

# **The Resurgent India**

**A Monthly National Review**

February 2020



***“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”***

*- The Mother*

Year 10

Issue 11

The Resurgent India English monthly published and printed by Smt. Suman Sharma on behalf of The Resurgent India Trust Published at C/o J. N. Socketed Cement Pipes Pvt. Ltd., Village Bhamraula Post Bagwara, Kichha Road, Rudrapur (U.S Nagar)  
**email:** sadlecjnn@gmail.com, info@resurgentindia.org, URL : www.resurgentindia.org

**Printed at :** Priyanka Printing Press, Hotel Krish Building, Janta Inter College Road, Udham Nagar, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand

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# THE RESURGENT INDIA

A Monthly National Review

February 2020



## SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

*Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella*

*Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels*

Year 10

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## **A Declaration**

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

— The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

## DELHI ELECTION: SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF NATIONALISM

The entire process of the Delhi elections – from the political developments in the city to the election results – are a snapshot of how far removed the electoral process has become from the core issues that affect the country. This illusory model of democracy – based on creating a false divide between national and local issues and presenting national issues as something abstract, impractical and idealistic – was severely tested during the Delhi elections. The message from Delhi elections and its aftermath was that this utilitarian and gross thinking may have survived for now, but will not go very far. The tendency to relegate “national issues” to ‘national elections’ and labour under the delusion that they do not minutely affect the people of this country in their everyday lives is a myth that was severely tested in the Delhi elections and its aftermath.

Similarly, counterposing the myth and the illusion of economic development – of narrowly making the provision of basic services the most pressing issue for the people – also revealed its limitations. This glorification of lowest possible denominator – of elevating gross everyday necessities and basic services to the level of politics – cannot survive for long in an environment of national fermentation. And the Delhi elections indicated as much, if not in terms of results, at least in terms of their wider significance, questioning and the disturbed aftermath they generated.

As Sri Aurobindo had once written in this regard in 1908,

***“The uplifting of a nation cannot be accomplished by a few diplomatic politicians. The spirit to serve, the spirit to work,***

***the spirit to suffer must be roused. Men in their ordinary utilitarian course of life do not feel called upon to serve anyone except themselves...we must continuously appeal to his better nature, we must evoke the spiritual in him, we must call forth his moral enthusiasm.***

***These may not be human nature's daily food, they may not be necessary for our daily life, they may not have their use in the ordinary selfish pursuits, but they are essential for working a change in our social or political life...England is commercially great because Adam Smith gave her the secret of free-trade. England is politically great because her national ideals have been bold and high, not because of her parish work and municipalities.” (CWSA 7, 880).***

This is a fundamental reality that Indians, immersed in their selfishness, have completely lost hold of. Thus, the glorification and politicization of natural, daily life and duties – the politics of education, health, transport and municipalities – and the myth that national issues do not matter shows that we have touched the lowest common denominator in politics, as in economics. In India, nationalistic fermentation and revival has occurred over the last six years, but it had not yet breached the gross utilitarian fortress of the way politics was conducted. Beginning from Delhi elections, the cracks in this are already visible.

## **WHAT THE DATA REVEALS**

The contest in Delhi was between Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). Congress was also in the fray, but its presence was next to nothing. AAP won with a clear majority winning 62 out of 70 seats, while BJP secured 8 seats and Congress got zero. Both Congress and AAP reduced their vote-share.

**Table 1: Vote share and seat share in Delhi elections**

Party	2013 seat- share	2013 vote- share	2015 seat- share	2015 vote- share	2020 seat- share	2020 vote- share
AAP	28	29.4%	67	54.3%	62	53.5%
BJP	31	33.07%	3	32.2%	8	38.5%
Congress	8	24.5%	0	9.6%	0	4.2%

Source: Election Commission

While the BJP managed to increase its vote-share by a significant 6.3% and the AAP vote-share was only marginally affected from 2015, the sweeping nature of AAP's victory does not leave much scope for searching for a silver lining in BJP's numbers. Overall, AAP performed well among all castes and communities, across rich and poor classes as well as women and young first-time voters. Among the migrants, BJP has performed slightly better gaining among migrants from UP, Bihar/Jharkhand, Punjab/Haryana and other parts, though again their vote – mirroring the Hindu vote – got divided right in the middle.

Yet, there are a few patterns that are clearly visible.

First, the reduction of Congress's vote-share by almost 5.4% shows that that vote has transferred to both BJP and AAP. 63 out of 66 Congress candidates lost their deposits in the seats they had contested from. But it is more likely that marginally AAP's vote-share shifted to BJP, while Congress's vote-share shifted to AAP. As per post-poll surveys, ***there is large overlapping between AAP and BJP voter-base, with the PM and CM both holding an appeal for most voters. Voters saw no contradiction in simultaneously supporting BJP at the national***



## **level and AAP at the state level.**

There were 7 seats where the victory margins for AAP were less 3500 votes. The AAP's average winning margin remained higher than BJP at 17.5% as against BJP's average winning margin of 8.2% (Verniers 2020), but AAP's winning margin decreased in 41 seats compared to 2015 and increased in 20 seats (The Hindu 2020). Arvind Kejriwal's winning margin from New Delhi seat came down by about 9886 votes compared to 2015. Significantly, AAP's vote share decreased in 38 seats, BJP's vote share decreased in 7 seats, while Congress's vote share went down in 64 seats (The Hindu 2020).

Second, as per election-eve and post-poll surveys, the approximate community-wise vote shares show that while BJP's vote share has gone up among many communities and castes, the party has performed badly among the Vaishya community and the Sikhs. The Hindu vote was largely divided.

