

Three Years of Governance Under Narendra Modi in India: Promises and Reality

T. Sadashivam*

Abstract

From the period of uncertainty, corruption, scams under the rule of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, there emerge new hopes for the people in 2014 General Election in India. After gap of one decade, coming into power the Narendra Modi of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) II government, created so many expectations from an ordinary Indian people to middle class to Elite. In this context, the study of governance of the present government is very much utmost important. Thus, the present article discusses a few new trends in Indian political system and more importantly, analyses some key electoral promises of NDA II government, after the completion of its three years in power.

Key Words: *government; National Democratic Alliance (NDA); Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); Narendra Modi; United Progressive Alliance (UPA) etc.*

Introduction

The Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) II government completed three years in power at the Centre (it came into power in 26th May 2014). As we know, this is the first time in three decades that, a

*Ph. D; Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Pachhunga University College, Aizawl, Mizoram; Email:sadajmi@gmail.com

political party has got its own majority (282) seats without depending for survival on other parties, like during coalition era. Also, this is the first time in the 67 years of independent India that, a non-Congress party (BJP) came to power with majority on its own in the Lok Sabha. And naturally, with such huge political mandate, everybody would like to assess the performance of the government more so, when the Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself during election rallies for the 16th Lok Sabha elections talk about bringing '*Achche Din*' (*Good Days*) for his countrymen.

New Trends in Indian Political System

There emerge some new trends in Indian political system (which may not call totally new, but during last few years, we are seeing more of it, especially at present juncture), these are discussed below in paragraphs:

a) Game of Advertisements

For more than one decade or so, we are seeing a new trend in our society, where every government who are in power either at the Centre or States, used to celebrate their anniversary, with front page advertisements in newspapers (National and Local) to list their achievements alongside, a photo of a Prime Minister or Chief Minister accompanied by a slogan. Actually, the tradition of measuring successes and accomplishments by the government started, in first of all in United States of America, when the President Franklin Delano Roosevelt did in 1933 by focus on his first 100 days in office. Slowly, other countries also started following it, however many of them are doing it annual (one year) measurement.

b) The Era of Slogans

The NDA II government third anniversary celebrations organized at various places across the country starting from 26th May to 15th June presided not only by Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself, but also, the President of BJP, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, and Member of Parliaments (MPs). This year the slogan theme was '*Saath Hai, Vishwaas Hai, Ho Raha Vikas Hai*' (meaning, '*Development is happening as there is togetherness and trust*') under which, there are eleven sub-slogans like

- 1) 'Bold and Decisive';
- 2) 'Empowering the Poor and Making Benefits Accessible';
- 3) Honest & Incorruptible;
- 4) A Government that Cares;
- 5) Gaining People Support and Earning their Trust;
- 6) India's rise in the Global Order;
- 7) Securing India's Future;
- 8) Empowered Women, Empowered Nation;
- 9) Strength of a New India, Power of the Youth;
- 10) Prosperous Farmer, Prosperous Nation and
- 11) Better Policy initiatives, Faster Development.

Last year upon completing two years in power, the slogan in various newspapers advertisements was '*Abki Bar, Desh Badal Raha Hai*' ('*This time the country is changing*'). So, we are living in an era where, slogans and acronyms are the trends, especially, it is true for the present NDA II government. The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is the first one in India's independence history, whose surname has been used for acronym, and associated with the performance of its government at the centre. The Acronym '*MODI*' stands for '*Making of Developed India*'.

So, the NDA II government will celebrate 'MODI Fest' throughout the country.

c) Allegiance of Individuals

Apart from ruling party at the centre, we saw advertisements from different Chief Ministers of the States (belonging to BJP) congratulating Shri Narendra Modi this year (2017). This did not happen during the first two years of anniversary of Union government. The four most unique advertisements were: firstly, from the Shivraj Singh Chauhan, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh which reads as: '*3 Years of transforming India: Three years of unprecedented dynamism and revolutionary initiatives of inclusive economic and social development, of robust infrastructure, and good governance that have transformed India.*' Secondly, the Chhattisgarh Chief Minister, Shri Raman Singh, acknowledged that Shri Narendra Modi charismatic leadership is driving Chhattisgarh progress, by quoting the facts of eight different Union government schemes implemented in his State. Thirdly, Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje advertisement looks more in content while equally giving space to achievements of Union government and also, its own State government. And finally, the advertisements of Shri Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh was the shortest, with just half page of a newspaper with five-line quotation. All the advertisements of Chief Ministers of different states, talk one common point, that is, charismatic leadership of Shri Narendra Modi that has transformed India, or in other words, revolutionary changes brought about in the country. So, the different state governments are giving advertisements in various newspapers in the capital to show their allegiance either to the party or their national leader. They are using their

state public money to show their allegiance. The advertisements given in national capital (Delhi) by other state governments doesn't justify their stand, especially if we go by simple political rule that their voters are not in Delhi to influence them.

