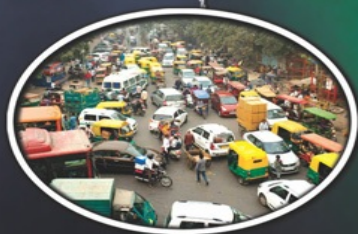


# How Developed **is** Development **in** India?



A K BHATIA

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# ***INTRODUCTION***

Indian economy is reported to be one of the largest growing economies in the World. This Asian Giant has enviable manpower and material resources with tremendous potential to make it a super power in the World. Some remarkable achievements made by our scientists and technicians have turned it into a vibrant and self-reliant economy dispelling an era of scarcities and shortages which haunted our economy till a few decades ago. It included green and white revolution, rapid industrial development, unprecedented transport expansion providing greater and quick mobility to people and commodities, and remarkable advances in information technology generating substantial employment in India and abroad catalyzing income and prosperity in the country. However, lop-sided and misdirected policies promoted and patronized by obstructive and intrusive political system restricted utilization of our enormous talent and potential to grow uniformly and homogeneously. We may derive satisfaction from our 'impressive' growth since independence, based on aggregative (macro) data showing notable economic prosperity of huge 250 million people (more than individual population of most countries in the World) but it is also a harsh reality that a mind boggling humanity (one-sixth of global population) comprising of 1100 million people (80% of Indian population) are still living in poverty without any economic security.

The situation on social development front is found more pathetic owing to a large majority of population remaining poor, deprived and unprivileged even after 70 years of independence. Not only are they still struggling to secure a minimum basic livelihood security and earn a dignified life but their condition and sufferings are aggravating over the years due to utter neglect of their basic development needs. They are also being exploited vigorously by unscrupulous politicians and corrupt bureaucrats who seem obsessed with maintaining and perpetuating their own hegemony at any cost. Sadly, these rascals have become totally insensitive to acute sufferings of common man living miserably under severely hostile and adverse conditions while they lead an extravagant and comfortable life. The basic infrastructure is extremely inadequate and deplorable for a majority of population which is still deprived of fruits of modern development. Only rich and influential manage to get all attention and access to various modern facilities. The development is so lop-sided and scanty that only one-fourth of massive population

including top authorities can claim relief while remaining three-fourth of population a massive one billion comprising of one-fourth of global population is still impoverished facing extremely fragile and insecure existence. Acute disparities and disparate structure reflects that it is largely a skewed society and the myth of rapidly growing economy is highly exaggerated particularly in view of absence of disaggregated dispersal and distribution of economic growth benefits both spatially and temporally. In addition, constraints on crucial investment opportunities is a matter of worry to restrict forces required to stimulate and accelerate pace of socio-development and provide sustenance to economic growth prospects.

According to a World development report, the disparities in India are rapidly accentuating over the years implying the much hyped progress on social development front is superficial and an exaggerated phenomenon posing serious questions on efficacy and credibility of so called present 'democratic' system in our country. Is it a mere coincidence that many under-developed African and other disorganized South-East Asian countries have similar relentless problem of destitution, distress and deprivation conditions unlike northern US continent and most European countries which are quite developed and affluent having well organized systems attracting best talents from around the World?

It is perhaps no exaggeration that the whole country has been hijacked by our rogue politicians and their cronies who themselves are major culprits along with corrupt bureaucrats, entrenched land mafia and big industrialists under their dubious patronage who are roaming free making mockery of the system. Is there any doubt that our incompetent and crook leaders along with their subservient lackadaisical officials are primarily responsible for present phenomenon of excruciating poverty, deprivation and underdevelopment in the country? Ironically, while they blatantly continue to misuse and misappropriate the whole system evading any punishment, the minor and marginal offenders like small farmers, medium entrepreneurs and petty criminals are being targeted and unduly persecuted or compelled to languish in jails. Unfortunately, the entire political and governance system has become so rotten that it will require a major will, determination and massive efforts to execute radical political and administrative reforms in the country. It may be quite a stupendous task in view of relentless resistance from rowdy opposition parties obsessed with lure of power and perpetuation of hegemony but there is perhaps no shortcut to pressing throttle to weed out inappropriate elements and ensure sustainable growth of our under-utilized national economy. The potential dissidents may cry 'murder' of democracy (mauled already) which should not deter present ruling government to deal sternly with people trying to vitiate socio-economic environment in the country. Unless strict policies and measures are taken to prevent undue disruption and derailment in governance and create positive environment for

implementing common public development and welfare initiatives, the chaotic and anarchic situation is unlikely to abate. The underlying purpose should be to protect democracy enshrining basic and fundamental principles of providing equality of justice and dignity to common man.

