“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

-John Q. Adams
Ancient sport, new age protests

Alain Dejean

Targeting old scroungers

The 1970s’ generation of scroungers are now being targeted by a new generation of scroungers: the young. The older generation, now in their sixties, are being accused of living off the state and not contributing to society. The younger generation, who grew up in a more affluent society, believe that the older generation should be working for themselves. The situation has led to a new form of protest: the scrounger protest. The younger generation is demanding that the older generation stop living off the state and start working for themselves. The older generation, who grew up in a less affluent society, believe that they have a right to live off the state and that the younger generation should not be judge.
Budget to new elimination targets for some major communicable diseases barely hints at the enormous burden carried by millions in India with tuberculosis, kala-azar (leishmaniasis), filariasis, leprosy and measles.

Eliminate Kala-Azar (black fever) and Filariasis by 2017; to eliminate Leprosy by 2018, Measles by 2020 and to eliminate Tuberculosis by Q-? is also targeted.

It would appear incongruous that an emerging economy with no timetable for universal health coverage and a lack of political will to loosen its purse strings for higher government expenditure has set ambitious deadlines to rid itself of deadly scourges.

Last year it was revealed that India has a higher burden of new patients with TB than estimated earlier — 2.8 million in 2015 compared to 2.2 million in the previous year, a quarter of the world’s cases.

Having set concrete goals, the Centre must now demonstrate its seriousness by moving away from the flawed policies of the past. The World Health Organisation has been pointing to the lack of integration of private practitioners with the national mission on tuberculosis for guaranteed access to drugs, and lack of continuous monitoring of such patients.

India’s campaign on leprosy is in reality a ‘post elimination’ struggle resulting from complacency, since it announced at the end of 2005 that it had eliminated it as a public health problem, based on a rate of less than one person in 10,000 having it.

Such self-congratulatory moments weakened both policy focus and funding in some pockets in eastern India, where it exceeded the accepted prevalence rate.

Health Minister J.P. Nadda’s admission in the Rajya Sabha that there were 1,02,178 leprosy cases on record as of September 2016, and districts of ‘high endemism’, shows the battle was never truly won.

Rehabilitation of patients is also a weak spot. Kala-azar, though underreported and mainly confined to Bihar and Jharkhand, is a promising candidate for elimination in the current year, since the few thousand cases are caused by a protozoal parasite with no animal reservoir; control of the vector, the sand fly, holds the key.

If good medical protocol is pursued- Rehabilitation programmes for these diseases require more resources and policy support
Measles
Also called: rubeola

Symptoms:
- Fever and skin rash

Leprosy
Also called: Hansen's disease

Symptoms:
- Bumps on skin (granulomas)
- Mycobacterium Leprae

Filarisis
Also called: lymphatic filariasis

Symptoms:
- Parasitic worm spread by mosquitoes
- Swelling and thickening of skin
Ancient sport, new age protests - Jallikattu protests

- The final months of 2016 witnessed high drama in Tamil Nadu, with millions across the State overcome by grief following the prolonged hospitalisation and subsequent demise of Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa.
- The first few weeks of 2017 have since seen protests over the issue of jallikattu convulse the State.
- Steeped in hoary tradition, dating back to the fabled Sangam era [Q-dynastie-?], jallikattu holds a special place in the hearts and minds of ordinary Tamil folk.
- The decision of the Supreme Court, in May 2014, to uphold the Central government’s notification of 2011 (adding bulls to the list of animals whose training and exhibition is prohibited).
- A resurgence of Tamil chauvinism(क़ौमपरस्ती) is apparent - Beneath the surface calm, deep wells of unhappiness exist in the State over issues concerning so-called “Tamil pride”.
- The celebrated British physicist, Stephen Hawking [Q-Country- English Channel?] is credited with the remark that “the 21st century will be the century of complexity”.
- Hence, all governments need to accept that change is the order of things and that the nature of change itself changes - Logical thinking has been overtaken, or is being eclipsed, by disruptive logic.
- In 1971, India dealt effectively with a problem of over a million refugees from East Bengal on its soil. Most of them returned home after the new state of Bangladesh came into being.
- Today, the refugee influx into Europe is threatening the very existence of Europe and is posing the most profound challenge to the traditional concept of what states are, and their meaning.
Time of ‘indeterminate complexity’