**Table 2: Community-wise vote share compared to 2015**

	<b>Congress</b>	<b>BJP</b>	<b>AAP</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Brahmin</b>	3 (-5)	55 (+6)	40 (-1)	2
<b>Rajput</b>	2 (-7)	54 (+10)	41 (-3)	3
<b>Vaishya</b>	1 (-6)	53 (-7)	42 (+11)	4 (+2)
<b>Punjabi Khatri</b>	4 (-9)	53 (+20)	40 (-12)	3 (+1)
<b>Other upper caste</b>	2 (-5)	51 (+12)	43 (-5)	4 (-2)
<b>Jat</b>	1 (-4)	59	38 (+7)	2 (-3)
<b>Gujjar</b>	2 (-17)	54 (+35)	43 (-5)	1 (-13)
<b>Yadav</b>	5 (+1)	41 (+1)	53 (-3)	1 (+1)
<b>Other OBCs</b>	3 (-6)	44 (+15)	51 (-9)	2

<b>Jatav</b>	3 (+1)	22 (+7)	72 (-2)	3 (-6)
<b>Balmiki</b>	4 (+1)	29 (+11)	65 (-14)	2 (+2)
<b>Other Dalits</b>	5 (-5)	27 (+7)	66 (+1)	2 (-3)
Hindus overall	3 (-5)	46 (+9)	48 (-3)	3 (-1)
Muslim	13 (-7)	3 (+1)	83 (+6)	1
Sikh	4 (-4)	28 (-6)	67 (+10)	1
<b>Others</b>	4	28 (-2)	63	5 (+2)

Source: Delhi 2020 election-eve survey & Delhi Post Poll 2015 by Lokniti-CSDS

Overall, BJP’s vote share is slightly better than that of AAP among upper castes including Punjabis, Jats and Gujjars. While BJP has made inroads among almost all communities, it’s vote-share is less than that of AAP among Yadavs, OBCs and Dalits. AAP has done well among Dalits, but has also lost support among Balmiki Dalits.

Similarly, AAP has lost some support of lower OBCs, while managing to hold onto higher OBC votes. Gujjar votes which used to belong to the Congress shifted, with both AAP and BJP doing well. Thus, while Hindu vote was split nearly right in the middle between AAP and BJP, Muslim, Sikh and Other non-Hindu votes went heavily in favour of AAP. As per 2011 Census, Muslims formed nearly 13% of Delhi’s population, while Sikhs formed nearly 4.5% of Delhi’s population, while Hindus are in the majority at 80% of the city’s population.

The dynamics of Muslim vote, when analysed in some detail, reveal the actual fault-lines of this election. ***The voting pattern of Muslims break the myth that Delhi elections were a referendum on ‘developmental and governance’ or ‘water-***

***electricity' issues. While among the Hindus, this may have been the case, among the Muslims, there was unprecedented religious polarization. The extent of Muslim support for AAP in this election is the highest ever and exceeded that enjoyed by the Congress during even Sheila Dikshit's time. Indeed, the Muslim vote-share in AAP's total share is around 20% compared to 17% in 2015, higher than even its Dalit vote-share (Sardesai 2020, p. 4).***

The five Muslim dominated seats – where Muslims comprise around 50% of the population – posted some of the highest turnouts of more than 70%, while the average Delhi turnout was 62.5%. AAP won by large margins in all minority dominated seats, such as Okhla, Seelampur, Ballimaran, Matia Mahal, and, Mustafabad. Besides these 5 seats, there are 6 more constituencies with Muslim population between 30% to 50% viz. Shahdara, Babarpur, Seemapuri (SC), Sadar Bazar, Kirari and Chandni Chowk. In all these 11 seats, AAP won handsomely.

Third, as the voting patterns in Muslim dominated areas show, the trend of reverse polarization was clearly visible. The Muslim dominated seats – in particular Okhla under which Jamia and Shaheen Bagh falls and Seelampur – were the hotbed of anti-CAA Muslim mobilization. ***These centers of Muslim-led anti-CAA protests witnessed both higher turnouts as well as heavy electoral polarization in favour of AAP which Muslims strategically saw as the only party capable of defeating the BJP.***

***In contrast, despite the manner in which the nearly two-month long Shaheen Bagh 'protests' had taken the city hostage and were a clear assertion of Muslim identity, the Hindus saw no polarization at all.*** Prior to the illegal Shaheen Bagh occupation, there was also heavy violence, near riots and stone-

pelting in northeast Delhi’s Seelampur and Jaffrabad by the Muslims where even school buses were not spared as a part of so-called ‘anti-CAA agitation’ in early December. These areas are the hotbed of not only Muslims but also house illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. Despite all this, the larger Hindu population of Delhi remained unaffected and unconcerned.

However, in constituencies with substantial Muslim population, the BJP did manage to improve its performance from 2015, except in Matia Mahal.

Table 3: BJP’s performance in Muslim majority and Muslim dominated seats:

	<b>BJP vote share 2015</b>	<b>BJP vote share 2020</b>	<b>AAP vote share 2015</b>	<b>AAP vote share 2020</b>
<b>Sadar Bazar</b>	28%	35%	56.8%	56%
<b>Chandni Chowk</b>	25%	27.6%	49.6%	66%
<b>Matia Mahal</b>	27%	19.2%	59.4%	76%
<b>Ballimaran</b>	24.3%	29.03%	60%	64.65%
<b>Okhla</b>	24%	29.7%	62.7%	66%
<b>Shahdara</b>	39.6%	45.3%	49.6%	49.5%
<b>Seelampur</b>	26.4%	27.6%	51.4%	56.05%
<b>Babarpur</b>	31.8%	36.23%	59.26%	59.4%
<b>Mustafabad</b>	31.8%	42.06%	35.45%	53.2%
<b>Kirari</b>	33.3%	46.5%	62%	49.7%

Source: Election Commission of India

Shahdara and Mustafabad are particularly significant cases, where BJP’s vote share increased significantly. Mustafabad has over 78% Muslim population, indicating that Hindu consolidation

had occurred. But compared to Delhi-wide trends, these are sporadic instances, and show that the assertion of Muslim identity through Shaheen Bagh did not have an effect on Hindus in the rest of Delhi.

## **THE REAL ISSUE: WHY BJP LOST**

***The election results show that BJP has not only held onto its vote-share, but also increased it by over 6%, and has also given a tough fight to AAP by reducing the latter's winning margins in 38 out of 70 seats and increasing its own margins in 63 constituencies. Nationalism has definitely had an effect on people and had the adversary been an outrightly secular party like the Congress instead of AAP, BJP's victory would have been more assured. If BJP had combined its nationalism mobilization with more robust opposition towards Kejriwal, their performance may have been far better.***

BJP has lost despite increasing its vote-share, partly due to failure to focus on local issues, infighting among unit members and other 'local' reasons. These have been acknowledged as being key reasons by many BJP leaders in the case of Delhi as well. Manoj Tiwari, who heads the Delhi unit, is not considered as being popular outside of some Purvanchali voters. There is also lot of infighting among unit members, with older Punjabi leaders, such as Vijay Goel wanting to take independent decisions. The lack of unity – as well as the lack of narrative – was clearly visible.