Massive corruption and uninterrupted manipulation in the political system and lethargic and inefficient administrative hierarchy under their control continues to be a major worry. In fact, most previous obstinate governments have been extraordinarily concerned about establishing their own individual hegemonies and dynasties, acquiring illicit wealth and properties besides engaging in irregular functioning without caring for development of common welfare services or establishing common public infrastructure. Not only it caused massive damage on inclusive development front but resulted in a large population remaining out of mainstream development and left poor and deprived even after long 70 years of independence. In fact, they blatantly continue to hijack entire system in their favour and derail governance at their whims and fancies with immunity. Worse, their unabated control, interference and nuisance in functioning of whole government system are causing serious bottlenecks in accomplishing objectives of inclusive progress and development. Their unwarranted reluctance to shed their authority and hegemony over the system apart from indulging in undue aggression and intolerance towards anybody challenging their arbitrary functioning is perhaps biggest threat to sustainability of current development process. It is apprehended that frequent jerks and delays in implementation of desired inclusive socio-economic policies may splutter growth engine in future and decelerate economy. In short, the present situation may be equated with prevalence of arrogant and monopolistic regime of rowdy politicians enjoying complete freedom to do whatever they like in disguise of democracy.

Any new ruling government, therefore, is going to face an extremely tough task and a big daunting challenge to create a more liberal, dynamic and people friendly development environment and promote investment opportunities to attract genuine investors and entrepreneurs who hesitate to come forward due to massive corruption and abundant irregularities entrenched into our political and administrative systems. It includes discarding usual appeasement policies with a view to accelerating pace of investment and improving dismal socio-economic infrastructure at ground level and implementing perennially neglected common development and welfare schemes. Not only does it require reversal of pronounced era of unwarranted lopsided policies serving rich, influential and big culprits but also making conscious efforts to dismantle and dislodge hegemony of certain 'powerful' leaders having a lot of nuisance in the system by virtue of their vested interest and tenacious tendency to run their dynasties without any fear. It also includes eliminating obscure

governance system by curtailing or diluting arbitrary powers and discretion of arrogant government authorities (read nexus of incorrigible, corrupt leaders and their subservient bureaucrats).

Can we celebrate our freedom and boast of development in real sense and spirit when a majority of population is poor and treated like slaves with contempt and is doomed to survive in extremely harsh and hostile circumstances? We boast of having a 'development vision' but are totally apathetic and awkwardly insensitive towards persistence of rampant poverty and deprivation, pathetic condition of houses, poor water and electricity supply, deplorable roads, education and medical facilities afflicting a large majority of population in the country. The facilities are not only just extremely inadequate in most cities, towns and villages but the quality of such services is almost invariably inhuman and distressing exploding myth of 'growing development status'. The whole country is now divided more than ever into a minority of 'haves' (political leaders and key bureaucrats and rich and influential) grabbing major share of fruits of development and a majority of 'have-nots' left in wilderness to fend for themselves on their own and remaining out of periphery of mainstream development. Incidentally, the 'haves' includes a substantive 'middle class' class population which is struggling hard including making compromises with compulsive pressures of unfriendly government agencies. Their prosperity is often flaunted to justify 'vibrant' status of our economy and derive pleasure of our 'achievements'.