Status of Electoral Promises

The NDA II government in its manifesto (2014 General Election) talks about fulfilling many promises. Here, we are going to discuss only three important promises.

a) Job Creation

Even, near about 70 years of India's independence, the basic common man issues i.e. '*Roti, Kapada aur Makaan*' (Food, Clothing and Shelter) still prevalent among the people of this country. And, the main solution for this problem is to provide employment to the people. Thus, employment is always an important issue in all the political party's manifestoes in elections (Lok Sabha and State Assembly). The BJP in its manifesto (2014 General Election) had mentioned that, '*The country has been dragged through 10 years of Jobless Growth by the Congress-led UPA Government. Under the broader economic revival, BJP will accord high priority to job creation and opportunities for entrepreneurship.*' Also, while addressing an election rally by Mr. Narendra Modi on 22nd November 2013, said that, '*If BJP comes to power, it will provide one crore jobs which the UPA government could not do despite announcing it before the last Lok Sabha polls.*' But, in reality, during the last three years of NDA II rule, the situation of job creation is not positive as the BJP promised in its manifesto.

According to the Fifth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey (2015-16), which includes workers from both (formal and informal economy) as well as those working as casual workers in public works programmes, the India's unemployment rate (as percentage of labour force) in 2013-14, before NDA II government came into power was (4.9%), which marginally increased to (5%) in 2015-16. If we analyze gender-wise then, the female and male unemployment rate was (7.7%) and (4.1%) in 2013-14; and (8.7%) and (4%) in 2015-16 respectively.

*UPA II (Job Created)		**NDA II (Job Created)	
Year	Jobs (In Lakh)	Year	Jobs (In Lakh)
July 2011-Sept 2011	3.2	July 2014-Sept 2014	1.6
Oct 2011-Dec 2011	2.3	Oct 2014-Dec 2014	1.2
Jan 2012-Mar 2012	0.8	Jan 2015-Mar 2015	0.6
Apr 2012-Jun 2012	0.7	Apr 2015-Jun 2015	-0.4
July 2012-Dec 2012	1.7	July 2015-Sept 2015	1.3
Jan 2013-Mar 2013	1.1	Oct 2015-Dec 2015	-0.2
Apr 2013-Jun 2013	0.9	Jan 2016-Mar 2016	NA
July 2013-Sept 2013	1.4	Apr 2016-Jun 2016	0.8
Oct 2013-Dec 2013	0.8	July 2016-Sept 2016	0.3
Jan 2014-Mar 2014	-0.4	Oct 2016-Dec 2016	1.2
Apr 2014- Jun 2014	1.8		

Note: 1) The data for the quarter Jan 2016-Mar 2016 is not available.

2) *UPA means United Progressive Alliance Government
 **NDA means National Democratic Alliance Government.

Source: 4th Quarterly Report on Employment Scenario, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Labour Bureau, Chandigarh, Government of India, April, 2017, p.12. & Shreya, Shah. (2017).

Senhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies Vol. II No.2 (July - December: 2017)

“Three Years into BJP Government, Unemployment Rate Slightly Up”, India Spend. Available at <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/three-years-into-bjp-government-unemployment-rate-slightly-up-32091>, accessed on 31st May 2017.

During NDA II rule, from July 2014 to December 2016, the eight major sectors of non-farm industrial economy which consist of Trade, Transport, Health, Education, Manufacturing, Construction, Accommodation & Restaurants and Information & Technology (IT)/ Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), contribute or create 7,20,000 jobs. In comparison, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) II government, between July 2011 and December 2013 added 1.29 million jobs. So, in the job front, the promise of providing one crore job every year is quite far from the reality for the NDA II government. Also, the Table 1 shows that the maximum growth in employment (3.2 Lakh) during a quarter saw in July-September 2011 for UPA II, and for NDA II, it was July-September 2014(1.6 Lakh) respectively. The one point that need to be kept in mind before we arrive any solid conclusion is that the data for the quarter January-March 2016 is not available for the NDA II government.

b) Swachh Baharat Mission (Gramin-Rural)