- Growing intolerance is a special feature across societies and populations today.
- The trend in “new wave” protests — which are occurring with greater frequency today — is towards creating a spectacle and mobilising large crowds to heighten the intensity of the initial cause.
- The cascading nature of public protests over the rape of a young woman in Delhi in Dec 2012, on the issue of safeguarding the dignity of women, is an instance in point.
- In Tamil Nadu today, the issue of Tamil pride could generate similar outcomes, with other grievances being added - Public opinion tends to be easily galvanised in a world which has gone from being “connected” to “hyper connected”.
- Hence, we need to recognise that the reality of “indeterminate complexity” is already upon us - Scientists and mathematicians are familiar with this phenomenon - Social scientists, politicians and administrators are less familiar with it.
- There is also need for a great deal of careful thought and well-considered action in approaching such situations, and in calibrating responses.
The NDA government is determined to undertake reforms in all domains- M. VENKAIAH NAIDU

Change is the key for progress- Fulfilling the dream of Resurgent India through a series of reformatory initiatives has been the leitmotif (theme throughout a musical) of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

From introducing a biometric attendance system for government employees, to selecting unsung heroes for the Padma awards, to ensuring transparency in the funding of political parties, the Prime Minister is seeking to transform the mindset of individuals and the functioning of institutions.

This was also reflected in the presentation of a single, all-encompassing Budget by doing away with a - Status quoists fear change, but visionaries with courage and conviction are capable of taking game-changing decisions in the larger interest of the nation.

It is time for citizens to realise that Mr. Modi is singularly focussed on ushering in total transformation in every walk of life and making every Indian a proud citizen of a ‘clean, transparent and resurgent India’.

Transforming India

1)-The decision to demonetise high-value currency notes,
2)- NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog,
3)-spectrum and coal blocks
4)-Acceptance of the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission to devolve 42% of the funds to States and 5% to local bodies from the divisible pool is a clear example of Mr. Modi’s belief in cooperative federalism
5)-Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana and the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana - financial inclusion-
6)-separate Railway Budget marked by the Prime Minister’s motto of Reform, Perform and Transform.
Cleanliness is next to godliness, to use a clichéd phrase - Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which virtually turned into a people’s movement.

Result, over 450 cities, 1.4 lakh villages, 77 districts and three States have declared themselves as open defecation-free.

A remarkable transformation in the attitude of the people has made this possible - More than three crore toilets have been constructed under the mission.

Another initiative that focussed on changing attitudes was the Give it Up campaign.

Following the Prime Minister’s appeal to well-to-do families, over 1.2 crore consumers voluntarily gave up their LPG subsidy. A whopping 36,000 crore has been saved by preventing leakages after the direct benefit transfer of Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile.

Similarly, PAHAL, the world’s largest cash benefit transfer scheme for providing LPG subsidy, has resulted in saving over 21,000 crore in the last two years.

It is heartening to note that Chandigarh and eight districts in Haryana have been declared kerosene-free.

As part of the government’s vision to double the income of farmers by 2022 and prevent farmers’ suicides, schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana [Q-Rate?] and the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, to provide crop-risk coverage at low premium and expand irrigation facilities, have been yielding good results.

In order to ensure easy credit to farmers, the corpus of NABARD fund has been doubled to 41,000 crore. Steps taken by the government, including increasing minimum support price for pulses and the procurement of eight lakh tonnes of pulses, have controlled their prices.

Another revolutionary initiative has been the Beti Bachao, Beti Padao scheme. Over one crore accounts have been opened and more than 11,000 crore has been deposited under the Pradhan Mantri Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, which seeks to ensure a secure future for the girl child.

The government has also enhanced maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks.
A success story of this saga is the popularity of BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) for mobile App-based payments.