The tragedy is that rampant poverty and glaring dichotomy in the society is conveniently overlooked and ignored. It may be quite startling and indeed disturbing observation that a majority of population especially in a predominantly rural India (about 75% of population) lies at bottom of development hierarchy living in most horrible and unimaginable inhuman conditions. The main agenda of our politicians continues to divide whole society into different castes, creed and religions and exploit their vulnerability (poverty, illiteracy, and lack of sustainable source of income) to garner their votes. They have no concern or shame in dumping them and other poor people into a vicious pool of poverty and deprivation even while making merry in collecting illicit wealth and properties for themselves. This has mean and sick tendency has been witnessed repeatedly since independence punctuated with expressions of deep public sympathy around election times. Predictably, their 'affection' for public disappears soon after elections. The subservient administrative authorities too have been taking full advantage of fluidity of situation and uncontested political hegemony to establish their own hold on the system to deny any voice and authority to common public. The whole situation gets so confused and complicated with invasion and influx of egocentric and opportunistic leaders dominating power at helm of affairs (e.g. unholy alliances)

that it causes a serious blow to inclusive growth resulting in rapid jump in disparities in the country. It is no exaggeration that the much hyped development in the country is perhaps a fake projection in view of exclusion of a majority of population from mainstream development. It is suspected that the kind of development 'matrix' being followed may soon lead to a critical scenario threatening its sustainability in future if no timely corrections are made urgently to revise current development strategies.

Millions go hungry and struggle to procure food often in leftovers, even while overflowing granaries are rotting or large quantities of food are wasted criminally in lavish social gathering and parties. The pain of poor children crying for milk goes unnoticed, notwithstanding white revolution. Malnutrition is a serious problem. A large number of landless labourers and their families are virtually forced to live under dismal existence for want of effective support from the government. Women in several areas still have to fetch water from long distances. Child labour is common regardless of ban under law. The curse of bonded labour is far from eliminated. Indebted parents are compelled to pledge children's labour. Indebtedness is driving people to commit suicide.







Indebtedness is driving people to commit suicide. Justice is unavailable to the poor and powerless people due to cumbersome and costly judicial process, while injustice often exacerbates their interminable sufferings evoking inert or just a feeble reaction from the administration and the society alike. How do fake people 'manage' to bypass 'government scrutiny' of their misdeeds and disgusting

activities speaks well about dubious 'role and efficiency' of our 'active and alert' authorities. Why should the government authorities, acting under command of our prominent leaders, and patronizing their empires be kept out of scanner? Why are the guidelines so poor and ineffective to encourage shady religious activities at sacred worshipping places on public land?

The whole infrastructure for poor and unprivileged people is weak and crumbling. For instance, roads with poor traffic management, hospitals without trained doctors and without vital care equipment, schools without trained teachers, electrical poles without bulbs or power supply is a crude joke. Many areas reel under outbreak of viral fevers and epidemics recurrently due to poor hygiene conditions, garbage is strewn everywhere, piped water supply network in most Urban areas is either inadequate or is contaminated due to old worn out pipes or lack of adequate water treatment facilities, hand pumps are either dry or have polluted water, potable water is still a dream or distant reality for a large population especially in rural areas. Women still have to fetch water from long distances in many rural areas. Water scarcity is imminent and the water stress is accentuating everyday but nobody in authority seems concerned about impending water crisis. Rise in deadly pollution-air, water and noise-continues unabated killing or maiming thousands of people. Green cover is shrinking at an alarming rate and the fate of fragmented patches that have survived is uncertain.

Encroachment on public land is an uncontrolled nuisance. Lack of will on the part of administration, often with tacit political support, has turned this into a monster of problems. The problem is thriving in blatant violation of rules and law besides shredding all ethics and propriety of orderly planning. Vested individual interest takes precedence over larger public interest as rich and powerful virtually twist their arms at every opportunity. Rules are openly flouted for selected favours, often with immunity or with the connivance of people in power and having authority enjoying unlimited discretion. Unauthorized occupation of prime government property by people in power creates no whimper or protest. Unholy nexus between criminals and the people in power dominates disorder in development.



Powerful people and criminals easily manage to maneuver hospitality of Hospitals to escape clutches of law or lead a luxurious lifestyle in prison enjoying obeisance of jail administration and officials. The crime of coercion and extortion is gaining strength and the criminals roam free and even manage to rule while the innocents languish in jails indefinitely.

