

Mortifying Dilemma to Vaccinate or Not Vaccinate

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 23 May 2021 02:39

By Sidharth Mishra



Late Arun Jaitley, who was only next to Atal Bihari Vajpayee with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) when it came to articulation, had once said that camera was going to bring much sorrow to country's politics. He made these comments in August 2011, speaking at the prestigious Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) at the launch of Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice. His remarks were with reference to the Anna Hazare movement which was then peaking, extensively backed by the television cameras.

Little would have Jaitley known that a decade later, the lure of the camera was bringing much sorrow not just to the politics in general but governance in particular. Every ruler has the desire to get documented, many do it by way their work speaking for them, and some prefer marking their presence at every given opportunity. With the camera now readily available, individual documentation has overtaken governance.

The opening lines of our Constitution, the Preamble, says: 'WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

Try and revisit these lines in the context of the camera-backed governance provided to the country during the current wave of Covid pandemic. The collapse of health infrastructure, a premium being put on the dignity for the dead and the life-saving vaccination drive failing to take off, all point towards the citizens being denied Justice, Liberty and Equality.

The silver line has been restoration of Fraternity, which was lying in tatters following a divisive narrative for the past few years. With misery befalling citizens without discriminating on caste, creed or religion, the citizenry has joined hands to support one another. The Sikh community with their oxygen 'langars' are back in public perception as sewadars (service doers) than terror mongers.

Mortifying Dilemma to Vaccinate or Not Vaccinate

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 23 May 2021 02:39

This desire to document for the camera has befallen wretchedness on our Republic. The faceless but organisations of strength which quietly served the nation for decades have been made public exhibits, bringing them under unnecessary pressure and compromising on their scientific autonomy. First, we had the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) bungling in 'our journey to the moon' and now the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) 'in its attempt to save the humanity.'

With the health minister of the country promoting 'alternative' medicine instead of focussing on his immediate responsibilities, the ICMR is left competing with a multi-item marketing firm run by a skimpy clad promoter, its left competing with cow-dung therapy, its run into a state of confusion whether to allow plasma therapy or not, and it's at a loss to comprehend efficacy of vaccines.

This Hamletian dilemma to vaccinate or not to vaccinate must be posing many a moral question to the functionaries of the ICMR. Are they prescribing the recess between the vaccine doses under the pressure of the government which is not able to deliver the vaccines? Studies in United Kingdom was cited for increasing the period of recess but we have been left red-faced with the UK bringing down the gap in less than 24 hours of our announcement.

While the Socialist, Secular and Democratic credentials of our Republic have been under stress for some time, now with the states being told to compete in the international market for purchase of vaccines, even a question mark is being put on our Sovereign stature. Hope the preamble of our constitution gets restored at the earliest, without which we cannot have a robust government, which can fight the Covid scourge.

(The writer is Author and President, Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice)