire had been secured by religion. By my early teens, I had abandoned religion and turned towards secular humanism and feminism which sprang from within me and were in no way artificially imposed.

My father, a man with a modern scientific outlook, encouraged me to introspect, and as I grew older I broke away not just from religion but also from all the religions customs, indeed the very culture, which constantly oppressed, suppressed and denigrated women. When I first visited India, specifically West Bengal, in 1989, I did not for an instant think that I was in a foreign land. From the moment I set foot on Indian soil, I knew I belonged here and that it was, in some fundamental way, inseparable from the land I called my own.

The reason for this was not my Hindu

**This is the summary of the address made by Ms. Taslima Nasreen, author at the India Ideas Conclave at Goa on 5th November, 2016.*

ancestors. The reason was not that one of India's many cultures is my own or that I speak one of India's many languages or that I look Indian. It is because the values and traditions of India are embedded deeply within me. These values and traditions are a manifestation of the history of the subcontinent. I am a victim of that history. Then again, I have been enriched by it, if one can call it so. I am a victim of its poverty, colonial legacy, faiths, communalism, violence, bloodshed, partition, migrations, exodus, riots, wars and even theories of nationhood. I have been hardened further by my life and experiences in a dirty, poverty and famine stricken, ill-governed theocracy called Bangladesh.

The intolerance, fanaticism and bigotry of Islamic fundamentalists forced me to leave Bangladesh. I was forced to go into exile; the doors of my own country slammed shut on my face for good. Since that moment, I sought refuge in India. When I was finally allowed entry after a few years, not for an instant did I think I was in an alien land. Why did I not think so; especially when every other country in Asia, Europe and America felt alien to me? Even after spending twelve years in Europe I could not think of Europe as my home. It took less than a year to think of India as my home. Is it because we, India and I, share a common history? Had East Bengal remained a province of undivided India would the state have tolerated an attack on basic human freedoms and values and the call for the death by hanging of a secular writer by the proponents of fundamentalist Islam and self-seeking politicians? How would a secular democracy have reacted to this threat against one of its own? Or is

the burden of defending human and democratic values solely a European or American concern? The gates of India remained firmly shut when I needed her shelter the most. The Europeans welcomed me with open arms. Yet, in Europe I always considered myself a stranger, an outsider.

After twelve long years in exile when I arrived in India, it felt as though I had been resurrected from some lonely grave. I knew this land, I knew the people, I had grown up somewhere very similar, almost indistinguishable. I felt the need to do something for this land and its people. There was a burning desire within me to see that women are educated, and independent, women stand up for and demand their equal rights and freedom. I wanted my writings to contribute in some way to the empowerment of these women who had always been oppressed.

While I was living in West Bengal, a few fatwas were issued against me, and some Islamic fundamentalists in Hyderabad chose to launch a physical attack upon me. After hearing of the incident in Hyderabad, Muslim fundamentalist leaders in West Bengal, became so excited that they wasted no time in issuing a new *fatwa* against me and set a price on my head. Almost twenty five per cent of India's population is Muslim and, unfortunately, the most vocal representatives of this considerable community are fundamentalists. No educated, civilized, cultured, secular and enlightened Muslim is regarded as representative of the community. What can be a greater tragedy than this? India was my second home. Because a handful of Muslim fanatics did not want me to stay in India, I was forced to leave the country in 2008.

Recently I have written book remembering those painful days.

In my book *Exile*, I wrote about the series of events leading to my ouster from West Bengal, then Rajasthan and eventually India, my house arrest, and the anxious days I had to spend in the government safe house, beset by a scheming array of bureaucrats and ministers desperate to see me gone. Without a single political party, social organization or influential personality by my side, I had been a lone, exiled, dissenting voice up against the entire state machinery with only my determination at my disposal. But there was one thing I was sure of - I had not done anything wrong, so why should I be punished unfairly? Why would not I be allowed to live in a country I love?

Why would a nation that prides itself on being a secular democracy bow down to the diktats of a section of dishonest, misogynist, intolerant fanatics, and banish an honest, secular humanist writer? Despite being forced to leave, I have eventually ignored all the prohibitions and bans and threats, and come back to India.

I have come back because I have nothing else but India, and because I hope India will one day truly encourage free thought. I wish to live in this country and be allowed the freedom to express my opinions even if they are contrary to others. I wish for neighbouring nations to learn from India's example and be inspired - they who yet do not know the meaning of freedom of speech.

Writers across the world are being persecuted, whipped, tortured, imprisoned, killed and exiled. But, leave alone dictators, even democratic governments are no longer interested in freedom

of expression. Whenever I try to point out the significance of such a fundamental right, I am informed that even freedom of speech must have its limitations and that it cannot be used to hurt someone's sentiments.

Wouldn't it be extremely difficult to ensure that you never hurt someone's sentiments? People keep hurting us, intentionally or not, by words or deeds. Our world is populated by a multitude of opposing mindsets. They clash and hurt each other but also have an in-built mechanism to manage hurt. Unfortunately, religious fanatics use the excuse of injured sentiments to cause further mischief, refusing to listen or be placated.

It is a moment of crisis for democracy when a citizen is robbed of their right to speak and express their opinions. Social change makes it necessary that a few feathers will be ruffled and a few egos will be wounded. It hurts people's sentiments when you try to separate religion and State, when you attempt to abolish misogynistic laws; equality between men & women cannot be achieved without hurting religious sentiments. A lot of people had been outraged when the Crown and the State were being forcibly separated in the Continent. Galileo's and Darwin's views had upset many pious people of their times. The superstitious are routinely offended by the evolution and advancement of science. If we stop expressing our opinions because someone will be hurt by it, if we curb the growth and development of scientific knowledge, if we forcibly try to stall the march of civilization, we will end up inhabiting a stagnant quagmire instead of basking in a possibly raging cascade of knowledge and plenitude.

If the objective is to say exactly what everyone would love to listen to, then we would have no need for freedom of speech. Such rights are important primarily for those whose opinions are different or usually don't follow the status quo. Freedom of speech is the freedom to say something you might not like to hear. Those who never hurt other's sentiments do not need freedom of speech. A State that chooses to side with those who seek to oppose such freedoms, instead of ensuring that they are brought to book, will be responsible for its own eventual destruction.

Some time back, one such a draconian law against freedom of speech was abolished by the Government of India. I was among those who had worked towards this goal and our success was a significant acknowledgment of the systematic persecution many have had to go through because of such laws. I have had to face it too, which is why I am glad to have been part of such a reform initiative, despite not being a pure-born citizen of India. The world is constantly vigilant that no one hurts the sentiments of those who are opposed to human rights and women's rights. When will the world learn to see all as equal? When will it learn to stop pleasing extremists and begin to respect reason and humanism instead?

In Bangladesh, you may know that Hindu temples and homes are again being attacked by Muslim fanatics. You also know that secular bloggers and progressive people were hacked to death. And you know about the terrorist attack at Dhaka Cafe. Those terrorists were around twenty years old. They were not poor, not illiterate. Heavily indoctrinated in Islam, they shouted 'Allah-

hu-Akbar' while slaughtering people.