Illegal operation is carried out freely in exchange for regular fee paid to the well-entrenched organized network often patronized by law protectors turning into outlaws. Police can be found doing what they should not be doing- sleeping during office hours and indulging in extortion during duty hours. The whole 'system' is being twisted and misused in collusion with people in power and authority. No ordinary person is allowed to raise objection and forced to remain a silent spectator because of fear of incurring wrath of arrogance and brutal authorities in power.



There is a scam virtually in everything and financial irregularities are abundant without the guilty being punished. Nothing gets done without influence or bribery – a syndrome having become the way of life. There seems to be no bar on shady officers with doubtful integrity handling sensitive departments. Land mafia fearlessly grabs public land. Illegal timber trade flourishes at the cost of deadly deforestation often in collusion with the authorities or abetted by their dubious inaction. Blatant violation of building byelaws, in connivance with the enforcement authorities, is a common knowledge. Nobody is concerned about safety threats or perpetual damage to the entire spirit of development. Commercial activities brazenly carry on in residential areas in exchange for bribe or unaccounted fee, and worse, usually get regularized thanks to irregular political intervention.



Mockery of commercial establishments affording necessary certificates without fulfilling even the most rudimentary requirements fails to surprise anybody in authorities. Hapless commuters are openly fleeced due to uncontrolled malpractices. Pilferage is a common practice without being frowned upon or inviting any deterrent action. Development funds are siphoned off or fraudulently diverted for dubious purposes. Adulteration is a serious problem sparing not even life saving drugs causing no more than a casual dormant flutter. Culture of sub-standardization and use of spurious products and fake substitutes is thriving- with no concern for safety hazards. Quacks are flourishing everywhere thanks to poverty and mass illiteracy without stirring any ‘authorities’. Women are subjected to highest degree of indignity- notwithstanding gender issues- throwing all traces of morality or ethics to wind. In short, India looks like a vast underdeveloped canvas representing state of bad planning, mismanagement and enforcement.



Remorseless attitude about misusing public machinery for personal benefit, poor work culture and dereliction of duty, trespassing into others' privacy or showing scant regard for seniors, distrust phenomenon, and lackadaisical attitude towards development affairs are some of other major concerns that threatens to shred the basic fiber of the society. There are several such examples to underline the crucial importance of quality in development depriving a large majority of people many decades after independence. It seems the edifice of empowerment of poor and weaker sections is erected on slick surface and path to eliminating poverty is misguided.

Have we not seen how our politicians have gone reckless and even those convicted by courts blatantly twist law and enjoy seamless immunity to take law into their hands unlike common man persecuted even on minor and insignificant issues? Have we not seen how even their pampered and insignificant supporters ruthlessly manage to create ruckus in the society making mockery of law and treating 'enforcement' authorities with contempt? It seems they possess ultimate authority to rule the country at their whims and fancies and treat all other human beings as inferior subjects meant to be their subordinates or slaves. They are absolutely adamant and reluctant to admit their poor vision and shortcomings despite suppression of common man being neglected perennially after independence. Is it not atrocious that their poor knowledge, lack of competency, immaturity and above all selfish attitude has created terrible mess and disaster through spurious control and distorted management? Have they not already displayed their vicious

characteristics to unleash numerous problems on governance front? As long as these unscrupulous 'power hungry' people having insatiable thirst for power and gunmanship are allowed to prevail, the country can never imagine to progress and prosper in true sense nor will be able to avoid dark shadows looming large on micro development front. In fact, the interminable senseless and weird behavior of our errant political leaders and their subservient authorities and sycophant 'followers' has become such a terrible nuisance in the system that the credibility of our 'democracy' is at stake besides having caused an incalculable damage.

Can we justify arrogant and authoritarian behavior of 'public servants' (elected representatives and their subservient officials) in democracy? Is it appropriate in present 'development context'? Should it not be a binding obligation to prove their capability and commitment (no false and elusive promises) to execute prime inclusive common development agenda? Should it not be mandatory requirement to ensure that 'electoral democracy' will not be misused to capture power and authority and set different rules for their own benefits? Should it not become a cognizable offence to punish authorities hijacking country for their own vested interest and leaving helpless common man at their mercy? Is it not quite confusing to call India a modern progressive society (country) in wake of such serious contradictions in the system? How can we overlook bitter reality of people in power flourishing illegally while ordinary people out of power remain as poor as ever and watching from sidelines for some miracle to happen to extricate them from pool of endless poverty, destitution and deprivation? Incredibly, our leaders worked 'hard' to prove Churchill right when he said on eve of independence "Power will go to the hands of rascals, rogues, freebooters: all Indian leaders will be of low caliber and men of straw. They will have sweet tongues and silly hearts. They will fight among themselves for power and India will be lost in political squabbles. A day would come when even air and water will be taxed in India..."

