

DO SAAL, JANATA BEHAAL



CPI(M) PUBLICATION

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Ugly Faces of the New ' <i>Trimoorti</i> '	9
Section - 1	
1. Rich Ka Saath, Rich Ka Vikas	21
2. Modi Sarkar's Vicious Attack on the Country's Working Class	24
3. Agriculture: A Litany of Broken Promises and Destroyed Livelihoods	28
4. BJP's War Against Women	33
5. Modi Govt. Cuts Funds for women & children	39
6. Modi Govt's Economic Attacks on Students	42
7. BJP Govt's Utter Failure in the Health Sector	48
8. Dalits, Adivasis and Women	52
Section - 2	
1. As Joblessness Grows, People Question	59
2. Price Rise: Robbing People to Enrich Traders	62
3. No Relief for Hungry and Malnourished	65
Section - 3	
1. Na Khaunga, Na Khane Doonga	71
2. When Democracy Becomes A Casualty	74
3. Why the Deafening Silence Mr. Modi ?	77
Section - 4	
3. US Gains from Modi Govt's Foreign Policy as Showbiz	86

Introduction

The Modi Government spent a great deal of public money to convince the public how much they had gained from two years of its Government. The ostentation of the celebrations could not hide the lack of substance or the gap between promises and the reality. Nor could it conceal the contrast with the real suffering and deprivation in the 300 drought hit districts of India where the Central Government has utterly failed the people. Even the Prime Minister was caught out with the false figures he quoted as to how his Government had cleared arrears of sugarcane farmers in Uttar Pradesh. He claimed that the cane dues in U.P. are down from rupees 14,000 crores to 700-800 crores, while the records show that on the day he spoke, the cane dues were rupees 5,795 crore and could be higher. In fact the old saying 'lies, more lies and statistics' could well be replaced with 'lies, more lies and Modispeak'. On every issue from claims of price control to creation of jobs, to helping the farmers and the poor, it is little more than a bunch of half truths and untruths.

One of the biggest claims made by the Prime Minister is that there has been no corruption within the Government in the last two years, as though this is not something to be taken for granted, but to be boasted about! "Na Khaoonga Na Khane Doonga" falls flat when in two years, protection is afforded to BJP leaders involved in scams, starting from Vyapam to Modigate to the latest exposure of murky land deals in Maharashtra. It falls flat when the Lok Pal and other laws in the last two years are not operationalised. In this case the Gujarat model has certainly been followed, when for ten years there was no Lok Ayukta. It falls flat when black money holders are offered amnesty schemes and even the court appointed SIT, registers little progress.

In this booklet we take forward the analysis we had made last year in our booklet “Ek Saal Bura Haal.” Although there are many issues to cover, we have focussed on some specific claims and promises and the failure to deliver which we have divided into various themes.

We start with the Overview by General Secretary Comrade Sitaram Yechury.

The Sab ka Saath Sab ka Vikaas slogan is counterposed with the reality of Rich ka Saath, Baki Khalaas (with the rich, the rest don't matter) section deals with issues of farmers, workers, different social sections. The facts in this section expose in the most telling way the reality of peoples' suffering, in contrast to the concessions to the rich..

Inequalities have grown, reflected in the deteriorating situation of farmers, with the average of farmers' suicides going up to 52 suicides a day compared to 41 in the previous years. The Government has utterly failed to provide immediate relief to the 300 drought hit districts of India. Even in Marathwada, the worst hit drought area, the number of workdays provided under MGNREGA have been shockingly low. In a most callous move, indicative of the Government's approach, the Railways sent a bill of four crore rupees to the Latur administration for the much publicized water train. While the Prime Minister goes country hopping, he has not found the time to spend a single day in drought hit Marathwada or indeed in any of the 300 districts hit by drought.

The structural inequalities against dalits and tribals have got further strengthened under the Modi Government. The institutional murder of the young and brilliant dalit Ph.D. scholar Rohith Vemula in Hyderabad University is symbolic of its callous approach to the needs and requirements of dalits and adivasis.

While the “beti bachao, beti padhao” programme was showcased at the two year anniversary celebration, the truth is that the laws against sex-determination tests are still not being implemented because of the strong medical lobbies involved in unethical practices and their contacts who are protected by top political leaders. In addition, with the wholesale privatization of educational institutions, the right to education has become infructuous, in which girl students in particular

are affected. To give an example BJP ruled States like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are closing down Government schools with the Shivraj Singh Chauhan Government proposing to close down more than one lakh Government schools.

One section is on 'Unfulfilled Promises' dealing with the main promises to control prices, provide food security and most importantly the promise for provision of twenty million jobs. How many were actually created? There was silence on this score. Because the truth is that in the most labour intensive industries which are expected to be the driver for job creation, the actual number of jobs created was a meagre four lakhs in the last year. In the rural areas, in the grip of drought conditions, 1.4 crore workers seeking jobs under MNREGA were turned back, according to official statistics from the Ministry's own website.

In two years, Dal has become a luxury item selling at between 180-over 200 rupees a kilo. Large number of people have been excluded from the Food Security Act. The Maternity benefits of 6000 rupees mandated by law for lactating and pregnant women, has been virtually shelved.

Another section deals with the slogan of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance". In this section we have included two important pieces on Maximum Government in the direct assault on the constitutional pillars of democracy and secularism. The shameful role of the Central Government in its assault on institutions of higher learning, central universities like JNU, Hyderabad University, FTII and others have little parallel in the history of independent India. The concoction of evidence to implicate student leaders and to punish them on charges of sedition shows the kind of Maximum Government' and prejudiced Governance under the Modi Government. The most recent incident has been in the harassment by the BJP Chattisgarh Government of two professors of JNU and Delhi University on the entirely cooked up charges of their helping Maoists. The fact is that both of them had been part of a team including State leaders of the CPI and the CPI(M) who had visited some villages in Chattisgarh to express solidarity with victims of rape by police personnel. This section also has a record of the horrendous increase in targeting of minority communities and the different slogans used by the affiliates of the sangh parivar. The Modi

Government is totally complicit in these hate crimes. It is creating communal divisions to divert attention from its utter failures to deliver on its promises.

The last section in the booklet deals with the claim of making India a Global leader. The US has greatly benefitted by the Modi Government's compromises on critical issues against the national interests, while relations with our neighbours are in a shambles. Except for clocking up flying hours, India's foreign policy is more showbiz than serious diplomacy.

Struggles and agitations have been taking place on many of the issues detailed in the booklet. We hope the information provided will strengthen these struggles.

This booklet has been made possible by contributions from several comrades. On behalf of the central publications team we especially thank Comrades Savera, Shyam, Vijoo Krishnan, Sunand, Subhashini Ali, Sonali, Adira, Dr. Amit Sengupta, Prabir Purkayashtha, Pranjali and Muralidharan.

Brinda Karat
Member, Polit Bureau

Do Saal, Janata Behaal
Ugly Faces of the New
'Trimoorti'

Sitaram Yechury

ON May 26, 2016, this BJP-led Narendra Modi government completes two years in office. At the conclusion of the CPI(M)'s 21st Congress, we had warned that under this government, a new '*trimoorti*' is being sculpted. Its three faces represent the following: one, the relentless pursuit of aggressive communal polarisation in the effort to transform the secular democratic character of the Indian Republic into the RSS version of a rabidly intolerant fascistic 'Hindu Rashtra'; two, the pursuit of the neo-liberal trajectory of economic reforms, more aggressively than pursued by the UPA government under Dr Manmohan Singh, imposing unprecedented burdens on the vast majority of our people; and three, increasing recourse to authoritarian measures undermining the institutions of parliamentary democracy and running roughshod over democratic rights and civil liberties.

The experience of this two-year rule vindicates the correctness of this warning. In every one of these three areas, the situation today is much worse than what it was earlier.

**AGGRESSIVELY SHARPENING
COMMUNAL POLARISATION**

No sooner than Narendra Modi assumed office of the prime minister began the litany of hate speeches being delivered by union cabinet ministers and BJP MPs. PM Modi was asked in the parliament in the

very first session after he became PM, whether his government will, in accordance to the existing Indian law and the penal code that define hate speeches as a criminal offence, take action against such perpetrators. Far from any action, PM Modi has till date refused to give such an assurance in the parliament, and hence, to the people.

This unambiguous signal of official patronage and encouragement for the spread of communal poison continues to be fully utilised by all the RSS tentacles across the country. The daylight murders of Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare and Dr Kalburgi saw the unprecedented protest action by the country's intellectuals, literatures, scientists, historians and others, many of whom returned the awards that they had received in protest. The Modi government brazenly ignored these protests.

Various communal campaigns starting from *love jihad*, *ghar vapasi*, against beef eating, prescribing dress codes and the moral policing – all contributed to generate an atmosphere of hatred against religious minorities particularly Muslims. The lynching of Akhlaq over allegations of beef eating or the public hanging of two youth in Latehar, Jharkhand on unfounded allegations of promoting cow slaughter etc have only vitiated the atmosphere even further.

Simultaneously began the systematic effort to communalise the entire education system and academic research in the country. RSS *pracharaks* continue to be appointed in key positions in these institutions. Efforts for rewriting the syllabus and curricula to be taught in schools and colleges continue relentlessly. The brazen attack on premier educational institutions like JNU, the film institute, IITs and other important education centres is part of the drive to attack secular progressive values and intimidate the students and teaching community into becoming servile conformists of the Hindutva ideology. The Modi government went to the extent of foisting sedition charges against JNU students on unfounded and doctored evidence. The attack on the Hyderabad Central University that led to the tragic suicide of a promising dalit research scholar, Rohith Vemula, displayed the virulent high caste bias of the Hindutva dispensation.

In its effort to transform the Indian Republic into the RSS version of a

'Hindu Rashtra', the Modi government is attempting to masquerade Hindu mythology as Indian history and Hindu theology as Indian philosophy.

The latest instance of misusing the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to absolve the leading lights of the Hindutva terror organisations, brazenly negating the impeccable evidence collected against them in the Malegaon terror attacks is a clear case of official patronage and protection being provided to the Hindutva terror outfits. The trail of investigation that linked the Malegaon terror attack to the others like the Hyderabad Mecca Masjid, Ajmer Dargah Sharif and the Samjhauta Express blasts have also been, thus, compromised.

The Modi government is compromising India's struggle to root out terrorism from our country. It is universally accepted that terrorism in India knows no religion, caste, or region. Instead of treating all terror attacks as being unacceptable and not to be tolerated, this Modi government is patronising Hindutva terror.

There are many more such instances of communal hatred all across the country at this very moment. Hopefully, somewhere these are being documented. But importantly, secular-minded people who cherish the foundational values of our Republic are rising in protest across the country.

GROWING AUTHORITARIANISM

During the course of these two years, this Modi government has embarked upon a systematic course to undermine the institutions of parliamentary democracy to advance its partisan objectives.

It sought to amend the Land Acquisition Act, 2013 that was passed by the parliament with the BJP's support through a series of ordinances in order to make land acquisition easier for the corporates at the expense of our already beleaguered farmers battling agrarian distress. These efforts, after promulgating ordinances thrice, had to be finally given up as the Modi government failed to get the Rajya Sabha approval.

In order to bypass the Rajya Sabha where it does not have a majority,

unlike in the Lok Sabha where it bulldozes its way exercising its 'tyranny of the majority', the Modi government has taken recourse to a subterfuge of declaring legislative bills as 'Money Bills' which do not require the Rajya Sabha's endorsement. It is grossly misinterpreting the constitutional provisions to suit its purpose of bypassing the Rajya Sabha.

One such bill was the Aadhar Bill. The Supreme Court has now admitted a writ petition to be heard before a three-judge bench challenging this legislation and its characterisation as a 'Money Bill'.

The Modi government's authoritarian face was nakedly exposed in the manner in which it is grossly misusing Article 356 to dismiss legitimately elected governments of the opposition parties. Its effort in Uttarakhand has now been reversed with the Supreme Court intervention. The apex court had passed a severe indictment about the brazen manner in which Article 356 is sought to be misused.

Attacks on people's democratic rights, freedom of expression, right to life and liberty are escalating across the country.

FANCIFUL SLOGANS AND TALL CLAIMS

On various counts, the claims associated with the propaganda blitz undertaken by the Modi government continue to be exposed. It had promised a corruption free government. This claim was punctured by various scams that have occurred in BJP-ruled states like the Vyapam scam in Madhya Pradesh etc. One session of the parliament was rocked by the sensational revelations of protection and patronage provided to the former IPL chief, Lalit Modi (a fugitive from Indian law), by the external affairs minister and the Rajasthan BJP chief minister. The course of 'crony capitalism' that the Modi government is pursuing is bound to generate greater corruption. The skeletons in the cupboard are bound to stumble out sooner than later. Remember, it took six years before the UPA corruption scams began to surface. During the course of the next three years, much of this is bound to come up for public scrutiny.

The government had grandly announced its slogan of 'minimum gov-

ernment, maximum governance'. The ongoing *patidar* (Patel) agitation in Gujarat and the mayhem unleashed by the Jat agitation in Haryana exposed the BJP's claims of effective governance.

FOREIGN POLICY

During the course of these two years, India's time-tested independent foreign policy has been severely undermined.

In a singular obsession to promote prime minister Modi's personal image abroad, this government has systematically shifted India's foreign policy to dovetail the global geostrategic priorities of US imperialism. The series of bilateral agreements undertaken with the USA, including defence and logistics support agreements, have exposed India's vulnerability to the penetration of imperialist agencies and armed forces into our domestic facilities. They have only provided USA and other Western powers avenues to maximise their profits through the sale of defence equipments to India. In global perception, this Modi government has reduced India in foreign policy diplomatic discourse to a hyphenated existence with Pakistan, ie, the standard usage 'Indo-Pak'.

In its eagerness to emerge as a trusted subordinate ally of US imperialism, the Modi government has succumbed to pressures that were hitherto resisted in international fora, adding to India's prestige as the leader of the developing countries. This has happened in the international climate change conferences when India signed on the dotted line at the COP 21 in Paris recently negating the 'red lines' drawn by our parliament. Likewise, in the WTO Doha Round negotiations summit at Nairobi, India succumbed to grant greater access to India's agriculture and markets and compromised on our food security obligations to the Indian people.