Those terrorists had nothing but religion as their guide. Young men have been brain washed with Islam. They have been fed the belief that non-believers, non-Muslims and critics of Islam should be killed. By killing them, they have been convinced, they will go to heaven. They have also been taught that jihad is mandatory for every Muslim and Muslims should strive to turn Dar-ul-Harb (the Land of the Enemy) into Dar-ul-Islam (the Land of Islam).

There is no point trying to confuse the issue by saying that poverty, frustration, lack of jobs and the absence of hope force people to become terrorists. It is, in fact, the other way around. The new terrorists are often rich and educated, highly qualified professionals, who have been seduced by fanaticism. They join terrorist organizations because they know they will be at liberty to do whatever they wish to do, and be given the sanction to rape, kill and torture at will.

Many organizations and institutions in Bangladesh have been funded by Islamic fundamentalists from rich Arab countries for decades. Madarasas and mosques have long been breeding grounds for Islamic fundamentalists. Islamization in Bangladesh started not long after its creation in 1971. It is tragic that Bangladesh, whose very birth was premised on secularism and a rejection of the two-nation theory, has degenerated into an Islamic fundamentalist country.

In the early 90s, when I was attacked by Islamic fundamentalists, a fatwa was issued against me, a price was set on my head, and hundreds of thousands of Muslim fundamentalists

took to the streets demanding my execution. The government, instead of taking action against the fundamentalists, filed a case against me on the charges of hurting the religious sentiments of people. I was forced to leave the country and that was the beginning of what today's Bangladesh is— a medieval and intolerant nation of bigots, extremists and fanatics. And you know, governments have been preventing me from entering my country.

I truly hope that the secular movement in my country will begin again and turn into a positive political movement for a true democracy and a secular state - a state which affirms a strict separation between religion and state, and maintains a uniform civil code, a set of secular laws that are not based on religion, but instead, on equality, and an education system that is secular, scientific, and enlightenment- based.

People must know that Islam should not be exempt from the critical scrutiny that applies to other religions as well; they must understand that

Islam has to go through an enlightenment process similar to what other religions have gone through, by questioning the inhuman, unequal, unscientific and irrational aspects of religion. The narrow-minded political will forever seek to plunge society into darkness and chaos, while a handful of others will always strive for the betterment of society and to have good sense prevail. It is always a few special people who seek to bring about change; that is how it has always been. I have been living in exile since 1994. I know I have no other alternative but to live in exile for the rest of my life. I feel, I have nowhere to go, no country or home to return to. I say now, India is my country, my home. How much more will I have to suffer at the hands of fundamentalists and their political allies for the cardinal sin of daring to articulate the truth?

Even after all that has happened, I still believe, I still dream, that for a sincere, honest, truly secular writer of the subcontinent, India is the safest refuge, the only refuge.



Growing Strategic Partnership between India and Vietnam

*Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan



Vietnam's Social-Economic Development:

Amid complex developments in the global political and security landscape, coupled with a slow recovery of the world economy, Vietnam is still able to maintain relatively high growth and stability. During 2011-2015, GDP growth stood at 5.82% per annum and is projected to reach 6.5% in 2016. We are striving to achieve a growth of 6.5-7% in the next 4 years (2017-2020). The size and strength of the economy continues to grow. Foreign investors have great confidence and see Vietnam as a destination for

investment owing to the following reasons:

First, the Vietnam's political – social stability is maintained. Vietnam is an open economy with a steady growth in trade: two-way trade during 2011-2015 grew by 15%, reaching 330 billion USD in 2015 (equivalent to 1.6 times the size of GDP). We are striving to achieve the target of 600 billion USD by 2020. So far, Vietnam has received nearly 290 billion USD in FDI with more than 22,000 projects from 116 countries and territories.

Second, Vietnam is actively promoting international integration with a focus on economic integration. We have participated in the ASEAN

**This article is the summary of the remarks by H.E. Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam at the civic reception hosted in her honour by India Foundation on 10th December, 2016 at New Delhi.*

Community (with a population of 650 million people, a GDP of 2.500 billion USD). 13 free trade agreements (FTAs) have been concluded, including many next-generation Agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in which Vietnam and India are both participating countries.

Third, Vietnam's legal framework has gradually improved to support economic development. The 2013 Constitution lays an important foundation for improving business and investment environment. A number of important legislations such as Procurement Law, Investment Law, Corporate Law are being reviewed and amended to create a more conducive environment and equality for both Vietnamese and foreign businesses.

Fourth, with a population of over 91 million, Vietnam has a labor force accounting for 70% of the population with enhanced training and quality. Vietnam has entered a "golden population" period. This will provide opportunities for investors as Vietnam will become a very promising market for business and trade. The size and purchasing power of the Vietnamese market continues to attain steady and stable growth as compared to other markets in Asia.

Fifth, there remain vast potentials for further development in Vietnam, especially in infrastructure such as road, railway, aviation, the areas, which need very large amount of capital. Vietnam has great strength and can make further development in agriculture and processing industry. In particular, tourism is also a potential area. The country boasts a long coastline along with a large number of historical sites, beautiful landscapes and

cultural heritages recognized by UNESCO. In recent years, revenues from tourism have recorded an annual increase of 21%. Vietnam welcomed more than 8.7 million international visitors in 2015. However this number remains low compared to neighboring countries such as Thailand, Singapore or Malaysia.

India is among Vietnam's 10 largest trade partners with an annual two-way trade of about 5.5 billion USD. We hope to welcome an increasing number of large Indian corporations to invest in the country, making India one of the leading investors. We appreciate that India has provided incentive credits and technical assistance, capacity building in areas that Vietnam has the demand such as infrastructure, transport, digital technology, English training, capacity building for small and medium enterprises. In the coming time, we suggest that the two countries should expand cooperation in new areas such as the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, research and use of space for peaceful purposes, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and high-technology.

Vietnam's Foreign Policy and the Relations with India

The foreign policy of Vietnam is further inherited and developed from the outcomes of recent Congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Vietnam consistently pursues a foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation and development; multilateralisation and diversification of relations and proactive international integration. Vietnam wants to be a friend, a reliable partner and a responsible member of the international community.

Vietnam gives priorities to relations with neighboring countries, major partners and key partners. Accordingly, India-as a comprehensive strategic partner- continues to be a priority partner of Vietnam. India is among the four countries with which Vietnam has established comprehensive strategic partnership. Vietnam and India are two brotherly countries, having a long tradition of friendship. The great and deep friendship between the two peoples were founded by President Ho Chi Minh and Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru and nurtured by generations of leaders. Vietnam always treasures the warm sentiments, the invaluable support and assistance extended by Government and people of India to our country during our past struggle for national independence as well as in the current cause of national development. The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Vietnam and India is growing strongly and extensively, ranging from political, diplomatic, defense and security cooperation to trade, investment, science and technology, education and training, culture and people exchange.

