

**By Sidharth Mishra**



We are in the midst of the festive season. The west has had its fill in Ganesha and the Navratra-Dandiya, the south has had its share of Onam and Dusshera, the east has celebrated the Durga Puja and the festivities in the north would reach its crescendo with Diwali. Ever since the opening of the economy in the 1990s, these festivals have also come to be about shopping and aggressive trade. With technology bringing in online traders, the courier boys with huge Santa Claus like bags are common feature in urban areas. These modern day Santas, unlike the original, however, often are of rickety frames. The shadow of these Santas, burdened by the huge bags, replicate the state of our economy. Amidst the loud talk of the country being feted with end number of government schemes, the fact of the matter is that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is being questioned – when would the ache din (good days) come?

To embroider my point, unlike and armchair economist juggling with the statistics, I would prefer narrate tales, the art which I have perfected working as a grassroot-level reporter for the past 25 years. My morning walk route is so mapped that in addition to gathering fresh air from the colony park and the middle-class analysis of the situation, it also passes through the local roadside bazaar, where the hoi polloi have a different perspective to share. During the Navratra, right on day one I found a former guard of our housing society selling marigold garlands sitting on the footpath. I thought he may have come to assist his wife, who sets up the shop every Navratra. But he was found on day two too and on day three I decided to ask him if he did not have a job to go to? “Saheb, when I left the society, I found job in a factory in Noida with PF (provident fund) and every other facility. The factory shut this month, so I am here,” he said and added, “This government has been bad for we poor people. We had voted for him (the Prime Minister) in the last polls but he has done great damage to us.”

Two days later I checked with the local fruit-seller. He is part of a “gang” of street vendors. Given my appearance on TV, though infrequent, they often come to me to share their perspective. The most vocal and articulate of them he is tailor, who repairs at least three dozen trousers and shirts every day. “Ache din aa gaye kya babuji (Has good days come sir),” he queried. His neighbour immediately blurred, “Bhaiyon, Beheno (brothers and sisters),” the way Prime Minister Modi speaks with hands raised complete with a finger pointing.

When people on the street side, who I am sure have not read the diatribe which visceral Modi-baiters have launched against him, who I am sure follow just the ideology of survival immaterial of the fact whether it comes from the left or the right, start doubting the credentials of the government and its leader, it time to worry. Statistics and appearances in media are of no use if the dividends of the government policy are not able to energise the common man on the street.

The third incident is of Dusshera day. My housing colony on Delhi-UP border is in the midst of three shopping malls and given the marketing bonanzas which have been announced given the four day extended weekend holidays this time, we should have been locked down by the traffic caused by the shoppers' rush. It did not happen this way, this time. On Dusshera, we managed, after ages, to pass by many a Ramlila grounds getting ready for the burning as the traffic was much less than the earlier years.

"Where have all the people gone," I queried. To this my driver replied, "They all are sitting at home. Sir, this is month-end. As it is, these are tough times. Forget about festival bonus, people are also not getting salary on time. It's difficult to meet the requirements of even puja, forget about the festivity."

This reflective analysis of the situation should sound the warning bells for Prime Minister Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. Winning brawny points against senior party leader Yashwant Sinha by putting up his son Jayant Sinha as counter to former's criticism of the state of economy is not going to take the NDA II government very far.

Only such political leaders who have the ability to remain rooted and take criticism positively also have the capacity to deliver. Both Modi and Jaitley are above suspicion as far as the issue of personal integrity goes. However, personal integrity cannot be the lone factor in somebody's character to make him a good administrator.

The Government may not be as beleaguered, largely thanks to a ramshackle opposition, as is being made out in both the mainstream or social media,. Prime Minister's personal image doesn't look to have been dented so far by these controversies. To the credit of the Modi team, despite the global slowdown, India is still to sound the warning bells. But for how long is the question worrying all.

## **Economic Atmospherics: Bad News For Govt**

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 04 October 2017 16:11

---

What should worry the government is lack of employment among the poor and lack of confidence among the entrepreneur, caused by moves like demonetization. The government has to move from talking of 'Ease of Business' to ensure 'Ease of Living' for the people. Winning state assembly polls alone cannot be the index for showing people's satisfaction with the performance of the government with seat at the Raisina Hills.

Acting on criticism is the need of the hour. Personal attacks should be rebutted and refuted but in doing so the finer points of genuine censure should not be overlooked.

(Sidharth Mishra is Editor, Capital Khabar. This piece first appeared in DBPOST, Bhopal)