

IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY

In today's fast-paced and increasingly complex world, efficient service delivery has emerged as a critical measure of governance and public administration. Citizens expect timely, transparent, and effective services, whether in healthcare, education, public utilities, or social welfare schemes. Yet, despite significant technological advances and policy initiatives, gaps in service delivery remain a persistent challenge, often resulting in public dissatisfaction, inequity, and wasted resources. Improving service delivery is not merely a bureaucratic exercise; it is a commitment to citizen-centric governance that strengthens trust, accountability, and social equity.

The first step toward improving service delivery is streamlining administrative processes. Bureaucratic red tape, complex procedures, and overlapping responsibilities often delay services and increase opportunities for inefficiency or corruption. Governments and organizations must adopt simplified processes, clear guidelines, and well-defined responsibilities. Digital platforms, process automation, and online grievance redressal systems can greatly reduce delays while increasing transparency. For instance, e-governance initiatives that allow citizens to access services online not only save time and effort but also limit human intervention, reducing chances of errors and corruption.

Equally important is capacity building of personnel. Even the most well-designed policies falter if the workforce lacks training, motivation, or accountability. Regular skill development programs, sensitization workshops, and performance-based incentives can ensure that employees are equipped to serve the public efficiently. Empowering field-level staff with decision-making authority also accelerates service delivery and reduces dependency on hierarchical approvals. When citizens interact with knowledgeable, responsive, and courteous officials, the perception of governance improves, fostering trust and cooperation.

Citizen engagement and feedback mechanisms are indispensable for refining services. Public satisfaction surveys, community consultations, and digital feedback tools allow authorities to identify gaps and respond proactively. For instance, in urban service delivery, real-time citizen reporting of issues such as water supply disruptions or waste management inefficiencies helps authorities respond promptly. Similarly, in social welfare programs, feedback on the quality and accessibility of services can guide policy adjustments, ensuring benefits reach intended beneficiaries without leakage.

Another critical aspect is leveraging technology and innovation. Data analytics, artificial intelligence, and geographic information systems (GIS) can help monitor service quality, predict demand, and optimize resource allocation. Smart cities and digital health initiatives illustrate how technology can transform service delivery by enabling real-time monitoring, predictive maintenance, and personalized services. Governments must not only adopt technology but also ensure digital literacy among citizens to maximize the benefits of such innovations. Accountability and transparency are the cornerstones of effective service delivery. Regular audits, public dashboards, and grievance redressal mechanisms ensure that officials are answerable for their performance. A culture of accountability discourages negligence and incentivizes efficiency. Furthermore, integrating social accountability, such as citizen committees or participatory budgeting, strengthens oversight and reinforces the principle that governance is a service, not a privilege.

Purmandal-Chota Kashi of Duggarland

■ G.L. KHAJURIA



Himalaya is prominent for the abodes of Gods and Goddesses as a whole, apart from a land of temples, shrines, sanctum sanctorum and of course, a treasure trove of pilgrimages, varied ramification which occupy their unique and enchanting placement. Having their spiritual and prodigious reverence, people from India and abroad throng in huge number, pay obeisance and obtain blessings from the supreme Gods and deities.

Amongst a few to be named are Bawa Amar Nath, Mata Vaishno Devi, Khir Bhawani, Mahalak, Shmi, Durga Mata, Mata Kali (Bahu Fort), Airwan (Kathua), ManiMahesh (HP). Gupt Ganga (Bhaderwah), Pingla Mata (Ramnagar), Mansa Devi, Badarkali, Vasuki Nag (Kailash Kund), Sukrala Mata (Billawar), Mata Bala Sundri on the hill top between Billawar and Kathua, Ashta-d-Bhuja, Sickle Mountain (Kishtwar), Jawalaji, Sudhmahadev, Mantalai (Chenani), Om Parvat (Great Himalaya), Kalkaji, Surinsar, Mansar, Moungri, Utterbehni. Though the list remains unending insofar as such religious spots of all religions are concerned.

It is unambiguously, no denying the fact that 'Purmandal' occupies its own placement, prominence and as far as its provenience is concerned, it equates in status with that of Kashi in Utter Pradesh (U.P.). Purmandal is a small village barely 30 kms from Jammu to its South-East. There are twin routes to the sanctum sanctorum; one from SidhraKunjwani bye-pass road and the other from NH-1 from Kaluchak through Birkpur-Utterbehni through various twists and turns en route to the lasttourist temple of purmandal.