Prime Minister Modi proudly claiming 'Barack, my friend' may be a subject matter for social media comments but it marks the current reality of reducing India into a deeper subordinate relationship with the USA during Barack Obama's presidency.

RELENTLESS ECONOMIC ONSLAUGHT ON THE PEOPLE

The highlight of PM Modi's aggressive implementation of the neo-liberal economic reforms has been the provision of greater access to foreign capital to maximise their profits at the expense of India's domestic economy.

Economic revival was the biggest commitment made by the BJP during its campaign. Many, who were not comfortable with the party's regressive social and political agenda, latched on to that promise. Two years down the line, we have an economy which is declining on all fronts.

The doctored data of India's growth rate being the fastest in the world today has been met with universal disbelief. Both the RBI governor and the prime minister's economic advisor have stated on record that the GDP growth figures do not match the ground reality. In a global economic situation of despair, the RBI governor described India's claims of registering the highest GDP growth rate in the world as "one eyed is the King of the blind". All these, notwithstanding, let us look at the major promises made by the BJP and PM Modi during the 2014 general elections to the people.

The government had promised doubling of exports from USD 465.9 billion in 2013-14 to approximately USD 900 billion by 2019-20. In reality, exports have declined for 17 straight months in a row, to a five-year low of USD 261.13 billion. This is the worst decline in exports in the last 63 years. While much of this has to do with the continuing crisis of world capitalism, it does not explain fully this phenomenal decline. The Modi government's policy to promote India's exports has severely faltered during these two years.

With all the strategies of export-led growth collapsing today, India had to look internally to expand the purchasing power in the hands of the Indian people and, thus, accelerating the growth of domestic aggregate demand. That the opposite has happened is reflected in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). In March, IIP grew by a mere 0.1 percent and for the whole of 2015-16, it grew at 2.4 percent. The same IIP had grown at 4.8 percent in 2013-14. The breakdown of IIP numbers paints an even scarier picture. Manufacturing contracted in March and grew

at only two percent during FY 2015-16. Capital goods segment also contracted by 2.9 percent over the entire year, indicating a sluggishness in private investment. The annual core sector growth of only 2.7 percent, a decade low, confirms the gloomy scenario for the industry.

The investment trends in 2014 and 2015 have been equally disastrous. In 2014, investment proposals fell by over 23 percent to Rs 4 lakh crore from Rs 5.3 lakh crore in 2013. And in 2015, they saw another drop of 23 percent to Rs 3.11 lakh crore. The first quarter of 2016 has seen investment proposals of Rs 60,130 crore, and if this trend continues, investments will see a further decline this year.

With the industry in decline, there are no jobs for the 14 million Indians who enter the market every year. Government data shows that new jobs in eight labour-intensive industries fell to a six-year low in 2015, with only 1.35 lakh jobs being created. Between April and June last year, the number of jobs actually declined by 43,000. During October-December 2015, the highest decrease in employment was seen in the IT-BPO sector by 14,000, followed by 13,000 in the automobile sector, 12,000 in metals, and 8000 in gems and jewellery business. The BJP government, which came with a promise of creating 20 million new jobs every year, seems hell-bent upon turning India's demographic dividend into a demographic disaster.

Declining exports, subdued manufacturing and poor investment demand portend further worrying times for the banking sector. Used by various governments to prop their favoured crony capitalists, India's banking sector is already in a deep mess. The NPAs of banks are estimated to be around Rs 13 lakh crore (USD 195 billion). This amount of bad loans owed to our banks, which is going to increase next year, is bigger than the GDP of 112 countries. Not only that, the amount of bad loans now actually exceeds the market value of the banks.

Who owes these loans? The government is not willing to make this data public, leave alone take any punitive action against these fat cats. But the same people have no qualms auctioning a poor farmer's utensils for defaulting on a loan of Rs 5,000. It is worthwhile to remember that these loans to crony capitalists have been extended by public sector banks which have been capitalised by taxpayers' money.

Working people have also borne the burden of additional taxation by the government. The increase in taxes, cesses and levies have all been done in indirect taxes (to the tune of Rs 20,600 crores) where the poor have to bear the greater burden. Direct taxes have been further reduced by Rs 1,600 odd crores benefitting the rich. Even the estimated targets have not been met. No attempt has been made to recover the pending tax dues of Rs 6 lakh crore or redeem the tax benefits as ‘incentives’ of another Rs 6 lakh crore extended in the budget.

In addition, people are victims of higher inflation too. The Consumer Price Index rose by 5.4 percent in April, and rural inflation was at 6.1 percent. The food component was up by 6.2 percent, and price of dal (lentils) rose by 34 percent in April. Petrol and diesel prices continue to be raised with shocking regularity. Core inflation, stripped of the volatile food and fuel components, which indicates stable inflationary trends, was up to 6.8 percent.

Government statistics, which underplay the real numbers, show that 2,997 farmers committed suicide last year and 116 farmers, have already taken their lives in the first three months of this year. Their numbers have only risen since, but the prime minister does nothing except mouth homilies during his various monologues. In a Kafkaesque move, agriculture ministry issued a tender seeking ‘brand ambassadors’ for popularising its content on social media.

This is a double whammy for the rural poor who have seen their wages decline in real terms in the past two years. The farmers were promised a 50 percent margin over their production costs by PM Modi during the election campaign but have failed to realise even their investment under this government. Distress suicides are on the rise. Poor rains and droughts are not in anyone’s hands, but the response is certainly in government’s control. While people in rural India were suffering, the government didn’t release money due under MGNREGA for last year till the Supreme Court ordered it to do so. Last week, the Supreme Court was incensed enough to say in its judgment that “there is a clear constitutional breach committed by the State...” and “Social justice has been thrown out of the window by the Government of India”.

But the government couldn’t care less for Supreme Court’s indictment.

It carries on its merry ways, splurging money on celebrations, advertising and marketing. The prime minister may say that Indians are not good at marketing, but it clearly excludes his government. His government has increased the spending on advertising this year by a whopping 20 percent to Rs 1,200 crore.

Thus, these two years have seen a sharp increase in the economic burdens imposed on the vast majority of our people. It is by now clear that in all the three major counts, this new *trimoorti* that is being sculpted, means both a regression for India as a secular democratic republic and a major onslaught on the livelihood of the vast majority of our people. It is only through widespread powerful popular people’s struggles, can this all-round offensive be met. Therefore, as we move into the third year of this government, the tasks before the Indian people are clear – mount the resistance to defend the people’s right to a decent livelihood and in defence of the fundamental rights enshrined in our constitution. This resistance must reach in this coming year levels to reverse this disastrous course and defeat all efforts to negate our secular democratic foundations.

In this context, the RSS/BJP and PM Modi’s ‘celebrations’ acquire a surreal dimension.

(May 18, 2016)



SECTION - 1

Not
Sab Ka Saath Sab Ka Vikaas
But
Rich Ka Saath Baaki Khalaas



Do Saal, Janata Behaal

Rich Ka Saath, Rich Ka Vikas

In an interview to the *Wall Street Journal* on the occasion of his government finishing two years in office, Narendra Modi boasted that his government had done more reforms in two years than the UPA had in the previous ten. What were these reforms he was referring to? As he himself spelt out, these were things like making the insurance and defence manufacturing sectors more open to foreign investment. In short, Modi was telling one of the world's leading financial dailies that he has done more for business, particularly foreign business than the UPA had. He also boasted that no other government would have had the courage to do as much in this direction as his had. Despite Modi's known penchant for empty boasts, this one rings true. The Modi government is indeed more brazenly pro-corporate than most governments in India have been.

The taxation proposals in the two full year Budgets presented by this government, in 2015 and 2016, are by themselves quite revealing. In 2016, the budget proposals were estimated by the Finance Minister to result in a net loss to the government of Rs 1,060 crores in direct taxes and a net gain of Rs 20,670 crore in indirect taxes. In 2015, the direct tax changes were estimated to lead to a revenue loss of Rs 8,315 crore in direct taxes and a gain of Rs 23,383 crore in indirect taxes. Put together, over the two years, that amounts to a net loss of Rs 9,375 crore on direct taxes and a gain of Rs 44,053 crore. Consider what that means. Direct taxes are primarily taxes on incomes of corporate or individuals. Obviously, only the relatively rich individuals pay and the

richer you are the more you pay. Tax proposals that lead to cuts in them are, therefore, a clear concession to corporates and the rich. Indirect taxes, on the other hand, are paid by everyone who buys any goods or services and obviously the bulk of those are the poor in a country like India. Thus cutting direct taxes while raising indirect taxes amounts to a transfer of incomes from the poor to the rich and to corporates.

The 2016-17 budget documents also reveal that the amount of money lost by the government in direct tax concessions for corporates (including concessions carried over from the past) amounted to Rs 68,711 crore in 2015-16. To put that in perspective, that money would be enough to fund the MNREGS for nearly two years at its current levels or the National Health Mission for more than three years. Apart from these direct tax concessions, a look at the indirect tax concessions also shows that the largest chunk of customs duty concessions (about one-fifth of the total, or Rs 61,126 crore) is cornered by the gems and jewellery sector. Now, an excise concession on a good widely consumed by the poor, like say salt, would be understandable. But gems and jewellery? Once again a sum that could fund MNREGS for two years or the health mission for three has been merrily handed away to the corporates that supply jewellery to the foreign rich, because that's where most of India's gems and jewellery sector's products land up.

This year's budget speech also revealed a plan to dispose of assets of public sector undertakings including land, in addition to disinvestment of their shares. Huge concessions were proposed for prospective private oil corporate, opening the doors wider for them. On the anvil for 100 percent FDI was also the marketing of food products. It also proposed an amendment to the APMC Act to create an e-platform for marketing of agro produces, a move intended to facilitate the domination of monopoly trade and agri-business interests in the name of better serving consumers. The same vision is evident in the proposed "decentralisation" of procurement, which basically means that over large tracts of the country the FCI would withdraw from procurement, leaving state governments or private entities authorised by them to corner the market. With few states having the capacity to undertake large scale procurement operations, it is quite clear who will gain.

The aggressive drive to appease the reform lobby and business was most evident on November 15 last year when the government announced what it called 'Big Bang' FDI reforms across 15 sectors. These included crucial areas like defence, banking, construction, single brand retail, broadcasting and civil aviation. It also announced that approval from the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) would suffice for investments under Rs 5,000 crore compared to the earlier Rs 3,000 crore. Cabinet approval would be needed only above this threshold.

In defence, foreign investment up to 49% was allowed under the automatic route, while proposals for foreign investment of over 49% would be considered by the FIPB. Also portfolio investment and foreign venture capital investment, which were restricted to 24%, were hiked to 49% and that too through the automatic route.

In private sector banking, the government removed sub-limits for FDI and FII (foreign institutional investor) investment, thereby allowing FIIs to invest upto the sectoral limit of 74 per cent. This move was to benefit private sector banks such as Yes Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Axis Bank.

Coffee, rubber, cardamom, palm oil tree and olive oil tree plantations were also opened up for 100% foreign investment under the automatic route.

That in a nutshell is sabka saath, sabka vikas – carrots for businessmen and sticks for the toiling masses.

Do Saal, Janata Bebaal

Modi Sarkar's Vicious Attack on the Country's Working Class

As the Modi government celebrates its second anniversary of capturing power through vulgar gala events, glamour and glitz hobnobbing with CEOs, a no-holds barred media blitz and ministers heaping vacuous praise, it is striking that India's majority – over 50 crore working people – are completely absent in word and spirit from all this. This is not surprising – Narendra Modi, his colleagues in the government, his party and the mentor, the RSS, have never given any thought to those who labour. In fact these two years have seen not just neglect but an active and aggressive attack on the lives of working people matched in its intensity only by the craven support and sycophancy exhibited towards big business, both domestic and foreign.

A three-fold attack has been launched on the working people of the country. Let us look at it in detail.

1. Attacks on jobs

Even as the country is reeling under high joblessness and the inability of the government to create jobs, there is a continuing wave of closures and retrenchments across both industrial and services sectors. In manufacturing, different industries like steel, electricity, textiles and garments, leather, automobiles, etc. are witnessing losses of thousands of jobs. This is visible in Punjab, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, etc. in stark form, while in other less industrialised states the effect is hidden but equally rampant in smaller units. Why is

the Modi government responsible for these diverse crises? Some are caused by crashing international prices or plunging demand (as in steel) others are caused by Western downturns – so is the government responsible? It is because not only has it failed to cushion our country against these effects, it has actually been actively trying to link up Indian production to unstable international markets and investments, as in its notorious failure, the 'Make in India' programme. The Modi government has been relying on an old, failed strategy of export led 'growth' which has not taken off at all. It has failed to initiate domestic demand, cut back on domestic public investment, given concessions to import goods and handed over productive assets to speculators and rogues thereby destroying any chances of our economy growing and standing on its own feet. This is what has destroyed the lives and livelihoods of lakhs of workers.

In addition, the Modi government is continuing with its foolish policy of disinvestment of public sector undertakings which leads to loss of jobs on a large scale and much more onerous conditions of work.

2. Attack on wages

Simultaneously, the Modi government has allowed and encouraged an all-out attack on wages of working people through direct cuts or freezes or indirectly through price rise of essential commodities which impoverishes the already hard-pressed working people. Since regular employment is not growing, more and more people are forced into low paying casual jobs both in rural and urban areas. This leads to hidden unemployment – people are technically employed but at a pittance, often doing 2-3 types of jobs in a day, and with no social security. This harsh system has been in practice in India for decades but in recent years, with MGREGS faltering and food inflation rising, it is playing havoc with people's lives. The Modi government has hardly acknowledged this crisis except for some lip service to unorganized workers. It has made active efforts to whittle down social security benefits by trying to put restrictions on PF advances or lowering PF interest rates which were forced back by angry workers. It has been actively selling India as an attractive destination for foreign investment by highlighting its cheap labour.