How true? Is it not true that our (cunning) politicians cleverly manipulated and maneuvered arbitrary acquisition of 'power and superiority' in free 'democratic' India? Is it not a harsh fact that our own rulers (read nexus of crook politicians and corrupt bureaucrats) perpetuated the same extravagant culture (at government cost) living shamelessly in exclusive bungalows and security like monarchs and authoritarian colonial rulers while ordinary people are living in cramped houses with pathetic conditions and left alone to work hard to mobilize their own survival? Is it not intriguing that our 'great' leaders showed unprecedented hurry and 'loyally' to inherit earlier hierarchical governance system and subservient culture in post independent India? Can we deny that India still remains a slave, poor and under-developed country in real sense because of wicked designs and deliberate action of our treacherous leaders who consciously and meticulously adopted outdated and

defunct system in modern era? Is it sensible to perpetuate current flawed governance system in the context of 'development oriented' economy?

Did they not pronounce having adopted a new development based economy against erstwhile tyrannical 'law and order' regime in pre-independent India? Is it not correct that we have completely failed and faltered in evolving 'development administration' and are virtually carrying on erstwhile 'authoritative administration' inherited from ex-colonial rule for vested interest? Is it not correct that we never tried to review the relevance and utility of outdated governance system having caused disastrous impact in evolving a more homogeneous society and accomplishing inclusive growth? Is it not extremely sad, disappointing and unfortunate that we are still far away from evolving a people friendly administration and a sound system to improve basic infrastructure and essential services in our country despite availability of tremendous potential that has been continuously overlooked or suppressed?

At present, the system has miserably failed because of (i) rampant uncontrolled corruption (ii) unwarranted control and maneuvering by our leaders (iii) haphazard and misdirected policies benefitting a minority of population mainly comprising of rich and influential people (iv) poor and ineffective implementation of policies at ground level depriving a majority of population their due share in development (v) poor and honest law abiding people living in fear and facing severe daily hardships, and (vi) rowdy anti-social elements roaming fearlessly and enjoying various undeserved support of government. Obviously, it is impractical to aim for developing a modern India without addressing basic hurdles and problems and taking tough action against culprits. An immediate corrective action is called for instead of usual 'tokenism' appeasement approach to remove widespread inertia and arrogant attitude of authorities. The trust, confidence and active cooperation and participation of common public must be ensured for success of the development process.

Can we endorse fake or superfluous growth and achievement? Can we afford such distorted growth or ignore impending crisis and imminent disaster due to relentless chaos and deterioration in the country? Can we allow our corrupt political and inept administrative system to prevail with immunity? Can we afford to let our mischievous leaders to assume immortal authority and dare making irresponsible, in or out of power, to exploit public through their notorious divisive policies (caste, creed, religion) and incite unwarranted conflicts and disturbances in society? Can we allow present distorted growth or ignore impending crisis and imminent disaster due to relentless chaos and deterioration in the country? Can we hope to achieve sustainable inclusive growth with such treacherous elements at helm of affairs? Can we implement public welfare policies with highly insensitive, complacent,

inefficient and exorbitant government establishment in place? Does it make sense to ask people to respect government when their prime leadership and implementing agencies are most corrupt and non-responsive? Is it incorrect to assume that the whole government establishment has become an excruciating liability due to their interminable nuisance?