The prominence of the temples of Purmandal is a testimony of the Valley of Kashmir which in other words round is the fountainhead of 'Shaivism' of which the first building of the temple was, de fact, ascribed to the ruler of time by nameRaja Vent Dutt. In other words round, he has been as well named as 'Vinayaditya' or 'Avantivarman' who ruled those times some eleven and a quarter hundreds years back i.e. (855 to 883



A.D.)

Situated alongside river 'Devak', it further meanders down and join Utterbehni another tirthsthan and thence downwards flows near Vijaypur; situated alongside a small town on Jammu Pathankote road and the bridge over the river is probablythe longest one in the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is commonly believed that most of Shiv-Lingams have spiritually originated in the close vicinity of Purmandal alongside 'Devak' proximity and is further reported that "Shiva and Mata Paravatiare those of Indreshwar, Bhuteshwar, Gyaneshwar, Kasheshwar and Bikeshwar. The sanctum sanction is of ample importance as a prominent tirthsthan around the years, preferably during 'Shivratri' and Chaitra Chaudish' like that of Airwan in Kathua district. The place is having its prominence that saint Kabir and Ustad Bismila Khan had been over this pious and secred spots.

The sanctan sanctorum of Purmandal bears relevance to "Kashi" Devsthan in U.P. where centuries old temple of Mighty 'Vishwanath' tll date exists but historically it is known that 'Raja Vishwa Chand' usurped him and confined him to ' Manika Ghat after having some tribal confrontation and as such King 'Vishwanath' relinquished the kingdom and confined himself to 'Manika Ghat' in late stages of his life. Here at 'Purmandal' multi-Shiva Lingams have originated spiritually called in local parlance as 'Aap Shambo' lingam which as per legends describe that a famous Raja by name King Veni Dutt as mentioned earlier ruled in those ancient times in between eight to the close of Ninth Century

had also visited Purmandal as it was a part of his Kingdom.

But, whatsoever legends are affiliated to this sacred spot, the fact remains that it was hoary past. The spot is of utmost prominence and Shakti in the Northern part of India where devotees in Lac assemble over here to have holy Darshan, pay obeisance and obtain blessing. Even great Guru Nanak had visited the spot.

The Village Purmandal is populated on either side of "Devika River" which with revolving wheel of time many more temples were constructed during Maharaja's regime. But with the exploding population and heavy biotic pressure, the areas surrounding the spot have turned barren despite the fact that the Govt. Deptt. of all hues have put in all out efforts to rehabilitate and bring back to its pristine grandeur and glory but all in vain. Even the historically old religious structures which form an important part of our national heritage stand neglected and are desertifying impending dooms day. Apart from historic temples, there are old Sarais and Havelis having the same status. During Maharaja's regime (Dogra rulers), it was earmarked to construct a cluster of sequential temples from 'Utterbehni' to Purmandal where the reminant material (Iron Girders and their allies) stand spanning the two sacred spots, and after dogra rulers all remained silent. Here the Govt. needs to take up the matter to save and invigorate this sacred spot of our national heritage. Restoration of dilapidated temples, Havelis, Sarais to its pristine grandeur is the call of the hour and glory as devotees/ tourists from far and wide areas come here

for holy Darshan, pay obeisance and obtain blessing.

The area is just like that of 'Kashi' (U.P) and as such dead bodies of locality around are cremated and one need not ot go "Haridwar" for immersion of ashes and as per local parlance are sured a place in heaven (Gati Locally spoken). Miraculous are the ways of God that the remnances of ashes are nowhere visible and disappear in the sandy ' Devak'.

The holy river needs to be rehabilitated by ensuring ecological balance by way of massive afforestation work on the barren hill-tops, catchments areas and here the Forest, Horticulture, Sericulture and other sister departments have to pick up the thread sincerely for this pious cause and its monitoring be ensured by accountability commission. The works executed over couple of years back are no where in sight and lakhs of money went to drain.

