

ERADICATING CORRUPTION


Like every year this year too, Government of India and its state governments including their vigilance commissions have issued instructions to their respective departments for celebrating vigilance awareness campaign with full enthusiasm. The period of campaign for current year has been downsized from a fortnight to a week presuming it as sufficient time for generating desired results. This mere symbolic tokenism for such a short period has been continuing for several years but without sustained efforts all along the remaining year. Why is it happening time and again and does this short period exercise produce desired results at ground level those are palpable by the common man or does it remain restricted to papers only, remains the fact to be pondered with ? Normally people give mandate to the governments on such type of important issue of eradication of corruption menace from the society. Addressing this vital issue seriously, that is actively eating our nation at all levels, assume utmost and urgent importance. Counting on accountable governance, public at large expect result oriented concrete steps, at least to have mass awareness against this evil, so as to present its deterrent effects rather than to have its punitive results.

Combating corruption by creating sustained public awareness is a campaign where not only government departments need to be involved but people enmass should play their responsible role for ending up this exercise with great success. Zero tolerance towards corruption is the need of hour, which must be strongly advocated and activated immediately at all levels. Thus, corruption free environment at ground level will not only reform our administration and society but will built a strong vibrant Nation. Administration need to be serious in its commitment towards the implementation of anti corruption measures by regularly sensitizing its employees continuously throughout the year. Vigilance departments must be supported with complete infrastructure and equipped with well trained honest manpower, who are sincerely dedicated towards the cause. Stress must be laid on granting them adequate judicial powers rather than empowering them with vast administrative jurisdiction in order to be result-oriented so that people have faith and confidence in such institutions. At the same time, there is need to have proper check and balance on their functioning, so as not to misuse these agencies for settling personal scores and taking political vendetta. Such credible caretakers must not succumb to undue tactical pressure of their governors for petty benefits by goofing up the facts that send wrong message to the masses and encourage law breakers.

All related investigative agencies need to identify the seriousness of this malignancy and establish a connect with the people for not only to expose this menace completely at the grass root level but to create sufficient knowledge about its consequences especially among the uneducated and rural poor. Voluntary citizens and Non-Governmental organisations, which work with limited resources and strive for creating awareness against corruption, need to be encouraged. Sufficient examples of discouraging such front runners by the rulers have been seen in the past, which not only reflect unexpected attitude of authorities but waste public money and intern conveys the message of inefficient governance.

Before combating corruption, it is also important to understand the genesis of corruption, so as to tackle it more specifically rather than holistically. Normally corruption in our society is perceived to be financial fraud or economic crime. Actually corruption is much broader term with wide ambit and different ramifications. It ranges from intellectual corruption to physical corruption, to sexual corruption, to moral corruption, to social corruption, to religious corruption, to ethnic corruption and to very many other types of corruption, all having negative implications on development and progress of our society. Basically corruption comes in to existence either by need or by greed and both these modes are directly related with the mindset of an individual. It is fundamentally connected with moral and ethical values those develop during the upbringing of a person.

Vigilance functioning mainly adopts two approaches in fighting corruption. One aspect is punitive vigilance that deals with creating much needed awareness so as follow the thumb rule of 'prevention is better than cure'. It not only creates fear in the mind of corrupt due to horrible consequences of corruption but also builds morale against their unfair and illegal practices. All actions under this exercise are aimed to create deterrent effect in the mind of a common man that creates sense of discipline and responsibility in him. This approach is purely educative, informative and propulsive in nature. The other method is punitive vigilance that provides punishment after committing the crime or acts of commission or omission. It is reformatory type that corrects human aberrations and serves lesson for others. Having major drawback that it can be used as a tool for victimization and vindication, it is less encouraged to preventive vigilance in practice. Conclusively, together with the Government we need to change our mindset, feel consciously responsible and fight for our rights by creating much needed vigilance awareness to fight against corruption menace, in order to rebuild our great India. Compromising with our moral and ethical values by succumbing to our petty gains, in turn destroy us and our nation, which we can't afford at any cost.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Do not match-fix your life, learn to enjoy it

Why are we so resistant to change? Why does change make so many people panic, or resort to rigid belief systems, whether religious or ideological? What makes us so afraid of uncertainty?