Vietnam supports the “Act East policy” of India. We hope that India will promote a more practical and effective partnership with ASEAN and implement successfully the strategy to connect

the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, further enhance India’s role and position in the region and in the world. Vietnam stands ready to support India’s candidacy as permanent member of the UN Security Council when it is expanded. Vietnam hopes India will play a greater role in Asia-Pacific. We support India’s joining to APEC when the decision on the suspension of admitting new membership is removed and on the basis of consensus among all members.

Vietnam highly appreciates India’s positive stance on the East Sea issue (South China Sea), in which India will continue to promote the non-militarization, respect for the diplomatic and legal processes, settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law, in order to maintain peace, stability, security, safety of navigation and over-flight in the East Sea. The National Assembly of Vietnam welcomes India to further maintain and enhance the cooperation in oil and gas exploration with Vietnam in the East Sea.

- *To the prosperity of India and happiness of its people!*
- *To the further consolidation and development of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Viet Nam and India, and between the two Legislatures.*



Symposium on “One Nation, One Election”

Jerin Jose



India Foundation in association with the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library organised a Symposium on ‘One Nation, One Election’ at Teen Murti Bhawan, New Delhi. This was organized on 26th November, 2016 on the eve of the Constitution Day. ‘One nation - one election’ is a proposed electoral reform to hold simultaneous elections in the entire country to the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies and the local bodies.

The inaugural session of the symposium was addressed by Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister for Railways and Dr. S.Y. Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India. The plenary session was addressed by Dr. A. Surya Prakash, Chairman, Prasar Bharati; Bhupender Yadav, National General Secretary, BJP; Bhatruhari Mahtab, MP (BJD); Prabhu Chawla, Editorial Director, The New Indian Express; and P.S. Narasimha, Additional Solicitor General. Post-

lunch session was addressed by Dr. P. Puneeth, Associate Professor, JNU; Mr. Gilles Verniers, Associate Professor, Ashoka University among others; it was chaired by Shakti Sinha, Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Suresh Prabhu remembered how initially India held simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas and how the cycle was broken in the late 1960s. He referred to the U.S., where elections across the country happen on a single day. He also said that India was always on an election mode and this electioneering is affecting the country’s governance. He also referred to L.K. Advani’s proposal of suggesting the alternative while introducing no-confidence motion on the line of practice which exists in a few countries. Shri Prabhu said that simultaneous election was a serious issue to deliberate upon.

Dr. S.Y. Quraishi referred to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee which mentioned four reasons on the need for simultaneous elections - (i) the massive expenditure that is currently incurred for the conduct of separate elections; (ii) the policy paralysis that results from the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct during election time; (iii) impact on delivery of essential services and (iv) burden of crucial manpower that is deployed during election time. He further added two more reasons – (v) caste and communal polarization peaks during elections and (vi) the practice of promising freebies on the eve of elections. He said that the root cause of all corruption was “electoral corruption was”, which would be effectively minimized by simultaneous elections. He also listed counter points against simultaneous elections saying that elections make politicians more accountable and that some temporary jobs are created during elections.

Dr. A. Surya Prakash said that development halts because of long duration of elections and that it had adverse impact on governance due to long tenure and massive expense. He also opined that the important step towards simultaneous elections was the need for political consensus, which was very difficult at the moment. In his opinion, regional parties across the country were skeptical about national parties pursuing their national agenda through simultaneous elections.

Bhupender Yadav stated that Election was only a means and not an objective of national development. He suggested the adoption of fixed electoral timetables. He said that the election

spending could be reduced when India goes for simultaneous elections at all levels. He also referred to the British examples of setting up electoral timetable in 2011. Bhartruhari Mahtab said that the states like Orissa, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Telangana proved that the notion of simultaneous elections adversely affecting the chances of regional parties, was wrong.

Prabhu Chawla said that he was not in favour of simultaneous election as people would not get a second opportunity to make amends as they would have to wait for another five years. According to him, simultaneous election could be done only when 48 regional parties agree, which was not easy.

P.S. Narasimha opined that as a matter of principle simultaneous elections was right but its implementation would have problems. He doubted the power of Parliament to restrict the tenure of state legislatures.

Dr. P.Puneeth said that the concept of simultaneous elections was a utopian concept and it cannot be synchronized. According to him, the suggestion of NITI Aayog for two-phase elections was the most workable idea. Prof. Gilles Verniers felt that bringing in simultaneous elections would be very difficult without infringing the democratic process.

Shri Shakti Sinha referred to instances where voters voted differently in Centre and State though elections were held simultaneously. He stressed on the need to work out on a system which best reflects the electoral process. He stated that India had been in a process of experimenting things and a platform needs to be created for the concept of one nation one election to materialise.



India Ideas Conclave 2016

Prasanna Karthik R



Ideas are central human actions, and ideas are what strengthen any human institution. The institution of democracy is no exception to this rule. The churning of new ideas and revisiting old ideas is vital for maintaining a progressive vibrancy in our society. It is with this objective that India Foundation conceived the India Ideas Conclave, to bring together people with different perspectives, engaging with an open mind in meaningful discussions and debates.

The third edition of India Ideas Conclave happened between the 4th and 6th of November in Goa. The event had about 300 guests from different professions. The Conclave also had a list of illustrious speakers, from a wide range of professions, geographies, faiths, and ideological affiliations; at the end of the day, India's diversity lends it a strategic soft power advantage.

Given the current churning in the Indian society caused due to discarding of old ideas that had limited our growth, embracing of new ideas that can leap frog our development, and the consequent increase in the engagement of various sections of the society in shaping the national narrative, the theme of this edition of the Conclave was aptly chosen to be – 'India at 70 – Democracy, Development & Dissent.'

Inaugural Session & Keynote Address:

The inaugural session was chaired by Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister for Railways. Suresh Prabhu began by talking about the conception of the idea of the Conclave and how it has evolved over last three editions. He spoke about various issues currently plaguing the world and how democratic setup could be an answer to them. He



said that the role of dissent was integral to democracy, but it was not the sole purpose. He also spoke about the role of parliament in resolving any issues in the democracy, and encouraged the audience to participate in the upcoming discussions.

The other speakers for the inaugural session were Swami Tejomayanda, the Global Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, and Sher Bahadur Deuba, former Prime Minister of Nepal. Swami Tejomayanada argued that all types of governance models, dictatorial and democratic, have had their share of successes and failures and thus, no system was fool-proof, and stressed that the idea of governance should not be to please others or self but to think what was right and what was good for all. Impressing upon the wisdom of the scriptures for understanding various aspects of society, he declared the conference open. Sher Bahadur Deuba spoke about the struggle for democracy, and how he, and others, had to undergo

inprisonment for years to see that Nepal became democratic.