In November 2015, the Modi government revealed its intent by suggesting that a national minimum wage of Rs 273 a day or Rs 7,100 a month. This is less than half of what it ought to be if the Supreme Court guidelines, and the norms proposed in the Indian Labour Conference 1957, were applied to current prices. As pointed out by trade unions, by these norms every worker needs be assured of at least Rs 15,000 as monthly wages. Since then, the matter is hanging fire. In most of the small and unorganized sector even statutory minimum wages as notified by state governments are not implemented in almost 90% of cases. In many units, workers have to work a 12-hour shift in order to get the minimum wage that was due to them for 8 hours of work.

3. Attack on Labour Laws

To facilitate more exploitation (and more profits), the Modi government has been straining at the leash to cut down various labour laws which provide some protection to workers from 'hire and fire' and ensure basic wages and benefits. Five new labour bills are ready to be brought in, which will replace 40 existing ones and make the whole labour protection system redundant. These bills are the Industrial Relations Code Bill 2016, Wage Code Bill 2016, the Small Factories (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Bill, the Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Bill, and Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Bill.

The net effect of these changes will be to make it easier for employers to: dismiss workers without having to go through a process of getting approval, change their working conditions, force workers to accept social security plans linked to stock markets, force workers to work under contractors (and by implication, at less wages and no job security). More changes are in the offing in trade unions related laws so that it will get even more difficult for workers to organize and fight to protect their rights. The labour inspection system is planned to be virtually dismantled. Employers are to be exempted from filing information about their employees and labour law implementation status.

Since labour laws are in the Concurrent List of the Constitution, State Governments also have a role in this. The BJP led state government of Rajasthan, acting as a laboratory for future reforms has already gone

ahead and allowed greater freedom in firing workers, relaxed norms for licensing of labour contractors, and relaxed the application of the Factories Act. There are also suggestions to increase the limit of overtime work.

* * *

Meanwhile, the Modi government has completely ignored demands for social security protection for all unorganized sector workers, for some kind of floor level minimum wage for agricultural workers, and for more job security and better wages to lakhs of govt. scheme workers like anganwadis, ASHAs and mid day meal cooks.

Government figures indicate that the policy of reducing its own employees and appointing contractual employees has gained more speed in the last few years as a result of the govt.'s neo-liberal commitment to reduce expenditure at the cost of the people.

As a result of all these policies of commission and omission, there is widespread anger and resentment among workers all over the country. This has led to unprecedented unity among various trade unions and a series of protests in the past two years. On 2 September this year a massive all India strike is going to be held to oppose the Modi government's policies against the working class.



Do Saal, Janata Bebaal

Agriculture: A Litany of Broken Promises and Destroyed Livelihoods

Hopes of “Achhe Din” for the peasantry faded in the first year of the Modi led BJP Government; they have been buried forever by the end of the second year. More than 3 lakh villages spread across 300 Districts and over 33 crore people of India are reeling under the worst drought since 1986-87 leading to acute water crisis, crop losses. There were no contingency plans to address the situation and the BJP Government has totally failed to provide relief. The Government also is reported to have sent a bill of Rs.4 crores for the “Water Train” sent to the parched Latur. The Prime Minister is busy getting his wax statues made and his Ministers are competing to ape his penchant for selfies while the Farmers who feed the country are dying. Such insensitivity is all pervasive also in their approach to Farmers and agriculture.

As opposed to the promise of putting an end to farmers’ suicides, there has been a rapid rise in such cases in the last two years. According to analysts everyday 52 farmers commit suicide while the average for the last two decades was 42 suicides every day. In BJP ruled Maharashtra alone there were 2568 suicides in 2014. This has risen to 3228 suicides in 2015, the highest since 2001. Note that the 2014 and 2015 figures were arrived at by excluding suicides by labourers, which were 1436 in 2014. There is a rising trend of farmers’ suicides in Karnataka with 1336 suicides in 2015. Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, West Bengal and other states are also reporting

an increasing trend. The BJP Government is seeking to wish away a human tragedy by pretending it never existed.

The promise of providing remunerative prices to crops as per the Swaminathan Commission recommendation of C2+50% i.e at least 50 percent more than the cost of production has been conveniently forgotten. This Government has also filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court that C2+50% cannot be given as it may “distort the market”. To add to the problems of farmers it also issued a Government Order to states threatening that procurement would be banned from States providing bonus over and above the MSP fixed by the Central Government on the pretext that it was “market distorting”. There is no effective procurement even at the low prices fixed. The MSP announced for most crops are far below the actual costs of production. The Government has been scaling down procurement activities on the basis of Shanta Kumar Committee recommendations. The Government also sacrificed the interests of the Farmers and the hungry millions at the WTO negotiations.

The prices of pulses could be an interesting illustration of how farmers and consumers lose while middlemen and big corporates rake in huge profits. Depending on the variety of pulses farmers get a price ranging not more than Rs.30-40/Kg while the prices in the market had gone up to Rs.150-220/Kg for different varieties like Masoor, Urad, Tur/Arhar. In two months when the prices were reigning high India must have consumed about 4 million tonnes of different varieties of pulses. Even if one takes into account a profit of Rs.100/Kg one can imagine the humongous profits that accrued to big players like Adani, Reliance, Tata, Birla and ITC. This was facilitated by the BJP Government which relaxed stockholding norms by an Order on 30th September, 2014 and helped spike the rates. Despite the fall in production, the Government allowed traders to hoard and tightened norms very late only after much criticism. It also failed to foresee the crisis and import pulses in time and hence is culpable of allowing a supply squeeze and consequently allowing big players to rake in super profits.

Government policies have ensured that the average income a Farmer earns from farming activities, including what is retained for family con-

sumption is merely Rs.20,000/- per year in 17 States. That would mean a meagre amount of only Rs.1,666/- per month. One has to note that it is in a scenario of high inflation in prices of food grains and essential commodities as well as health and educational expenses that we are talking of such low incomes. The Government is now talking about doubling incomes of farmers by 2022. The Government has not taken any radical steps to generate confidence in the peasantry, to enhance productivity and profitability. According to experts to double even this meagre income in real terms would require a growth rate of over 15 percent. Growth rate of agriculture which was 4.2 percent in 2013-14 in the first two years of the NDA Government contracted to (-) 0.2 percent in 2014-15 and hovered around a negligible (+) 1.1 percent in 2015-16.

Increasing costs of agricultural inputs and unremunerative prices have led to falling incomes and rising indebtedness. According to the latest NSSO report for Jan–Dec, 2013, more than 31 percent of the rural households in India are indebted. Among these, the cultivator households have an even higher share of indebtedness – over 52%. In some states like AP, nearly 93 percent of farmers households are in debt. There has been no effort to fulfil their poll time promise of affordable credit. A recent study in Punjab found that farmers’ total debt in the State has gone up to Rs 69,355 crores. The average debt per household is Rs.5,52,064. Loan waivers for farmers are not even being considered while Adani, Ambani and the like are getting huge tax concessions and defaulting on loans. Adani group alone has a debt of Rs.72,000 crores and reportedly corporate houses owe State-run banks over Rs.5 lakh crores. Very clearly a Government of Corporates.

Prices of many commercial crops are crashing and there is no help forthcoming for ensuring price stabilisation or protecting peasantry. Rather the BJP Government is entering into more and more Free Trade Agreements and going in for greater trade liberalisation. Rubber growers have been worst hit. If inflation is taken into account Rubber prices are 35 years behind and it is lower than 1980-81 prices. From Rs.239/Kg in 2011 it fell to Rs.94/Kg in 2016 and due to the price crash from 2012-13 till 2015-16 the loss of incomes to the peasantry is estimated to be Rs.27409 crores. While farmers faced the brunt of the price crash

companies like MRF registered 74 percent increase in their profits at their expense. Similar stories in the case of silk, spices and other commercial crops are heard.

The BJP Government also brought a draconian Land Acquisition Ordinance which would facilitate smooth take-over of land for corporate profiteering and real-estate speculation. It sought to do away with the principle of seeking prior-informed consent of land owners and dependants on land, Social Impact Assessment and Food Security restrictions. It also sought to open up land up to 1 Km on both sides of expressways for corporate land grab. For instance, the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor passes through 7 States and 2 Union Territories with a length of 1483 km and the Project Influence Area is expected to be 4,36,486 sq.km constituting 13.8 percent of geographical area of India. About 150-200 Km on both sides is to be acquired in the name of industrial areas and investment regions (11 Investment regions of Minimum 200 Sq Km, 14 Industrial Areas of Minimum 150 Sq Km, etc). The scope has been further expanded by adding “Smart Cities” and other projects. Multi-cropped, productive land is being acquired forcibly across the country. An issue-based unity and massive struggles had forced the Government to withdraw the Ordinance but now it is bringing such laws through the States.

One of the first attacks by the BJP-led NDA Government was on the working class and their rights in the name of ‘Labour Reforms’. This was followed up with a systematic effort to subvert the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). MGNREGA has been scaled down drastically and is being starved of funds. Through a circular issued on 21st July 2014 the Central Government directed the States to limit the implementation of the MGNREGA only to 2500 blocks which are “most backward” in development. Even the latest Budget allocated only Rs.38,500 crores when the actual allocation required was more than Rs.65,000 crores. The national average days of employment provided in a year is only about 36 days. A recent study showed that there has been negligible employment generation even in drought hit states. Data shows that in 2015-16 of the households that were provided work under the scheme in these regions, merely 1.8 per cent got full 150 days of employment. In BJP ruled Rajasthan

the proportion of such workers is 0.2 percent or less.

There have been no social security measures for agricultural labourers or the peasantry. The promise of comprehensive farm insurance scheme to take care of crop and income loss due to unforeseen natural calamities and crop losses has been belied by a policy which prizes open agricultural insurance to multinational companies. They are expected to rake in over Rs.8000 crores more than usual in this year. Nothing concrete has been done for the small, marginal farmers and farm labour who are reeling under falling incomes and rising prices. FDI in retail, in agro-processing, plantation sector is being encouraged in a big way although they had claimed before coming to power that it would lead to rendering millions unemployed.

All sections of the peasantry have seen declining incomes forcing them to sell their assets on the one hand and being unable to invest in agriculture on the other. Issue-based unity is being built and massive struggles are going on to counter this BJP Government and their anti-peasant policies.



इंटरनेट से साभार

Do Saal, Janata Behaal

BJP's War Against Women

The BJP government has been in power at the centre for two years now and yet, they have failed to fulfill any of the gazillion promises they made during the campaign for the 2014 general elections. They had projected Narendra Modi as the savior of Indian people, our own knight in shining armor, leading us rapidly to "achhe din". The people believed in them (at least 31% of the people) and BJP got the majority in the Lok Sabha. On many occasions, during the campaign and after winning the elections, Modi has spoken about the women of this country and how the development of the nation is impossible without their development. His views on women are so generous that one might think that during the two years in the office he must have worked tirelessly to improve the situation of Indian women in public and personal life. But, on the contrary, the reality is that the BJP and the Prime Minister are only interested in making speeches and are not very keen to transform their words into action.

The BJP in its election manifesto for the 2014 general elections, had called the women of this country 'nation builders'. In spite of this, they are formulating such "development plans" which will eventually kick the already marginalized dalits, women and minorities further away from the mainstream. Let us have a look at some of key issues on which the BJP governments, both at the state and central levels, have betrayed women.

Exclusion of women from elected positions

The Women's Reservation Bill is amongst the many issues which have been met with either silence or vague promises by the Modi government. The BJP in its manifesto clearly mentioned that the party is committed to pass the bill in Parliament. It's been two years now and the Bill, which has been passed by the Rajya Sabha, is nowhere on the agenda of the Lok Sabha. They promise to bring it soon, but their definition of the word 'soon' must be different from everyone else's. Next year will mark the 70th anniversary of Indian Independence but the representation of women in the 16th Lok Sabha is merely 11%. The idea behind the Women's Reservation Bill was to improve the representation of women in Parliament, as it has been done in panchayats and urban local bodies, and some state Assemblies.

The BJP's silence might have been tolerated as none of the previous governments had been very enthusiastic about increasing the participation of women in mainstream politics. But the BJP governments in the states of Rajasthan and Haryana have directly attacked the constitutional right to contest election by putting arbitrary conditions on the qualifications of candidates in panchayat elections. This assault has been strongly resisted by the democratic and progressive forces of the country.

The BJP government in Rajasthan brought an ordinance on 20th December, 2014 just before the announcement of Panchayat elections in the state and the commencement of winter holidays in the courts. In the ordinance, the government has made minimum educational qualifications of class V, VIII, and X for different posts, and having a functional toilet in the dwelling unit, mandatory to contest panchayat elections. Due to these conditions a large number of people have been exempted to contest panchayat elections, especially dalits, women, and minorities, because educational backwardness is more rampant among these sections. After all, that is why they are marginalized.

This anti-constitutional move on the part of the BJP government in Rajasthan deprived almost 80% of the women in the state of their right to contest election. This figure was revealed by the petitioners - Norati Bai and Kamla Meghwal - in the case against the Rajasthan government's ordinance. They didn't find any relief from the court. As

a result, many of the seats in different panchayat across Rajasthan are vacant because no eligible candidates were found. In many seats, candidates won unopposed because of this. This goes against the very concept of democracy.

A similar ordinance was brought by the BJP government in Haryana. It was stayed by the High Court of Punjab and Haryana. But the government surreptitiously placed it in the Assembly as an Amendment Bill and, without due discussion, got it passed in a very undemocratic manner. The Bill was amongst the last few agenda items, and it was passed in a hurry, with the Governor signing it late at night. The next day the panchayat elections were announced. AIDWA filed a petition in the Supreme Court against the amendment, but in a highly controversial judgment it decided against the petition. The Rajya Sabha compelled the government to include a criticism of the Supreme Court's elitist judgment in the President's address. Because of this anti-constitutional amendment around 83% of dalit women and 67% of women from other sections have been excluded from contesting panchayat elections.

The BJP came to power by popularizing their promise of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas". But the amendments made in the Panchayati Raj Act in the BJP ruled states of Rajasthan and Haryana have stripped a large number of women of their constitutional right to contest election. They have not only stalled the Women's Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha but also have driven out a vast majority of women of the decision making process at the lowest level of our democracy. This shows that they are only interested in 'Sabka Saath' (everyone's vote) but not in 'Sabka Vikaas'. They are booting out the 'nation builders' out of the public sphere where they can be an active member of democracy.