It is indeed quite shocking that our internationally acclaimed electoral and upright legal system has remained silent on inherent contradictions and distortions in the existing political and bureaucratic system. Perhaps, it is right time to reform existing putrid political system (electoral democracy is just not suitable in our kind of distorted system) with a view to evolving a new system based on concept of **‘participative democracy with discipline’**. Unless common public is adequately empowered to check rampant corruption, multiple scams, and recurring incidence of audacious diversion of public money for dubious purposes, neglect of common development etc. it is extremely difficult to catch right development path and direction. It is stupid to cherish superficial and misdirected democracy’ that has encouraged nepotism and casual, poor and unprofessional governance of the system leading to utter chaos and disorder prevailing almost everywhere in the country. Today, our system has become so ineffective and insensitive that no governance authorities care to listen to plight and frustration of common man who has no voice or authority in the system and is woefully neglected and treated with contempt. The growing lawlessness and deterioration in the country shows sheer weakness of both our government and legal systems to combat this dreadful menace. Unless the deteriorating situation changes, and changes soon, India shall continue to be looted unabatedly by corrupt politicians, arrogant bureaucrats, unfriendly police, criminals, and rich businessmen for next 100 years as a matter of their birthright.

It is the responsibility of ruling government to amend existing inappropriate and impractical system to ensure effective implementation of development planning and policies. A comprehensive road map should be prepared to fix target and deadline to provide basic facilities to the masses on overriding priority. The plan, inter-alia, should incorporate suitable strategies to utilize massive resources available to replace and renovate archaic outdated infrastructure, create modern roads and railways, factories, power plants, petroleum refineries, schools, hospitals and other services for benefit of common public. It should be mandatory to fix personal accountability for any lapse, neglect and inefficiency in improvement of public utility services and penalty to instill due fear of law. Is it not a paradox that we are making a lot of noise on unemployment problem but are casual on evolving a concrete policy to generate employment on improving critically neglected basic infrastructure (and services) in the country? Why should the ‘cries’ of ‘dictatorship’ be entertained when our own elected leaders in our ‘democratic system’ have failed

in implementing inclusive development agenda and concentrated (without exception) on building their hegemony in the system. Is it not violation of fundamental principles of democracy? These unholy public servants- opportunistic leaders and their subservient officials- do not deserve any right nor sympathy to take shelter under 'democracy' nor carry on their unbecoming conduct of acting like 'masters' of public. Is there any doubt that our much hyped 'cherished' democracy has been notoriously exploited by nasty leaders and their dynastic families to perpetuate their hold on power and constantly interfere in government functioning often derailing common development activities? Have they not already become a terrible nuisance? Is it not the same 'electoral democracy', perceived best after independence, that has been grossly mauled and misused by new authoritarians to capture power and authority to set different rules for their own benefits? Can we endorse such mock and superfluous 'democratic' system which is completely devoid of any commitment to its fundamental basic discipline and has no regard for public accountability? It is really quite confusing how we can call India a modern progressive society (country) when a majority of population comprising of poor and under-privileged people, is doomed to live in wretched conditions.

In short, the message is that the present form of democracy has proved highly injurious and caused more harm and nuisance than in evolving people friendly policies and responsive governance system to help common people particularly poor and unprivileged. Therefore, it would be stupid to observe silence against irrational noise of dissidents and fascist forces or express sympathy with cries of pseudo ultra-intellectuals and extremists. Rapid rise of contemporary communist China is perhaps a glaring example of how an independent country should concentrate on development agenda uninterruptedly without bothering for irrational people and annihilate them, if necessary. The tragedy in 'democratic' India, in contrast, is undue tolerance of hypocrisy our 'opportunist' leaders enjoying unbridled freedom in shouting anti-national slogans or indulging in anti-national activities. Can we afford such a superficial and misdirected democracy that has encouraged nepotism and casual, poor and unprofessional governance of the system leading to utter chaos and disorder prevailing almost everywhere in the country? It is imperative and perhaps inevitable to re-invented and reform the whole system (democracy) to check rampant corruption, multiple scams, recurring incidence of audacious diversion of public money for dubious purposes, neglect of common development and so on.

According to an official report (in early 1990s), only about 15% of the government money was utilized for public welfare purposes. Unabated discretion and relentless corruption has failed to check flagrant unfair diversion of government funds for dubious purposes. In other words, our present system (controlled by unscrupulous

politicians and bureaucrats) has become an excruciating liability for the nation particularly acting against interest of common people in India. In fact, the whole system has become so ineffective and insensitive that no governance authorities care to listen to plight and frustration of common man who is woefully helpless and treated with contempt. The growing lawlessness and deterioration in the country shows sheer weakness of both our government and legal systems to combat this dreadful menace.