The key note speech was delivered by Amit Shah, the National President of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The BJP President commenced his speech by noting that democracy inherently covers development and dissent, and there was no need to use the three words democracy, development and dissent explicitly. He further expressed that democratic ideals have existed in India since long, and asked the audience to evaluate where the other nations that won independence along with India were currently standing in comparison with us. Amit Shah concluded that democracy and development are not two different things, and added that one must be free to say anything including criticism of the Prime Minister or ruling dispensation, but speaking against the nation can not be camouflaged as freedom of expression and would not be acceptable.



The key note speech was followed by a video recorded speech of HH Dalai Lama, who called himself a ‘son of India,’ as India has nurtured him both physically and spiritually. H.H. Dalai Lama called upon spiritual leaders to spread this message to the masses and stressed on getting rid of any element of feudal societies—which is distinct from the real message of dharma—and bringing in true democracy.

Plenary Discussion I: Defence at 70

The session was chaired by Gen. VP Malik (former Chief of Indian Army). The speakers were Amb. Daniel Carmon (Israeli Ambassador to India), Pratyush Kumar (President of Boeing India), and Amb. Arun Kumar Singh (former Indian Ambassador to US).

Gen. Malik stated that defence is an important element in today’s India, and that the report card of Indian Defence establishment was more positive

than negative. He spoke about the success of the Indian Army, and its failure in 1962 due to the ill-conceived policy of forward deployment done during that period. Daniel Carmon, talked about the three D’s that Israel follows as core principles—*Democracy, Development, Defence*, besides highlighting 25 years of India-Israel diplomatic partnership.

Dr. Pratyush Kumar questioned why even after 70 years, India carried the moniker of the largest importer of defence, and stressed on how India could build strategic self-reliance and create globally competitive industrial base in the defence sector. Arun K Singh began by saying that political and military aspects not only have an impact on defence but also influence the nature of international partnerships. He spoke about India’s four critical partners namely, Russia, Israel, France and US.



Plenary II: Governance at 70

The session was chaired by Jayant Sinha (Minister of State, Ministry of Civil Aviation), and had Baijayant Jay Panda (MP, Biju Janata Dal), Himanta Biswa Sarma (Finance Minister, Government of Assam), Rajeev Chandrasekhar (MP, Independent), A Surya Prakash (Chairman, PrasarBharati), and Archana Chitnis (Minister of Women and Child Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh).

Jayant Sinha welcomed the distinguished speakers and went on to ask four basic questions, for the speakers to deliberate upon:

1. Is the governance system embedded in our country's ethos?
2. Is there a need to look at the balance between legislative and judiciary in the country?
3. How is the governance system functioning

at State and Local levels in the country?

4. Are the political parties in the country functioning optimally?

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, in his opening remarked about dual weaknesses of the public systems in the country- being opaque and a closed system on one hand, while being inefficient in handling the public finances on the other. He said that we should reach *swarajya* to have a governance system which was embedded in our country's ethos. Baijayant Panda admitted that our governance system was working, but not well and hence there was more scope for improvement. He also stressed that India had inherited a centralised governance system and therefore along with fiscal devolution, structural reforms were needed for decentralization of power.

Surya Prakash gave a very lucid presentation regarding the history of Parliamentary System in



the country. He gave a glimpse of the parliamentary changes from 1952 to 2014 in terms of political and occupational democratisation of the parliament, and questioned the elected representatives' obsession with privileges in parliament. Archana Chitnis, remarked that the politicians are not the rulers but the custodians or trustees of the power entrusted by the citizens, and went on to state that it took many years for the governments to say 'Skill India,' 'Startup India,' 'Stand Up India' which should have been adopted into policy making much earlier.

Himanta Biswa Sarma remarked that while the constitution framework was absolutely in tune with our cultural ethos, the main challenge for our generation was in protecting and preserving our ethos amid growing western influences. He further added that time has come to create a situation where every citizen in the country, irrespective of the geographic location, could have equitable

access to resources for development.

Plenary III: India Global at 70

The session was chaired by MJ Akbar (MoS, Ministry of External Affairs), and had Daniel Twining (Director and Senior Fellow at German Marshall Fund), Dr. Patrick French (Writer & Historian), Prof. Walter K Andersen (Johns Hopkins University), Amb James Tien (Trade Representative of Taiwan to India) as speakers.

MJ Akbar spoke about the need to have a 'transformative thinking' in context of India's Foreign Policy. Describing the theme of India's Foreign Policy under PM Modi he stated the theme to be - 'Power of Balance' - which allows a nation like India having balanced relations with nations from across the globe.

Daniel Twining started his remarks by stating that the accelerating Indo-US relations shall be the central driver for global peace and prosperity

in the 21st century. He pointed out the synergy between India and US as both nations oppose terrorism, believe in an open plural community, a free society, and an open world.

Dr Patrick French was pessimist about the bleak prevailing global scenario, ranging from US elections, preparations of baltic countries against Russian invasion, Brexit referendum, civil and proxy wars in West Asia etc. He also cautioned about the increasing pollution levels in the New Delhi and across the country serving as a detriment in future growth prospects of the nation.

Prof Walter Anderson dispelled the legacy notions which did not expect India to last for 70 years as a united nation or remain democratic for such a tenure. The key question raised by Prof Anderson was whether India could leverage the geopolitical advantage to present and play a considerable role in presenting a robust global strategic vision.

Ambassador James Tien stated that with the ascent of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the relations between India and Taiwan had significantly accelerated, and he expressed hope that with the interlinking of 'Southbound policy' of Taiwan and 'Act East' policy of India, both nations could immensely leverage their resources for creating shared prosperity.

Plenary IV: Education in India at 70

The session was chaired by Prof. Sunaina Singh (Vice Chancellor, EFLU, Hyderabad), and had Prof. Harsh V Pant (Professor of International Relations, Kings College), Prof. M Jagadesh Kumar (Vice Chancellor, JNU), TV Mohandas Pai (Educationist and Former Member of Board,



Infosys), and Ratin Roy (Director, NIPFP) as speakers.

Prof. Singh traced the education system in India to over 5000 years and said that the present education system was “a legacy we have inherited from our colonial past.” She further said that the education system per se needs to be “harnessed to the Indian reality” and that there was a need to plan accordingly for the next 20 to 25 years.

Ratin Roy expressed his surprise that while India produces CEOs for global corporations such as Google, Microsoft, Pepsi etc., the ability to produce people to run India’s public service institutions was dismal. He explained the insufficiency of professionals such as educators, doctors, engineers, etc. to serve the entire population of India, and the disconnect of the students with scholars and creative thinkers and



involvement in protests and demonstrations.

Prof. Jagadesh Kumar started by saying that all his life as a Professor at IIT he thought about electronics and integrated circuits but since he joined JNU ten months ago, he had been hearing only about freedom of expression, dissent, strikes, dharnas and gheraos. He stressed the importance of educational institutions in nurturing human resources and concluded by quoting Mahatma Gandhi - “Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.”

Prof. Pant spoke about the lack of research and scholarship in our universities, and stressed that knowledge was going to play the key role in determining who will be the leaders of the 21st century. Further expressing his dismay at the present state of Indian education system, he lamented that, “we are staring at an intellectually barren landscape in our universities.”