Sex Determination Tests and BJP

Apart from these anti-women moves at the states level by the BJP, the Modi government is also displaying its inherent ideological bias against women in its actions. The Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi, earlier this year suggested making pre-natal sex determination compulsory and then monitoring the mother. This suggestion was severely criticized by women's organizations as it goes against the PCPNDT Act, 1994. This law was created to tackle

the inhumane practice of female-feticide. The law made it illegal for the doctors and ultrasound technicians to tell the parents the sex of the fetus. The doctor's lobby has been trying to get the onus removed from them for a very long time now and the Union minister has also gone on record to say that the very same thing. This shows exactly how serious the Modi government is in the matter of female-feticide. The declining sex ratio amongst children in India is already a glaring problem that our society is facing. The patriarchal system prevalent in India makes it difficult for women to lead their lives on their own terms and in a dignified manner. The girl child is not allowed to be born in the most parts of our country and in this situation the Union minister's suggestion can only be called anti-women. Because we are aware of the fact that medical science has also become a very lucrative money-spinner, driven by profit like everything else in the capitalist system. The nexus of pharma companies, medical equipment makers, and the doctors lobby is treating this noble profession as a money making scheme. If the government makes the pre-natal sex determination compulsory for parents, it will only open a new area of making money. Can the government honestly assure the nation that they have the resources and machinery to monitor each and every mother-to-be in the country? The governments, at the centre and states, are not being able to monitor the existing ultra-sound centers to stop the pre-natal sex determination and they are daydreaming of following the many mothers-to-be. In reality this approach is to let medical equipment makers and doctors off the hook and shift the whole onus on to the women themselves.

Marital Rape

And this wasn't the only time when Maneka Gandhi took an anti-women stand. In March, just a few days after the International Women's Day, she said that the "concept of marital rape can't be applied in Indian context". She, like her ideological colleagues, has a very archaic and brutal concept of what construes as 'Indian'. If the BJP's and their ideological fathers' version of 'Indian' is applied to the whole Indian society then it will be impossible for the women of this country to ever become equal citizens, let alone the other half of the society to treat them as one. The BJP's and the RSS' 'Ind(iot)ness' allows a man to rape his wife and get away with it. The Union minister also said that if

we criminalize marital rape, it would strain the family ties. Does she think that 'family' and its unity can be preserved on the basis of violence and crime?

Education for women

The Modi government with utmost pride announced the 'Beti padhao, Beti bachao' scheme. According to reports, the Rajasthan government has closed down around 13000 schools. This is the same state which has decided to make minimum educational qualification essential for contesting the panchayat elections. The female literacy rate in Rajasthan is just 52%, lower than the national average of 65% (Census 2011). Shutting down government schools will have the most dire effect will be on the girl child as they would not be allowed to go to schools in other villages or to ones that are very far. Even the Haryana government is considering shutting down schools. A recent incident of rape of a school going girl in Rewari, Haryana shows how the concern of security also becomes a crucial factor in the issue of educating the girl child. After the rape incident of a girl, who went to school in a different village, all the girls from her village have stopped going to school as they don't want to fall victim to such a crime. This is not an isolated incident; we can easily find other examples. If the government starts shutting down schools then education will become even more inaccessible to the girl child.

These were a few examples of how the Modi government, along with the state governments run by his party is betraying the women via formal means. There is a continuing list of how BJP MPs, MLAs and other party members or the Sangh parivar people are continuously creating an anti-women environment in the country through offensive and derogatory statements and movements.

The Hindu fundamentalist ideology, which the Sangh Pariwar and the BJP uphold, is itself detrimental to the status of women in the society. This ideology also objectifies women, and understands and defines the woman and her rights only in the context of the traditional role they play in a man's life. This is why they notice when our dupattas slide off our shoulders to bring disgrace on the male members of our families, they see our jeans or pants and skirts distracting the whole male community

that is not related to us by blood or otherwise, they have decided that if we marry a person belonging to another religion it has to be because the guy is conniving and not because as a person with a full functioning brain a woman has the ability to make her own choice and face the consequences whatever they may be. They have even appointed MLAs to count the number of used condoms in a central university so they can issue the female student community their character(less) certificate. They see all this but when it comes to the political, social, and economic rights of women, we as a whole community become invisible to them. The Modi led BJP government is working to implement the agenda of the RSS and women are the ones at the highest risk of losing everything they have achieved through continuous struggles.



Do Saal, Janata Behaal **Modi Govt. Cuts Funds for Women & Children**

Think of the vast majority of women in India, and the most common image that comes to mind is of them walking miles to fetch water in villages or lined up in urban slums to collect water, fetching firewood, working in the fields, on construction sites, as domestic helps in cities – all of this and also cooking and caring for their families. Invisible and unrecognized drudgery is their destiny and this plight continues unchanged.

How has the Modi Sarkar approached this plight? Two years of the much-hyped ‘achhe din’ of the Modi government have only meant more ‘bad days’ for women, as the Budget allocation for social sector programmes that directly affect women’s wellbeing, such as MGNREGA, Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and so forth, have been cut or have not been reinforced.

Some of these programmes offer a meagre livelihood to millions of women, who work at anganwadis and as ASHAs or cooks in schools. Their work makes a critical contribution to health and nutrition of children which is otherwise in a dismal state. All this, at a measly remuneration of Rs 3,000 for anganwadi workers and Rs 1,500 for helpers a month, which is less than half the minimum wage declared by the governments for similar jobs.

Any cut in allocation for these programmes, therefore, means a direct hit at the nutrition, health and education of the most vulnerable link — women and girl-child — in the spending chain of governments as well

as families. In most families, any increased economic distress almost always results in cutbacks for the girls and women – in terms of food, or healthcare or education. This is the patriarchal mindset at work.

Take MGNREGA, where women form a majority of the workforce. After two consecutive monsoon failures and drought conditions hitting around 10 States, some studies have pointed out that only 7 per cent of the total rural households registered in these States have got work for more than 100 days. With the Modi government starving MGNREGA of funds, reports are pouring in from many States of delayed payment of wages. As per an estimate, by the end of 2014-15, nine States were left with pending wages worth Rs 1203 crore, which were cleared only after these States got funds for 2015-16. By linking payment of wages with the quantum of work done by them, women workers once again stand to be affected the most.

The allocation for ICDS has also been slashed by Rs 1,500 crore (from Rs 15,300 allocated to Rs 14,000 crore in the revised estimate of 2015-16), directly impacting women’s livelihoods as well as child health. Also, there is no provision in the budget for universal maternity benefit entitlement of Rs 6,000 to all pregnant and lactating mothers as committed to under the National Food Security Act.

The suffering of women, especially the elderly and destitute, will also get aggravated as large-scale migration to cities is being reported following the unabated agrarian crisis and rural distress. In such a situation, no effort has been made by the Centre to even think of raising the measly old age pension fixed at Rs 200 since 2007-2008.

Coming to health, in a country where over 75 per cent of the population spends out-of-pocket for healthcare, under-funding public health instead of strengthening it will further affect women and girls the most, spending on which is anyway low down in a family’s priority.

According to Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, given the impact of inflation and population increase, the rise in allocation for the National Health Mission, a flagship programme for strengthening the public health system, from Rs.19,135.37 crore in 2015-16 to Rs.19,437 for 2016-17 “actually represents a 6-7 per cent decrease, per capita.”

Expenditure on the Tribal Sub Plan for the uplift of this marginalised section of the population, which is supposed to be 8.6 per cent of the total Plan expenditure, has also been slashed by almost half to 4.4 per cent, a shortfall of Rs 24,000 crore.

Similarly, in the case of the Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan, the expenditure is pegged at 7 per cent of the total, when it should be 16.6 per cent — a shortfall of Rs 52,470 crore.

That women have a coveted place only in Prime Minister’s Modi’s speeches not actions is clear from the 50 per cent cut in the allocation for the Women & Child Development Ministry, which handles key schemes for women and child welfare.

The total gender budget, too, had decreased from 4.19 per cent of the total expenditure in 2014-2015 to 3.71 per cent in 2015-2016.

“In absolute terms, this constitutes a decrease of 12.2 per cent in the gender budget and an almost 49.3 per cent decrease in the allocation for the WCD Ministry over the revised budget of 2014-15,” according to the All India Democratic Women’s Association. In fact, there had been a Rs 20,000 crore cut across all Ministries when it comes to the gender budget.

In sum, while claiming that it has left more funds in the hands of States due to higher devolution, the Modi government, while polarising the country on religious lines by shouting hollow slogans like ‘Bharat Mata Ki Jai’ has so far only ensured that its fiscal deficit is checked at the cost of depriving women and children of nutrition under ICDS, jobs under MGNREGA, health benefits and pensions.

Allocation for schemes that impact women/girls (Rs crores)

SCHEMES	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
ICDS	16400.8	16683.6	15584.2	14.862.9
Mid-day Meal	10917.6	10523.5	9236.4	9700
SABLA	603	622.4	475.5	460
National Health Mission1	8633.8	19751.5	19,122	19037
Rural Drinking Water Scheme	9691.3	9242.8	4373	5000

Source: Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability.

Do Saal, Janata Behaal

Modi Government's Economic Attacks on Students

Two years of Modi government has seen unrelenting authoritarian assaults on the campuses and students in the wake of the imposition of RSS agenda of Hindutva. This has also been period of growing struggles and resistance, with student movement emerging as a catalyst in the movement against authoritarianism. However, what has gone largely unnoticed is the increasing economic attacks on students.

Ab Ki Baar, Fund Cuts Ki Sarkaar!

Education sector has seen remarkable reduction of budgetary allocations during the Modi regime. This downward spiral started from the first budget itself, which the Modi government presented. For the Dept. of School Education & Literacy, Modi Sarkar spent Rs.45722 crore in 2014-15, down by Rs.1134 crore over the previous year (UPA's last year). Then in 2015-16 Rs.42187 is estimated to have been spent (revised estimates), further down by Rs.3535 crore. Finally in 2016-17 budgeted allocation, the govt. has allocated Rs.43554 crore, up by about Rs.1367 crore over the previous year. So, Modi sarkar's latest budget has cut funding for schools and literacy by Rs.3302 cr or 7% since UPA's last year. Considering that school going children's population is increasing by about 2% per year, any cuts will translate into severe damage to the most deprived and remotely situated people. It will also push people into the arms of private schools with exorbitant fees and uncertain benefits.

For the flagship Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Modi sarkar's latest budget of 2016-17 allocated Rs.22500 crore, which is Rs.1597 crore less than its first budget allocation in 2014-15 of Rs.24097 cr. There has been an increase in budgetary support for secondary schools (Rs.302 crore) and for higher education (Rs.883 crore).

Spending for teachers' training and Sakshar Bharat has been cut from Rs.1158 crore to Rs.879 crore, a drastic cut of Rs.279 crore or nearly 25% in the past two years.

The crucial Mid-Day Meal scheme has received a cut of Rs.823 crore or about 8% in these two years. Meanwhile allocation for IITs and IIMs has increased by Rs.1441 crore or 33% under the Modi Sarkar.

If you look at the education spending by the central govt. as a proportion of either total govt. expenditure or GDP, the real picture emerges in stark form. The trend started by the UPA in its last years – of cutting down spending on education and other crucial social sectors – is being continued with gusto by the Modi sarkar. Here is how it looks: spending on education as a share of GDP was 0.66% in 2012-13, 0.63% in 2013-14 (both UPA years), and then – 0.55% in 2014-15, 0.50% in 2015-16, and 0.48% in the Budget estimates for 2016-17. Remember: it is well accepted that at least 6% of the GDP should be spent on education in order to provide good quality education for all. Two years of Modi Sarkar shows a steady retreat from this goal.

As a share of total govt. expenditure, central govt. spend on education



declined from 4.7% in 2012-13 to 4.6% in 2013-14 (UPA's last two years) and then – 4.1% in 2014-15, 3.8% in 2015-16 down to 3.7% in budget estimates for 2016-17.

The Right to Education (RTE), which was introduced during the UPA 1 has proved to be ineffective given the lack of financial accountability from successive central governments. Central and state governments are required to share the RTE budget on a 65:35 proportion (90:10 in the North East) but most states have been unable to provide their share. The continued reduction in the plan outlay for the school education will mean that the stated aim of 'achieving free and compulsory education' would become even more elusive. Today only 63% of schools have student- teacher ratio as per the RTE norms. If we take other indicators such as infrastructure or availability of toilets for girl students then the numbers will dip further.

The reduced allocations in various sectors are contrary to the 12th Plan objectives regarding expansion, growth, access, or quality of Higher Education. In fact, the government has scrapped the planning process altogether. The 12th Plan approach paper on Higher education had proposed that 18 per cent of all Government education spending or 1.12 per cent of GDP should be on Higher Education, and Parliament's Standing Committee on HRD recommended raising it to 25 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively

Siphoning Public funds to Private Players

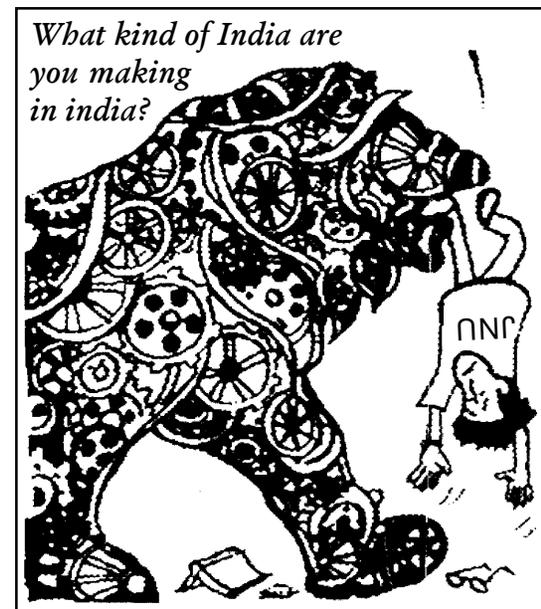
The finance minister in his speech has talked about an 'enabling regulatory architecture' for 10 public and 10 private educational institutions to be made 'world-class'. This will enhance the dual education model that creates a minuscule number of so-called centres of excellence while the vast majority of institutions are forced to remain cash-starved. Another disturbing feature is the inclusion of 10 private institutions in this framework, which is a continuation of the regressive outlook of RUSA and other such academic reforms which have been seeking to divert public funds to private players (while there is no social control over the fees, infrastructure, teaching etc. in these institutions).

A Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) is being set up with the

initial base capital of Rs. 1000 crore. Finance Minister in his speech has said that 'These funds will be used to finance improvement in infrastructure in our top institutions and will be serviced through internal accruals.' This again means: 1) Diversion of funds to select few institutes 2) Linking of funds to the financial performance of the institutes (since internal accruals refer to the accumulation of retained earnings and depreciation charges)

All this is being done with almost criminal resonance with the moves towards again bringing the Foreign Educational Institutions bill, which were stalled when the Congress government tried to bring it in 2009. It is interesting to note that while the BJP was against FEI then, PM Modi personally gave directions to the NITI Ayog to make policy formulations which could ease the entry of foreign educational providers in the country.

Further, for the Rashtriya Uchhtar Shiksha Abhiyaan (RUSA), a provision of Rs 1300 crore has been made in the Budget, up from Rs 1155 crore in the current financial year. The centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2013 aims at providing strategic funding to eligible state



Courtesy: Unny in Indian Express

higher educational institutions. RUSA, which was introduced by the Congress-led UPA-II government and has been carried further by the BJP-led NDA government, replaces the pre-existing multiple funding mechanisms with one centralised mechanism. The funding then is linked to a set of conditions failing which the institutions/states will not be eligible to

receive funds. These conditions include implementation of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), semesterization and compulsory accreditation among others. The same document makes it clear that the funding under RUSA will be norm based as well as performance based. This means that the state governments or universities will not have any room to modify the system according to their specific conditions and all powers to determine their education are snatched away from them. Funding will be linked to the performance of the institution, based on set criteria which would include student-teacher ratio, infrastructure, examination results etc. This would effectively spiral into increasing the already existing inequalities. For example, let us consider St. Stephen's College in Delhi and Rajendra Mishra College in Saharsa, Bihar. If funding is linked to accreditation, then St. Stephen's College will continue getting more funds every year due to better 'indicators'. Rajendra Mishra College, which needs more funds to enhance its infrastructure, will actually keep on getting less and lesser funds every year. Hence, this performance-based approach to funding will actually widen the existing gulf. RUSA has provision to divert funds to even such institutions, which do not fall under section 12B and 2(f) of the UGC Act. This translates into the provision of diverting the public money (tax collected from the working class and other toiling sections) to fund the private institutions, which are anyways free to charge exorbitant fees.

Education of the marginalized put at stake

These budget cuts have had direct impact on the students in general and the students from the marginalized sections in particular. In the last two years, we have seen steep fee hikes in numerous government institutions. The fees for the B.Tech courses in the IITs have been increased from Rs.90,000 per annum to Rs.2 lakh per annum. The application fees for the CSIR-NET examinations saw a massive increase of 250%.

"I have to get seven months of my fellowship, one lakh and seventy five thousand rupees. Please see to it that my family is paid that", wrote Rohith Vemula in his suicide note. This is only a reflection of how the delays in government-sponsored scholarships drive the students from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) communities into desperation. Fellowship schemes like Rajiv Gandhi National fellowship,

Maulana Azad National fellowship, CSIR-JRF and UGC-JRF are the only means by which hundreds of students from socio-economically deprived backgrounds are able to continue their higher studies. Many such students have to send a significant portion of their fellowships back home also. But, over the last two years, the budget cut has translated into delays up to eight-nine months in the disbursement of the fellowships. In the 2014-15 revised budget estimates, the government reduced funds for higher education by Rs. 3,900 crore. Prior to this, the universities used to release the stipends from their own coffers, knowing that the University Grants Commission (UGC) would reimburse them on time. However, this is no longer the case.

The UGC decision to stop the non-NET fellowships also emerged out of the fund cuts. It was a different matter though that the government was forced to backtrack following nationwide protests. There are apprehensions though that some form of 'targeting' will be introduced in this scheme which used to cover nearly 35,000 research scholars. Students on the other hand have been demanding the scheme to be extended to all state universities, fellowship amounts to be doubled and be linked with the inflation index.

Skill Development in air

Finance Minister's speech (2016) talks about 'Entrepreneurship Education and Training' through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Global experience shows that over-reliance on MOOCs as a tool of vocationalization ends up increasing the duality within the education system and in effect serves as a means of providing cheap labour for the big business.

There is lot of talk about skill development in the finance minister's budget, but one is forced to wonder how this rhetoric will be translated into action when the allocations for UGC/IITs/IIMs/NITs have been cut by more than 50%.

Student movement in this period has played an important role in resisting the authoritarian assaults on the universities and on democracy. It cannot afford to remain oblivious of the continuing 'economic attacks' either.

Do Saal, Janata Behaal

BJP Government's Utter Failure in the Health Sector

Two years have passed since the installation of the BJP led government at the centre and there is growing frustration at the inability or unwillingness of the present government to provide leadership in key areas of public policy. The health sector typifies the hands-off policy of the present government towards important areas that impact on welfare and livelihoods. There has been a singular lack of purpose in policy making and implementation in the health sector. Till date there has been no movement forward in unpacking of the vision around 'Health Assurance' — a phrase coined by the BJP to exhibit its commitment to healthcare. BJP's 'health assurance' has remained an empty slogan, devoid of content or vision. This has been so in spite of at least one high level committee having been constituted in the early days of the present government to spell out the government's concrete vision. The committee's report, submitted more than a year ago, has since gathered dust and appears to have been silently buried.

The draft of a new National Health Policy was unveiled over a year and half back and public comments were invited. Reportedly the comments were compiled and the revised draft has been lying with the Ministry for the last six months. Indications of the government's unhappiness with the health policy draft come from reports in sections of the Press of a sharp rap on the knuckle from the NitiAyog for suggesting a key role for public services. A letter from the NitiAyog to the Ministry, leaked to the Press said: "*Even though one might find it morally and ethically reprehensible – this system of two-tier care – one for those*

with means and a voice and the other for the voiceless and indigent will continue to exist in the short or even medium term as it would be logistically impossible to shift the majority of patient load from the private to the public sector". The Ayog further castigated the policy for recommending increase in public investment, arguing: "*We need to assess whether drastically increasing investments will run in to the law of diminishing marginal returns, besides posing a challenge to the absorptive capacities of the state health systems.*"

The mantra of needing to contain the fiscal deficit was invoked to slash by 20% committed funds to the health sector towards the end of 2014. The Union budget of 2015-16 was equally harsh, and effected a 5.7% cut in total allocation to the health sector – down from Rs.35,163 crores in 2014-15 to Rs.33,152 crores. Simultaneously, allocation for the flagship Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) to the Ministry of Women and Child Development was halved, from around Rs.16,000 crores to a meager Rs.8,000 crores. Also slashed was the budget for HIV/AIDS with the National Aids Control Organisation's (NACO) budget plummeting from Rs.1785 crores to Rs.1395 crores. The 2016-17 budget is a continuation of previous trends. The government's flagship programme, the National Health Mission (NHM), has seen an insignificant rise in allocation – from Rs.19,135.37 crore in 2015-16 year to Rs.19,437 for 2016-17. Given the impact of inflation and population increase this actually represents a 6-7% decrease, per capita, in allocation for the National Health Mission.

The impact of these cuts on expenditure is starting to be felt on the ground. The National Rural Health Mission's activities have stuttered to a standstill in many states. Within 6 months of the new government's installation, absorption of funds had started stalling – just 42% of allocated funds were spent in the first six months of the 2014-15 fiscal year. The government's own data (in the yearly Rural Health Statistics) points to extremely disturbing trends. The number of Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) serving in the public system actually saw a reduction between 2014 and 2015, as did the number of specialists working in public facilities. In March 2015 only 18.8% of sanctioned posts for specialists in rural public facilities had been filled. Infrastructure creation through the NHRM is also slowing down and only 288 new Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and 33 new Community Health

Centres (CHCs) were set up in 2014-15 against 572 and 176 respectively in the corresponding period in 2013-14. Serious shortages of consumables and human resources have surfaced, with widely reported periodic stock-outs of medicines for the HIV and TB programmes.

Clearly, there is a method in this madness. India's health system is one of the most privatised in the world and public expenditure is one of the lowest. Of the total expenditure on healthcare in India only 32% is public expenditure – the 16th lowest (among 190 countries in the World Bank Database) in the august company of countries such as Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Haiti and Guinea. India performs even worse for public spending on healthcare as percent of GDP. At 1.3% of GDP spent on healthcare India stands 12th from the bottom in the company of Myanmar, Haiti, South Sudan, Timor-Leste and Pakistan. Innumerable public documents have hammered home the need to increase public investment in health by an order of magnitude, including successive Planning Commission documents. The ten year tenure of the UPA government saw only a marginal rise in investment in %GDP terms. The NDA government, defying all logic appears committed to reverse even this marginal commitment to increase public investment.

The BJP Government would like to cap public expenditure at a minimum level and at the same time, through public policy measures, encourage the growth of private providers. In spite of the earlier Planning Commission's High Level Expert Group's (HLEG) clear recommendation to wind up the government's health insurance scheme (the

Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana), the present government is aggressively pushing forward the insurance scheme because the main service providers attached to the scheme are private. Numerous reports and studies have shown that the existing national and state health insurance schemes



have failed to rein in catastrophic health expenditure incurred by the poor. These schemes, largely implemented through partnerships with private providers, have been indicted in several states for defrauding the system of hundreds of crores by performing unnecessary surgeries (for example a huge rise in unnecessary uterus removal operations) and for not contributing to better health outcomes.

The government is also aggressively pushing for private health insurance and the 2015-16 budget explicitly encourages this by announcing tax relief to those who purchase private health insurance. At the same time states such as Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are leasing out existing rural public facilities to the private sector.

The ideologues of the BJP do not hide their fondness for the private sector. They would benefit if they were to rationally peruse the record of the private medical sector, both in India and globally. Instances abound of fleecing, callous neglect, and serious professional misconduct within major sections of the private medical sector. The private sector in India is also fast transforming into a corporate sector, thus gobbling up small and medium practitioners, many of whom are being forced to become franchisees of large corporate hospital chains. At the same time the government has exhibited a singular reluctance to operationalise the Clinical Establishments Act, supposedly designed to regulate the private sector.

The masterly inactivity of the government in promoting public services and public oversight and its progressive withdrawal of support to public services is part of a particular vision of healthcare provision. In this vision, the role of publicly provided health services is replaced by outsourced services to the private sector. Insurance mechanisms and not public provisioning is the hallmark of this approach. Concurrently, given that public financing is being reduced, what is promised are basic and not comprehensive services. Even these basic services are largely reserved for primary levels of care, thus paving the way for an ever larger penetration of private facilities, especially in the hospital sector. Finally, as we saw in the 2015 budget, private health insurance is incentivised for the rich and a section of the middle class. While not made explicit, this is the vision of the present government towards healthcare.

Do Saal, Janata Behaal

Dalits, Adivasis and Women

Dalits and adivasis who have suffered centuries of discrimination and violence at the hands of ruling elites are continuing to face restrictive and discriminatory policies under the Modi government. Some of the ways in which budgetary support for dalits and adivasis has been disgracefully cut by the Modi govt. are listed below, along with some other indicators of growing violence against them:

1. Under the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP), which directs the govt. to allocate funds in accordance with the share in population of dalits there is continued under funding. In the last 2 years only about 8.5 % has been allocated for dalits as opposed to the designated 16.6 % of the plan outlay for the year. In 2016-17 Budget too the allocation is only 7.6%. In other words, the due amount under SCSP budget should be Rs. 91,301 crore (16.6%) while the allocated amount is only Rs. 38,823 crore (7.06%). Of this limited amount, the targeted amount that directly benefits the dalit community is only Rs. 6570 crore (1.19%). Only 1% of funds are allocated for dalit women.
2. Allocations for pre-matric scholarships for Dalits have fallen by over 34 per cent. Hostel funds for Dalit girls and boys are down by 21 per cent and 80 per cent.
3. The total allocation for the rehabilitation of safai karamcharis is only Rs 201 crore this year.
4. A National Sample Survey of 2014 says Dalits account for 32.4 per cent of India's out-of-school children.

5. Expenditure on the Tribal Sub Plan for the uplift of this marginalised section of the population, which is supposed to be 8.6 per cent of the total Plan expenditure, has also been slashed by almost half to 4.4 per cent, a shortfall of Rs 24,000 crore.
6. For the financial year 2016-17, the total amount due at the Union level under Tribal Sub Plan was Rs. 47,300 crores. But only Rs 24,005.39 crores have been allocated. There are significant budget cuts in the programmes meant for development of Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG)s, merit-cum-means scholarship, appointment of language teachers and panchayat training programmes. The two tribal universities of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have been allocated only Rs 15 lakhs for its operations.
7. In budget 2015-2016, TSP allocation was 19,980 crores while the allocation should have been 40,014 crores. In 2014-15 it was 26,714 crores.
8. A scheme for "strengthening of education" among tribal girls in "low literacy districts" has been dropped altogether in Budget 2016-17.
9. The government's Public Procurement Policy 2012, requires all central ministries, departments and central PSUs to ensure at least 4 per cent of their supplies from enterprises owned by Dalits (SCs/ STs). This order was never implemented.
10. Allocations in the education sector have also declined to Rs 10,194.7 crore under the SCSP and Rs 5,486.44 crore under TSP in Budget 2015-16.
11. Allocation in the critical Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC/ STs has been reduced from Rs 1,904.78 crore to Rs 1,599 crore in Budget 2015-16.
12. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, 47,064 cases of crimes against Dalits were registered in 2014, up from 39,408 in 2013 and 33,655 in 2012. That is an increase of 19%.
13. According to NCRB 2014 data, the chargesheeting rate in crimes committed against Dalits is 92.3%, while the conviction rate is 28.8%.



