

70 years of Independence

Special Feature – I-Day2017

Assessing India's Progress in Various Fields



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We are celebrating 70 years of our Independence. But looking back at the history of these seven decades, what are the things which we should be proud of? Have we really progressed much and reached the level we should have in all these years?

The verdict will be divided. India is a land of a diverse population, with great variations in economic standards, having different religious and cultural customs and different stages of development. Hence, every section has its own view of development and reasons to whine or cheer.

But there are certain major and decisive strides we have made in these years particularly during last three years which no one can ignore or deny, irrespective of his or her political affiliation or personal grudges against certain leaders or governments or the 'system'.

Perhaps our greatest achievement is to have evolved a healthy democratic government system.

We have a very strong constitutional framework that makes democracy such a success here. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. Our achievements in these years are endless, should we sit to prepare an exhaustive list. We have some of the best institutes in the world in the form of IIMs and IITs.

Our healthcare sector is looking up and health tourism is a reality where people from advanced nations are coming here for affordable treatment. We have a railway network that is among the largest in the world in terms of track length and passenger volume. We have one of the largest armies in the world.

We have among the world's busiest airports in Delhi and Mumbai. Our life expectancy at birth has increased from a mere 32 years in 1947 to 66 years today. We were one of the foremost nations to establish nuclear reactors and produce clean energy. Despite our financial and technological limitations, we have made the best use of our resources and from an importer of even a needle, today we are exporters of software.

Our technocrats and managers are celebrated worldwide for their professionalism and calibre. Today we are a nation reckoned as a leader in space technology. Millions of Indians have fought their way in and made Europe and the US their home, by sheer virtue of their hard work and professional competence, contributing seminally in global projects.

We have produced noble laureates, artists, singers, musicians, writers, sportsmen, scientists, diplomats, scholars and statesmen of world repute year after year, in hundreds. This is no mean thing in just seven decades of our independent existence. We had difficult times in recent years with policy paralysis in government and slackness in ideation that slowed down India's growth trajectory to some extent but in the last three years or so of the NDA government, things have started looking up.

In less than three years, at least 30 new projects have been launched for giving a new shape and direction to the country like Jan Dhan, Swachh Bharat, Startup India, Nat'l Health Policy, Give up LPG, Skill India, Make in India, Smart City, Udaan scheme, GST, Digital India, Crop Insurance scheme to name a few, even if we leave for the moment aggressive advancements in railway and road networks and facilities.

No wonder World Investment Report finds India among the top three prospective host economies of the world. In Financial Year 2015-16 we had a whopping 55 billion dollars' worth of investments in the country. In World economic forum Global Competitive Index, India has jumped 32 places

and today the country is the 6th largest manufacturing nation in the world. Projects worth Rs. 8 lakh crore pending for years have now been cleared and put on the fast track under the Prime Minister's personal initiative.

India's effort and commitment towards production and use of clean energy has found praise globally. The government has plans to produce 175 GW of renewable energy and we have already realised 50 GW production level in last three years. India stands 4th in the world in global wind power installed capacity. At least 22 crores LED bulbs have been distributed, which is to lead to saving of Rs 11,000 crore in electricity bills of the country. The government is not only targeting mega projects but is equally attentive towards micro-level social engineering and taking grassroots level steps to strengthen the common man and the rural foundations.

The Prime Minister deeply believes in public participation and hence all projects are prepared with a view to benefit more and more people. In just three years of his governance, the government has ensured the establishment of 50,000 km of power transmission lines, even as over last five decades we had only 16,000 km covered. Not only that, in less than three years we have over 12,000 villages electrified, even as when the government came in power, it found over 18,000 villages in Independent India still living in the dark.

Between 2010 and 2014, just 59 village panchayats had been connected with optical fibre network which in last three years stands at 77,000 panchayats. Such is the pace at which the government is working. It is very likely that in next two years we will have all the 2.5 lakh villages enjoying optical fibre network to enjoy seamless internet and communication facility.

The buzzword of the government is transparency and to bring in transparency in government working, digitisation has a big role to play, which is why the government is taking along the two together. The more digital technology penetration we have, the lesser corruption we have because everything is in the public domain for everyone to see and track. As Prime Minister Modi says, it is all about change in the viewpoint and way of handling things that would make all the difference.

The NDA government is a departure from the past because it has changed the work culture and viewpoint of the people, instilling hope in them, pushing them to dream big. The seeds of every success lie in dreams that we cherish!

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Views expressed in the article are author's personal.

(This feature has been contributed by PIB Bhopal)

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