Mohandas Pai highlighted the three global

trends that are profoundly impacting education: technology changing the face of job market, large number of jobs that are about to become obsolete, and the nature of markets to be altered forever. He said that globalisation has changed the way we perceived national boundaries, but education had not progressed at the same pace. In conclusion, he said our universities must embrace technology as it had fundamentally altered how we create and consume knowledge.

Plenary V: Dissent at 70

The session was chaired by Swapan Dasgupta (MP, RS), and had Roopa Ganguly (MP, RS), Shekhar Gupta (Senior Journalist), Ashok Malik (Senior Journalist), Vivek Agnihotri (Film Maker), and Aatish Taseer (writer and journalist) as speakers.

Swapan Dasgupta spoke about media reports on how India was facing an emergency like



situation at present, and how over the past two years there had been a lot of hue and cry about the space of dissent being truncated. He said such malicious reporting had greater implications as when a false message is repeated frequently, it becomes a truth. He said that there are different types of dissenters in India and labelling and shutting down doors on them or celebrating them are not binary options. Roopa Ganguly spoke about various issues that people face today - from poor infrastructure in North East to Triple Talaq. She also spoke about the current situation in Bengal and expressed displeasure over how the ruling party there oppressed opposition voices.

Shekha Gupta started his presentation saying that there are mainly two kinds of dissent - one that we see in totalitarian countries and the one

that we see in democratic societies. He said that he did not agree with the Government's decision to ban NDTV for a day but he thought that the current government was handling the economic situation in the country better than the previous dispensation.

Shri Malik started by comparing dissent and disagreement and that dissent in one sphere could be counter-dissent in another sphere. He then stated that the newspaper Telegraph which had carried strong remarks against BJP Government at the Centre and Trinamool Congress Government in Bengal had suddenly stopped carrying strong comments against Bengal Government.

Vivek Agnihotri, talked about how the topic of dissent was a very contentious one. He objected to the view that 'my dissent is better than yours'.



AatishTaseer shared his attachment with India, and spoke about cultural dissent and Macaulay's intentions to introduce English based education system in pre-Independent India.

Panel Discussion on Nature of Nationalist Narrative

The discussion was chaired by Ashok Chowgule and had Tavleen Singh (Senior Journalist and Author), Dr.David Frawley (Teacher of Vedanta), Lalitha Kumaramangalam (Chairman, National Commission for Women), Shankar Saran (Professor, NCERT), Madhu Kishwar (Maulana Azad National Professor, ICSSR).

Ashok Chowgule started by highlighting the importance of nationalist narrative and how it impacted the vote share of BJP in 2014 general elections. Tavleen Singh asserted that Nationalism should be instilled from and by the people

themselves and not be defined by politicians. She called for seizing the narrative away from politicians and bringing it back to the people.

Dr. Frawley affirmed that India is not just a modern state like US or some European nations; that it has around 5000 years old legacy. He added that post-independence, this narrative was deconstructed by the colonial minds, and what is needed today is a national identity and not a regional one as often represented by regional political parties etc. Lalitha Kumaramangalam highlighted the need for inculcating basic civic duty among Indian citizens especially with reference to respect for women in the society. She spoke about the need for beginning the change right from home and for inculcating correct values among the children in society.

Shankar Sharan began his presentation by stating that nationalism as a concept was not very

old. It originated only about 250-300 years ago. Quoting from the definition given by Aurobindo 100 years ago, he said “Nationalism is the faith. Sanatan Dharma is the only true nationalism.” He closed his remarks by stating that India must be called a civilizational state. Madhu Kishwar opened her remarks by explaining how Stalinist philosophy was propagated in the guise of human rights, subaltern and minority studies. She targeted the left discourse by pointing out that multi ethnic and multi-cultural is not new to India where people breathe differences.

Panel Discussion on Evolution, Impact and Role of Social Media

The session was chaired by Sadanand Dhume (Resident Fellow, American Enterprise Institute), and had Rupa Subramanya (Economist and Author), Shefali Vaidya (Consulting Editor, Media Vidya), Nistula Hebbar (Political Editor, The Hindu), and Kanchan Gupta (Commissioning Editor and Commentator, ABP News) as speakers.

Sadanand Dhume started the session by mentioning that his Tweet, “Freedom of expression is doing fine. It is monopoly of expression under threat,” got disproportionately high amount of traction. He further argued that monopoly in religion, markets and bureaucracy was being challenged by social media. Rupa Subramanya, began by sharing her experience with social media. She said that she realised the power of social media in the lead up to 2014 General Elections and that social media challenges biases, questions of status-quo and for makes an effort to come out of the comfort zone.

Shefali Vaidya shared her personal story and

how her blogs got traction throughout Twitter. She compared the narrative of Good Dissent vs Bad Dissent to Good Taliban vs Bad Taliban. She also said that today’s social media users are not just passive consumers but active contributors. Nistula Hebbar said she started using social media as a tool for her book promotion, but took cognizance of its significance in 2014 general elections when she felt that the campaign was as much online as on-ground. She admitted that the mainstream media has taken cognizance of social media and now online articles were drafted differently than that of print media.

Kanchan Gupta started-off by remarking that Twitter wasn’t meant for what it is being used for now. Social media would have to build its credibility, if it were to substitute the mainstream media. Media in India today was pretty much homogenous in approach and content and that mainstream media has largely co-opted social media.

Panel Discussion on Youth Perspectives

The session was chaired by Sanjeev Sanyal (author and historian) and had Swadesh Singh (National Vice President, BJYM), Hindol Sengupta (Editor at Large, Fortune India), Shubhrastha (Senior Research Fellow, India Foundation), and Nupur Sharma (Advocate and BJP Politician) as speakers.

Swadesh Singh initiated his remarks by pointing out that when we talk of youth, we should not lose focus and must talk of every section and class of youth. Talking about the aspirations of a Dalit rural uneducated girl he said that all what she needs in life was a good quality of life and respect from the society.

Hindol Sengupta emphasised the need to

dissent against three prevailing truths in the society: dissent against wrongful handing out of labels and tags, dissent against distortion of history, dissent against blocking access to alternative discourses on national stage.

Shubhrastha began her remarks by stating the 'Representation Deficit' of the youth in the sphere of political and governmental decision making, including the Parliament. She talked about the need for creation of platforms which could be used to channelize the energies of youth into more constructive activities for the benefit of the nation.

Nomesh Bolia talked about the significant hunger among the youth to contribute. He went on to highlight the lack of platforms where the youth could contribute especially in the field of policy making.

Nupur Sharma argued that much of the dissent these days was manufactured and was aimed at reaping political gains.