Rohith Vemula's mention itself is enough to expose the hollowness of the Modi government's slogan of 'Sab ka saath, Sab ka vikas' and its protestations of honouring Dr Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, in his 125 birth anniversary year. Hyderabad Central University research scholar from a poor dalit family and student activist who aspired to be a 'writer of science like Carl Sagan', was forced to kill himself. This happened during the course of the same Ambedkar anniversary year, not just because of the anti-dalit attitude of the university authorities, but also due to the direct intervention of two Central ministers, which forced the university authorities to persecute the 28 year old to the point of committing suicide. Rohit's martyrdom has become a stark reminder of the Sangh Parivar and the Modi government's anti-dalit character.

In a repeat of what had happened earlier at IIT Chennai in case of Ambedkar Periyar Study circle, a minor scuffle was used by Sangh parivar and the Modi government to attempt to crush the Left-Dalit student activism. The Ambedkar Students' Association (ASA) organised a screening of the film "Muzaffarnagar Baaqi Hai" at the University of Hyderabad, to protest ABVP vandalism during its screening at the Delhi University, If it was an anonymous saffron

complaint in case on Chennai IIT this time it was Bandaru Dattatreya, minister of state (independent charge), labour and employment, who took exceptional interest in this case and wrote a letter on August 17, 2015 to Smriti Irani, minister of human resource development, explicitly seeking her intervention in favour of ABVP president, Susheel Kumar! In his letter. he also brands the University as "a den of casteist, extremist and anti-national politics".

HRD under Smriti Irani duly complied and wrote five letters to university in a row seeking action. The ABVP leader's complaint dismissed by first proctoral enquiry of the University as "The Board could not get any hard evidence of beating of Mr. Susheel Kumar." Later, however, another enquiry that was conducted led draconian actions against five Dalit Student activists, including Rohit Vemula, who having concluded that he would not get justice, ended his own life.

The BJP and the Sangh Parivar exposed their real face further by their subsequent actions in this case. They actually went around the country even challenging whether Rohith was a dalit at all. No action is taken against all those responsible for driving the young Dalit scholar to suicide, inspite of countrywide protests and continuous agitation demanding "Justice for Rohit Vemula." How can poor dalits, specially in rural areas, expect any Justice from this Modi Government?

The CPI(M) supports the demand for a Rohith Act to specifically deal with problems faced by Dalit students. We join the fight for such an Act.

Women

Funding for schemes and programmes meant to empower women and help them in their role as mothers have been slashed across the board by the Modi government.

1. The spending on ICDS declined by Rs 1,300 crore compared to the allocated amount of Rs 15,300 as revealed in the revised estimate for 2015-16. This was at a time when cooked food had not regularly been given and anganwadi workers/helpers not paid.

2. There is no provision in the budget for universal maternity benefit entitlement of Rs 6,000 to all pregnant and lactating mothers as committed to under the National Food Security Act. Currently a scheme is being run only in 53 districts with a meager allocation of Rs.500 crore whereas the actual requirement is Rs.15,000 crore.

3. In fact some other schemes meant to support mothers and women's health too have suffered declines during Modi's two year rule in 2014-16 compared to 2013:

Allocation for schemes that impact women/girls (Rs crores)

<i>SCHEMES</i>	<i>2013-14</i>	<i>2016-17</i>	<i>Change after Modi's 2 years (%)</i>
ICDS	16400.8	14.862.9	-9
Mid-day Meal	10917.6	9700	-11
SABLA	603	460	-24
Rural Drinking Water Scheme	9691.3	5000	-48

Source: Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability

4. The total gender budget, too, had decreased from 4.19 per cent of the total expenditure in 2014-2015 to 3.71 per cent in 2015-2016.

5. As the Supreme Court recently pointed out, the Modi govt. is sitting on a Rs.3000 crore Nirbhaya Fund meant for safety and welfare of women. The fund was set up after the 2013 rape and murder case in Delhi. Only Rs.1800 crore worth of "projects" have been given and just 14 district level crisis centers have been set up out of 653 districts in the country.

SECTION - 2

We will Control Prices, Create Jobs

Kya Hua Tera Vaada ?



Do Saal, Janata Behaal

As Joblessness Grows, People Question Modi Sarkar's Policies

Modi Sarkar's single biggest failure – betrayal is a better word for it – is on the jobs front. Two years ago Modi was voted to power because he promised again and again in his campaign speeches that the days of joblessness are going to be over soon, “achche din” (good times) are coming. In a country which has been reeling under ‘jobless growth’ for the past several years, and ever increasing number of people, especially youth were severely under-employed, Modi's words were welcomed by many. Two years later the dreams are shattered and Modi is seen as a demagogue.

India adds about 1.3 crore people *every year* to its nearly 50 crore strong workforce. Increasingly, these new job seekers are young and educated. They are not satisfied with working at a pittance in fields or building roads. But in the absence of any meaningful initiative to industrialise the country, and absorb the army of unemployed, the Modi Sarkar has been making all kinds of wild claims with zero result.

So what's happening on the jobs front? Although there is no mechanism in India for tracking changes in employment on a current basis there are several indicators that point towards a deeply worrying and explosive situation of unemployment or disguised employment. Let us look at these briefly.

1. According to government data, the index of industrial production (IIP) had grown by a mere 2% between February 2015 and February 2016. This was worse than the corresponding period in the previous year

(February 2014 and February 2015) when the IIP grew by 4.8%. The manufacturing sector grew by just 0.7% in this period compared to 5.1% in the previous year. These data were released by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation on 12 April 2016.

Meanwhile, according to newly created data for the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – which has come under widespread criticism for fiddling around with statistics – government expenditure as a share of GDP is down, investment is down, exports are down and imports are down. What does this mean? It means that govt. spending which provides relief and buying power to the people has declined, there is small investment and global trade (what Modi wants in his Make in India) is declining. In other words, there is no substantial basis for more jobs to be created. Even agriculture, which is carrying the burden of two thirds of India's people, is growing at a minuscule 1.1% - but that is in the second successive drought year.

The government also brings out production data on eight core industries – crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, steel, coal, cement, fertilisers and electricity. These are big employers and contribute to about 38% of total industrial production. As per data up to March 2016, crude oil, natural gas and steel production declined in the last one year while the others grew by 4-6% with only fertilisers growing by a healthy 11.3%. So again – no great increase in jobs because if production is declining or growing marginally then where is the chance of more people being employed.



2. Now take a look at another measure of employment – this time in the rural areas. The MGNREGS provides partial relief for joblessness and low incomes in rural areas. With an average of 45 days of hard manual labour work in a year at an average wage of Rs.140 per day, it is hardly an ideal job. But in 2015-16, a record 8.4 crore persons applied for work in the scheme across the country. This is an all-time high for the scheme which started in 2009. It is as clear an indication of the desperate search for jobs in the countryside as any. It should be noted that 1.2 crore applicants (about 14%) were turned back and not given any work – not even one day's worth.

3. The situation in some of the more labour intensive industries is also dire as revealed by a survey conducted by the Labour Bureau. Every three months, they survey eight industries to find out how many jobs have been added or scrapped. The eight industries are: textile, leather, metals, automobiles, gems & jewelry, transport, ITES/BPO and handloom/powerloom. The latest survey result, released in March 2016, covered July to September, 2015. If one looks at all the successive quarterly reports, it is clear that the 15 months after the Modi Sarkar took over, that is, between July 2014 and October 2015 saw just 4.3 lakh jobs added, one of the lowest since 2009. Of the jobs added, the bulk have accrued to the IT enabled services and BPO sector while handloom/powerloom, transport, gems & jewelry, and leather have seen loss of jobs.

From this brief survey it is clear that despite Modi personally travelling all over the globe begging industrialists and investors to 'Make in India' and selling India as a place where cheap labour and peaceful atmosphere will be available nothing much has happened. As far as our Indian industrialists and investors are concerned, the extent of their own sickness is evident from the staggering amount of bad loans that they have digested. In September 2015, banks were reporting Rs.3.4 lakh crore worth of bad loans (called non-productive assets or NPAs). Most of this has been lent to various private companies, supposedly to set up industrial plants or build infrastructure. But nothing has happened and this huge amount, belonging to the public, has gone up in smoke. And so have the jobs that would have come with new investments. This is Modi Sarkar's gift to the people.

Do Saal, Janata Behaal

Price Rise: Robbing People to Enrich Traders

Prices of most food items have been continuously rising throughout the two years of Modi's misrule. This is a continuation of the trend seen under the previous UPA government. And, just as in the case of UPA, these two years have seen periods lasting for up to two months when the retail price of a particular essential commodity zooms up intolerably. Here are some examples:

- Prices of onions sky rocketed during October-November 2014 to more than Rs.100 per kg
- Prices of arhar spiked to Rs.200 per kg in Sept-Nov 2015 before declining somewhat. But even now they are trending upwards and are currently 140% higher than two years ago.
- Prices of potatoes have nearly doubled in the past month this year.
- Prices of sugar have increased by almost two thirds and already crossed the Rs.50 per kilogram mark. This is expected to rise even more.

This is not just a matter of family economics, which can be adjusted by cutting some item. As a consequence of rising prices, consumption of several essential items of food is declining in India. For example the amount of pulses consumed per person has relentlessly declined from about 61 grams per person per day in 1951 to about 42 grams in 2013. This is essential nutrition being snatched away from the mouths of people.

Why is this happening? Ministers of the Modi government have been crowing about the fact that the wholesale price index is running negative – that is prices are actually declining! So why a steady rise with killer spikes as far as the consumer prices are concerned.

There is one simple reason: mismanagement and a desire to allow “market forces” to determine prices. Mismanagement works this way: when the government knew that pulses production had fallen in 2014-15 due to drought, they should have imported pulses and built up stocks. They didn't do anything and as a result prices started rising. Then they pretended to import some meagre amounts. By that time international prices were sky high and supply was short.

And this is where the governments “freeing the markets” comes in. What it really means is allowing private traders to take advantage of the situation, hoard commodities and jack up prices. For instance, they allowed private traders to import pulses and hold them in their domestic and foreign warehouses so that prices increased beyond belief. Then they started releasing the stock making crores of rupees in super profits.

Further, the Modi Sarkar has done away with Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMCs or wholesale mandis) restrictions in the name of helping farmers. They also initially eased stock holding norms, tightening them again after prices had increased. All this “freedom” was actually meant for big traders and profiteers. It meant low prices for farmers (hence the low wholesale prices) and intolerably high prices for consumers.

It must be noted that all this manipulation of markets and giving big traders a free rein was also done by the previous governments. But the BJP has done it in the most brazen and shameless manner, ignoring the distress caused by the drought and sabotaging other govt. schemes that help people get affordable food.

There is another example of the naked anti-people character of this government. During these very two years, international prices of crude oil have fallen by over 62%. India imports nearly three fourths of its oil. It is estimated that India had saved about Rs.2.14 lakh crore due to falling crude oil prices. So this fall in prices could have well benefitted

millions of consumers in the country. But the devious Modi Sarkar had other ideas. They maintained the high prices in Indian market while buying cheaper crude oil from abroad. Excise duty on oil was raised five times in this period. The Government has raised prices of diesel 19 times and of petrol 16 time in past two years. In this way the Modi govt. padded up its accounts while depriving the people of some relief from rising prices.

The Modi government has also completely failed to develop a plan for resolving the food prices crisis in the long term. This can happen only if production of vegetables, pulses and other commodities like oilseeds and sugarcane is boosted through spread of new seeds, techniques, provision of cheaper inputs and water and establishing a mechanism for procurement of these essential produce at minimum support prices for routing to the public distribution system. Only through these measures can production be really boosted ameliorating the perpetual knife's edge on which India currently stands in terms of a match between a growing demand and insufficient supply. The Modi Sarkar has no such vision and there are darker days ahead.

Prices of Pulses

	Prices (Rs. per kg)		
	Apr-14	Apr-16	% Increase
Gram	49	67	40%
Tur/arhar	70	137	90%
Urad	67	139	112%
Moong	88	101	14%
Masoor	63	80	32%

Source: Ministry of Consumer Affairs

Price rise of essential food items 28 May 2014 to 28 May 2016

Rice	17%	Atta	10%
Sugar	18%	Milk	33%
Groundnut oil	13%	Tomato	71%
Potato	100%		

Source: Dept of Consumer Affairs; National Horticulture Board

Do Saal, Janata Behaal **No Relief for Hungry and Malnourished**

In a country where more than 20 crore people do not get an adequate daily diet and go to bed hungry, where half the women and over 60 percent of children are anemic, Modi government's silence and inaction is nothing short of criminal. It is bizarre that Modi and his party, which have been portraying themselves as champions of "nationalism" demanding respect for the national flag and national anthem and such other symbols, should have this callous indifference towards the lives of crores of their country's citizens. Have a look at their actions (or lack of them) and judge for yourself the depth of this pseudo-nationalism of Modi and BJP.

The UPA government had passed the National Food Security Act (NFSA) in 2013 after intense pressure from people's movements. This law was still short of the valid and justified demand for a universal public distribution system which would ensure two square meals for all of India's residents at affordable prices. But still, it was a step forward. But after coming to power two years ago, the Modi government extended the date of implementation of the NFSA three times, the last one in March 2015 for six months. Why? One reason that was officially tom-tommed was that State governments had not identified those who were entitled for getting the foodgrains under the law. This was true to some extent. But what did the Central govt. do to expedite the process? Nothing. A party and a Prime Minister that had not ever mentioned hunger as a big crisis facing India naturally allowed things to drift.

But the real reason behind repeatedly extending the NFSA

implementation deadline was that it was saving the government a huge amount of money, commonly called the ‘food subsidy’. This fitted in well with the Modi govt.’s strategy of cutting down govt. expenditure, but it has directly caused continued suffering for crores of men, women and children, the extension served to reduce the food subsidy bill.