Classic clean lines campaign, shall have to be launched by one and all to make 'Devak' neat, clean and green, imposition of fine who litter the sacred spot and its surrounds. It is imperative and this shall have to be ensured by constituting a committee to assist "Dharmarth 'Trust Deptt", apart from planting multihued flowering plants, climbers and creepers on either side of the river; particularly those best suited to site. Water conservation, construction of ponds, tanks, boalis and other water bodies /Ghats are warranted to be constructed. During my last visit to "Purmandar", I observed that a man from Punjab with this associates had engaged labourers for the construction of a bathing ghats most keenly. Apathetic altitude of our people and Govt deserves to be blamed for the act of negligence. When the outsider from Punjab is devotedly on this pious job what hinders we people and the Govt? It is rather a matter of shame.

Conclusively, therefore, imperfect and unawareness in our grey matter need to be revived to enhance the beauty of our old religious heritage and bring back to its pristine grandeur and glory by one and all so that our coming generations may not abuse us for utter act of negligence which our earlier 'Rulers / ancestors have bestowed upon us. And lastly I add here the last line "How senseless seems to me the man who has seen his neighbour ill, old and dead, and yet remains happy and is not shaken by fear"Ash- vaghosha.

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Going green-the only sustainable way forward using green marketing

■ PROF K S CHANDRASEKAR



From 5th of June to 16th of June 1972, the first world environment conference was held at Stockholm, Sweden. The slogan of the conference was "Only one Earth". By 2022, we celebrated World environment day on 5th of June and will be celebrated every year on that date. Governments time and again have banned plastics. It can be noted that plastic toothbrushes can last for 400 years to degrade into environment. It is hence a choice among people to leave the best for the next generation. If the customers decide to refuse plastics, onedoesn't need to reduce, rethink, reuse, repair; repurpose or recycle it. Once promoted as the solution to our ever-growing needs, recycling today is a crumbling industry with a single-digit success rate.Green Marketing can be a solace. It is a holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing, consumption and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less detrimental to the environment, with growing awareness about the implications of global warming, non-biodegradable solid waste, harmful impact of pollutants, etc. Both marketers and consumers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the need for switching over to Green products and services. Green marketing is the process of developing products and services and promoting them to satisfy the customers who prefer products of good quality, performance and convenience at affordable cost, which at the same time do not have a detrimental impact on the environment. It includes a broad range of activities like

product design and development, product modification, changing the production process, modified advertising, change in packaging, and change in the style of consumption and change in the attitude after consumption, etc., aimed at reducing the detrimental impact of products, their consumption and disposal, on the environment. Many global players in diverse businesses are now successfully implementing Green marketing practices. Today, many companies have accepted their responsibility not to harm the environment. So, products and production processes become cleaner, and more companies go green because they realize that they can reduce pollution and keep the natural environment more green at the same time. Green marketing is a creative opportunity to innovate in ways that make a difference and at the same time achieve business success by designing and modifying the products in a way totally suitable to nature. As business activities caused many of the environmental problems in the past and still do, there is increasing recognition that Green business is vital in the process of a more ecological, sustainable society. Companies, especially multinationals, play an essential role in the world economy, and they have also the resources and capacity to put ecological solutions into practice. Companies have a responsibility to drive development towards greater sustainability and becoming greener, so that a company's aim is to create markets for more environmentally friendly products and services and educate and influence customers to change their Black Behaviour into Green Behaviour.

At least two motives for companies to change to more environmentally appropriate strategies and practices are protecting the environment and creating a Green mar-

ket for the Green customers. Companies can save money by reducing the amount of raw material and energy used in production. Becoming more eco-oriented and offering environment-friendly products might result in increased market shares as well as an improved company's Green orientation towards environment and thus, companies gaining first-mover advantages in greening should become more competitive. This first-mover advantage, however, is not sufficient anymore as more companies orient themselves ecologically and customers can choose from a variety of eco-designed products. Thus, Green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes in the production process, packaging and modifying advertising. According to the World Commission on Environmental Development (1978), Sustainable Development is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs". The common theme, throughout this strategy of sustainable development, is the need to integrate economic and ecological considerations in decision making by making policies that conserve the quality of Green environment through its protection. This is what the product of Green marketing is, environmental protection by Green production by Green operations, distribution and consumption for the present and the future generation. The development of eco- products through energy- efficient operations, better pollution controls, use of Green technology in production, reduction in hazardous emissions and effluents from production process are also part of Green marketing, which also lead to sustainable development. Green marketing is a tool for protecting the environment for the future

generation. The obvious assumption of Green marketing is that potential consumers will see in the 'green' product an additional benefit and they will adjust their purchasing decisions accordingly.A research study indicates that marketers also have the responsibility to make the stakeholders aware of the need and the advantages of Green products. The Green marketers will have full support from the Government, and the consumers also will not mind paying more for a cleaner and greener environment.