In addition to the sessions detailed above, the conclave had the following accomplished individuals making presentations on various topics:

1. Tarek Fatah – Author & Columnist
2. Dattatreya Hosabale–Sah-Sarkaryavah, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
3. Mahmood Madani – Islamic Scholar & Politician
4. Amb. Shaida Mohammad Abdali– Ambassador of Afghanistan to India
5. Sajad Lone–Minister, Government of Jammu & Kashmir
6. Aroon Purie – Founder-publisher and editor-in-chief of India Today
7. Lobsang Sangey–Chief Executive of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile
8. Taslima Nasreen–Writer, secular humanist and human rights activist
9. Arnab Goswami– Senior Journalist & former Editor in Chief of Times Now.



Bilateral Dialogue on "India and Nepal: Exploring New Vistas"

Guru Prakash



India Foundation, New Delhi in collaboration with Neeti Anusandhaan Pratishthan, Nepal (NeNAP) and Nepal Center for Contemporary Contemporary Studies (NCCS) organized a bilateral dialogue on “Nepal and India: Exploring New Vistas” on November 2 and 3, 2017 at Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu. Inaugurated by the Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ and closed by His Excellency the President of India Shri Pranab Mukharjee, the seminar discussed several aspects of India-Nepal relations, featuring eminent speakers from India and Nepal with proven repute in several aspects of these relations.

Inaugural Session, 2nd November 2016, 4 PM

The inaugural session of the seminar was graced by Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal. On the dais, besides him were Shri Ram Madhav, the General Secretary of Bharatiya Janata Party and the Director of India Foundation, Shri Neelakantha Uprety, the former Chief Election Commissioner of Nepal, Capt. Alok Bansal of the India Foundation, and Shri Lok Raj Baral, the Chairperson of the Nepal Center for Contemporary Studies.

Welcoming all the dignitaries on the dais and delegates and guests on the floor, Prof Dr. Lok Raj Baral, former Ambassador of Nepal to India, remarked that the seminar was a new start to add impetus to the age-old cultural ties between the two peoples. As a guest speaker, Ram Madhav, the General Secretary of Bharatiya Janata Party said, “India has already experienced 80 years of democracy. It began in 1935 with the Government of India Act.”

He added, “We began our process of

Constitution building in 1947 and it took us three years. Constitution making is not easy. We took three years to make sure that everybody was happy and satisfied. Today, after seven decades of our independence, we can proudly say we are the largest democracy in the world. We are also successful and that is something we are proud about. In 1947, we had decided that our journey would be democratic. In those days, democracy wasn't as highly regarded as it is today. Yet, we decided that that would be our political model and we stuck with it."

Explaining the nature of India Foundation, Shri Madhav said, "Our organization, the India Foundation, is not a conventional think tank. We want to ensure that ideas are implemented. We want to talk about issues facing both sides so that we can have a bilateral relationship and also we can help each other become successful countries. What do we need to do in order for us to jointly progress in critical areas like trade? That is the main idea for us holding this two-day conference."

Shri Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal mentioned the visit of His Excellency the President Pranab Mukherjee as historic as it was taking place after years of the visit of former Indian President K.R. Narayanan. He opined that the impact of this visit, added to his own visit of India in the recent past, would bring the two nations closer. The Prime Minister also mentioned the old geographical, historical and cultural bonds, which was not limited to documents and treaties. The misunderstandings, if there were any, were all transient.

Mentioning the potential of the two regions, the Prime Minister said, "We have tremendous potential; we need to unleash it. We have a glorious

history of humanity, spirituality, innovation and wisdom. Ours are lands of Buddha, Mahaveera and Gandhi. Our pioneering philosophers have bequeathed us a glorious tradition; we need to revive our glory."

The Prime Minister also discussed at length the problems of poverty and backwardness, and urged the need for noble work, imagination and innovation to address the same. He termed India-Nepal relation as 'multi-dimensional'. He expressed happiness at the fact that Eminent Persons Group (EPG) had started working, and could devise better means to strengthen the relations. In the meantime, he stressed the need to develop new infrastructure, better connectivity through roads and railways, technology transfer, mitigation of trade deficit, unrestricted market access, and collaborative efforts to combat climate change, disasters, and other common issues.

The Prime Minister also cited the necessity to honor one another's dignity and honor. In an interdependent world, partnership has no alternative. So, Nepal was trying to negotiate and develop an India-China-Nepal tripartite partnership. He also stressed the need to enhance people-to-people interaction among the populace of India and Nepal, for which, the planned Hindu-Buddhist Circuit would be a great boost.

The seminar began with a discussion on "Inclusive Democracy: Experience of India and Nepal." chaired by JNU Professor, S.D. Muni, the seminar featured former Prime Minister of Nepal, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, Member of Indian Rajya Sabha and journalist, Shri Tarun Vijay, former minister Shri Mahantha Thakur, and Member of Lok Sabha, Shri RP Sharma as speakers.

The second day in the first session of the seminar was a discussion on “Reinvigorating the Civilizational Links: Bonds beyond Borders.” Chaired by former Chief of Nepal Army General, Rookmangad Katuwal, it featured Indian parliamentarian, Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah, JNU Professor, Dr Sangeeta Thapliyal, former Diplomat and Professor, Dr. Jaya Raj Acharya, and former Diplomat and Nepal’s former Ambassador to India, Prof. Lok Raj Baral.

The third session of the seminar was on “Connectivity and Freedom of Movement.” Moderated by Shri Jayant Prasad, Director Indian Defence and Strategic Analysis (IDSA) and former Ambassador of India to Nepal, this session featured Sh. Nisha Taneja and Dr. Vandana Mishra from India, and Shri Prashant Jha and Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba from Nepal.

The fourth session of the seminar was a discussion on “Sharing the Federal Experience.” Chaired by former Indian diplomat G. Parthasarathy, it featured Dr Sekhar Koirala, Shri Shakti Sinha, Dr. Krishna Hachhethu and Dr. Rajest Kharat as speakers.

The fifth session of the seminar was a discussion on “Geo-Political Imperatives: Nepal’s Relation with its Neighbors.” Chaired by former Prime Minister of Nepal, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, it featured G. Parthasarathy, Capt. Alok Bansal, Dr. Sekhar Koirala and Shri Pashupati Shumsher JBR as speakers.

At the end of all these discussions, the Valedictory Session of the seminar was organized, which was addressed by Shri Pranab Mukherjee, His Excellency the President of India. Shri Mukherjee, in his address, mentioned the priority of his government to help Nepal move into the

path of development and prosperity. He expressed happiness at the achievement and progress made in bilateral relations between India and Nepal, but expressed the need to enhance the partnership. Mentioning the unique civilizational linkages and fraternal ties, national treatment to each other’s citizens, and shared beliefs, he said, “Nepal and India share a common destiny. At a time when Nepal was on the threshold of new era, presently engaged in charting out a course of socio-economic development, he applauded Nepal for its enterprise and achievement and expressed India’s willingness to share its experience in building strong democratic institutions.”

President Mukherjee stressed the need to enhance trade and economic engagements and increase job opportunities, infrastructural development, rural development, manufacturing capacity etc. Mentioning that several million Nepali citizens were working in India, he said, “We cannot remain hostage of political baggage”, and stressed the need to prioritize long-standing development partnership.