Currently, 33 states have implemented the Public Distribution System of the NFSA with Tamil Nadu, Nagaland and Kerala being the exceptions. Tamil Nadu and Kerala have their own pre-existing systems of channelizing foodgrains to people. But because of the absence of any push or seriousness from the Central govt., and with most states being ruled by equally indifferent governments, the “implementation” of the NFSA is just a paper technicality. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh the distribution of new cards has still not been undertaken except for Bundelkhand, and the full rollout is only expected only by June 2016.

But the story of Modi Sarkar’s willful sabotage of the food security law doesn’t end there. The food ministry tried internal subversion by introducing a slew of conditionalities for limiting the access of the poorest of poor to foodgrains under the Antyodaya scheme. These changes included the introduction of citizenship as a requirement for accessing entitlements under the NFSA, curtailing the expansion of the scheme by directing the States not to add any new family in case a family was dropped from the AAY and depending on the decadal census results rather than annual population projections to increase the allocations of foodgrains. All these were meant to not only limit the scheme but slowly strangulate it. For instance if only decadal Census was to be used for population estimation then no new families could be added for 10 years. How would people survive? Of these three changes, action by civil society could only ensure the rollback of the decision not to allow for new families to be added to the AAY list in case they were missed out during the counting.

Another attack on the scheme was that the provision for maternity entitlements of at least Rs. 6000 for every pregnant and nursing mother was dropped. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) has not even framed the rules for this crucial provision. A pilot program, called the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahayog Yojana (IGMSY) is being implemented in 53 districts only. It continues to discriminate on the basis

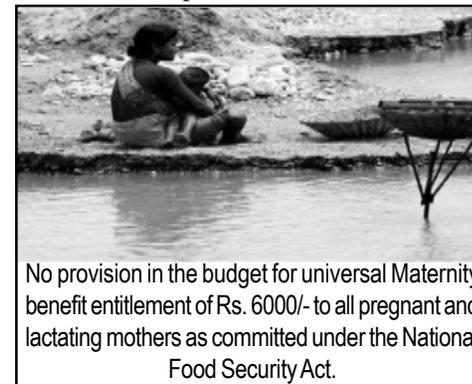
of the age of marriage and number of children. If a woman has more than two children, she will be refused foodgrains under the scheme.

Giving clear indication that the law’s implementation is only being done in name and the government is not keen on it, the institutional mechanisms have not been created down the line till the district level and beyond. For instance, district grievance redressal officers, whom a family can approach if they are left out, have been made out of minor officers with no powers.

But the full extent of Modi government’s hostility towards the people is revealed by its attitude towards other equally important components of the strategy to provide adequate nutrition to people, viz. schemes like the mid-day meal scheme, anganwadis under the ICDS, scheme for adolescent girls etc. All these schemes have suffered cuts in funding from the Central govt. This has hamstrung the delivery of nutritional supplements to the most vulnerable sections children and adolescents.

Other programs that would somewhat help crores of poor families, like the MGNREGS too have suffered poverty and making them all the more dependent on cheap food grains from ration shops – which is not available.

Even in the face of heightened distress due to the two successive droughts, the Modi Sarkar has refused to provide desperately needed help to starving families adding to the already dire circumstances they are facing. It needed the Supreme Court to severely admonish the government on its tardy and callously negligent treatment of drought relief and compensation efforts.



No provision in the budget for universal Maternity benefit entitlement of Rs. 6000/- to all pregnant and lactating mothers as committed under the National Food Security Act.

So, the Modi government’s all round squeeze on the people – all flowing from its sworn allegiance to the neo-liberal dogma of cutting government expenditure and allowing “market forces” to rule the roost – has further aggravated hunger and malnutrition in the country.

SECTION - 3

Not
Minimum Government
Maximum Governance
But
Maximum Kushasan
Minimum Janwad



Do Saal, Janata Behaal

Na Khaunga, Na Khane Doonga

Everyone remembers that during the Lok Sabha election campaign by Narendra Modi he had promised ‘Na Khaunga, na Khane Doonga’ (will not take bribes, nor allow anyone else to do so)

What is the reality?

Anti-corruption policies require a legislative framework but the opposite has happened during the last two years of the Modi regime

The Lok Pal Bill, diluted as it was, was finally adopted by parliament and gazetted in January 2014. It has a clause which includes the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in the selection panel for the Lok Pal. Since there is legally no recognized LOP, it is obvious that the leader of the single largest party should be included. This requires a minor amendment. But in two years, the Modi Government has chosen not to bring this amendment which has frozen the operationalization of the law.

But instead, the Government has brought several amendments to dilute the law including more protections to bureaucrats and their family members.

The Gujarat model is clearly in evidence when for ten years there was no Lok Ayukta and was finally appointed only because of the intervention of the Court.

Remember Modi’s hypocritical support to Anna Hazare when he was on hunger strike for a Lok Pal.

Where is the Lok Pal Mr. Modi?

Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA)

The refusal to appoint a Lok Pal is linked to the Government's clear opposition to the implementation of the Anti-Corruption law. It has moved amendments to the PCA to introduce a requirement for approval of the Lok Pal before any Government servants are prosecuted for corruption. But since there is no Lok Pal, the PCA also is effectively stayed.

Whistle Blowers Protection Act (WBPA)

Although the Act was passed in 2014 which provides for protection to whistle blowers including against their victimization, the Modi Government has in the last two years not even promulgated the Rules. Shockingly the Modi Government has brought amendments to the Act which will actually discourage anyone from reporting corruption. It seeks to exclude in the name of security and national interests anything which may prejudice "economic interests, strategic interests etc. In other words the main areas where such corruption is known to be rampant are sought to be kept out of the purview of the law, thus depriving honest officers or citizens from reporting corrupt deals, as they will have no protection of the law.

Black Money

What happened to the promise to bring black money back? No action has been taken but worse, like the previous Congress led Government the Modi Government too is more interested in protecting the identity of those who have cheated the country and has refused to make public the list it received from some banks.

The Government passed a law with an amnesty scheme to blackmoney holders who have cheated the country. This brought disclosures of just around 3770 crores rupees when the estimates range from 1 lakh crores and above! This is a far cry from the boasts made by Modi during his campaign of bringing back the black money within 100 days and putting 15 lakh rupees into bank accounts of the poor.

It is the Supreme Court which has set up a Special Investigation Team on the issue of bringing back the black money. The Government has not acted even on the latest disclosures of the Panama papers of hundreds of Indians who are hiding their money abroad.

BJP Leaders

What about the range of BJP leaders involved in scams, why has no action been taken against them as for example:

On May 1, 2015 in an audit report placed in Parliament, the CAG named Nitin Gadkari as the "promoter and/or Director of Puri Sakhar Karkhana that had taken loans from Government in violation of guidelines. This brought back to the forefront the serious charges made against him. What about Shiv Raj Chauhan and his alleged role in the shocking Vyapam scam? What about other leaders like Vasundhara Raje and Sushma Swaraj whose names were linked to the Lalit Modi scam? The return of Yeddyurappa as the BJP Chief in Karnataka shows the scant respect the BJP has for probity in public life. Other Ministers in Maharashtra like Pankaja Munde accused of making money even on the food for children of the poor in ICDS schemes or Eknath Khadse involved in land scams have been protected by the BJP leadership.

Do Saal, Janata Behaal
**When Democracy Becomes
A Casualty**

On May 28, 2014, just two days after the Modi government was sworn in, it issued an ordinance to ensure that the prime minister's first choice for the job of principal secretary to the PM, Nripendra Misra, could be appointed to that post. Misra had been chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and the law stipulated that a TRAI chief could not be appointed to any central or state government job. The law didn't fit in with what Modi wanted, so it had to go. Waiting for Parliament to amend the law would take time, so Parliament would have to be sidestepped and an ordinance issued. This reasoning sent out an early signal of the contempt in which the Modi government would hold all norms of democratic functioning. If its very first act could be an ordinance to ensure that a relatively trivial whim of the PM could be enforced, what would it do when the stakes were higher?

The signal has been amplified in the two years since then and the answer to that rhetorical question provided unambiguously. Modi and his government would have their way, no matter what it took and how many democratic norms had to be trampled. Dissent would be given short shrift. This has been the mantra, whether dealing with Opposition in Parliament or outside it.

Within Parliament, the Modi government has adopted an attitude of out and out confrontation with the Opposition, making it clear it will ride roughshod over its opponents. The ordinance route was tried to push the land acquisition law but the law ultimately had to be abandoned because the government did not have the numbers in the Rajya Sabha.

Having learnt a lesson in this, the government has adopted a patently unethical and arguably illegal route to get legislation passed that it knows will not find enough support in the Rajya Sabha. The Aadhar bill was turned into a money bill (which means the Rajya Sabha cannot block it) despite constitutional experts expressing shock at this misuse of the provisions governing money bills. This same tactic is being used to get the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill passed. Once again, if the law won't let you do what you want, just ignore the law.

The same logic applies outside Parliament. Consider the manner in which student protests have been dealt with at the Hyderabad Central University and the Jawaharlal Nehru University. In Hyderabad, a group of students protesting against capital punishment and in that context the hanging of Yakub Memon were deemed anti-nationals at the behest of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the BJP-RSS. With pressure from a BJP MP and the Human Resources Development Minister Smriti Irani, the university expelled some students leading to one of them, a Dalit student named Rohit Vemula committing suicide. In JNU, allegations, once again by the ABVP, of some fringe left groups raising "anti-India" slogans led to sedition charges being slapped on several student activists including the union president Kanhaiya Kumar, who belonged to the All India Students Federation, by no means an ultra-left organization or one that supports a secessionist agenda, in Kashmir or elsewhere. Subsequent investigations established that the video clips on which the action was based were doctored, but the cases have not been dropped and everybody in authority from the Home Minister downwards has repeatedly asserted that 'anti-nationals' will not be tolerated. We can and do disagree with some of the slogans raised in both cases, but that's beside the point. What is telling is the manner in which the government has reacted to them, coming down hard to show it will not tolerate dissent. The law is amply clear that mere mouthing of slogans cannot be termed sedition, but the government has ignored that because the intent is to intimidate and curb democratic dissent.

The anti-democratic impulse of the government is evident also in the manner in which it has gone about dismantling Congress governments in Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and is now reportedly trying to do the same in Meghalaya. In each case, differences within the Congress

have been used to impose President's rule and then try and form a BJP government or one amicably inclined towards the party. The ploy succeeded in Arunachal despite scathing comments by the courts on the manner in which the regime change was executed and only just failed in Uttarakhand.

Where hostile governments can't be toppled, like in Delhi, the Modi government has used every opportunity to block their functioning. The Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi may have its faults, but it is a government elected with a massive popular mandate. Yet, the Modi government has ensured at each step that this elected government is stymied by the Lieutenant Governor, the representative of the central government.

The Modi government's anti-democratic stance is part of the larger agenda of the sanghparivar to force fit India into its vision of a Hindu Rashtra dominated by male caste Hindus. It must be seen, therefore, in this larger context. It is evident that the agenda has received a fillip with the coming of the Modi government. The imposition of beef bans in BJP-ruled states, the lynching of Mohammed Akhlaq in Dadri in western Uttar Pradesh on the mere suspicion that he had beef in his fridge, the regular beating up and worse of people across states on similar suspicions by sanghparivar vigilantes are all part of this larger game plan. In each case, Modi, who is otherwise so fond of tweeting on anything and everything, maintains a stunning silence for weeks, often months before making a bland statement that does not condemn but merely seeks to distance himself for the record.

A less obvious part of this agenda is the drastic changes made to the rules governing panchayat elections in Rajasthan and Haryana, both states ruled by the BJP. In both cases stringent educational qualifications have been made mandatory for contesting these elections. The effect they have is to exclude the overwhelming majority of women, dalits and tribals from contesting. This has been repeatedly pointed out by analysts, but to little avail. As far as the sangh is concerned, that is not a problem with such rules, it is their real virtue. For, in the sangh vision of a well-governed society, women and the unwashed masses should not have any role to play in governing themselves. What better way to ensure that than to make them legally ineligible?

Do Saal, Janata Bebaal **Why the Deafening Silence Mr. Modi?**

On 28th September, 2015, Md. Akhlaq was brutally killed, his son, Danish critically injured and his home vandalized in Dadri (UP) after rumours circulated that his family had cow's meat in their home. This unspeakable atrocity committed by men of the ruling party has become the dreadful symbol of the Hindu rashtra agenda of those who rule India today.

There are many other aspects of how the agenda is being pushed forward. Packing important academic and scientific institutions with underqualified RSS supporters has become common place. Aggressive public attacks on eminent persons who are outside the RSS pale, are deliberately done to demoralize them, such as the condemnable and cowardly attack by BJP M.P. Subramaniam Swamy on the RBI Governor. The changes being brought about in history books and other texts for school children in BJP ruled States is continuing. The latest example is the removal of the name of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his role in the freedom movement from the Class 8 history textbooks in Rajasthan. Now children will not be taught that Nathuram Godse murdered Gandhi ji--that too has been removed.

Increase in Communal Violence

The RSS led Sangh Parivar, of which the BJP is the political face, relies on communal polarization for its political successes and for drawing increasing numbers of Hindu communities into its fold. Since its inception, the name of the RSS, and subsequently its other Parivar units, occur regularly whenever incidents of communal violence break out and

enquiries are held. Wherever they are successful in forming State Governments, this process accelerates. In fact, today the Central Government led by a pracharak, and under the control and guidance of the RSS actually provides the shield for the heightened activities of the sanghparivar in different States. There has been a 17% increase in incidents of communal violence in 2015 over and above the figure for 2014.

These figures do not reveal the real extent of communal polarization that is taking place because they only cover incidents of communal rioting. They do not include attacks on Muslims and Christians in the name of conversions, and inter-communal relationships and marriages or the hate speech to which its leaders regularly take recourse. Even those opposing the Government's policies are immediately labeled as 'pro-Pakistani anti-nationals' in order to give a communal colour to their opposition.