Interestingly, when people are young, they do not look for security; they look for life. By the time they hit the mid-twenties, however, their wild dreams subside, their zest and exuberance diminish, and they decide to turn 'practical'. By their mid-thirties, they have decided, "As long as I steer clear of trouble, it's okay." What they forget is that settling into a comfort zone isn't practicality; it is cowardice. If you resist change, you resist life.

A young person told me

recently that her parents advised her to deal with uncertainty by always 'staying positive'. Now, this New Age mantra has its own problems. 'Staying positive' means you must embody confidence without clarity. This is a recipe for disaster! If you cannot see clearly, it is best to be cautious, not confident.

However, it is certainly possible to deal with uncertainty by enhancing your powers of perception. There are several yogic practices that can empower you to enhance your perceptual capabilities and grow in clarity. Once you enhance clarity, life will inevitably yield positive results. These are the human beings we need in the world today: individuals of clarity, not jagged.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev



■ HARDEEP S PURI

Twenty years is a short time in the history of a nation but more than sufficient for an individual to lay a lasting foundation in the development of the nation. Nowhere is this more visible than in the historic Swachhta campaign.

On 7 October, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi completed 20 successful years in high public office. First, as Chief Minister of Gujarat, and then as Prime Minister of India, his two tenures as chief executive have redefined leadership. His style of governance reflects his bold vision, humble upbringing, unimpeachable integrity, relentless drive, and clarity of thinking. His appointment as Chief Minister of Gujarat initiated a paradigm shift in the governance architecture of the country- first, in city and state administration, and later at the Centre. The citizen-centric orientation led to a holistic transformation of infrastructure and services in the state. Among the many notable achievements two accomplishments stand out- access to water and Swachhta.

The first accomplishment is the massive rejuvenation of water bodies in Gujarat. From acute scarcity to water adequacy in a mere two decades, the turn-around for a state that was perennially short of water is astounding. Not only did Chief Minister Modi oversee the construction of Narmada canal, he also led the augmentation of all canal systems and water sources in the state. His farsighted thinking was the beginning of a state-wide push to strengthen water conservation and management. It led to the State Government spending more than Rs. 1 lakh crore in the last two decades to build 184,000 check dams and 327,000 farm ponds while deepening 31,500 ponds and reviving 1,000 abandoned step-wells. He oversaw a bureaucratic and organisational restructuring - from state-level supervisory bodies to village-level Samitis. These measures have resulted in a 77 percent increase in irrigable area and 55 percent increase in ground water recharge today.

The Prime Minister's concentrated focus on rejuvenating water systems-especially in our cities-is now bearing fruit at the national level, where he aims to make the country 'Water Secure' through landmark programmes

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

There is definitely a shift in the pattern of killings by the terrorists in Kashmir and now the non-locals are being targeted and are killed with sadistic pleasure. The non-local labourers are targeted in order to intimidate and force them to leave the valley. The killings of non-Kashmiris is a very disturbing and it has given a bad name to Kashmiris and such killings are a blot on the face of Kashmiriyat and mutual brotherhood for which Kashmir was known in the country. The target killing of non-Kashmiris has no place in our democracy and such killings should stop for the cause of secularism and democracy. It is very unfortunate that the non-Kashmiris are killed and the land of Kashyap Rishi is soaked with blood of innocent and poor people mostly the non-locals who are working for the benefit of local Kashmiris. The target killing of non-locals is taking place under a well knit plan and the aim is to kill a few and intimidate all the non-locals so that they will leave the valley lock stock and barrel. The killers should realize that after the abrogation of article 370 any one can move, settle and purchase the property and land in Jammu and Kashmir. Thus the non-locals have every right to work in Jammu and Kashmir and the target killing of the non-Kashmiris has the potential of creating disturbance in Kashmir so that the so called freedom struggle is carried on. What is happening in Kashmir is through and through terrorism and cannot be called a freedom struggle by any stretch of imagination.