He expressed satisfaction at the development of small development projects that are joint ventures of India and Nepal. He also assured India’s commitment to post-earthquake reconstruction efforts that involve Indian assistance of 9000 million US Dollars. Mukherjee reminded the audience of the various projects—hulaki roads, first international oil pipeline, cross-border transmission lines and railways—under constructions. The completion of hydropower projects like Arun 3 and Upper Karnali, he believed, would enable Nepal to use the same transmission line to export its power later, when the surplus was generated. He also stressed the need to work further on flood



management, irrigation and multi-purpose projects like Pancheshwor, Saptakoshi and Sunkoshi projects.

Lauding the valor of the Gorkhas, he made a special mention of their contribution in the security of India. He also expressed his happiness at the close academic partnership through 3000 annual scholarships to students, 250 scholarships to employees, and the decision of the government of India to allow Nepali students to partake in IIT entrance examination in Nepal itself.

President Mukherjee called Nepal the crucible of social and cultural tradition of Hinduism and Buddhism, and expressed his gladness that a Hindu-Buddhist circuit was being worked out to enhance tourist flow, by laying newer networks of roads and railways. In a common ecological landscape, he stressed the need to have similar approaches to environmental conservation.

President Mukherjee also highlighted his government's special focus on sub-regional cooperation mechanisms like movement of goods

and motor vehicle agreements. He expressed his dismay that in forums like SAARC, some members were using terror as a state policy against humanity, and appealed everyone to join hands in vanquishing cross-border and state-sponsored terrorism. He urged, that in places sharing open borders, we should be more vigilant to ensure that our borders are not misused by elements that do not share love for the two countries in their heart.

President Mukharjee admitted that due to an overwhelmingly large bilateral relation, it is possible that minute misunderstandings might sometimes take place between India and Nepal, but he suggested bilateral talks and dialogues as solutions. Finally, in favor of a united, stable, peaceful and prosperous Nepal, he expressed India's commitment to stand by it, and called for a stronger public and private sector partnership for shared prosperity.

Before the address of His Excellency the President of India, Nepal's External Affair Minister, Dr. Prakash Saran Mahat addressed the gathering. He enumerated various bilateral relations between

India and Nepal related to trade, infrastructural development, power generation, tourism and employment, and stressed the priority of his government to enhance such relations in the days to come. He remarked, “The seminar's value had been enhanced by the presence of President Mukherjee.”

He recalled the long and glorious political career of President Mukherjee as a statement and a leader of high stature. He mentioned the unique relationship of Nepal and India, which are time tested, comprehensive, deep and multi-dimensional in terms of geography, history and culture that bind the people together through a multi-faced, people-to-people relation. He said, “Our relations cannot be compared with any other relationship. Many Nepali political leaders and activists participated in India's freedom movement, and the Indian leaders helped Nepal in its quest for democracy.”

He also mentioned a huge Nepali workforce in India. He lauded India for being the first country to respond to the need of Nepal in the earthquake of 2015. He called for a stronger understanding and cooperation to make all bilateral mechanism function. He expressed his government's commitment to work in this direction in order to strengthen bilateral mechanism.

He added, “We made a special understanding of the need to review treaties and agreements to update them. Eminent Person's Group was working to chart out an area that needs mitigation.” Dr. Mahat also highlighted trade and transit and called for solving huge trade deficit, exemplified by 1:13 export ration between Nepal and India.

Cross-border railways, integration check posts and cross-border transmission lines, he mentioned, are projects that could enhance connectivity. He also stressed the need to harness power potential and its transmission. He also foregrounded the need to develop better technological ties between the two nations.

Dr. Mahat opined that Nepal's glorious cultural and religious heritage provides a great opportunity to develop Hindu-Buddhist circuit for enhanced tourism. He also informed that Nepal was against any form of terrorism and that it would not allow its territory to be used by terrorist forces against the interest of the two nations. He also mentioned the government's initiatives to make the open border more secure. He appealed India to stand together with Nepal at the regional and international forums to reap harvest of technology and solve collective problems like human trafficking.

Dr. Mahat expressed his happiness on being able to launch the new constitution, and assured that its due amendment will accommodate the voices of all to make it more inclusive. The minister also assured that Nepal would support India's claim for a permanent position in the UN Security Council.

The last session of the two-day seminar on bilateral relations between India and Nepal was on “Economic Growth: Interests and Imperatives.” Chaired by Shri Madhav Kumar Nepal, the former Prime Minister of Nepal, the session featured Shri Shakti Sinha, Shri Birendra Gupta, entrepreneur Shri Sekhar Golchha, and economist Dr. Haribansha Jha.



Symposium on “Jammu & Kashmir: On 70th Accession Day”

Aaditya Tiwari



A symposium on the occasion of 70th accession day of Jammu and Kashmir state to India was organized under the aegis of India Foundation & JK Study Center on 26th October, 2016. The symposium was organized at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Ind Charge) for Development of North Eastern Region & MoS PMO, was the chief guest for the occasion.

In his inaugural address Jitendra Singh said that the glory that Maharaja Hari Singh had brought to the state of Jammu & Kashmir eroded over the past 60 years but circumstances were gradually changing and people see a glimpse of hope today. Giving the rationale behind celebrating the accession day, he said that most states in India today celebrate their foundation days so why treat Jammu & Kashmir any differently.

Talking about the accession of Jammu & Kashmir to India, Mr. Singh said that today there is a confusion as regards the facts of the accession

and that there is a deliberate attempt to conceal facts so that the issue remains disputed. The so-called intellectual class also raises questions on whether the state of Jammu & Kashmir wanted accession to Pakistan or wished to remain independent. But the truth was beyond these speculations.

Dr Jitendra Singh while discussing the role of Maharaja Hari Singh said that history has been very unkind to a king who loved his people and who was a great patriot. Maharaja Hari Singh, in his time, had build institutions to strengthen science, health and governance.

Director of JKSC, Padma Shri awardee Jawaharlal Kaul discussed the anomalies caused due to Article 370. Shri Maroof Raza talked about the unholy intentions of Pakistan in Kashmir. He gave a threadbare description of the sequence of events during the 1948 attack. The event was moderated by Shri Alok Bansal, director of the India Foundation. Shri Ashutosh Bhatnagar, Secretary of JKSC, gave the vote of thanks.



