

# SOUTH ASIA POLITICS

- Personalities that Moved India
- Coalition Politics in India
- Connecting with Central Asia
- Three Years of NDA
- Women's Education & Empowerment
- Modi Celebrates Vesak Festival



## Indo-US Relations

# Three Years of NDA

C Sheela Reddy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) II which assumed office with an unprecedented victory in May 2014 completed 3 years in office. Though the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party tasted disappointing results in the subsequent assembly elections in New Delhi and Bihar, it could win handsomely in almost all the rural and urban local body elections from tribal Odisha to urbane Maharashtra and Chandigarh. It has formed its governments in four states for the first time Maharashtra (2014), Haryana (2014), Assam (2016) and Manipur (2017). The latest victory in the Uttar Pradesh elections is indeed a 'shocker' to the opposition and the leftist intellectuals. Needless to



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with his ministers

say, the perception of the Aam admi of the BJP led NDA II government and the charisma of Prime Minister Modi can be considered as the principal causes of these spectacular election victories.

There is a noteworthy trend of analyzing elections and their outcomes in India in recent times. Similarly, there is need for assessing the policies enunciated by the governments and governance aspect of the ruling parties. The

## Promises Modi Government must fulfil that NDA Made

• **Drafting a Uniform Civil Code:** In our country, we have differing sets of laws. The Uniform Civil Code would basically cover all these personal laws into one unified set of a secular law, that would apply to each and every citizen of India regardless of his/her religious community.

• **Clean up the Ganga:** BJP commits to ensure the cleanliness, purity and uninterrupted flow of the Ganga on priority. In addition, a massive 'Clean Rivers Programme' will be launched across the country driven by people's participation.

• Set up a National Optical-Fibre Network up to the village level; and Wi-Fi zones in public areas.

BJP has committed to create 50 tourist circuits that are affordable.

• Set up a task force to initiate the process of tracking down and bringing back black money stashed in foreign banks and offshore accounts.

• Improve Centre-State relations, ensure fiscal autonomy of States while urging financial discipline.

• Set up the Ministry of North-Eastern Region. Empower Ministry with a broader charter and non-lapsable funds for the rapid development of the region:

• Committed to the abrogation of Article 370 on Kashmir.

• Digitisation of Government records will be taken up on top priority so that they are easily accessible.

• Performance review, social and environment audit would be mandated for all Government schemes and programmes.

• Initiate a National e-Governance Plan to cover every Government office from the centre to the panchayats.

• Pursue a mission mode project under the 'National Rural Internet and Technology Mission' for use of telemedicine and mobile healthcare for rural healthcare, IT for agriculture for real time information.

• Make every household digitally literate with a goal to make India the Global Knowledge hub.

• Mandate digitisation of all government work to reduce corruption and delays.

• Rationalisation and convergence among the Ministries, departments and other arms of the Government to focus on delivery.

• Services of youth in particular will be tapped to contribute in governance with Fellowship and Internship programmes.

• Initiate a mission mode project for filling the vacancies in the judiciary and for doubling the number of courts..

• Implement the National Litigation Policy in letter and spirit to reduce average pendency time of cases.

• Create a fund for modernisation of courts to improve the operational efficiency of courts.



PM Narendra Modi launches Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana, 2016

present article is a brief analysis of political and policy setting during the Lok Sabha elections in 2014, the policies initiated thereafter and their implementation by the NDA II government with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm of affairs. The NDA II government under the leadership of Narendra Modi won the elections chiefly on the poll campaign criticizing the policy paralysis, large scale corruption, indiscipline in the institutions and the governance

deficit that have set in during the UPA I and UPA II governments. Narendra Modi's campaign also focused on 'ache din' promising to end corruption and black money, check inflation, revive economic growth, create more jobs etc. After three years of NDA II rule, there is a general opinion that the government has been successful in the implementation of key reforms and developing the economic sector. At the same time, there is a criticism that in the areas of

creation of jobs, bringing back black money, Non Performing Assets (NPAs) of the banks etc, a strong decision or policy implementation is yet to happen.