Attempts to corner Kejriwal by calling him out on buying voters by providing 'freebies' failed to hit the mark, as it was neither well-articulated, nor developed over the last few years/months when Kejriwal was engaging in these policies. The BJP campaigning also started late, from middle of January by calling

in the national leaders, while AAP had been in a campaign mode for the last few months preceding the elections. In Lok Sabha election of 2019, BJP won all 7 seats in Delhi solely because of Modi and because of the nationally recharged environment. The Delhi unit failed to develop the connect on these issues over a period of time. BJP may have – via the central government – regularized illegal colonies, yet the dividend was reaped by Kejriwal, as it was seen as a stand-alone issue.

***These issues of ‘development’ and governance formed the mainstay for majority Hindus in Delhi, even as national issues like CAA/NRC/ Ram Mandir/Kashmir conditioned the Muslim voting patterns. Therefore, it cannot be said that local issues alone determined election outcomes. They only did so for the Hindus. National issues mattered and polarization did occur, but largely among the Muslims.***

***Delhi cannot even be compared to BJP’s losses in Jharkhand or any other state, since the elections were taking place in a recharged and extremely significant national environment, the hotbed of which was Delhi itself. Under such an environment, it is incomprehensible that the national level should not matter to the majority community. The developments that took place nationally – and their grave import – far exceeded all these petty and temporary local problems put together. That this still did not figure in the voter mindset has gone onto reveal how blissfully ignorant and gullible is the educated, metropolitan India’s psyche.***

Indeed, if there is any election that can be characterized as being of a national level importance after the Lok Sabha election, it was the present Delhi election. The election occurred in a highly polarized national environment which, since December 2019, has seen massive protests all over the country against CAA and

NRC by Muslim mobs. Since December, Delhi has become a hotbed and a representative of this anti-India mobilization in the form of Shaheen Bagh occupation. It was also obvious to all that Muslims have – through these protests – gone all the way in asserting their religious identity at the national level for the first time in decades in such an unprecedented manner, through incendiary, anti-national, anti-Hindu speeches, slogans etc. In UP, Muslim mobs did not even spare the policemen till there was a heavy crackdown on them.

Yet this virtual ongoing national emergency – the consistent taking of hostage of Indian cities by minority communities – failed to weigh in with the Delhi voters. ***In many instances, as post poll surveys showed, there were many Delhi voters who claimed to support CAA/NRC and Modi government at the centre, and had yet voted for AAP in Delhi. This was largely because they not only viewed Kejriwal as promoting ‘development’, but also as not being antagonistic to Hindu interests. AAP’s refusal to support or comment on Shaheen Bagh and take the election focus away from that issue worked in its favour. It also peddled soft, minimalistic Hindutva narrative that gave the impression that AAP is not a secular, Hinduphobic party like the Congress.***

The results show that India has yet to get the real message – that to understand the true importance of the nation, the bogey of development and governance (like secularism) which has become a mask for perverse self-immersion will have to be removed. That the process would start so fast ***on the eve of Donald Trump’s visit was unexpected, as Muslim mobs repaid the rest of Delhi’s blind trust in ‘development’ by virtually setting major parts of the city on fire.***

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The seemingly well-orchestrated riots were started on 24<sup>th</sup>

February – with Trump’s visit to Delhi due on 25<sup>th</sup> February – when Muslim mobs (with lot of women) gheraoed the Seelampur and Jaffrabad metro stations and soon spread to other metro stations like Babarpur. These are all Muslim dominated (as well as illegal Bangladeshi dominated) areas in northeast Delhi. The aim was to replicate the ‘Shaheen Bagh model’ across the city. In response, BJP’s Kapil Mishra issued a public warning that if the Delhi Police did not remove this illegal occupation within 3 days, Hindus would remove these people forcefully. That statement was exactly the opportunity Muslim mobs were waiting for to start the riots. Thereafter, riots spread like wildfire across the whole of northeast Delhi.

At some point, early on, when riots had not taken a full-fledged form, Muslims – keeping their women in the front – attempted to occupy Hauz Rani area in Malviya Nagar (in South Delhi), but were soon evicted. The riots remained confined to northeast Delhi, but the intensity was unprecedented. 25 people died while hundreds were injured, with the casualties going up with each passing day. Ground reporters attached evidence showing how Muslim mobs climbed on roofs of houses and hurled petrol bombs and stones. Police personnel were not spared. The case of death of a Delhi Police constable and the brutal torture and lynching of a young Intelligence Bureau (IB) trainee, Ankit Sharma, stand out. Sharma’s family has confirmed on national television that he was dragged by a Muslim mob inside AAP corporator, Tahir Hussain’s house, where he was tortured and murdered.

While riots raged and even gained intensity just when Trump was about to land in Delhi, extra forces were called in to keep the situation under control. Muslim mobs’ planned antagonism was based on provoking the Indian government into cracking



down on them while Trump was in India and thereby painting themselves as victims. The Muslim lobby, media and intellectuals were also hoping that Trump would comment on the Delhi riots. Despite asking him a question on it in a press conference, Trump refused to comment on it citing it as India's internal matter.

The police crackdown began as soon as Trump left, on the night of 25<sup>th</sup> itself, when immediate shoot-at-sight orders were imposed across northeast Delhi. Detentions happened overnight and the situation was brought under control broadly. But the violence by the Muslim mobs has continued, though it is reduced in intensity. Illegal occupation of Jaffrabad and other metro stations was cleared by the police.

While Hindus have reacted and fought back, it is the Muslim mobs who have had the upper hand. The judiciary itself has come under scanner for minority appeasement. Delhi High Court's, Justice Muralidhar, admitted only evidence against Hindu leaders for their speech, completely ignoring all evidence of Muslim leaders and intellectuals who have been goading the minorities to take to the streets. Even worse, he ignored all evidence of Muslim violence and compared the riots to the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom. Justice Muralidhar is also the very same person under whom JNU case of administration versus students has been stuck for 2 years now and evidence against Kanhaiya Kumar's pro-Afzal Guru event of 2016 was not acted upon.

The riots are a logical follow-up of the kid gloves with which Shaheen Bagh was treated by Delhi citizens. ***Despite the clear communal polarization in Muslim voting patterns, Delhi simply assumed that once elections are over, the Shaheen Bagh 'protest' would stop. Instead, ironically, the Islamic fundamentalist mentality which perpetuated it has spread, emboldened by the election results and based on the***

***assumptions that Hindus will always be cowardly and meek regardless of the most abusive violence and provocation.***

***The rioting Muslim mobs made the mistake of reading the Delhi election result as a vote against BJP and its plank of nationalism and an endorsement of Muslim assertion. In reality, it was not an ideological rejection of BJP, but a vote in favour of Kejriwal, undergirded by the conviction that nationalism is not in danger due to AAP. The Muslim calculus also assumed that AAP was careless and insincere in its mild Hindu appeasement and will become like another replica of secular, minority-appeasing Congress once the elections are over. This has not happened.*** For, emboldened by Delhi victory, AAP now seeks to make at least some inroads into the Hindu vote-bank of BJP. Thus, even after elections, some AAP's individual leaders have continued to build upon this Hindu base.