India Foundation Dialogues

8 December 2016



Mr. Ofir Okunis, Minister of Science, Technology and Space, Israel
Theme: New Chapter in India-Israel Relations

28 November 2016



Amb. Husain Haqqani
Former Ambassador of Pakistan to USA
Theme : The Pakistan Dilemmas

8 November 2016



Ms. Dunya Maumoon,
Former Foreign Minister of Maldives
Theme : Current Developments in Maldives

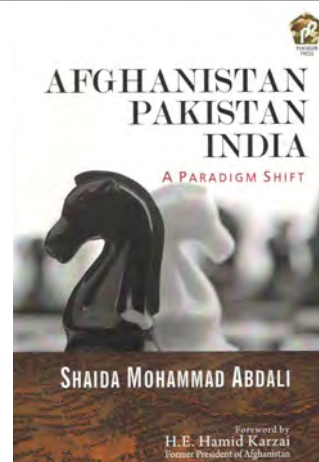
Afghanistan Pakistan India A Paradigm Shift

Author: **Shaida Mohammad Abdali**

Publisher : **Pentagon Press**

Price: Rs.705/-

Book Review by: **Deeksha Goel***



Shaida Mohammad Abdali is serving the Government of Afghanistan as its Ambassador to India and is the Non-resident Ambassador to Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives.

In his book, *Afghanistan-Pakistan-India*, Ambassador Abdali has explored the potential of the trilateral relationship between the three countries, which is also his area of expertise. He has written extensively about the past and present of the political, defence, and economic situation of the three nations. Major events of the last decade have been clearly highlighted ranging from the internal conflicts and the Taliban regime to the impact of USA's invasion in the region after 9/11. To expand, he has included the role of Pakistan-India relations on the development and stability of the region at large and Afghanistan in particular.

The book further talks about the historic ties that India had shared with Afghanistan and how the same had been developed upon in the recent past. Be it reconstruction, academic scholarships, or military assistance, India has been the largest regional aid provider for Afghanistan. He goes on to talk about the multifaceted relationship in the

context of their strategic partnership agreement. He has also underlined the significance of India's reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. He has further examined India's role in education, training of civilian and military personnel, health infrastructure and economic development.

Talking about Afghanistan, Ambassador Abdali has recognised the need for the nation to play its own unique role in bringing about crucial changes in the region. Besides, being a point of contact between central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, Afghanistan is currently the missing link for ensuring a smooth transit of people, trade, energy and goods within the region. He has further enlisted four factors for Afghanistan's weakness, they are:

1. A regional pursuit of geopolitical ambitions
2. Destabilising efforts of the non-state armed groups
3. A weak Afghan Government and weak state institutions
4. Rapid growth of poppy cultivation

Talking about the history of Afghanistan-Pakistan, Ambassador Abdali emphasizes that the

**Reviewer is a Senior Research Fellow at India Foundation.*

current state of relations has been a predictable outcome of the initial unhealthy start between Afghanistan and Pakistan following the birth of the latter in 1947. The primary bone of contention, however, dates back to 1893, when the Durand Line border between the two nations was imposed by the British for reasons of imperial control and the burning question of the cohesiveness of the Pashtun nation was born as its unfortunate result.

The modern, nationalistic thinking of Sardar Daoud Khan is elicited, who, in 1955, "was emboldened enough to confront the radical elements. On August 31, 1955, he allowed women to appear in public without the veil, and women of the royal family were publicly seen without the purdah for the second time in the country's social history." Daoud's governmental reforms were carried out in the spirit of Amir Amanullah Khan's thinking, who struggled for an enlightened and modern free society where human rights and civil liberties could be ensured for all the people of Afghanistan.

Further, adding on to the cooperation among India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the author has expressed concern on the prevalent situation. Economically, the region is at a standstill. It is faced with severe economic crisis, the growth rates are at an all-time low, vast resources have been left untapped and major signature projects such as TAPI and others are still in nascent stages. He further noted that SAARC, the region's most aspiring organisation, has remained dysfunctional. Writing about the cooperation between India and Pakistan in the context of Afghanistan, the author says that "Cooperation does not imply an absence of conflict but takes place in situations in which

actors perceive that their policies are actually or potentially in conflict, not where they are at harmony."

Discussing sinister elements threatening regional security, in particular, that of Afghanistan and India, Mr. Abdali points out that such internationally famous terrorist organizations as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Haqqani network are living peacefully and thriving in Pakistan as they implement their nefarious designs against Afghanistan and the Indian administered Kashmir.

The author is of the view that all these terrorist organizations should be isolated, and then Pakistan should be forced to dismantle them while removing all obstacles it throws in the way of regional trade and cooperation. Besides that, he also suggests that Afghanistan should not be abandoned by the major powers as it was once left in isolation decades ago by the USSR and the United States.

In his concluding chapter, Ambassador Abdali writes of Afghanistan being an unstable country that continues to suffer from insecurity and weak governance. Dilapidated Afghan institutions remain incapable of delivering services to the Afghan people who are tending to lose faith in central government. He has also enlisted the external and internal factors that affect the stability of Afghanistan and have been identified by the World Bank. They are:

External Factors:

1. Strategic Location
2. Pakistan and the Extremist Groups in Afghanistan
3. The Durand Line

Internal Factors:

1. Government Structure, Bureaucracy and State Functions
2. Lack of skilled Human Resource in Governance
3. Low Salary
4. Lack of merit based appointments
5. Inadequate mechanisms for Performance Management
6. Imbalanced Delegation of authority among the Government Departments
7. Corruption
8. Drug Production

Mr Abdali, concludes by saying that unless the three countries address the common problem of terrorism firmly and sincerely, there would be no good future in sight. He reiterates Afghanistan's assistance in formulating a joint counter-terror strategy with both Pakistan and India. With regard to overall trade at the larger level, Mr Abdali has expressed the need for a more concerted and energetic regional and international effort to enable Afghanistan to take fuller advantage of its geographical position at the crossroads of difference cultures, states and peoples.



Upcoming Events

Counter Terrorism Conference 2017

13-15 March 2017, Gurugram, Haryana

India Foundation has been organising International Counter Terrorism Conferences for the past two years. The Third edition of CTC is scheduled between 13-15 March 2017.

Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has been afflicted by terrorism and is one of the worst victims of global terror networks. Both Al Qaeda and Islamic State have significant presence in the IOR as well as their numerous affiliates, besides many other smaller terrorist outfits. Their linkages span across the length and breadth of the region. Combating terrorism in the IOR would play a major role in global fight against terror. This year's Counter Terrorism Conference is focusing on "Terrorism in the Indian Ocean Region". This Conference would attract participants from all over the world, especially from the academia, CT experts, intelligence experts, military and para-military officers, media, politicians and other stake holders in counter- terrorism.

For further details, please write to ctc@indiafoundation.in

Festival of Faiths

31 March - 2 April, 2017; Guwahati, Assam

India is a land of diverse cultures, traditions and religions. India's North East is endowed with great socio-demographic diversity. Over 150 scheduled tribes and 400 other sub-tribal communities live in the region. Despite its heterogeneity the region is quite distinct as it is evident in the indigenous peoples' shared history and culture and also common belief and practices in tune with mother nature.

Festival of Faiths is an effort to bring together the distinct traditions, customs and faith practices of different tribes and ethnic communities of the North-East. Besides bringing together religious leaders of almost all major religions in India and its neighbouring countries, the festival intends to showcase and celebrate the richness of the region's religio-cultural diversity and the underlying unity.

For further details, please write to mail@indiafoundation.in