

PART IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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Suggested Steps for Implementation of Reforms

Having given my blue-print for curing the ills plaguing India, now, I suggest as to how we can proceed to encompass all the population of the country under the umbrella of comprehensive social security cover in a systematic manner at a quick pace.

- First of all, arrangements should be made for election/nomination of paid *panches* so that the entire country is adequately covered by the network of the *panches* for instituting meaningful governance related reforms.
- With the help of the *panches*, issue of NID smart-cards to all the citizens should be completed as early as possible.
- As soon as NID smart-cards are issued, supply of food-articles and other commodities under the UPDS scheme should be commenced. Soon, thereafter, universal basic healthcare plan should also be extended for all.
- Immediate arrangements should be made to augment basic education network wherever lacking and along with it central external evaluation, on the similar lines as contemplated in this book, should be started.
- Large infrastructure companies should be roped in, on competitive basis, to take up rural development works in full swing and simultaneously steps should be initiated to phase out corruption ridden NREGS programme, as it will be redundant, now.

Suggested Steps for Implementation of Reforms

- Other reforms as listed in this book, like, consolidation of agricultural land by land-units coupled with corporate farming; realization of cost of higher education from the beneficiaries; etc.; should also be started soon, for propelling the country into a higher growth trajectory.
- Last but not the least, simultaneous steps should also be initiated, to amend laws wherever needed so that legal disputes between the Centre and the States do not crop up which may raise questions, such as, education and internal security are the issues primarily under the jurisdiction of the States and thus Central schemes cannot be implemented in certain cases. Since food, security, education, health, and other things related with livelihood support, must be considered as the basic rights of the human beings, thus no law should be allowed to interfere with such basic rights of the people. Therefore, if anything is to be changed then it should be those laws which interfere with these basic rights of the people. Concurrently, the Government should also initiate steps for mobilization of resources for funding expected expenses on rolling out basic comprehensive social security package for all, for this purpose the proposals embodied in this book can be looked into. Though the Government may have to dig into its reserves as well as seek aid from international agencies in the beginning, yet it is expected that soon funds would start flowing in the Government coffer from internal generation. I feel that the country will be on self-sustainable growth path pretty soon and will not require any help from the outside sources because, now, the necessary impetus for growth and generation of funds will come from within the country.

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Summary

Good governance does not need complex strategies and elaborate rules with lots of provisoes which give scope for exercise of discretion every now and then. Rule-based guidelines, alone, are capable to achieve objectives of good governance, which can provide bliss, joy and satisfaction to one and all. Rule-based governance will lower administrative costs as well as significantly reduce waiting period for solution of problems of the sufferers.

- National Identity Cards, each, with unique identification number - with smart-card based bio-metric identification - should be issued to all as early as possible. These NID smart-cards will facilitate (a) improvement of national security, (b) putting in place a reliable and quick mechanism for identification of people for various requirements, (c) leak-proof disbursal of food-articles and other commodities to all, (d) extension of reliable healthcare under nation-wide insurance plan to all, (e) efficient realization of government dues from the concerned individuals, etc. Besides the above, the NID smart-cards will also bring down corruption level in the country significantly.
- When the bare minimum requirements of the people, like, food, cloth, meaningful security, basic education, reasonable healthcare (and housing to some extent), are met, it will usher in an era of true empowerment for all in the country. This will keep everyone afloat even in the midst of the gravest of crises. Consequently, the

feeling of helplessness among people will be replaced by a sense of empowerment and thus provide equitable opportunity to one and all for charting out course of their lives as per their natural talents.

- The paid *panches* will be instrumental in bringing good and effective governance up to village/ward level. Recently, our Hon'ble Home Minister, P. Chidambaram remarked on the 6th January, 2009: "... *best source of intelligence still remains the local police station and friends of the local police ...*", however, if these paid *panches* and *head-panches* could be integrated well in the system, it will have multiplier effect in strengthening internal security of the nation. Besides helping in improvement of the law and order situation, these *panches* can also play a significant role, as reliable and watchful observers of the development works taking place in their localities.
- The national goal of universal basic education for all, with actual transfer of knowledge, can be easily achieved, if local teachers in sufficient numbers are appointed and simultaneously central external assessment is carried out, regularly, to check the level of knowledge of the school children, as contemplated in this book. Further, if development grants of a region are also linked with the growth of education of the region, it will give fillip for development of real education in the country. Presently, government officials seek solace only in the statistics which project that about 95 percent school-going children are enrolled in the schools, irrespective of the fact that about 50 percent of these children do not learn anything substantial and waste their time in idle class-rooms, in the semi-

functional government schools and other low-fee structure private schools. This all will change if the simple proposals as presented in this book are implemented.