At the end of May, 2014, days after the Modi Government was sworn in re-iterating the promise of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas', frenzied Hindu mobs attacked shops and property belonging to Muslims in Pune and a young IT engineer, Mohsin Sheikh, exactly the kind of 'Good Muslim' that the Sangh Parivar professes to support, was brutally killed. Later, completely unsubstantiated reports in some newspapers appeared that a Dalit girl had been molested by Muslims and a statue of Shivaji desecrated – as if this was justification for the taking of an innocent life. This is a pattern that the Sangh Parivar and sections of the media repeat regularly with numbing effect and in that charges of molestation are the most common alibi. Later it is found that it is entirely concocted. In Jamshedpur in 2015, rumours were spread about such a case. Muslims' homes were burnt and there was a clash leading to curfew for several days. However police reported that there was no such incident. Even if such incidents do occur, as they do, the RSS and its outfits always give it a communal colour instead of mobilizing all against the rapist, the criminals, regardless of the community they may belong to. Thus issues of violence against women are used by the Sangh Parivar selectively to rouse communal anger. They have not a word to say of the annual average of over 8000 Hindu women burnt in the name of dowry within their own homes.

The highest number of communal clashes occurred and continue to occur in UP. Assembly elections are due in 2017 and, for the BJP, the stakes are very high. Communal polarization and rioting in Western UP earned them rich dividends in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and they are eager to repeat the same. Between May and July, 2014, 13 incidents of communal clashes left five persons dead and over 100 injured in the State. Meerut saw 3 clashes; Moradabad, one; Muzaffarnagar remains tense with incidents occurring every month or so; Pratapgarh, Faizabad, Bahraich, Saharanpur, Shamli, Gautam Budh Nagar, Mathura all witnessed clashes. By August 2014, the Indian Express reported that over 600 communal incidents had taken place in UP since the Lok Sabha results.

In the last 2 years, such incidents have occurred in Haryana, Delhi, Hyderabad, Gujarat, Bihar and Rajasthan with minor alterations in the plot but with the epicenter still in UP. The common threads are the involvement of the Sangh Parivar, the complicity of the police and administration and the loss of property and life being confined to Muslims.

Engineering riots, however, is not the only method of widening the communal divide utilised by the Sangh Parivar.

Hindutva Terror cases

There were serious apprehensions when the Modi Government took over that it would dilute and ultimately sabotage the cases of terror against Hindutva groups. The cases include the Malegaon bomb blast case, the Mecca Masjid bombings in Hyderabad, the Samjhauta Express bombings, the Ajmer Sharif bomb blasts. The cases are all in various courts and their involvement is suspected in 16 incidents. In the Malegaon case it was the brave and honest police officer Hemant Karkare who had headed the SIT formed for the investigation. He himself was killed by Pakistani terrorists in the Mumbai attack. It was he who had meticulously collected the facts and linked the blasts to a Hindutva group called Abhinav Bharat. Names of others had also reportedly come up in the investigation such as Rashtriya Jagran Manch, Sharda Sarvagya Peeth, Hindu Rashtra Sena, many of whose members had RSS links. Swamy Aseemanand one of the accused had in fact exposed the meetings he had with top RSS leaders. Later they all retracted the

statements. After the Modi Government came to power, the National Investigation Agency, responsible for the case asked Rohini Salian Public Prosecutor to go soft on the accused. Many of the witnesses found protection in the Modi Government stand and turned hostile. 15 witnesses in the Samjhauta case and 19 witnesses in the Ajmer blasts have turned hostile and two witnesses against Aseemanand in the train blasts have also turned hostile. Now the NIA has given a clean chit to “Sadhvi Pragya and others in the Malegaon blasts. In doing so they have maligned the work of a fine officer like Karkare who is not here to defend himself. This shows the double standards of the ruling BJP. Terror for them has a religious label and if terror acts are committed by Hindutva groups, they are not to be treated as terrorists.

Love Jihad

National dailies of August 4, 2014 reported the incendiary news of a 20 year old Hindu woman teacher having been forcibly converted to Islam and gang-raped by Muslims. The incident reportedly occurred in the most sensitive area of a communally polarized Western UP just days after communal clashes occurred in the nearby district of Saharanpur. Two months later, the girl went to the police and confessed that she had eloped with a young Muslim and converted to Islam before marrying him. She insisted on being allowed to live with her husband. Later, her father confessed that a local BJP leader had given him 25,000/- as an incentive to fabricate the story of rape and forced conversion. Reports of this ‘incident’, and others like it, intensify polarization in an already polarized area and have the potential to trigger off horrendous violence. The trust between communities that have lived in amity for generations is frayed forever.

A similar incident from MP occurred in October, 2014 when a Christian boy, Joseph and a Hindu girl, Ayushi, both majors, married in an Arya Samaj mandir in Bhopal. Hundreds of Bajrang Dal members gathered in their home town, Jobat, to protest. Even the police officer tried to convince Joseph to become a Hindu. The Bajrang Dal activists alleged that such marriages are an effort by Christians to increase their population. Ayushi is in a Government-run home while Joseph is in his house.

Such incidents have occurred in many parts of the country. The Bajrang

Dal and their allies are running a continuous propaganda campaign in which they accuse Muslims (and Christians) of luring unsuspecting Hindu girls into relationships. They insist that such women will be forced into prostitution and will also have to accept their husbands’ polygamous relationships. The language used is vicious and obscene.

Attacks on Christians in the Name of ‘Conversion’

In Sirisguda, Bastar District of Chhatisgarh, the VHP campaign against Christian missionaries led to the ban on their entry in 50 villages of the area in July, 2014. Over 50 gram panchayats in Bastar passed orders under Section 129 (G) of the Chhattisgarh Panchayat Raj Act banning all “non-Hindu religious propaganda, prayers and speeches in the villages.” The order said “To stop the forced conversion by some outsider religious campaigners and to prevent them from using derogatory language against Hindu deities and customs, the Sirisguda Gram Sabha bans religious activities such as prayers, meetings and propaganda of all non-Hindu religions.” Christians were attacked and denied ration on the orders of the village panchayat. “It’s been over two months now that we have been denied ration in the village and 10 Christians were attacked when they went to collect ration,” claimed Sonuru Mandavi, whose family converted to Christianity in 2002.

Hate Speech

Recourse to hate speech by leaders of the Sangh Parivar, often elected representatives and Ministers has become an every day occurrence. The most ghastly example of this is a speech given in March, 2015 in the presence of Yogi Adityanath, MP, in which he exhorts his listeners to dig out dead bodies of Muslim women and rape them. A barbaric incident that occurred a few months later in Ghaziabad, UP in October may or may not have been inspired by this speech: Two young Hindus dug out the dead body of a 26-year-old Muslim woman from a grave in which she had been buried two days previously had raped the dead body.

The Issue of the Holy Cow

The veneration of the cow and its slaughter by Muslims have been issues that have repeatedly been used by the Sangh Parivar. After the

Modi Government formation, several States have made anti-cow slaughter laws more stringent and have brought bullocks and calves within their purview. This has led to great economic hardship for Muslim and Dalit communities and also for drought-stricken farmers. It has also been used to lynch Muslims in several parts of the country.

Jammu (J&K), Jharkhand and Haryana have also witnessed such attacks and killings in 2015 and 2016. The worst example of this was in Latehar, Jharkhand. A twelve year old boy and his uncle taking eight bullocks to a cattle fair were stopped on the way by so-called gauraksha vigilantes, brutally beaten and then hanged to death. The BJP Chief Minister sought to justify the crime in the name of criminal cattle smugglers being caught. When the lie was thoroughly exposed he backtracked but the police had got the message. They refused to interrogate the main gaurakshasamity organisers who take their inspiration from RSS ideology. All over the country these samity's operate under the protection of BJP politicians, including elected members. These lynchings have created an atmosphere of terror



for ordinary Muslims and have emboldened members of Bajrang Dal etc. to attack and kill Muslims with impunity.

Using Bharat Mata Ki Jai as Proof of Patriotism

Several Sangh Parivar notables including the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and the Union Minister for Human Resources have proclaimed along with their allies, leaders of the Shiv Sena that those who do not chant the slogan 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' are anti-national and should go to Pakistan. A very disturbing example of their intentions was the suspension of an MIM legislator in Maharashtra on March 17, 2016, because he refused to chant 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' but said that he would say 'Jai Hindustan'. Shockingly, it was Congress MLAs who initiated the move for his suspension.

This is just one example of the way in which the Sangh Parivar conflates slogans and symbols that are Hindu in nature with expressions of patriotism and then all those who object to this are dubbed anti-national. A consonance between anti-national and non-Hindu is being promoted constantly.

Political Campaigns with Communal Undertones

The BJP's successes in various elections have been attributed to the promise of development made repeatedly by its leader, Narendra Modi. A closer look at these results will reveal, however, that the undercurrent of communal polarization that the Sangh Parivar campaigns ensure is the real factor behind these successes. The most recent example of this is the BJP victory in Assam. While the alliances it entered into certainly contributed to its success, there is no doubt that the campaign by the Sangh Parivar over the last several years against Bangladeshi Muslim migrants has found traction among many sections of the population.

Conclusion

The emphasis on slogans may change from love jihad to Gau Mata ki Raksha to Bharat Mata ki Jai, but the intent and goal remains the same..to target the minorities, to move towards a Hindu rashtra which means an

assault on the basic pillars of the Indian constitutional guarantees of secularism and for the protection of minority rights. Such an approach also helps and strengthens the fundamentalist elements within minority communities who organize to take “revenge”. Every way, India and the Indian people are the sufferers.



SECTION - 4

India
Not A Global Leader
But U.S Junior Partner



Do Saal, Janata Behaal

US Gains from Modi Foreign Policy As Showbiz

Apart from the frequent flyer miles he has clocked, Prime Minister Modi has very little to show for the 40 foreign trips over the last two years. On the flip side, we have virtually aligned ourselves with the US. The US has also recently placed a resolution in the Congress bringing India on par with its NATO allies; and the long-pending Logistics Service Agreement with the US is back on the anvil, giving the US access to our air and sea ports, and allowing it to establish military bases here.

In an era, when the US hegemony is eroding, and a multi-polar world emerging, the Modi government has shown the bankruptcy of its vision by increasingly aligning with the US. It is willingly becoming a partner to the US goal of the containment of China, and its pivot to Asia. Earlier, even though India was much weaker economically, it had always withstood pressures to become a part of any other global player's geo-strategic policy. Today, India is increasingly seen as a subordinate ally of the US.

The Modi government is also making other concessions to the US. It has succumbed to the US pressure and issued an Intellectual Property Policy document, which explicitly talks about changing our patent laws, the demand of the US big pharma lobby. The Modi government is working on various mechanisms to bypass the provisions of the Nuclear Regulatory Act, so that the US suppliers do not have any liability for supplying faulty reactors leading to a Fukushima-like disaster.

The biggest failure of Modi's foreign policy is in the handling of its relationship with its neighbours – Pakistan, China and Nepal. There were no preparation for any serious engagement; and hurried, ad-hoc meetings with foreign leaders were combined with grandstanding in the media. This has resulted in long-term damage to India's relationship in the region.

In Nepal, India is seen as interfering in the writing of its constitution, and giving tacit support to a section of the Madhesis for a blockade of Nepal. If Modi won brownie points as the first Prime Minister to visit Nepal after 17 years, he has squandered this goodwill. Indeed, India's relationship with Nepal has now sunk to a new low.

With Pakistan, it appeared that Modi made a good beginning by inviting PM Nawaz Sharif and other SAARC leaders to his swearing in ceremony. But soon after, the proposed talks between the two foreign secretaries were called off, because of the Pakistani Ambassador meeting Hurriyat leaders. The nascent peace process was aborted. Modi's recent air dash to Lahore to attend the wedding of Nawaz Sharif's grand daughter, the Pathankot terror attack, and the fiasco over the visits of the investigators, follows by the now familiar pattern: first agree to meet and discuss various steps, followed by break-down of the process, and recriminations. Back-channel diplomacy, preparations on both sides on what is achievable, and laying down do's and don'ts prior to any serious, diplomatic engagement, are all missing.

India's relations with China show a similar lack of preparation and break-down of talks. President Xi Jinping's visit to Ahmedabad and his talks with the Prime Minister, saw a stand-off over Ladakh even before the visit was over. The relations between India and China worsened with India's endorsement of the US position on South China Sea in a joint statement, and then India's participation in a joint naval exercise with the US and Japan. While China's blocking of the declaration of Masood Azar as a terrorist in the UN should be criticised, India's retaliation by first granting a visa to an Uighur activist on a red notice of Interpol as a terrorist, and then withdrawing it under Chinese pressure, does not show Indian diplomacy in a good light. As in the case of Pakistan, Modi's off and on again China initiatives, shows little application of mind and very little preparation.

Modi's foreign policy initiatives appear to have completely cut the Ministry of External Affairs and India's professional diplomats out of the loop. It has been entirely led by the PMO. To compound the problem, instead of a geopolitical vision, the former RAW officer Ajit Doval and now the National Security Advisor, has added a narrow, security lens to India's foreign policy. The other aspect has been the primary focus of Modi's foreign visits — media events instead of diplomatic engagements. Madison Garden in New York, Shark Tank in San Francisco, Wembley Stadium in London – are all examples of media extravaganzas. Modi seems to be more interested in marketing himself to the Non Resident Indian community, than pursuing a meaningful foreign policy.

India's foreign policy is also not helped by sundry ministers such as Mahesh Sharma, the Minister of State for Culture talking of violence in Africa as an excuse for the murders of African students here, or the vainglorious claims of Rajyavardhan Rathore, Minister of State in the I&B Ministry, regarding hot-pursuit in Myanmar and threats to Pakistan.

On Palestine, India has now firmly aligned itself with Israel. Though it still pays lip service to Palestine, through what it calls de-hyphenation of its relationship with Israel and Palestine, it refuses to even acknowledge that Israel is committing war crimes in Gaza and violating international law in its continued occupation of Palestine. It has lined up \$3 billion defence deals with Israel to be signed during Modi's Israel visit, abstained from an UNHRC resolution in 2015 criticising Israel on Gaza, and refused to protest on Israel's stopping the gift of 30 Indian computers and other communication equipment destined for the Al-Quds University in Ramallah.

Policy as showbiz, policy subordinating India to a declining super power: this is the sum total of Modi's two years of foreign policy.