Unless recent change of guards at apex level manages to bring significant improvement in the grim situation prevailing at ground level, there is no hope for reversing earlier loot or amending development direction to achieve sustainable inclusive growth. The big question is whether it is possible to accomplish tangible improvement in existing appalling situation without active and constructive cooperation of ever hostile opposition political parties notorious for playing proverbial musical chairs game to retain their hegemony? Will it remain an idealistic hope to expect 'new' government to act with firm hand to check and change fast decaying system? Can we expect a real and honest initiative to extricate us from present mess or are we doomed to face usual false promises and protracted claims of action against major defaulters even where abundant prima-facie evidence is available? It is indeed an acid test that will decide whether India will discover right development path or shall continue to be looted unabatedly by corrupt politicians, arrogant bureaucrats, unfriendly police, criminals, and rich businessmen for yet another century as a matter of their birthright.

Is it so difficult for extensive government machinery to track people involved in building unaccounted properties and making other illicit assets? Are these culprits above law to escape scrutiny and punishment? Is it difficult to track people undeserving people occupying unauthorized government properties? It has become a cruel joke that anybody in power in India can blatantly grab any government facility permanently and yet plead immunity? Can it happen without active knowledge or collusion of unscrupulous political parties and corrupt and helpless subservient government agencies? Why should our 'active' Courts fail to take due cognizance of such public nuisance? Is it not brutal mockery of whole system that 'powerful' culprits easily escape any penalty while common man is absolutely discriminated and subjected to harsh treatment even in most insignificant cases? Does it not smack of mutually convenient political conspiracy to protect major defaulters and, worse, provide them endless support, security and other undeserved life-long privileges including free bungalows, free travel, and luxurious vehicles in disguise of usual elusive and inconclusive enquiries or insipid investigations? Is it not a political stunt or smart eyewash to mislead public? Lack of political will to improve our fragile legal system or reform our ineffective governance system, is

perhaps root cause of relentless deterioration and growing degeneration of our society becoming more impatient, impolite and brash over time. Is it wrong to assume that the game being played by our 'own leaders' is far more vicious than our ex-colonial masters? Is there any doubt that our arrogant leaders are only concerned about their own welfare and have no interest for the country as evident from their artificial arguments and squabbles in Parliament because none of them ever resigned or protested against their own unwarranted supremacy in public? Have we learnt anything from history to be extra-cautious in making final observation and conclusions about their proximity or coalitions? Can we trust them in developing a fair and responsible democracy for benefit of common public?

How can we expect our people to be honest when their leaders and most government agencies under their command are incorrigibly corrupt and downright unaccountable? Can we convince our public to keep cleanliness when their surroundings are stinking due to unattended garbage dump lying all around? Can we justify much hyped digitization without uninterrupted power and electricity? Can we expect public to be more polite and disciplined when our leaders are most argumentative and arrogant? Should we, the common people, launch another freedom struggle to snatch power from evil clutches of vicious neo-rulers? Should we not say 'NO' to cunning politics pursuing abominable 'VIP' culture in 'free' India? Should we not revolt against ugly practice of our 'rulers (read nexus of crook politicians and corrupt bureaucrats)' shamelessly living exclusive king style life like monarchs in ancient history and 'dreadful' colonial rulers just before independence? Should we not condemn our 'great' leaders who inherited and perpetuated earlier hierarchical system and subservient culture in post independent India? Had we not claimed about shifting to new development based economy against erstwhile tyrannical 'law and order' regime in pre-independent India? Can we deny that India still remains a slave, poor and under-developed country because of wicked designs and deliberate action of our treacherous leaders who consciously and meticulously adopted outdated and defunct governance system in modern era? Should we not compel government to evolve a relevant political and administrative system to suit 'development oriented economy'?