This impression was further reinforced during the riots, when Kejriwal ended up massively antagonizing the Muslims and their intellectual/media patrons due to his refusal to stand by 'Muslim victims' or comment on the riots except a general appeal for maintaining peace. On the other hand, his action of condemning deaths of police forces also did not go down too well with the minority, secularist lobby. When a mob of 'protestors' gathered outside his residence, on 26<sup>th</sup>, to 'protest' against his silence on the Muslim victims, not only he did not meet them, but they were also greeted with heavy water cannons unleashed by the police.

## **THE ILLUSION AND DANGERS OF THE NATIONAL-LOCAL DIVIDE**

As Delhi elections showed, even the most clear-cut and visible pattern of national and local polarization by minority

Muslim communities on a national issue – like the NRC which had not even come into existence – right in the heart of Delhi, could not awaken the self-immersed populace of Delhi to come out of their comfort zone. The later distancing of AAP from the Shaheen Bagh protests and performance of some religious theatrics was sufficient for the people of Delhi to assume that national issues are taken care of and they should vote on the basis of purely local issues.

This blissful self-immersion and failure to emotionally and psychologically connect with the nation is something that India has witnessed historically and even paid a price for. As Sri Aurobindo wrote, ***“Ancient India could not build itself into a single united nation, not because of caste or social differences as the European writers assert, – caste and class have existed in nations which achieved a faultless national unity, – but because the old polity of the Hindus allowed the village to live to itself, the clan to live to itself, the province or smaller race-unit to live to itself. The village, sufficient to itself, took no interest in the great wars and revolutions which affected only the ruling clans of the kingdom including it in its territorial jurisdiction... One cause perhaps more than any other contributed to the failure of the centripetal tendency to attain self-fulfilment, and that was the persistence of the village community which prevented the people, the real nation, from taking any part in the great struggles out of which a nation should have emerged. In other countries the people had to take part in the triumphs, disasters and failures of their rulers either as citizens or at least as soldiers, but in India they were left to their little isolated republics with no farther interest than the payment of a settled tax in return for protection by the supreme power. This was the true cause of the failure of India to achieve a distinct organized and self-conscious nationality.”*** (CWSA 7, 908-09).

While the political scenario is now different and India has achieved political unity since then due to our administrative and political integration, yet this political unity – as numerous instances in post-Independent India have shown – is incomplete without effective national integration. What Sri Aurobindo had explained in 1908 as a fundamental problem of India now applies in form of a different kind of obstacle, as forces opposed to India’s national consolidation – in the form of illusion of development or ‘vikas’ and secularism – are using the garb of locality/state-level to blindside and constrain people and dilute the reviving spirit of national awareness. ***And the closeting of the locality – cities and states – within the easy prism of utilitarian issues during periodic state elections is misleading the people and proving to be a serious obstacle to bringing home the importance of national turning points that we are facing.***

Our current political system – as is increasingly becoming evident – is in need of a radical change. As Sri Aurobindo had said, ***“Life is organic because it evolves from the separate to the united, from the individual to the group, from the cell to the organism, and what we require in India is political life, not a manufactured unity. All our previous attempts at union have been failures because we did not recognize this law of growth.”*** (CWSA 7: 943).

***In Delhi elections, while the gross politics of “local” issues was used skillfully to keep the majority communities blinded, the minorities witnessed unprecedented religious polarization in their protests and voting patterns that transcended the local domain, showing how Muslims continue to strongly constitute a psychological idea of nation-hood based purely on their religion, as even Ambedkar had warned.*** Such misleading and

blindsiding is not only detrimental to national interests but also proves to be an obstacle to changing the corrupt, self-interested and utilitarian political system of the country. ***The present Indian political system – modelled on the Western idea of democracy, freedom and socialism – and the effect of 73 years of its working on the Indian psyche reveals a deep disjunct between India’s civilizational values of Sanatana Dharma which are still alive and the artificially cultivated selfish, utilitarian, corrupt political psyche of people which is only now and slowly beginning to be touched by these deeper values.***

The model of democracy which liberals trumpet and the gross, utilitarian politics of basic provision of needs which parties like AAP have reduced the meaning of socialism to have completely distorted the true understanding of these terms, as seen in an Indian context, unadulterated by Western impositions. As Sri Aurobindo explained, ***“What is called Socialism in Europe, is the old Asiatic attempt to effect a permanent solution of the economic problem of society which will give man leisure and peace to develop undisturbed his higher self...without it we cannot get the equalised and harmonised distribution of functions, each part of the community existing for the good of all and not struggling for its own separate interests, which will give humanity as a whole the necessary conditions in which it can turn its best energies to its higher development...The fulfilment of Hinduism is the fulfilment of the highest tendencies of human civilisation and it must include in its sweep the most vital impulses of modern life. It will include democracy and Socialism also, purifying them, raising them above the excessive stress on the economic adjustments which are the means, and teaching them to fix their eyes more constantly and clearly on the moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection of mankind which is the end.”*** (CWSA 7: 684-85).

The façade of Delhi elections that has been exposed in its aftermath in the form of ongoing strife in Delhi shows how the difficult and painful process of national self-awareness and regeneration is still going on. It not only shows that careless choices will have immediate consequences, but also that India's political system, the process of politics and the public common sense and psyche are moving towards inevitable fundamental changes, crying out for recovering the truths at their base, as India begins to show the way to the rest of the world.

### **Appendix:**

#### **List of Muslim majority towns and percentage of Muslims in Delhi (as per Census 2011):**

Chandan Hola (South Delhi): 63.26%

Mustafabad (Northeast Delhi): 78.05%

Khajoori Khas (Northeast Delhi): 56.44%

Jaffrabad (Northeast Delhi): 70.6%

Mir Pur Turk (Northeast Delhi): 78.08%

Baqiabad (Northeast Delhi): 59.5%

North Delhi Municipal Corporation (Central Delhi District): 64.7%

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# THE INDIAN SPIRITUAL HERITAGE AND THE PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – 3

## INTRODUCTION

### I. THE PROBLEM OF DEVELOPMENT

### II. THE ILLUSION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the modern era Science and Progress has brought about an increasing concentration of man on his surface individual self which, as pointed out earlier, makes it impossible that individuals, in general, could be getting better in any real sense. Therefore, what is perceived as progress or development, in spite of the bewitching appearances to the contrary, must be really illusory as far as the real well-being is concerned. **It should be apparent to all who can look behind surface appearances that, as long as the present trend in the movement of human psychology continues, not only can there be no increase in real income and well-being, but, as a matter of fact, these things are bound to experience a steady decline over time which, if not stopped by some divine intervention enabling humanity to change course, will lead humanity towards its extinction in the near future.**

Science, progress, government, society are simply instruments and mediums and not the godheads that this materialistic age has made of them. These are like a double-edged sword that can cut both ways and their value is dependent on the consciousness of those using them. Because of the narrowness of the goals and the egoistic spirit in which they have been pursued, the whole humanity seems to have come under the influence of the subtle vital beings – who are invisible but whose presence can be felt – of the life plane whose aim is



always to enslave human beings through their unchastened desires and use them for their own satisfaction which lies in creating, as much as possible, confusion, disharmony, catastrophes and other forms of sufferings and passions which makes human beings throw out the kind of vital vibrations these beings cherish. To anyone who can really step-back and look at the present scenario it will be apparent that the present civilization is swiftly moving towards destruction of life on earth.\* One of the most important factors contributing to this movement is humanity's blind acceptance and seeking after the Mammon in the form of GDP.

The GDP of a country consists of the production or consumption of goods and services. While the production of goods can be measured in terms of volume, major services like education, health, justice, law and order and defence cannot be quantified and hence their volume is measured simply by the amount of money spent on them. The most important thing for a service is its quality which is often capable of being felt easily by the people involved but which cannot at all be measured objectively and hence an expense incurred on it is made to pass for its measure. If a doctor begins to charge Rs. 200 for the same examination for which earlier he charged Rs. 100, then for the purposes of economic calculations he would be considered to have provided two times more valuable service than before, even though in this case, in all probability, he may have inflicted not only a much greater financial drain but also (through his act) an adverse psychological impact on the consumer of his service.

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\* Stephen Hawking, a renowned British scientist, has recently stated that by the end of this century the earth is likely to become uninhabitable and humanity must look for life on another planet if it is to survive.

Thanks to the onslaught of the utilitarian spirit, an increasing proportion of the Health-Service sector's contribution to the GDP may be attributed to the motivated and positively harmful medical practices such as unnecessary and harmful surgeries, tests, costly medicines and treatments in the hospitals. The service sector which accounted for about one third of the world GDP in the 1950s, accounted for 66% of it in the year 2013 and in the case of an advanced economy like that of the U.S.A it is about 80% at present.

To fully illustrate our point of view, let us assume that an economy consists only of services. Now, in such an economy one person's expense will be another person's income and vice versa. If everyone were to start charging ten times (as much as before) for his/her service, this will lead to a tenfold increase in the nominal GDP as currently measured. But will there be any increase in the real GDP if the quality of the service performed remains unchanged? The only way the real GDP can increase in such an economy is via an increase in the quality of service. If the quality of service keeps going down – as it has steadily been doing under the corrosive action of the ever increasing utilitarianism in the modern societies – the real income of the people (at least as far as the services are concerned) will also keep going down regardless of the ever increasing figures for the (service sector) GDP. The real GDP figures are arrived at by deflating the nominal figures for price changes. But there is no provision for adjusting the GDP figures for changes in the quality of service which – as is felt by most – has been steadily declining over the years. The pace of this decline – thanks to the ever more powerful discoveries of science – has also been increasing, especially since the beginning of this century. So, in the face of these facts the figures for the real per capita GDP – even when an account is taken of the upward trend in the volume of services

made available – must have been declining over the years – at least as far as the consumption of services (accounting for almost two-thirds of the total) is concerned.

In any service, particularly in the case of such services as education, health and justice, quality alone, without which quantity is almost superfluous, is really important for giving satisfaction to the people. Now, what has been happening in the service sector – the world over – is that while the quality of the services has been steadily going down over the years, the national accounts figures for the average real (constant price) per capita income of persons engaged in this sector has been going up. In India, the service sector accounted for 61.5 percent of the GDP in 2015-16, but only about 28 percent of the total employment. Thus the average income of a person employed in this sector was more than 3 times that of the non-service sector.

For the non-service sector (accounting for about one-third of the GDP) the story is basically not much different. Certainly, the apparent increases in this cannot be expected to make-up for the declining real value of the service sector in its contribution to the GDP. Even in this sector, the cost of a good is not a reliable indicator of its quality nor, obviously, is its attractive outer packing. Undeniably there has been an upward trend in both of these along with the volume (of the goods), but it has been, more often than not, accompanied by a declining trend in the quality of goods in general. At present the whole world economy is based on the principle of competition with an unbridled seeking after profits by all the players in the field. It has become apparent – especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early nineties of the last century – that in the psychology of the players in the competitive economic system there is a built-in tendency to cut costs by taking out of a good all in terms of quality that can be safely taken out to enable one to lower the price and

thereby gain an additional competitive advantage in the market. If one producer begins using this trick, others will be forced to follow suit. This is what is meant by a dictum of the bad coin driving the good coin out of circulation in the market. And the above principle is the characteristic manner in which an economy begins to function under the utilitarian spirit which, if allowed to continue unabated, ultimately leads to its total dissolution.

In today's utilitarian society, more and more individuals are increasingly finding that the situation in their life and the field of work has become such that they must consent to the use of more and more unethical and degrading means to succeed or even to survive.

For example, let us assume that A and B are two competitors in a business and A resorts to the practice of avoiding paying of government taxes (whenever he can get away with it) and starts selling his articles a little cheaper. Even if B is a man of scruples, when he finds it increasingly difficult to stay in business he copies A. Now, to do better A decides to undercut his competitor by taking out of the product, in quality and substance, all that could be taken out 'safely' – without affecting the appearance, i.e. without the risk of the consumer finding out. This lowers the costs and enables A to further reduce his price. Now B must do something similar or if through his experience of so called 'realities of life', he gets exceedingly groomed in the commercial spirit he may even do better and discover novel ways of cheating customers and undercutting his competitors.