- All the people of the country can be covered under a comprehensive healthcare plan which will provide a sense of relief to all, as every individual will receive reasonable medical care during the entire life-span.
- Availability of houses will increase in the country, significantly, if the practical proposals suggested in this book are implemented. Moreover, with the provision of safe community shelters for the homeless, everyone will have a roof on his/her head for protection from inclement weather as well as get reprieve from various kinds of abuses these homeless have to undergo at the hands of the rogues.
- Though mobilization of resources for providing comprehensive social security will be carried out from within the country yet most of the potential sources identified for the purpose in this book are such that they will not prick anyone. On the contrary, these measures will only help in bringing equilibrium in the whole nation. If one glances through the justification for application of taxes and withdrawal of subsidies from the various sources as mentioned in this book, it will be apparent that this mobilization of resources will, in fact, benefit those people, too, who in the first instance will appear to be hit by it, in the same manner as reduction of fat intake in the diet of an overweight person, is a boon for the well being of that person, itself.
- A better approach has been suggested, in place of the existing National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

(NREGS), which has the potential to generate high-end employment opportunities for the people as well as to ensure development of durable infrastructure, in rural as well as urban areas, besides bringing down a lot of corruption prevailing in the existing NREGS programme.

- A model for initiating consolidation of agricultural land by way of land-units for starting corporate style farming has been proposed. It will bring several visible benefits, like, (a) agricultural productivity will increase, (b) significant number of agricultural workers can be shifted to non-agricultural sectors, thus raising overall income of the people, (c) land disputes will reduce thus bringing down court cases, (d) country will be in a better position to conserve available arable land for future food-security, etc.
- A fail-safe approach for reforming higher education in India, is presented with following direct benefits: (1) no meritorious student, howsoever poor, will ever face difficulty in receiving higher education, (2) it will bring much needed accountability among teachers, educational administrators as well as students, thereby raising quality of higher education and injecting transparency in the whole system, (3) financial burden of the Government will not rise exponentially, instead, it will reduce for the established educational institutions, too, thus more and more quality educational institutions can be established by the Government to provide educational empowerment to a wider section of the people, which will usher in an era of social harmony as well as connect people to their *alma mater* and the country more intimately, (4) students will be receiving

more purposeful and focused education thereby boosting their employability.

- A practical solution for tackling reservation-related problems of India is presented which can operate within the existing frame work of reservation policies, with the added advantage that it will expedite the process of early empowerment of candidates of the reserved categories. In the proposed system of indirect reservation, candidates of the reserved categories will have considerably higher motivation to improve upon their performance. Thereafter, the need for reservation will itself fade away in a couple of decades without causing any commotion in the country. Moreover, by the early empowerment of the people of the weaker sections, productivity and prosperity of the nation will increase much faster to benefit one and all.

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Conclusion

When people are covered under the umbrella of comprehensive social security, it will raise their morale considerably and they will experience new found trust in themselves. This feeling of immense empowerment among all will have the potential to solve most of the problems plaguing this country for so long. The main findings of the book have been summarized in the preceding section. In the concluding remarks, it is illustrated as to how the expected outcome of the feeling of empowerment among masses, will sort out many other contentious and burning issues of the country, too, which

are on the government radar for long but still not much success has been tasted on these vital issues.

- Problem of female-foeticide and infanticide which has assumed alarming proportion in India and because of which the country is heading towards grave sociological problems in imminent future, can also be tackled effectively to a large extent. The gravity of the problem can be gauged by the fact, that as per the census of 1991; the sex ratio of females and males was 945:1000 but it alarmingly declined further to 933:1000 as per the census of 2001. The major causes for bias against female child are following: (a) often girls are considered as an economic burden on the family which has to be passed on to another party with cost (dowry) through a socially accepted bond, known as marriage, (b) owing to rising graph of crime against women, people feel scared in protecting their daughters, (c) many people have preference for male-child, since they feel that in their old age he will be in a better position to help them because female-child will not be around after her marriage, and (d) people also have a feeling that government's law and order machinery is in such a poor shape, as far as majority of the people are concerned, that they will have to defend themselves in odd situations, and in this context, a male-child seems to give them psychological strength. However, if comprehensive social security as envisaged in this book is extended to all, then apparently, there would not be any difference between the status of the females and the males, thereafter girls will neither be considered as an economic burden nor perceived as sociological burden which is to be borne by a family, because now the females will be able to support themselves and chart

out their independent lives whenever needed. Moreover, due to livelihood support of food, cloth, and healthcare for all, people will not have to look towards their son(s) for their dignified survival in their old age. And with the advent of increasingly secured environment, due to induction of paid *panches* and expected improvement in basic governance, personal scores will not be settled through physical force, and thus son(s) will not be required for the same any more.

