

**70 years of Independence**

**Special Feature – I-Day 2017**

## India in Fast Motion



**\*Ramesh K Arora**

During the initial years after country's independence, the Government of the day had three major challenges to meet - managing the massive refugee crises and the consequent re-settlement of lakhs of people; integration of more than 560 princely states into one strong nation; and promulgation of the Indian Constitution which laid the foundation of political democracy and socio-economic justice. With this, the planning system adopted by the country, facilitated the development of infrastructure for promoting science, technology, power, agriculture, industry, roads, irrigation and other segments of development. The state, including the Central and State governments, performed a key role in guiding and controlling the process of socio-economic change. However, a radical transformation of Indian economy took place in 1991 through the adoption of Liberalization–Privatization–Globalization paradigm. A new era of partnership between the public and the private sectors commenced authentically, heralding faster and less regulated economic development. During the next year (1992), the 73<sup>rd</sup> and the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments paved the way for the democratization of urban and rural local governance institutions. In later years, another important reform in strengthening political democracy was promulgated – the introduction of the Right to Information Act, 2005.

In the domain of socio-economic development, there has been an enormous growth of the public sector, despite its erratic performance. Further, there have been numerous schemes and programmes in the realms of urban change, rural transformation, transportation, communication and other sectors of national life. The focus of many programmes has been on the development of backward regions, provision of urban services to rural areas, mitigation of poverty, promotion of agriculture and raising the dignity and status of less privileged sections of society.

## The Faster Track after 2014

After the NDA government came to power in 2014, vigorous initiatives and innovations have been introduced in almost all facets of national life. Narendra Modi's pro-active foreign policy has augmented India's prestige and strengthened economic and defence relations at the cross-national level. Besides, massive investment is being made on modernizing India's defence system. Of late, India's economic growth has been accelerating consistently, making it the fastest growing economy in the world.

What is most noteworthy in the present regime is the re-vitalization of economic democracy. There has been a massive participation of common people in banking services, employment generation, industrial expansion, business growth, educational transformation and delivery of health services. The "Digital India" campaign has become an effective catalyst to ensuring greater transparency, accountability and people's participation in the governance system. GST is one such upshot of the technological revolution.

The trinity of JAM (*Jaan Dhan Yojana*, mobile and *Adhaar*) has empowered crores of people financially and economically. Start-ups and stand-ups have inculcated the spirit of enterprise and self-esteem among young people, women and underprivileged sections of society. Obviously, the socio-economic philosophy of the present government is characterized by the time-honoured dictum of growth with equity. *Beti Bachao, Beti Padao* is an example of garnering support for gender justice and women empowerment.

Perhaps the three most important innovations of the Modi government are the Make in India campaign (facilitating even the production of defence equipment and supercomputers), strengthening the spirit of Team India that has given a fillip to deliberative democracy, and the Skill India Mission.

Demonetization and GST will eventually be helpful in containing black money, although many more systematic efforts will be required to curb economic crimes and corruption. We need to build an India where people are devoted to the performance of their duties and voluntarily conduct themselves honestly in their private and public life.

The *Swacchh Bharat Abhiyan* of the Modi government is a revolutionary movement in the India of Mahatma Gandhi who proclaimed that “cleanliness is next to godliness”. For the success of this and other programmes, people should demonstrate strong civic sense which can be promoted by voluntary social groups, families and educational institutions. India deserves a more responsible society where people do not evade taxes nor violate laws. They must feel a strong bonding with their nation and its governments at various levels. Modi’s “New India” can be constructed only when we have “New Indians” – hard working, sincere, emotionally intelligent, decent, honest and patriotic.

Apart from national defence and internal security, which are the areas that require a more focused attention in the near future? Perhaps, these would be: multi-dimensional infrastructural development, industrial regeneration, agricultural re-invention, primary health, primary education, digitalization including Artificial Intelligence, non-conventional sources of energy and provision of pure drinking water to all people in all regions. Importantly enough, the Modi government has emphasized and adopted the approach of ‘holistic’ development, thus aptly balancing all significant components of nation building. Every Indian citizen, irrespective of religion, caste, region and political affiliation, should contribute to making India a great nation. We truly need to ensure that there is “*Sab ka Saath, Sab ka Vikas*”.

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*\* Author is Chairman, Management Development Academy, Jaipur.*

*Views expressed in the article are author’s personal.*

*(This feature has been contributed by PIB Jaipur)*

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