

# TECHCITY PLUS

Make the most of where you live

► **When you see how tired and disappointed Indians are with the political scene, what thoughts do you have?**

It happened in 2006-2007, when I was at the World Economic Forum, and was watching the 'India Everywhere' campaign by the CII at Geneva. You could see a whole lot of buses plying by with the 'India Everywhere' hoardings. The whole Indian delegation, 300 ministers and CII top brass, were harping on this theme. In my talk, I cautioned them, saying, "It's true, we are sitting on a phenomenal threshold. For me the threshold is not that Indians are going from Maruti cars to Mercedes. What matters to me is that there are 600 million people in this country who hardly have a human existence. It is a tremendous opportunity in one generation to take them to a different level of life, nourishment, education; which in turn will make a big difference to what they make out of their lives. It is people who make the nation after all." So I said, we are sitting on a fantastic opportunity, but at the same time, we have a history of goofing up opportunities.

► **How critical is the role of leadership in achieving the kind of growth that you talked about? How optimistic are you about India's future in the next 10 - 15 years?**

It is very important that people in responsible positions take charge of this possibility. No country would have done anything like this. In a matter of 10-15 years we can take half a billion people from one kind of existence to another, without a revolution, without killing, without bloodshed, just like that. That is the kind of miraculous possibility we are sitting on.

I won't say we have totally goofed up, but we have missed the bus in many ways. Economics is not the only thing that holds a nation together; but culturally and as a sovereign country, in my perception, we have about 15-25 years of elbow room to transform India into a great nation. We have been 'developing the nation' for too long. 65 years is a long time. Two - three generations have passed, and still nothing has changed for a majority of the people. It is not a question of misfortune, it is a question of mishandling a whole lot of things.

The potential that India as a population carries, the talent this nation has, is huge. If we do not harness that, we really do not have much else to harness. For one billion people we do not have enough natural resources, land, water, air. Nothing is enough. The only thing we have is people, and they are young. If we transform this population into a trained, educated, focussed, inspired population, we will be a miracle. If we fail to do that, we will be a disaster, a disaster that one can't handle. We have been stationary for the last seven - eight years, not moving. Even if you are on the right track, if you are sitting in the same spot for too long, you can get run over. That's the situation we are in. The next five years are phenomenally crucial in the making of India. If we do not

do the right thing in the next five to ten years, we will end up like many of the African nations. Keeping the country together would be a serious challenge. When I said this, people said "Sadhguru, why are you saying this, you must inspire people." I said I am not being pessimistic. This is a fact, because I observe the nation at a very grass root level.

I know what people are aspiring for, what their mindset is right now. It is a large population and we need to instill a sense of direction in them. Otherwise you would not be able to control them after some time, even with army or navy or whatever. Even now almost 25 % of the country is under armed control.

► **There is so much of activism and militancy across regions in the country. Would you attribute it to the failure of leadership?**

Most of us are living in a utopian state of mind, hoping everything will be ok. We read about the death of 100-200 policemen as if it is a cricket score. It is not just that people have become immune to misfortunes, it is that they are not even perceiving what that means. People think that the news is from some other world. I know you call your paper The Times of India, but for all that people care, it could be Times of some other place.

So people have turned to full time activism. Right now activism is a profession. But unbridled activism is the first step to violence. Maoists are also call themselves activists. Hence, we can see, this is a progression. You can protest, but if you protest at all time, then it will lead to anarchy. This is not the pre-independence era where one wanted to dislocate the state. This is our own nation, we must not think about dislocating it. If the CM himself wants to sit on the street and protest, where is the law? If he thinks he is imitating Mahatma Gandhi, this is not the right time. It is time to work coherently and bring about change without disrupting the nation.

► **Activism exists all across the globe. How is it different in India? What kind of leadership can resolve the issue?**

I have spoken to all kinds of groups. In other countries, the intellect in people

► **Is there a problem of mindsets? Are we lacking the sense of nationalism and pride that triggered the birth of independent India?**

The fundamental aspect of this nation is Jananayaka. We say we are a democracy but our mindset is feudalistic. We choose by caste, creed, religion; where is the democracy?