In one of the studies conducted by the author found that there are green customers who are socially responsible, ethically and culturally creative, and/or environmentally responsible. They consistently and primarily discriminate against product purchases in favor of the environment. In choosing a particular brand, these customers take sustainability into account by seeking out Green products or products with eco-friendly design. The Green customer is someone who voluntarily engages in Green consumption practices that are regarded as environmentally friendly. Consumers whose purchase Behaviour is influenced by environmental concerns will be considered as Green consumers.

Automobile industry is one which requires us to follow the green protocols.The automotive industry globally, including in India, are advised to adopt sustainable practices due to environmental concerns.The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), are key drivers for this shift towards new materials in automotive manufacturing.Toyota, Maruti

introducing hybrid cars is one such example. Stricter pollution regulations and incentives for electric cars are two ways the Indian government is aggressively encouraging changing the habits of consumers and ensuring more electric vehicles are on roads by supporting the industry.

Paper is one of the most environmentally sustainable products on the Earth; It is biodegradable, bio-compostable, and one of the most recycled products of the planet.Recycling is a key component for the paper industry creating an economically viable and sustainable model for circular economy.West Coast Paper Mills adopted the clonal technology for their tree improvement strategy to make more effective use of the land. Seshasayee Paper and Boards Limited introduced innovative Lift Irrigation Scheme used in its Erode unit where the company treated its wastewater; and the treated water is used to irrigate nearly 2140 acres of land in which local farmers grow sugar cane and tree crops like Casuarina and Eucalyptus. This innovative irrigation scheme has caught the attention of overseas experts and UNDP,which was praised for the commendable water conservation system but a circular model of sustainability.

India was once a food-scarce nation and has undergone various famines in history, but India has come a long way and is now a food-surplus country. India is now feeding its people efficiently as well, and its exports to other countries are increasing day by day. Indian cuisine solely relies on locally sourced ingredients, encouraging consumption of seasonal produce, which reduces the carbon footprint associated with transportation. Food packaging is the only area that requires plastics to come out and use organic

materials.McDonald's restaurant's napkins, bags are made of recycled paper. Coea-Cola pumped syrup directly from tank instead of plastic which saved 68 million pounds/year.Gradually, food industries are switching their delivery fleet to EVs and reducing their dependency on fuel-based vehicles. Various food companies are working on their cold chain infrastructure, they are working on developing robust cold storage and transportation networks, ensuring that perishable foods reach consumers without spoilage. Barauni refinery of IOC is taking steps for restricting air & water pollutants. Nokia was recycling its old worn-out handsets donated by customers. Suzlon Energymanufactures and markets wind turbines, which provide an alternative source of energy based on wind power. This green initiative taken by the company is extremely important for reducing the carbon footprint.

However, there are challenges like green products requiring renewable and recyclable material, which is costly, requires technology, which requires huge investment in R&D, majority of the people are not aware of green products, and their uses and majority of the consumers are not willing to pay a premium for green products.Companies hence should not neglect the economic aspect of marketing. Firms alone cannot lead the green campaign revolution. It is up to the customers to demand the same for the benefit of the future generations. The great Bhagavad-Gita states that "Nature works under divine supervision. Though the environment is not ours, it is still ours to make".

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India-Russia Ties: A New-Age Multi-Aligned World! Does Trump's Diktat Still Dictate?

■ TUSHI DEB

There are junctures in global politics when a relationship isn't merely reaffirmed - it is reborn. The latest diplomatic choreography between New Delhi and Moscow fits that category. Far from being a ceremonial replay of Cold War nostalgia, India's renewed engagement with Russia signals a sharply evolving doctrine: sovereign diplomacy in a multi-aligned world. And standing strangely at the centre of this geopolitical recalibration is Donald Trump - not as a partner or persuader, but as the unintended catalyst.