By resorting to the wanton killings of the locals and non-locals, the terrorists are only making their presence felt. It is on the directions of Pakistan that the terrorists of the resistance front are indulging in the killings of the poor non-locals which is highly condemnable and it should not happen for the cause of the mutual brotherhood and communal harmony. The killers of the target killings should know it that such killings can boomerang as these killings can lead to similar retaliation outside the Kashmir valley and god forbid that such retaliation should not happen but these killings have the potential of being replicated in other parts of India. But thank God no such thing has happened in the country and the Indians deserve all praise and kudos for this restraint.

YOUR COLUMN

Public schooling system requires rapid expansion

Dear Editor,

Despite India being one of the world's youngest countries in terms of age, our investment in human capital remains one of the lowest. With nearly one-third of our population belonging to the 5-19 years age group (Census 2011), there is a vast pool of human capital that needs to be tapped by investing right from the very start. The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which is only the third such policy document on education since independence, envisions India as a global knowledge powerhouse and gives an impetus to this cause. The policy aims not only to universalize education by achieving cent-percent rates of gross enrolment, but also to bring children who have dropped out back to school and prevent others from dropping out. Additionally, the policy aims to bring children as young as three years old under the school curriculum, thereby acknowledging the importance of early childhood interventions in education for better cognitive development (Heckman, 2000). Further, the NEP recognizes that one of the most important ways to achieve its goals would be to upgrade and enlarge the schools that already exist, build more quality schools in areas where they do not, and providing safe and practical modes of conveyances, as well as hostels, especially for girls, so that all children have an opportunity to attend a quality school of the level appropriate to their educational needs.

A major bottleneck in achieving these goals is a severe supply-side constraint, which is the unavailability of

such as the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0) and Jal Jeevan Mission. The Prime Minister's thinking is guided by the Gandhian principles of Sarvodaya and self-sufficiency. Gandhi's philosophy has served as an inspiration to the Prime Minister on many flagship policies, including most notably the Swachh Bharat Mission. Gandhi was the first proponent of Swachhta-he spoke of the importance of cleanliness, remarking "sanitation is more important than independence" at the Banaras Hindu University in 1916.

Launched on 2 October, 2005-the same year that he designated as the Gujarat Urban Development Year-the 'Nirmal Gujarat' programme was the thread that connected Gandhi's unfulfilled dream to Chief Minister Modi's belief that universal sanitation was the fulcrum on which development would stand. Nirmal Gujarat programme introduced many innovative features such as community involvement, women-led implementation, and focus on behavioural change, demand-driven approach, and financial incentives.

The strides made in Gujarat since 2005informed his idea of Swachh Bharat Mission which finally converted Gandhi's dream into a reality. When the Prime Minister first announced the Swachh Bharat Mission from ramparts of the Red Fort, the announcement ennobled him in eyes of the 1.3 billion Indians who saw their leader's conviction and the deep sense of care that he had for the dignity of every citizen. A few cynics thought that it would be impossible to become an Open Defecation Free (ODF) country. We have gone from a meager 38 per cent ODF status in 2014 to almost 100 per cent today, the notable exception being the state of West Bengal. The Prime Minister himself took up a broom to lead by example, and converted us all into Swachhagra his in this Jan Andolan.

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban (SBM-U), this Government has built more than 73 lakh toilets and increased the solid waste management processing capability of urban areas from 18 per cent in 2014 to more than 70 per cent today. The true victory was the behavioural change that occurred in the heart of every Indian. The Prime Minister realised that if our mindset changed, cleanliness would invariably follow. He recently launched the Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0) to capitalise on this momentum, and go from being an 'ODF India' to a 'Garbage-free India'.