- Various laws have been enacted in India banning child-labour, since 1933, but still the problem remains more or less unabated. Often, such children have to undergo bone-chilling cruelty, which leaves indelible marks on the body as well as the mind of the suffering child, including death in some cases. The main cause of child-labour seems abject poverty and vulnerability of the family of the concerned child. Due to comprehensive social security for all, the problem of child-labour will largely be over for ever because then parents will not be so helpless direly needing the meagre earnings of their children to augment financial condition of their families. Moreover, due to NID smart-cards and central external assessment to be carried out in schools as advocated in this book, any child dropping out from the school can be easily detected, and with the help of the *panches*, whereabouts of such drop-out children can be traced. Thus, at least, now, a viable solution looks within reach to solve the embarrassing and pathetic problem of child-labour in India, even though this problem is gigantic since as per the census of 2001, there were about 12.6 million child-workers, whereas according to other estimates, about

50 million Indian children aged between 5 to 14 years, are still engaged in various works.

- Child-less adults, who are otherwise poor and sometimes homeless, too, and thus are unable to bear the financial burden of adopted children, remain deprived of the bliss, joy, and soothing effect children kindle in the lives of people. Similarly, the runaway children or abandoned children remain aloof and deprived from parental affection. A tiny fraction of these homeless children are kept in child protection homes run by the Government and other organizations. But even these children, who secure protection in these child homes, remain devoid of love of families and thus grow up with abnormal personalities, while some remain withdrawn and terrified whereas others acquire violent traits. In this context, companionship can provide a healing touch which can never be extended through materialistic support. Even homeless strangers tend to develop family bonds among themselves while sharing patches of pavements, as they seek solace in company of each other. Cases have been reported, when it was observed that the runaway children adopted some adults as their parents or grand-parents and served them. Similarly, adults have also been found as tendering affectionate care to such unfortunate children. The comprehensive social security package as outlined in this book can play a significant role in bringing together these two disjointed and deprived segments of society, whereby both the groups can bridge the vital missing link of companionship, which causes emotional deprivation in their lives.

- As per recent findings of the UNICEF, about 40 percent child-marriages take place in India. Child-marriages have direct effect on many other vital areas impairing the well being of the nation, too. Child-marriages culminate in large number of unwanted and closely spaced pregnancies, which cause all sorts of health related problems for the mother as well as the child. It increases mortality rate of the mother as well as the child during child-birth. Children born to under-nourished and minor mothers naturally remain underweight and grow up to become physically, mentally as well as emotionally weak adults and this vicious cycle continues, which eventually retards the growth and prosperity of the nation and its people. Our Hon'ble President, Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, once scoffed at the curse of child marriage as "*one child marriage has ten ill effects*". The above mentioned comprehensive social security package can help in breaking the cycle of child-marriages because now the available food, cloth, education, security, and healthcare will empower especially the females so much that their opinion will also be valued regarding the age of their marriage as well as the number of children the family should have. These women will be equal partners of their counter-parts and will not be regarded only as child-bearing machines, confined to domestic chores of the family. As a result of the above, growth of population of our nation will decelerate, too, and simultaneously, health of the national populace will also improve, thus creating a positive impact on the prosperity of the nation and its people.
- Further, it is stated that the comprehensive social security can also facilitate early implementation of the

reform agenda of the nation, which is being held hostage for want of a viable safety net for the people. Now, various reforms related to employment, agriculture, education, healthcare, etc., can be carried out without much commotion and these reforms will eventually transform this nation into a vibrant and competitive society in no time. Because if we do not carry out necessary reforms, in real sense, we will have to pay a heavy price for it, glimpses of which can be seen from the wide spread turmoil in the entire country. So far we could tide over the problems of the poor because of general global economic growth whose trickle down effect acted as a palliative for a large population. However, skewed prosperity of a small segment of people of the country cannot ensure well being of the entire population for long. One can also construe that so far the economic growth of the country was masking the real problem of the people to a large extent, but it may not continue to happen for long.

I sum up my narration on an optimistic note that, now, we have a real chance as well as capability to take care of all the people of the country and this will definitely ensure long-term prosperity of the nation. I appeal to all the people that now it is not the time to be contented with piece-meal welfare measures for scattered segments of the society. As these, only prolong the agony of the nation - but now it is time for bold action - for which they should emphatically demand from the leaders of the political parties - a comprehensive social security package for all - as this alone can put us on a meaningful growth path where all of us can enjoy dignity of life.

At the end, I wish sweet success and prosperity for the whole nation and its people. Long live my dear INDIA!!!

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