For months, Washington has issued direct and indirect warnings to India over its continued reliance on Russian oil and defence systems. Tariffs, public rhetoric, and strategic pressure were meant to discipline India into alignment with the American stance toward Moscow. Trump believed that tightening the screws would force compliance. Instead, it triggered something far more consequential: India's

public assertion that its foreign policy will not be dictated externally, ideologically, or coercively.

The Modi-Putin handshake this week was not just diplomacy. It was defiance. India's message: Multi-alignment is not neutrality-It is strategy. In the last century, global politics was neatly mapped into camps: socialist vs capitalist, NATO vs Warsaw Pact, and West vs East. Today's world is far less obedient. The 21st century is not bipolar, not unipolar - it is transactional, layered, and unpredictable. Nations no longer choose sides. They choose interests. And India embodies that shift. It buys discounted Russian oil because it keeps inflation stable at home. It strengthens defence ties with Russia because two-thirds of its platforms originate there and can't be replaced overnight. It works with the United States as a strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific to counter China. It negotiates with Europe for technology and markets. It deepens trade and

cultural ties with the Middle East. The old school diplomacy called this hedging; modern diplomacy calls it agility, while modern India calls it strategic autonomy.

So where do Russia's stakes stand: is it from isolation to opportunity? For Moscow, the growing distance with the West has placed tremendous value on the partnerships that remain. India isn't just another trade partner- it is a diplomatic lifeline, a global voice with influence in forums from G20 to BRICS to the Global South movement. By committing to long-term energy supplies, technology cooperation, joint defence manufacturing, and economic diversification, Russia is signalling that the India partnership is not nostalgic - it is necessary. Putin's messaging was unmistakable: India is not a subordinate player. It is a strategic equal in a new world where Western dominance is neither default nor guaranteed.

Trump's Miscalculation: Pressure Doesn't Work on New Delhi! If Donald

Trump imagined New Delhi would capitulate under tariff threats and diplomatic friction, he misread India's political psychology. The India of 2025 is not seeking approval-it is demanding respect. Hence, what Trump achieved unintentionally was the following: He accelerated India's intent to diversify beyond U.S. dependency, and he forced Indian policymakers to publicly defend sovereign decision-making. He strengthened the perception that Western pressure tactics are outdated and counterproductive. And he reminded India that alliances cannot be based on fear but only on mutual benefit. If Washington wanted New Delhi closer, the smarter policy would have been engagement, not instruction. Instead, America made Russia the more predictable partner. The question now writes itself: Does Trump's diktat still dictate? India's actions have answered emphatically: No, not anymore. And perhaps never again.

The risks are real - but so are the rewards.

To be clear, the India-Russia trajectory is not free from complications. Russia's tightening embrace with China remains a major strategic discomfort for New Delhi. The India-U.S. partnership, especially under the Quad framework, is vital to balancing Beijing's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific. The future of defence dependence on Russia must eventually evolve toward joint innovation rather than import dependency.

Yet, caution does not equal withdrawal. Pragmatism does not equal betrayal. India's ability to maintain parallel engagements with Russia, with the U.S., with Europe, with the Gulf, and with Southeast Asia is not diplomatic confusion. It is diplomatic maturity.

The New Grammar of Power is here! The Modi-Putin engagement marks a deeper truth: The global order is no longer shaped by blocs-it is shaped by leverage. In today's world, trade is not loyalty. Defence ties are not ideological alignment. Energy decisions are not moral judgements. And foreign poli-

cy is not a hostage to someone else's worldview. And India knows that. Russia recognises it. The West is learning it-slowly, reluctantly, and sometimes resentfully.

The Final Word: A Sovereign India in a Multipolar World! As Russia and India chart a deeper path forward-from energy security to defence co-production to new economic architecture-one reality towers above the rhetoric: India is no longer being courted by global powers-it is being calculated into their strategies. The handshakes in Delhi reflected more than friendship. They reflected an irreversible shift in global diplomacy: A world where nations are not aligned left or right but aligned to themselves. A world where influence is negotiated, not commanded, a world where diktats-American or otherwise-do not dictate. And in that world, India stands not as a follower of alliances, but as an architect of balance-confident, unbent, and unmistakably sovereign.

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