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, in his first Independence Day address to the nation from Red Fort on 15th August 2014, talked about the problem of open defecation in our country and how women dignity are affected by it. Also, the data shows the necessary action to be taken in this front, for instance, according to National Family Health Survey-3 (2005-06) only (29.1%)

households using improved sanitation facility, which increase to (48.4%) in National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16). However, still 51.6% households are not using improved sanitation facility (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2015-16). So, in this regard, the importance of Swachh Bharat Mission launched by NDA II government on September 2014 is laudable initiative. Let's look at the status of Swachh Baharat Mission (SBM). According to the guidelines of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, which came into effect from 2nd October 2014 every year, independent third-party verification and monitoring has to be done on the progress of SBM as reported by the government. But, so far, no such verification and monitoring are done. Because of which, the loan from World Bank in tune of \$376 million divided into two installments, first in July 2016 to the tune of \$147 million; and second, \$ 229 million in July 2017. Already, the deadline for the first installment was over, and likely to miss the second one. A total of \$ 1.5 Billion loan support from World Bank was signed on 30th March 2016 (Rajagopal, 2017).

As of 1st June, 2017, according to the data from the website of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, 40,539,017 million household latrines have been constructed (since 2014), out of which the states of Kerala, Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh have achieved (100%) Open-Defection-Free (ODF) status (Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2017). But there exists one problem, that is, huge difference between villages themselves declared or claims of ODF in comparison with the verification of claims done by the respective state government. According to the guidelines, every state government supposed to carry out two verifications after the self-declaration by the

village; first verification within three months, and second around six months. So, as on 1st June 2017, 2,01,898 villages are ODF (self-declared). However, only 92,925 are verified by state governments (Yadavar, Swagata, 2017). Table 2 has discussed about the state-wise data for declared ODF by villages, and total verified by state governments. It shows that more than half of the claims of villages are not verified by state governments; so far, only 46.02% are verified. In Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura, none of the villages claim was verified whereas in case of Jammu & Kashmir, only 2 out of 149 ODF villages are verified. The data for the States/Union Territories like Goa, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Puducherry is not available on the Ministry website.

States	Declared ODF Villages	Total Verified ODF Villages	% of Total Verified ODF Villages
Jammu & Kashmir	149	2	1.34%
Himachal Pradesh	15,978	15,978	100%
Punjab	5031	928	18.44%
Uttarakhand	15,430	6,697	43.40%
Haryana	6,637	4,402	66.32%
Rajasthan	19,911	9,721	48.82%
Uttar Pradesh	7,410	757	10.21%
Bihar	2,168	63	2.90%
Madhya Pradesh	16,566	571	3.44%
Gujarat	15,295	14,092	92.13%
Maharashtra	23,861	9,130	38.26%
Chhattisgarh	12,776	7,806	61.09%
Jharkhand	5,096	797	15.63%
West Bengal	21,646	11,583	53.51%

Odisha	4,835	258	5.33%
Telangana	2,016	675	33.48%
Karnataka	7,816	2,383	30.48%
Kerala	2,035	2,033	99.90%
Tamil Nadu	3,652	848	23.22%
Andhra Pradesh	4,470	653	14.60%
Meghalaya	3,777	2,405	63.67%
Assam	1,594	164	10.28%
Mizoram	217	175	80.64%
Manipur	177	61	35.05%
Nagaland	424	302	71.22%
Arunachal Pradesh	2,488	0	0%
Sikkim	441	441	100%
Tripura	5	0	0%

Source: Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India. Available at <http://sbm.gov.in/sbmdashboard/Default.aspx>, accessed on 3rd June 2017.

c) Open Government and Accountable Administration: Lokpal still a Distant Dream?

According to the 2014 Manifesto of BJP, “Administrative reforms will be a priority for the BJP. Hence, we propose to implement them through an appropriate body under the PMO. The objective will be to bring in transparency in Government’s decision-making process. Government systems and processes would be relooked to make them citizen friendly, corruption free and accountable. Every effort will be made to meet the development aspirations of the people and make the Government agencies accountable to the citizens. We will set-up an effective Lokpal institution” (Bharatiya Janata Party, 2014). So, the NDA II government has talked about big things about bringing corruption down (before coming to power and after also). And no doubt, there were no

such big scams during last three years at the top government (Centre) level (in contrast to what we have seen during UPA rule, especially during the second tenure).