Other schemes that seek to bring about transformation include One Nation, One Market; the Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana; supply of 20 crore affordable LED bulbs; Mission Indradhanush; Stand Up India; Start Up India;

The government’s agenda

- The transformation-driven agenda of the government was also reflected in the 2017-18 Budget in which political funding reforms were announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.
- Now, a political party can receive a maximum amount of 2,000 in cash as donation and every party has to file its returns.
- The Reserve Bank of India Act is also proposed to be amended to enable issue of electoral bonds.
- The Budget summed up the agenda of the government — Transform, Energise, Clean India.
- According of infrastructure status to affordable housing is a huge step.
- Also, the allocation under the Housing for All scheme was enhanced to 23,000 crore as against 15,000 crore, in this year’s Budget.
- Similarly, the usual practice of segregating plan and non-plan expenditure has been done away with.
- Reforms to be undertaken in the University Grants Commission, according greater autonomy for good quality institutions and ranking them on the basis of excellence and creation of innovation fund for secondary education are all aimed at bringing about transformation.
- While the list of such revolutionary initiatives is exhaustive, it is suffice to say that this government is determined not to be swerved from the path of transforming the nation by undertaking reforms in all domains.
On January 14, 2017, Ennore fisherfolk and the Save Ennore Creek campaign released a song called “Chennai Poromboke Paadal” spotlighting Ennore as an environmental crime scene (disclosure: this writer was involved in the production of the song)-NITYANAND JAYARAMAN

Poromboke is an ancient Tamil revenue term describing areas reserved for communal use such as the seashore, grazing grounds, and the margins of wetlands.

It uses the pollution and encroachment of the Ennore Creek to make the case for reclaiming the word and healing the creek- Barely a fortnight later, two ships collided of Kamarajar Port Limited’s (KPL) harbour in Ennore.

The consequent oil spill, the disaster that is unfolding in the name of containment and remediation, and the hurry to declare the clean-up operation complete raise questions that go beyond the incidents of this last week

Denial, downplaying and buck-passing are standard disaster response protocol that have stood the test of time from Bhopal to Kodaikanal to the Chennai floods.

Disasters are great teachers.
Petroleum oils are complex mixtures -like benzene, are known human carcinogens(causing cancer).

They enter the body through inhalation, ingestion and the skin- But the world watched as Chennai’s youth rolled up their sleeves and scooped the oily emulsion bare-handed by the bucketful.

No advisories on the toxicity of the spilled material have been issued- No prosecution has been launched for violation of environmental laws by various agents.

Clean-up complete?

In 1996, Union Carbide handed over its factory to the Madhya Pradesh government stating that the clean-up was complete-Twenty years later, the site remains contaminated and begging for a real clean-up.

In Ennore too, the Coast Guard has been threatening to complete the cleanup in a couple of days — less than 10 days from when it commenced.

Ending the clean-up should not be determined by the stamina of the executing agency, results of post-remediation assessments.

This governance deficit needs to be fixed if we are to avert the death of our life-support systems through the slow-motion disaster of day-to-day pollution or shock incidents like oil spills.
Eliminate Kala-Azar (black fever) and Filariasis by 2017; to eliminate Leprosy (कु ष्ठ रोग) by 2018, Measles (खसरा) by 2020 and to eliminate Tuberculosis by [2025] is also targeted.

Approximately during the period between 400 BC to AD 200, Tamilakam was ruled by the three Tamil dynasties of Pandya, Chola and Chera, and a few independent chieftains, the Velir.

The English Channel, also called simply the Channel, is the body of water that separates southern England from northern France, and joins the southern part of the North Sea to the rest of the Atlantic Ocean.

Stephen Hawking- UK

M. VENKAIAH NAIDU - Minister of Urban Development of India since 2014

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana- The *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana* (Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme) was launched by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi on 18 February 2016- It envisages a uniform premium of only 2 per cent to be paid by farmers for Kharif crops, and 1.5 per cent for Rabi crops. The premium for annual commercial and horticultural crops will be 5 per cent - Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked for integration.