The Prime Minister innately understood how the Mission could inspire millions of Indians towards collective action.

Stop targeted killings in Valley

dition of the land of Kashmir will get a big jolt and the forces of doom prevail in Jammu and Kashmir. No religion of the world allows the killings of the innocent and weak and more so the religion of Islam and as such the killings of the non-Kashmiris are against the teachings and tenets of Islam and as such killings of the non-locals should not be indulged in and instead efforts should be made to preserve Hindu Muslim unity and communal harmony for which the Kashmir was once famous throughout world but today conspiracies are being hatched to destroys the composite culture and tradition of Jammu and Kashmir and thus the target killings of non-Kashmiris are being executed to tarnish the image of the Kashmiris.

The common Kashmiris should rise above petty politics and condemn such killings of the non-Kashmiris and force the terrorists to stop these target killings for flourishing of the communal harmony and brotherhood. The killings of the non-locals are dastardly and now these should stop in the interest of the country and for flourishing of the Kashmiriyat humanity, Hindu Muslim unity and brotherhood.

Till now a number of innocent non-locals have been killed by the enemies of humanity and all of them were poor labourers and small vendors. Such killings have created fear psychosis among the non-locals working in Kashmir and they are not only thinking of leaving Kashmir as the threat perception is very high in them due to the targeting of the non-locals day in and day out. But in fact some non-locals have started leaving Kashmir and it is very unfortunate and this should not be

allowed, rather security should be provided to these non-locals .The killings of the innocent people whether local or non-local is against the ethos of Kashmir and as such the target killings of the poor people should not be resorted to by the terrorists to show their presence.

The killers of the non-local labourers should be identified and severe punishment should be given to them after speedy trial in the special courts so that the sense of security will prevail among the non-locals so that they will continue to work in the valley and they will shun the thought of leaving Kashmir.

The government should act fast and give a free hand to the security agencies so that the killers of the innocent non-locals are identified and put behind bars so that the brute act of the target killings of the non-Kashmiris will be stopped at the earliest before it will damage our composite culture and become a headache for the country. We have seen enough spilling of the innocent human blood and now the target killings of the innocent non-Kashmiris should stop immediately.

The government as well as the majority community of Kashmir should rise against the target killings of the non-Kashmiris so that they will not happen again and tarnish our image in the world.

It fallsows that the target killings of the non-Kashmiris has no place in our democracy and secularism and as such it should not happen and give a bad name to Kashmiris. We should unite to oppose the target killings of the non-Kashmiris so that these will not take place again in Kashmir for the sake of Kashmiriyat and Insaniyat.

too costly for many). Further, it also helps in reducing time and effort expended on schooling, in addition to lowering the psychological costs that emerge from concerns over the safety and well-being of children who must travel some distance. This is particularly important for us to obtain better schooling outcomes for the girl child. As the study noted, patriarchal norms and additional concerns associated with the safety of girls mean that public schools within a village deliver better results for girls than boys. Also, the value of an appropriate school is significantly higher for a girl child at the secondary level of education.

Providing children with access to all three levels of school education within their village could thus go a long way in bridging gender gaps and improving educational outcomes. With the enactment of the Right to Education Act in 2009 and now with the introduction of the NEP, education is no longer just a need, but a legal right. It, therefore, becomes the state's responsibility to ensure the fulfillment of this right. The need for public schools in general has only become more acute since the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, which has affected the livelihoods of a large number of households and strained the financial sustainability of low-cost private schools. As a result of this, more and more children are being moved by parents from private to public schools, a trend confirmed by the ASER report of 2020, thereby increasing pressure on the country's existing educational infrastructure.

Ensuring the availability of proximately located schools at all levels of education would require innovation and investment in this vital sector. It's imperative to expand schooling systems to serve educational needs at higher levels everywhere. Human capital and other resources need to be mobilized on a vast scale to see this done.

Vijay Garg.