But to even see that one has to be free to think. This education system was given to us historically as a way to make us subservient to the powers that ruled us. At least we should have rewritten our history when we won independence. We don't read the history written by people who enslaved us. In the initial few years after Independence, we were in awe of people who knew how to speak English. Everything English was superior and everything Indian was inferior. It has gone so deep. If we do

not stem the rot, we will never be like a westerner, believe me. It will take 100,200, 500 years to become like that. We have to grow, focusing on our natural strengths and we will reach there. We have to stop trying to be somebody we are not. One becomes a slave in some other way, because there is no natural thought in this country.

If western countries opened up the visa system, eighty per cent people will swim across the ocean and go away from India. What does that mean? It is a prison not a nation. Maybe the economic and physical situation cannot be transformed immediately, but we can inculcate the pride of being Indian. We have been ingrained to believe what is in the country is not good, and cannot be good. This is the result of the education system scripted by the occupiers.

## "WE NEED HOME GROWN LEADERSHIP"

JAGGI VASUDEV SPEAKS WITH DIPAL GALA ON WHY INDIA IS AT ITS MOST IMPORTANT JUNCTURE AND, IN THE BACKDROP OF ELECTIONS, ON THE LACK OF LEADERSHIP, AT A NATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL



is better organised. But in terms of natural intellect, ours is way better. India is a land of very complex ethnicity and strong genetic character which has produced a unique kind of people.

Every Indian deals with a great of disorganisation, at all levels, but is not as deeply impacted as people elsewhere would have been. This is because the basic culture of the nation is so spiritually rooted and this ability to be uninfluenced by the immediate environment is a phenomenal quality to have. But right now, it is turning out to be negative for us. At this moment we need a little more engagement with issues, we need to find solutions, we need to bring the billion people together.

All around the world, people believe only anger can solve problems. But no, human intelligence can solve problems. Love can solve problems, compassion can solve problems and above all, sense can solve problems. If we allow rage to develop, the solution would be a bigger problem than the problem itself. Here we are sitting on the threshold of huge change. We have the ability to do it without violence. The only thing missing is a focussed leadership. Leadership has been missing for a long time.

And what a leader needs is not worship, but many strands of support to make his leadership effective. I have identified 11 layers of leaders this society needs for it to do well. It is not just one CM, one PM, we need layers of people. Democracy - Jananayakam means that people are the leaders. Anybody who can touch ten people in a day, has the capability to make a difference. It can be anybody - a village panchayat

leader, a grocer or a home maker.

► **Why then are we waiting for someone all the time?**

That is because leadership is about taking action to bring the change one wants to see. In India, if somebody has an accident on the street, there will be a thousand people watching, nobody will act. This is because, for several generations, we have been in a survival mode. We have been taught not to stick our neck out, just run home in difficult situations. This is the wisdom of past generations and that is working against us right now. Indians are still in this mode, largely.

So the new generation has to be empowered, to be told you have to stick your neck out for the nation. Otherwise, this nation is not going anywhere. That is why we need a leader who understands what makes this nation tick. India was not born in 1947. Though the country was split up into numerous political entities, in the last 8-10 thousand years, India was always recognised as one nation. Has anybody asked why?

Essentially, sameness of people makes nations. All nations are made that way, same language, ethnicity and so on. India is totally different. We look different, we think different, we speak different languages. It stands in defiance of the mediocrity of uniformity. Has anybody wondered why?

► **What is the way forward to address the gap between possibility and reality? How would you define the kind of leadership that is required to do that?**

A nation is an idea. If the idea has to work, we must put everything behind it. The idea has to permeate into every individual. The only way to do that is with pride. If there is no pride, there are no real people who will rise to do something. In the pre-independence era, people wanted to give their lives for the nation, and in 65 years' time, they want to throw the nation.

There is an enormous amount of knowledge in the culture, about the best way to use the mind and body to achieve something. Above all there is an enormous amount of knowledge about how we can be. All these have been just brushed aside. Recently, I was told, some university in the UK said the rays of the sun reverberate with the sound Aum. So I said, we in India have said that always. But it is only when it comes from abroad that we believe it.

Essentially the leaders of the nation have always presented themselves like that. Thought from within India has never been taken seriously. Hence it is very important to have a home grown leader, with an international vision. Otherwise you cannot get everyone actively involved in building this nation. If every Indian is not involved in building this nation, all theories are pointless.

Hence the only aspect to look at now is that between possibility and reality there is a distance, do we have the commitment to walk the distance?