NDA II is credited with some daring reforms undertaken to reduce corruption, improve trade and investment procedures and the standard of living of the aam admi. Although the demonetization has jolted the nation, experts believe that, in the long run, demonetization will have a positive impact on the economy as well as on the general public. As soon as assuming office, NDA II under Narendra Modi introduced policies, governance initiatives and reforms in some key sectors which directly impact the poor and the middle class. The increase in the supply of goods, strengthening the distribution system after the harvest, regulating the export of the essential commodities, coordinating with the states in mitigating illegal stocking by the traders have made a positive impact on the overall governance

- Establish an institutional mechanism to periodically review and give suggestions for refining our laws.
- Modernise our Prison system with technology and infrastructure; to strengthen the security as well human rights.
- Train and technologically enable the police to track, pursue, as well as prevent Cyber Crime.
- Bring Coastal States together on a common platform to discuss issues of Marine Policing.
- Facilitate training and capacity building of Police forces, modernise the police force and police stations across the country for intelligence sharing and crime control.
- Look at revising election expenditure limits realistically.
- Identify 100 most backward districts of the country to bring them at par with other districts.
- Review successful Public Distribution System models, and incorporate the best practices to revise the existing PDS.
- Radically transform the Food Corporation of India.
- Initiate a 'Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojna' at the national level to be overseen by a 'Tribal Development Authority'.

- Strengthen and modernise minority educational systems and institutions.
- Empower Waqf Boards in consultation with religious leaders.
- Initiate building 100 new cities; enabled with the latest in technology.
- Review, amend and strengthen the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2012.
- Enact the 'Rights of the Persons with Disabilities bill' (RPWD).
- Set up neighbourhood Children's/ Youth Parliament across India that leads to vibrant student committees.
- Launch a National Sports Talent Search System, so that extraordinary sporting talent is identified at very young age
- BJP is committed to 33% reservation in parliamentary and state assemblies through a constitutional amendment.
- Government will create an Acid Attack victims welfare.
- Introduce self defence as a part of the school curriculum.
- Set up an All Women Mobile Bank to cater to women and a special skills training and business park for women.

although the media and the government machinery have failed to give the desired publicity. These governance reforms have resulted in decreasing the retail inflation to 3%-4% in these three years from around 10% during the UPA II. The fiscal deficit which was 5.31% of the GDP during UPA I and UPA II came down to 3.2% during NDA II. However, the fall of prices of oil in the international market and the decrease in the government petroleum subsidy have also helped the fiscal deficit.

The public policy initiatives like removing the limit on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the sectors like railway infrastructure, defense and



*Pradhan Mantri Sochalay Yojana, is a major part of the scheme Adarsh Gram Yojana*

medical equipment, manufacturing, airways, insurance, pension, broadcasting etc along with 'Make in India' policy have contributed to

the strong position of India in the global economic system. Such policy and governance reforms undertaken by the Narendra Modi

#### **Achievement of 3 years of Modi Government: Amit Shah**

- While addressing the media, BJP Chief Amit Shah said, "In last three years, the confidence of the people has increased".

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been successful in changing the scale of the country's thought. Casteism, nepotism and appeasement had been uprooted. He said, "that's why our motto for the celebration this time is: *Sathi hai, vishwas hai, ho raha vikas hai*".

- Indian Army displayed their valour by surgical strikes, and PM Narendra Modi showed political will. When it comes to defence and national security, Modi government has always put this as a topmost priority. India has been presented as a country now with a strong political will.

- This government is clean and progressive, no corruption taint on us.

- While the formation of the government PM Modi said that this government would be for the poor and downtrodden, for farmers and for the Dalits. This government had worked day and night to ensure that the promise made by PM Modi is achieved.

- After years of corruption under the previous governments, we finally have a government that not even the opposition can accuse of corruption.

- For last several years, our armed forces have been asking for One Rank One Pension or OROP, The Modi government ensured that OROP is implemented.

- Before BJP government was in power, Indian scientists used to be satisfied by launching 3 to 4 satellites. But now they have set world records by launching 104 satellites.

- The GST (Goods and Services Tax) or One Nation One Tax was a dream for traders and entrepreneurs across India. The Modi government made sure that the crucial bill was passed in the Parliament. The GST Bill is one of the most significant reforms, which makes India as one unified market.

- In last three years, the BJP government had repealed 1100 laws that were irrelevant and further simplified law and order.

- More and more Indians are moving towards digital transactions every day and so the country is undergoing a digital transformation. The Modi government launched the BHIM App, which is today the world's most popular digital transaction app.

- Under Make in India programme, the Modi government has given manufacturing a major boost.

- The BJP government is also working day and night towards ensuring that electricity reaches the corner of the country.

- The BJP government has had also taken steps to put an end to VIP culture. Scrapping the red beacons from cars has been a path-breaking step.

- The current financial year has been a record year for industry and production. Urea production, Gas connections, Coal production, Urea production, Ethanol, electricity production, sea trade, railway investment, highest length of roads constructed, rural roads, most cars, two wheelers, highest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and highest Forex Reserves.

- The BJP government had regulated the price of stents, has brought heart treatment to the reach of the poor. PM Modi and the BJP government has laid the foundation for a 'New India'.

- Inflation is under control, we are now the fastest growing economy in the world. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that India's GDP will grow at 7.2 per cent.

- In last 3-years, through his dedication, commitment and hard-work, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as the most popular leader since Independence.



Former SC judge M.B. Shaw

government have shown a positive impact resulting in the 6,000 crores dollars of FDI during 2016-17. The Indian Rupee became stronger in terms of dollar exchange rate and the stock markets were hugely benefitted. India has been able to register a 7% annual growth rate. India which was described as 'Fragile Five' among the world economies along with Brazil, Indonesia, Turkey and South Africa has been able to advance economically in the last three years and seems to be back on the development track.

One of the most popular policy initiatives introduced by Narendra Modi is the Jan Dhan Yojana, a scheme to provide free bank accounts to the poor in order to bring them into the formal economy. The aim of the government was also to plug the misuse of public money in the government welfare programs. Under Jan Dhan, 28.38 crore bank accounts have been opened in which Rs.63,960 crores is available. The 'Smart City' concept is another policy initiative aiming to improve the urban amenities in 100 select cities throughout India by 2019. So far, 60 cities have been selected for

which funds to the tune of Rs.1.33 lakh crores have been sanctioned. In another 20 cities, projects are being finished with an expenditure of Rs.1,600 crores. The 'Swachh Bharat' is another scheme aimed at the poor to make 4,041 cities and towns Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 2019. A total of 633 cities and towns as well as 1,94,000 villages in India have already been declared ODF. The NDA II has built toilets in 32 lakh houses and 1.25 public toilets, with an investment of Rs. 62,009 crores. This scheme is yet to be implemented in 3,400 cities. Narendra Modi's government has set a target for building 2 crore houses for the urban poor by 2019. 18.76 lakh houses have been sanctioned in which 3.55 lakh houses have been built in these three years.

It is also pertinent to mention about other major schemes. A major pro-farmer scheme has been the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, which covers all food grains and all risks in the crop cycle. With an outlay of Rs.50,000 crore, the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana seeks to provide water to every field (Har Khet ko Pani) in five years. Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the highest ever expenditure of Rs.51,902 crore was made in 2016-17. Credit facility to agriculture has been increased to Rs.10 lakh crore which is aimed at preventing farmers from falling prey to usurious money lenders. Under Jan Suraksha, 13 crore people have availed social security cover at nominal rates. Through the Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd (MUDRA) scheme, a capital of Rs.3.17 lakh crore as collateral-free loans has been provided to 7.45 crore small entrepreneurs.

Several schemes to empower women have been successfully implemented which include Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP), Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (over one crore accounts opened), Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act (increasing maternity leave to 26 weeks) and Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (safe pregnancy). As many as 224 schemes have been brought under the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) platform and over Rs.1.92 lakh crore transferred to 32 crore beneficiaries, resulting in a saving of Rs.49,560 crore. Rural development, infrastructure and housing have been given a huge



"100 Smart Cities Mission" was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

thrust through 'Housing for All'; rural electrification (about 13,432 of 18,456 un-electrified villages have been electrified) and rural connectivity (1.20 lakh km of rural roads constructed in last three years). The Bankruptcy and Insolvency Code, which helps in the quick resolution of insolvency cases and the enactment of Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 are other big initiatives.

Narendra Modi government claims that it has brought in a sense of honesty, accountability and transparency in the bureaucracy. This claim seems to be justified through the transparent auctioning of coal blocks and spectrum. The auctioning of 82 blocks over the life of the lease period is expected to get Rs.3.94 lakh crore. Under the UPA II, there was loss of Rs.1,86,000 crore in the coal blocks allocations as per the Comptroller and Auditor General's report.

The cancellation of 23 million fake ration cards following Aadhar-linked public distribution in the States has been another important reform-driven outcome. Among other policies initiated by NDA II, one important policy was to deposit scholarships directly in the bank accounts of 1 crore SC/ST/OBC students. Through the policy of 'Skill India' 1 crore youth were imparted skills. Around 2 crore gas connections were provided to women. Through Jana Aushadhi centers, medicines were made available cheaper. The pregnant women were given a financial support of Rs.6, 000 each. The government has decreased the price of stents by 80% which is very helpful to the patients with heart diseases. The government has also established 109 new Central Schools, 62 Navodaya Vidyalayas, 7 Indian



*Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was launched by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on May 1st, 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh*

Institutes of Management, 6 Indian Institutes of Technology etc.

However, some policies which were promised during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections have been not so successful during the NDA II rule. The promise of creating 1 crore jobs could not be fulfilled probably due to the turbulence in the global as well as national economy. The unemployment rate which was at 4.9% during 2013-14 has marginally increased to 5% during 2015-16. The NDA II government could create 15.1 lakh new jobs in the eight major sectors. During the UPA II 24.7 lakh jobs were created. Likewise, the NDA II government has not been able to neither bring back the black money stashed in foreign banks nor deposit Rs.15 lakhs in the bank accounts of a common man, as promised during the elections. However, the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi constituted a SIT under the former Supreme Court Judge M.B. Shaw which made several recommendations with regard to black money. With the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, the government has blocked a key route to generate and hold black money.

The public policy initiatives and governance reforms undertaken by the NDA II government of Narendra Modi in the last three years and the perceptions of the people is reflected in the surveys conducted by some national media agencies. The agencies like the Local Circles and The Economic Times have conducted separate surveys on how satisfied the people are on the performance of the Modi government. 61% of the respondents in the Local Services survey expressed satisfaction on the performance of the Central Government. In the Economic Times survey, 45% respondents said that Modi's performance exceeded their expectations while another 40% expressed satisfaction on the performance of central government which indicates that 85% of the respondents are satisfied with the working of the NDA II government. In so far as controlling inflation, 66% of respondents in the Local Circles survey said that the initiatives by the central government have had positive results. However, 58% of the respondents in the Economic Times survey said that the central

government has failed in reducing the living expenses.

In the last three years, the NDA II government under the stewardship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as the surveys suggest, has been able to retain the trust of the people who reposed faith in him in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. On a closer scrutiny, it appears that his government could gain the trust of the people firstly by the very design of the public policies which targeted mainly the poor and the women. Secondly, the government could govern better to deliver those policies directly to the beneficiaries eliminating misuse, corruption and wastage. For example, the policies like Jan Dhan Yojana and the linking of 28 crore Adhar cards of the poor with the banks ensured that the schemes and

the money reached the poor beneficiaries without any leakages. Modi government could transfer scholarships directly to the bank accounts of students. The NDA II, therefore, could save around Rs.50,000 crores which it could utilize for other welfare and development programs. It has also reached the middle class and urban poor through better governance of schemes like MUDRA, Smart City, Maternity Act etc. The fact that in the last three years the NDA II has been devoid of any scams or large scale corruption charges is a positive sign towards good governance. The establishment of many central, educational institutions is also a factor in the popularity gained and has strengthened the image of the NDA II. However, the publicity that ought

to have been given to so many policies has not been adequate. There are still people in the rural side, who are not aware of some policies that were designed for them by the Modi government. While Social Media has been effectively used by the Prime Minister and the youth from his party, the government needs to energize the government machinery in the Information and Broadcast Ministry and rope in the regional print and electronic media so that the government policies and their implementation has a wider reach among the people across the length and breadth of India.

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