Thus the disease spontaneously percolates to deeper and deeper levels and most of the people – even those who begin with good intentions – working in any kind of business or economic activity or profession are either thrown out if they do not yield or they begin sinking to ever lower levels in ethics and morality.

**[This] utilitarian spirit...has already made deep inroads into**

**the areas of services that practically must remain – as they traditionally have been – free from the commercial spirit if they are at all going to be able to perform their sacred task. Education, health and medicine, justice and not even philanthropy and religion are any longer immune from the corrosive action of this rust of the human soul...**Close family ties and intimate personal relations have so far remained largely free from the grosser forms of this commercialism because India has a tradition of strong family ties and a spiritual culture. However, a turn towards it has already been made – particularly in the urban areas – and it may not be too long before it spreads and India begins to catch up with the Western gospel of each man for himself.

Thus it should be clear that in such a scenario, an increase in the real well-being – even when measured in the narrow terms of material well-being – is an impossibility because it depends crucially on the quality of the goods and services that became available and in this respect the declining trend in the quality of these cannot really be reversed unless people’s selfish attitude towards each other – a byproduct of an increasing concentration on the surface being brought about by the materialistic outlook and pursuits – begins to undergo a basic qualitative improvement. Such an improvement can be brought about only when mankind begins increasingly to turn towards the first member and the base of the triangle of the triple godhead of Fraternity, Liberty and Equality brought into the forefront by the French Revolution. Fraternity is the base of the triangle and Liberty and Equality are the two sides which meet to make its apex. The triangle cannot stand on its apex – the futile and painful exclusive European pursuits of Liberty or Equality during the past one hundred years should have made that abundantly clear to all those who can look behind the surface appearances of things. The triangle can stand only on the base of true Fraternity which exists only in the soul and cannot be brought into prominence unless humanity begins to progressively turn inwards towards the soul.

## ***A. The Triple Godhead of Fraternity, Liberty and Equality and the Past One Hundred Years' Record of the Attempts to Move Towards It***

The experience of past one hundred years clearly shows that the fundamental issue before us is not of the right form of the government – we have seen the working of every possible form of government (democratic, authoritarian or some form in between) – but of the spirit of governance, which means that those who would rule would not do so just formally in the name of the people using some outer machinery (elections, voting, parliaments) to sanctify their authority but would actually be very sensitive to the feelings of the common masses – not in appearance only (like in the modern democratic forms of government) but truly. And the time has come when people can no longer be fooled by the appearances or the talk of the sanctity of the sacred written documents (constitutions) or elected bodies (parliaments, assemblies, etc). A beginning in this direction seems to have been made in the consciousness of the people and the march towards this must commence. It may come across some detours but it will not be stopped or reverted because, at present, the future of humanity hangs in the balance and nature can no longer afford the luxury of one more round of partial victories followed by defeats. **Europe's failure in truly giving form to the triple godhead of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity – brought to the forefront of European consciousness by the French Revolution – is perhaps one of the most important causes that led to the last two World Wars** and fortunately the present state of defence technology is such that humanity can no longer afford a third one which may very well prove to be the last. **Fraternity is the only base on which both equality and liberty can be built and it is because of the absence of the true spirit of this godhead (which exists only in the soul) that all attempts steeped in the spirit of Western Culture and based on taking either equality (Communistic or Socialistic forms of**

**authoritarianisms) or liberty (capitalistic democratic forms) as their starting point or base have failed to establish the triple-godhead.**

The basic reason behind this kind of difficult equation is simple. Men are created equal in the spirit but not in their outer nature and are endowed with varying assortment of abilities, capacities and qualities. **People who are endowed with a strong vital nature, and consequently a powerful will, have always been able to stamp their will on all those around them. Such people will always come to occupy positions of importance and authority in any walk of life – especially in the political and economic fields because of the special attraction these have for the human vital ego – regardless of the nature of the outer form of a government or society. The past experience of humanity amply bears it out and the European experience of the last century only confirms it beyond any shadow of doubt. The crux of the matter is that the wolves will always dominate the sheep no matter where and in what kind of physical arrangement or structure they are put together.** We all know how nature has put them together in humanity with a perfect similarity in the outer appearance and with no other distinguishable features. They differ only in capacities and force, the things which become visible only in action and manifestation and then who – except perhaps some other wolves who would have their own axe to grind – can stop them, certainly not the sheep. **The only approach that can possibly tame the human wolf is the approach through the heart – not from its surface parts but from its depths where the soul has its station and where all feel oneness. Once the deep and inherent feelings of Love and Brotherhood are awakened in human hearts, the discords automatically begin to dissolve and humanity can smoothly advance towards the triple-godhead because it is only Love that can prevent the misuse of Liberty and it is only Brotherhood which can make Equality tolerable.**

## ***B. How Science and Technology are Ineffective in Redressing the Peril***

In fact not only that they cannot redress but, mostly, they even speed up the process leading to the precipice. We should be under no illusion that there is an alternative to a change in consciousness. As gross human beings, we suppose that if technology, infrastructure and equipment get better, then the service rendered is better. This is not true. Science and technology are double-edged swords whose use depends entirely on the consciousness that is using them. There are numerous examples all around us that prove this. For instance, at present things have reached such disgustingly low levels that one hears of big drug companies producing and having ready large stock of necessary medicine for containing an epidemic before they secretly disperse the microbes that would spread it. It is the same in other fields as well. It is quite commonplace to hear that big software companies not only create anti-virus programs for computers, but also create new viruses so that computers get infected and people are forced to buy upgraded and more expensive anti-virus programs. With technological advances, more and more sophisticated and expensive equipment is available to doctors, who in an effort to cover costs, or worse, to generate more income, create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among their patients in order to make them undergo unnecessary but expensive tests and treatments.

How can one take such things as contributing to one's well-being? In fact, such things are clearly leading to a loss of real income and well-being as people have to spend more and more time, energy and material resources on alleviating artificial human-made ills like crime, pollution and progressive adulteration in food leading to poor health and costly treatment of illnesses resulting from this. As things stand at present, the



loss of real well-being resulting from these ills requires greater and greater spending of money to partially mitigate these. All such spending (done to mitigate the evil effects of problems generated largely as a by-product of the process of development) is counted as addition to the GDP which, therefore, must invariably grow as spending on such things grows. In such a scenario an increasing proportion of the growing GDP will be contributed by the growing human deprivation.

### ***C. The Misplaced Efforts of Modern Economists for the Alleviation of the Problem***

The above issues have provoked some re-thinking among the welfare economists. They have reached a general consensus on why there is a lack of well-being. Unfortunately, their thinking is based on the assumption that there is a problem only with the current 'measures' of national well-being, like the GDP and the GNP.