Still, it doesn't mean that there was no corruption at all, especially among the common men who still pay bribe to public officials. This was highlighted by the survey conducted by the Transparency International across the Asia Pacific region (it includes 16 countries, including India) between July 2015 and January 2017. According to the survey, amongst all the countries in the region, India got the highest bribery rate, where 7 out of 10 people who had accessed public services had paid bribe or in other words, 69% of people paid bribe whereas 41% of people think that the level of corruption has increased in the country. Also, according to the results of the survey, the poor people suffer more because of bribe or pay more bribe than the richer people for accessing the basic services. The 73% of poor people have paid a bribe in comparison with 55% of rich people. So, amongst all the 16 countries surveyed, it was in India only that so large a number of poor people pay bribe. However, one positive thing also came out in the survey, that is, 53% of people surveyed think that government is taking efforts to address corruption in the country (Transparency International, 2017).

However, still the one independent institution (Lokpal) which everybody think that can go a long way in fighting corruption in our country is not established because of lack of seriousness of the Centre (NDA II government). The Lokpal Bill, 2013 was passed by both houses of Parliament in December 2013 and was enacted on 1st January 2014 before NDA II government came into

power. The Act provides for the establishment of an independent Ombudsman to probe into the allegations of corruption in public offices and ensure accountability on the part of public officials (it includes Prime Minister, Ministers and Member of Parliament). So in this regard, a batch of petitions was filed in the Supreme Court regarding, the non-establishment of Lokpal by the Centre. The Attorney General of India, representing the Centre told the court that the Lokpal cannot be appointed at present, unless the changes related to the 'Leader of Opposition' post to enable the leader of the largest opposition group in the Lok Sabha to be part of the Lokpal selection panel, and this is yet to be cleared by the Parliament (PTI, 2017). He is quoting about the Section 4 of the Lokpal Act 2013, which says that one of the members of the selection committee has to be the Leader of Opposition (LOP). At the present 16th Lok Sabha, there is no LOP, only the leader of the largest party in opposition. Also, according to Attorney General, the Central government is still examining the report of a Parliamentary Standing Committee which tabled its report on 7th December 2015, in both houses of Parliament. According to the committee, the leader of the single largest opposition party in lower house (Lok Sabha) can be nominated as a member of the selection panel, in case of no recognized leader of opposition (PTI, 2017a). However, the Supreme Court on 27th April 2017, ruled that the present Lokpal Act 2013 is a '*workable piece of legislation and there is no justification to keep the enforcement of the Act under suspension till the amendments, as proposed, are carried out.*' Also, quoting Section 4(2) of the aforementioned Act which makes it clear that the appointment of chairperson or a member of the Lokpal will not become invalid merely because of the reason of

any vacancy in the selection committee and in this case, the vacancy of LOP (Financial Express Online, 2017).

According to Prashant Bhusan, an eminent lawyer in Supreme Court of India, NDA II government's lack of seriousness about bringing Lokpal can be seen from the fact that even after three years, there was delay in bringing out one line amendment related to LOP definition in the Act whereas, the Central government hurriedly brought Aadhaar as a Money Bill and passed in the Parliament; similarly Land Acquisition Act was pushed through an ordinance, then why not Lokpal? So, double standard on corruption from the NDA II government can be seen (Bhushan, Prashant, 2017). Moreover, here, we have to note one important thing that the appointment in CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation), CVC (Central Vigilance Commission) and CIC (Central Information Commission) have done by this government (NDA II) with the leader of the largest party in opposition rather than with the tag of LOP; in that case, why not Lokpal? That is the question to be asked.

One more negative aspect related to the current government is RTI (Right to Information Act) which came into exist on 12th October 2005. In independent India, it stands as one of the best law, which empower the citizens to demand transparency from the government and made them accountable. However, the Modi government's negligence towards non-appointment of Chief Central Information Commissioner (CCIC) for over nine months (from 22 August 2014 till 7th June 2015); and, also three vacant posts of Information Commissioners (ICs) shows the attitude of the government just after few months of coming into power. Again, as the case with the Lokpal, the delay in appointment of CCIC and three ICs is also

heard by Delhi High Court, through a public interest litigation filed by RTI activists. Here also, High Court had directed the Government to fill up those vacant posts as soon as possible. Even, the Opposition party led by Congress raised the issue in the Parliament.