It is felt that extremely wrong choices after independence left us perpetually struggling to overcome even most basic fundamental problems including elimination of rampant poverty and deprivation for a large majority of population. Is it wrong that fuzzy policies are unfolding more serious and complicated problems threatening integrity of society? Is it not correct that we have completely failed and faltered in evolving 'development administration' in place of existing 'authoritative administration' inherited from ex-colonial rule for vested interest? Is it wrong that we never tried to review the relevance and utility of our governance system in

modern context that has hindered our 'efforts' in evolving a more homogeneous society and accomplishing inclusive growth? Is it not extremely sad, disappointing and unfortunate that we are still struggling to evolve a people friendly administration and improving basic infrastructure despite tremendous potential available within country that has been continuously overlooked or suppressed?

Is it not absurd that certain sections have been consciously pampered indefinitely causing irreparable damage to the basic fabric and filament of society which now stands torn and fragmented more than ever? Have we not created unprecedented crisis by stalling 'inclusive development tasks' by our immature actions and silly hurdles in development process? It includes perpetuation of (sic) vulgar 'VIP' culture in electoral democracy that is the root cause for promoting disparities and distortions in society. Our experience so far, unfortunately, is that they are mainly responsible for steering growing mess in the country by their vote bank policies. In addition, they have been blatantly wasting huge public money on them by availing unwarranted numerous government freebies unanimously decided and approved by themselves even while a large majority is facing wretched conditions (an unheard phenomenon even in most developed countries like USA, Canada, Australia and Russia). Their actions regarding certain critical issues like much lauded 'development' policies, twenty point programmed including poverty alleviation, perpetuation of contentious reservation policy, enactment of (nasty) 'irrevocable' Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir (an integral part of independent India) are really questionable. Is it not absurd that it has become a fashion and status symbol for our 'VIPs' (including indicted and convicted leaders) to indulge in immodest speeches and carry bloated baggage including awkward elaborate security at government cost? Is it not unbecoming of them to show their uncontested authority and superiority in public to remind the unprivileged common public about their inferiority in society? Do they ever realize that poor man in the lower ladder of hierarchy is much more vulnerable and deserves far more effective protection and dignity? Why should these 'authoritarian' ego-centric leaders not adopt uniform yardstick in democratic society to enable them to understand and appreciate real meaning and nuances of normal life? Why are our 'elected' leaders and their nexus including favoured bureaucrats permitted to audaciously misuse their position and authority to avail tremendous facilities free of cost and perpetuate their hegemony by dividing society rather than evolving inclusive society for benefit of all? Why should they not seriously consider empowering and authorizing common man, on priority, to let public decide their own common development agenda and methods to secure appropriate livelihood security for them and their families?

In this regard, our 'independent' Media- an important organ of the governance system- should also re-discover its primary responsibility to report violations and

aberrations being perpetrated at the instance of arrogant leaders rather than acting as their captive tools remaining overwhelmingly busy in magnifying their minor insignificant 'achievement' in a bid to emerge as first in 'Breaking News'. Is it not more fair and appropriate that they should expose arrogance of leaders including their misusing power and authority and making false promises to keep them on tenterhooks? Is it not proper to ignore coverage of such political events that does not relate to common public welfare measures? Is it not their potent power to jolt wretched leaders and complacent authorities to compel them to become committed to public or face extinction? But what is happening today which should as a crucial torch bearer of the society has become paid servants of indignant leaders and their parties wagging their tales in front of them for petty favours. It is time they should do some serious introspection of their method of functioning because they have a larger responsibility and great potential to awaken public than just sensationalizing insignificant news? It is presumed that a more proactive role of Press will encourage more and more dormant people to gradually join the momentum against present chaos and disorder and injustice being done to them by our arrogant, insensitive and lackadaisical authorities.

Our people surely deserve a better future and developed society. Remember, these corrupt leaders pursuing their own vicious agenda to eternally remain in power are fairly afraid of negative publicity in public domain as it can adversely affect their prospects. They cannot afford to take any chance of losing public support. The Media, in fact, should exploit such a sensitive issue to expose and highlight wretched politicians and awaken public to start a crusade or a kind of 'revolution' against them in the national interest. It is their moral responsibility save our country from their evil clutches. A positive and constructive role of Media is crucially important and can become a decisive step in changing the system. Their critical role is sure to be remembered in history by our posterity.

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