At a superficial level, the following general problems have been identified:

GDP is simply based on quantitative addition and subtraction. It cannot capture the quality, the well-being or the real benefit to the people. There are numerous everyday examples around us that bring home this fact. For instance, if parents care for their children themselves, they are not contributing to the national income. But if they hire and pay a nanny to do so, they are contributing to the national income, even though the result is that they are becoming more selfish and children are not so well taken care of. To take other examples, traffic jams, invariable, contribute to the GDP, because of the extra expense of vehicle fuel people have to bear, and, murderers contribute directly to the GDP by buying a knife or a

gun and other equipment and indirectly by making it necessary to increase the size of the police force and the administrative machinery including the number of courts and judges.

Similarly, in the health sector, the rising number of diseases contributes more to the national income by increasing people's expenditure on medical services. But if people were to lead a healthy life, the GDP would effectively go down. In other words, **the modern society significantly contributes to the GDP both in creating and then in its attempts at solving the ills created by it.**

Although not amounting to much, still there are attempts that are being made in various countries to devise ways to objectively measure qualitative changes. Such attempts cannot get very far because of the fundamentally subjective and psychological nature of the real human well-being. Regardless of whether it grasps the problems with the way economic development is measured, the folly of the current economic thinking lies in its belief that it can actually find solution to these problems within the framework of the present system. This belief (and the reasoning based on it) is completely misplaced. **If we analyse deeply the causes of the lack of well-being, we will understand that, under present conditions, no matter what measure is used and what policy and institutional interventions are put in place, there can be no real increase in income and welfare. In fact, the way things are going, there will certainly be a fall in income as time passes, because this fall in income and welfare is related to something deeper than material deprivation and has psychological roots. It is the very crisis of the consciousness that is causing it.**

(To be continued.....)

## HIGHLIGHTS:

### I. TRUMP'S VISIT TO INDIA: CEMENTING INDIA-US TIES AND AN EMERGING INDIAN GLOBAL ROLE

Trump's India visit marked a landmark in India-US ties and sent out a strong domestic and international message about India's new position as a global, assertive power. The crowds of more than a million people that cheered for Trump in Ahmedabad, on the way to the Motera stadium – the world's largest stadium – and during his rally with PM Modi, were unprecedented in a foreign visit of a head of state to India, bringing back memories of days when Nehru used to greet visiting heads of state with huge crowds. At the time, a newly emergent India – free from the yoke of colonial rule – was seeking to establish her international role, in spite of many odds. At the time, US and its western allies were – in connivance with Pakistan on Kashmir – biased against India.

Over the decades, the West – especially the US – has resisted India's rise, with this bias breaking only after the mid-1990s when India's growing economic and military clout became too hard to ignore. No matter however much looted of her prosperity and brutalized by the British rule, India – even at her lowest and most isolated points since 1947 – has always remained a dignified, strong, culturally powerful and assertive nation, and never tried appeasing any country for the sake of temporary gains. Understandably, the West has been, both, mystified and uncomfortable with an India that – unlike many other Asian countries – refused to toe the standards of modernity set by the West, leaving her unique stamp even while engaging with a newly emergent world order post-Second World War and after the 1990s.

Since those times of Nehru till the present-day visit of Trump, India has come a full circle, through all the travails in the intervening decades. India and US are finally embracing each other without the past hiccups and frictions, and this is happening without India bowing down to Western standards of modernity or US's instructions on politics, and in her own capacity as an independent power. This was also one of those unique, landmark visits by a US President when not only mere technical economic and political aspects were emphasized, but the mainstay of the relationship was put in a deeper context of India's own civilizational values and culture, with Trump invoking Indian figures from Swami Vivekananda to Sachin Tendulkar.

The irony that this is happening under an Indian PM who was once banned by Western countries – such as US and UK – for his political assertion of Hindu cultural identity, is also not lost. In his current visit, Trump could not stop showering enough compliments on PM Modi as a 'strong', 'great' and 'tough' leader, through his speech. Even as he acknowledged and admired India's culture, plurality and civilization, he criticized the current political and cultural bane of India viz. 'radical Islamic terrorism' in clear words.

***Even as Trump acknowledged that the US is positively working with Pakistan to curb terror groups operating from the latter's soil, this was an endorsement of India's decades-old position that Pakistan was home to terror groups, which the West had always turned a blind ear to. The fact that the US was working positively with Pakistan to curb these groups was, thus, a reassurance to India, rather than a rope to Pakistan.***

The fact that Pakistan in a FATF meeting (on terror funding) just before Trump's visit was retained on the 'grey list', with India being backed by Saudi Arabia and China, US and other western

powers, was a practical reinforcement of Pakistan's new pariah status as a result of success of India's international lobbying.

Trump's visit also put to rest negative and wild media speculations – masquerading as facts – that Pakistan will regain importance for the US and regional power due to its role in brokering the US-Taliban peace deal. Not only was such imaginary importance not visible in action or words, but this also turned out to be a first standalone visit by a US President to India, without visiting any other country on the way. Previous US Presidents – like Obama and Bush – had always attempted to hyphenate India and Pakistan based on a compulsion to treat both the countries equally. With this visit of Trump, this artificial hyphenation was broken.

Pakistan's protests – since a few days earlier – that if US sells integrated air defence weapons system to India, it would undermine the 'regional balance' were dismissed without a response, even as the sales were approved in mid-February. ***During the present visit, US and India signed a \$3 billion deal for the sale of helicopter systems – Romeo MH-60 and Apache, which are among the best in the world – and other equipment to India, with Trump emphasizing US's intentions to sell "some of the best, most feared, military equipment on the planet" to India.***

These defence purchases simply build upon the stronger and closer defence partnership instituted during the past 3 years, due to agreements signed during the 2018 2+2 format, Industrial Security Annex (ISA) in 2019 and US's updation of India's status to Strategic Trade Authorization (STA-1) partnership level in 2018. Together, these initiatives open up space to share advanced defence technology with Indian industries and private sector defence manufacturing, and, facilitate India's role as global

manufacturer and supplier of US defence products. Besides defence, in other bilateral areas, the US also discussed the proposal of Blue Dot Network for India to consider joining. The Blue Dot Network consists of US, Australia and Japan. It aims to bring governments, civil society and private sector together to promote high quality and trusted standards for global infrastructure projects. Its objective is to rate infrastructural projects, much like a rating agency would do, thereby influencing the flow of private finance and investments into these projects. Politically, it is seen as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

The progress in India-US defence partnership, which has speeded up over the last five years, has proceeded in parallel with the growing political alignment between the two countries. This is very important for India. ***Over the last few months, since Modi came back to power in May 2019, the Indian government has taken important domestic decisions which have had global resonances. All these decisions have revolved around an assertion of India's position that foreign-funded anti-India elements will not be allowed to survive in the country and that national interest will take precedence over any political expediency.***

The result has been the abrogation of decades-old special status guaranteed to Kashmir under Article 370 which had always been sowing the seeds of separatism and terrorism in the Valley. While Kashmir is in a much more peaceful and stable situation now, more than it has ever been, India has had to fend off the attacks from the global and domestic media/NGOs, Indian Muslims and domestic secular political parties and foreign countries like Pakistan and Turkey. The US has staunchly supported India's position throughout.

Another significant decision – apart from significant developments like Ram Janmabhoomi verdict – was the legislation on Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which seeks to fast-track or reduce the time-period required for granting citizenship to persecuted minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who had entered India on or before December 21, 2014. The CAA debate has resulted in an unprecedented, well-planned and funded and organized Muslim backlash in the Indian cities in form of ‘protests’ since December 2019. Just when Trump was in India, well-planned siege was underway in Delhi with Muslim mobs occupying key roads and metro stations and unleashing violence in Muslim-majority areas in north-east Delhi, with Hindus responding with strong defensive retaliation. The Muslim violence, now being acknowledged even by Modi critics due to common sense, was planned to provoke the police into a crackdown and thus show India in a poor light by hijacking the otherwise hugely successful visit of Trump.

As a result, even as Trump was visiting Delhi on February 25<sup>th</sup>, parts of the city were burning, with casualties now almost touching 50 people. The riots ended – as well as Muslim siege on Delhi metro stations – as soon as Trump left.

Despite these circumstances, Trump not only refused to comment on Delhi violence, but even when he was goaded by media by being asked pointed questions, he maintained that all this is India’s internal matter. He repeated the same position for Article 370, CAA and other decisions. Not only that, he even put a CNN journalist in place by replying to an insult by saying that CNN’s record in telling the truth was ‘so bad’ that it should be ‘ashamed of itself’.

The press conference in which Trump left the media

disappointed as well as his entire visit was politically significant as it marked a departure from the past US tradition of visiting Presidents inevitably monotonously preaching India on improving its human rights and religious freedom's record. Trump not only defied that tradition – despite the varying positions taken by US bipartisan House foreign affairs committee and other bodies – but even complimented India by saying that Modi's efforts in this area were commendable.

Trump's visit, the memorabilia preceding it and the aftermath of the visit highlighted the new turn of US-India relations. Despite being slammed by Leftists and Bernie Sanders for not commenting on Delhi violence, Trump returned to a political rally in South Carolina to recall and appreciate the huge crowds that cheered for him in India, saying that he can never get excited about crowds in the U.S. after visiting India, and once again praised Modi.

## **2. AYODHYA DEVELOPMENTS:**

In early February, the government named the 15-member trust of the 'Shri Ram Janambhoomi Teertha Kshetra' trust, as mandated by the Supreme Court.

The members include senior lawyer K. Parasaran, Jagatguru Shankracharya, Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj, Prasannatheerth Ji Maharaj, Yugpurush Paramanand Ji Maharaj, Swami Govinddev Giri Ji Maharaj, Vimlendra Mohan Pratap Mishra from Ayodhya, Anil Mishra who is a homoeopathic doctor from Ayodhya, Kameshwar Chaupal who is a Scheduled Caste member and laid the first foundation stone, and, Mahant Dinendra Das from Nirmohi Akhara.

There will also be nomination of 2 prominent practicing Hindus on the following basis:



- One representative will be nominated by the Centre who shall be a practising Hindu by religion and a serving member of the IAS and who shall not be below the rank of joint secretary to Government of India and shall be an ex officio member. Additional secretary Home Ministry, Gyanesh Kumar, was appointed as representative of the Centre.

- One representative will be nominated by the UP government who shall be a practising Hindu and an IAS officer and shall not be below the rank of secretary to the UP government and shall be an ex officio member. Avneesh Awasthy, Additional Chief Secretary Uttar Pradesh, was appointed as representative of the state government.

The Ayodhya district collector will be the ex officio trustee who shall be a practising Hindu. If the incumbent collector is not a practising Hindu, the additional collector of Ayodhya who shall be a practising Hindu shall be an ex officio member. Currently, Ayodhya District Magistrate, Anuj Kumar Jha, holds the position.

On 19<sup>th</sup> February, in the first meeting of the trust held in New Delhi, Mahant Nritya Gopal Das was elected as the President and VHP leader Champat Rai was made the General Secretary of the trust. PM Modi's former Principal Secretary, Nripendra Misra, was made the head of the temple construction committee of the trust. Swami Govinddev Giri of Pune was appointed as the treasurer of the trust at the meeting.

The trust will be in charge of entire 67.7-acre of land. It will initially function from the residence of K. Parasaran till a permanent office is found. The UP government allotted 5 acre land for construction of a mosque at a site which is 30 km away from Ram temple, to the Sunni Central Waqf Board. After initially

rejecting this site as not being a part of Ayodhya proper, the Waqf Board has now accepted it.

According to VHP, crores of donations have already been offered by individuals while companies such as Larsen & Turbo (L&T) have offered to construct the temple free of cost. VHP also wants that every Hindu house should contribute to the Ram temple construction by seeking Rs. 10 donation from every house.

The next meeting of the trust is scheduled to be held after Holi. The date when construction of the temple would begin, the final date of shifting of the idols, the final blueprint as well as the construction agency details are also expected to be finalized and announced soon. Tentatively, the idols are expected to be shifted from the earlier makeshift temple to a new makeshift one at the site, on March 25<sup>th</sup> when the Navaratri starts, to enable the pilgrims to offer worship at the site.



## **The Importance of Studying Our Past**

*“In religion lies the vitality of India, and so long as the Hindu race do not forget the great inheritance of their forefathers, there is no power on earth to destroy them.*

*Nowadays everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past is the cause of all India’s woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true. So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life. It is out of this past that the future has to be moulded; this past will become the future.*

*The more, therefore, the Hindus study the past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of everyone, is a great benefactor to his nation. The degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusions.”*

*– Swami Vivekananda*

*(Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. 4, p. 323-24)*