Similarly, in the month of April 2017, the NDA II government brought a new draft RTI rules in public domain (still to be made as a law), which according to many RTI Activists are to undermine or diluting the act. The two important features of new draft rules are- Firstly, the RTI application should not be more than 500 words, of course, it also says that, exceeding the limit doesn't mean rejection of application. Secondly, if an RTI applicant dies, before s/he gets the information, then the information application will be closed and information sought will not be given. Thus, it will increase the threats and attacks on the RTI applicants, especially the activists who want to expose the wrongdoing or corruption in various public authorities. In the past (2009) also, the Congress led UPA government tried, to dilute the act, for example, limiting an RTI query to one subject and 250 words, levying a higher charge and prohibiting applications which could be deemed to be 'frivolous or vexatious', etc (Tabassum, and Sadashivam, 2015, p.679). However, because of pressure from various sides on the government, it has to be withdrawn. Also, the Central Vigilance Commissioner post was lying vacant from 28th September 2014 and one Vigilance Commissioner from 7th September 2014 till 7th June 2015. So, if the post of high importance was lying vacant for so many months, then how can we fight corruption?

Conclusion

The dream of *Achhe Din* (“Good Days”) for the common man of this country is still not fulfilled if we see the facts or the ground realities. No doubt, the NDA II government initiated some good initiatives during the last three years, and many more still have to be done. But, so far, the results of it don’t reflect much on the ground. Nonetheless, the benefit of doubts still goes in favour of NDA II government because any policies and programmes take some time to materialize because of long gestation period. We have to see how it folds up in the coming months or years for the NDA II government in general and country in particular. This is particularly more important for the BJP led NDA II government because it will decide its fate in the coming 2019 General Election. And, now is the right time for the government to analyze and do it, if it wants to come to power, or in simple words, rule continuously for two terms (from 2014 to 2024), which, only the Congress Party did it, till date.

References

- Bhushan, Prashant. (2017). Modi Talks Big About ‘Zero Corruption, But the Lokpal is Still Nowhere in Sight. *The Wire: India*, 26th May. Available at <https://thewire.in/140250/lokpal-modi-prashant-bhushan/>, accessed on 14th June 2017.
- Bharatiya Janata Party. (2014). *BJP Manifesto- Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat-BJP Manifesto General Election 2014:Delhi*. Available at <http://www.bjp.org/manifesto2014>, accessed on 12th January 2017.

- Financial Express Online. (2017). Why Narendra Modi government is not appointing Lokpal: 15 things Supreme court told Centre. *Financial Express Newspaper: India*, 28th April. Available at <http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/what-stops-modi-government-from-appointing-lokpal-15-things-supreme-court-told-centre/645603/>, accessed on 10th June 2017.
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. (2015-16). *National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16)*. Delhi: Government of India. Available at <http://rchiips.org/nfhs/pdf/NFHS4/India.pdf>, accessed on 25th May 2017.
- Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. (2017). *Swachh Bharat Mission*. Delhi: Government of India. Available at <http://sbm.gov.in/sbmdashboard/Default.aspx>, accessed on 3rd June 2017.
- PTI. (2017). Modi government must shun stubborn attitude, appoint Lokpal: Mayawati. *Firstpost: India*, 27th April. Available at <http://www.firstpost.com/politics/modi-government-must-shun-stubborn-attitude-appoint-lokpal-mayawati-3409552.html>, accessed on 10th June 2017.
- PTI. (2017a). Top cabinet ministers in the Modi government hold consultations on Lokpal Bill. *The Economic Times English Newspaper: India*, 2nd May. Available at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/top-cabinet-ministers-in-the-modi-government-hold-consultations-on-lokpal-bill/articleshow/58480980.cms>, accessed on 10th June 2017.
- Rajagopal, Divya. (2017). World Bank yet to release fund for Swachh Bharat. *The Economic Times English Newspaper: India*, 10th January. Available at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/world-bank-yet-to-release-fund-for-swachh->

Senhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies Vol. II No.2 (July - December: 2017)

bharat/articleshow/56429289.cms, accessed on 1st June 2017.

Transparency International. (2017). *People and Corruption: Asian Pacific-Global Corruption Barometer*. Germany: Available at <https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publications/P10>, accessed on 11th June 2017.

Tabassum, Shahla and Sadashivam, T. (2015). Right to Information Act in India: an Overview. *Journal of Knowledge Economy*, Vol 6: U.S.A.

Yadavar, Swagata. (2017). Modi@3: 2.5 Years on, Swachh Bharat's claims remain Unverified. *The Quint: India*. Available at <https://www.thequint.com/india/2017/05/24/2-and-a-half-years-swachh-bharat-mission-claims-unverified>, accessed on 3rd June 2017.