

PRESS RELEASE

India has the potential to leapfrog in the 21st century

Can India- second most populous country in the world, seventh largest in terms of area, home to a bewildering diversity of people with huge economic disparities-leapfrog in the 21st century? Ambassador Surendra Kumar brings together India's leading experts and opinion makers to ponder on the question, analysing the prevailing conditions and the road ahead in his book "What will Leapfrog India in the Twenty first Century", being launched at the session hosted on 30th March 2016 by Ananta Centre, New Delhi.

New Delhi, 30th March'2016: India has become a virtual superpower in an impressively short span of time. This is reflected in the technological feat India has accomplished by successfully launching a cost friendly Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM). This shows that although a 68 year old republic, it has all the potential to leapfrog in the twenty first century.

Ambassador Surendra Kumar, editor of the book, advocated the same stream of thought when he said:

"By securing national borders, maintaining friendly relations with the world outside, and making social, educational, scientific and technological advancements for meeting basic needs of thousands of people we can bring a positive change in the society."

Honourable Minister of Railways Shri Suresh Prabhu highlighted the importance of holistic development, and said "we need to grow holistically as a society and not just as an economy; as a nation and not just as a state. Apart from the growth in GDP we need to equally focus on art, literature, culture, science and technology. PM Modi's Make in India is focussed on addressing the imbalance in GDP which favours service sector and leaves out the manufacturing sector. The idea is to ensure that all government programs make for tomorrow's India".

Padma Vibhushan Awardee and Indian classical dance exponent, Dr. Sonal Mansingh cheered a new slogan called 'Wake up India'. She said rulers are servants of people and they must ensure a constant flow of ideas. We need to direct our energies and ideas not for our own good but for the welfare of all.

Writer, diplomat and Member of Parliament, Dr. Shashi Tharoor encouraged young leadership and advocated engaging with the youth. He shared an anecdote that in his last cabinet the average age was 67 years while the average age of India was 27 years – the widest gap ever. The enthusiasm of the youth must be channelized constructively. We must open doors for the young to enter politics.

Member of Parliament Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi applauded the NDA government initiatives to transform India, and said "India is on the right path in terms of conserving the environment. 19th century belonged to Britain, 20th century belonged to the US but the 21st century should belong to India. Benefits should reach people who really need it, irrespective of caste, creed and gender. Through various initiatives by the current government we are gradually moving towards an overall growth and development. This will take India where it really deserves to be."

Member of Parliament, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, emphasised on translating the benefits of democracy for all, and said” Without empowerment there won’t be entitlement and enrichment. We have to empower the middle class of India by giving them benefits of democracy. Greater participation at the grassroots level will strengthen overall democracy.”

Lord Meghnad Desai, Professor Emeritus, LSE, said,” India’s position in HDI is low compared to other developing countries. Our rich ancient culture and religion are in conflict with society today. Hierarchy and inequality still persist. Women’s position is also appallingly bad. We need to break stereotypes and treat everyone as equal human beings”.

Sounding a cautious note, former Member of Parliament and Press advisor to PM, Shri H K Dua said,” the current optimism about India’s development should be based on reality. On the human development index India’s position is quite low. We have to respect the institutions and constitutional values to leapfrog in this century.

The book covers a plethora of themes pertaining to India’s future and its abilities to resolve its problems. It encourages young readers to ask pertinent questions and find solutions for what India needs to do in order to realise its full potential.

About Ananta Centre

Ananta Centre is an independent and for-profit charitable organisation that seeks to foster positive change in society through dissemination of knowledge. The Centre facilitates discussions on issues of international significance, values-based leadership and cross-sector outreach by engaging the civil society, government, private sector, and other key stakeholders.

For more information, contact:

Ms Mrityika Nandy

Mobile: +91 7838595542 / 011-40733312

Email: mrityika.nandy@anantacentre.in