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Webinar Report

National Webinar on “Self-reliant India: Challenges and Opportunities”

GUHAR organized the national webinar titled “**Self-reliant India: Challenges and Opportunities**” on 18th July 2020 in collaboration with D.A.V. College, Neneola (Ambala), Haryana. It witnessed a footfall of young researchers, scholars, professors, and students from all across the. There were one hundred and fifty participants. The seminar proceedings are as written below.

The webinar began with introductory opening remarks by organizing secretary Mr. Deepak Kumar. He introduced the webinar topic before the gathering. He dwelled upon the importance of achieving self-reliance in the era of globalization. Only through cooperation between different stakeholders at the domestic level, we can achieve our objective of aatma-nirbhar Bharat.

The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Rahul Chimurkar, assistant professor Lakshmibai College, University of Delhi. With much zeal and zest, he addressed the flamboyant audience and instilled in them more vigor and vitality. Amidst the tensions with china at the borders, the vocal for local initiatives or self-reliance by PM is a welcome step. It has given us a golden opportunity to reinvent Bharat on its own principles, values, etc. The recent upsurge of the ‘Boycott China ’movement could hit the right spot if we adopt the Swadeshi model of development in our country. The movement is already gaining momentum across the country and resonated with millions of Indians after the stealth aggression shown and surprise assault made by China in Eastern Ladakh. To become a superpower, we have realized that there is no need to look for some ‘left ’or ‘right ’way of development rather swadeshi model of development. The current pandemic has provided us an opportunity to adopt a bottom-top approach of development based on justice and fairness or in short ‘Swadeshi model of development’.

Introductory remarks were given by the Shri Satvir Singh, Principal, D.A.V. College, Naneola (Ambala), Haryana. He appreciated the PM Modi initiative of achieving a self-reliant Bharat. He emphasized upon developing our strengths in all sectors and become

competitive in the global market. He asked the gathering to follow the slogan 'Trust Thyself' to fulfill our objectives of a superpower India.

The gathering was then addressed by the Chief Guest of the webinar, Prof. Maheshwar Singh, Professor, Political & International Relations, National Law University, Delhi NLU Delhi. In his address, he explored the meaning of Aatma-Nirbhar Bharat in today's era globalization, economic implications of it, and changes required at the policy level to achieve the objective. The pandemic had disrupted the whole supply chain across the world. The whole world was dependent on China for medical equipment, PPE kits, etc. This was an eyeopener for India to reduce its dependence on China and develop its capacity to supply all these equipment at the domestic level only. He said Self-reliance cannot be understood as boycotting of foreign goods as it was during the freedom struggle. Rather it is the autonomy of taking actions and holding oneself responsible for the consequences of one's actions. He suggested strengthening our non-strategic sectors. These sectors should develop their production capacity and become suppliers in the whole world. The objective of Aatma-nirbhar Bharat could also be achieved by boosting entrepreneurship in India. The ecosystem needs to be developed for start-ups to grow. He also outlined certain challenges like bureaucratic interventions, rigid rules, and multiple clearances at the policy level which need to be addressed.

The whole session was chaired by Prof. Uma Shankar Pandey, Principal, SOL, University of Delhi. He brought out the role of technology during the current pandemic and we Indians are using the technology to serve our needs and interest. Be it the education sector, business, medicine, etc., we have built innovative models with the help of technology. He referred to the RTPCR kit for corona testing developed by IIT Delhi. He suggested that the villages should be made self-governing by bringing all facilities and building necessary infrastructures in the villages. At the same time, initiatives need to be taken to utilize technology for the benefit of the whole country. He also appreciated the efforts of the government who is doing its best to extend all help possible to various sections of the society.

The first speaker Prof. Pavnesh Kumar, Professor, Dean, School of Commerce and Management Sc., Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Motihari, Bihar. He spoke on the role of rural entrepreneurship and aatma-nirbhar Bharat. He quoted World Bank's report and said the world is going to face a recession in times to come and India's GDP will go down in negative 5.2 percent. The only positive aspect of this pandemic is the reduction in pollution by 20% worldwide. India needs to work on majorly two sectors i.e on economy and poverty. He adds India is self-reliant in many sectors like textiles, wheat, rice, etc. However, we are still dependent on foreign countries for electronic products, medical equipment, automobile parts, solar power equipment, etc. In this pandemic situation, India has an opportunity to develop on its own and achieve the aim of a self-reliant India. For this, he suggested many steps like - demographic dividend needs to be utilized to the fullest, farmers need to be given all necessary support system, one district one product schemes need to be promoted, skill up-

gradation of workers needs to be done to prevent migration, a concept like Smart Village must be promoted, etc. These initiatives will go a long way in ensuring a self-reliant Bharat.

The next speaker Dr. Ram Sharma, Associate Professor, Department of English, Janta Vedic College, Baraut, Baghpat, U.P. He spoke on opportunities and challenges for becoming self-reliant. He referred to our ancient past and emphasized that in ancient Indian, we achieved a growth rate of 25-30%. This was possible with the use of our natural resources and with no dependence on outside countries. The imposition of the western model of development exploited our economy, culture, and society. It is based on pure greed, individual growth, and ecological disaster. We in a sense have become 'unpaid employees of the corporates today'. He proposed to reinvent India by reviving our old age tradition, values, adopting swadeshi goods and services in all ways possible, protecting nature, respecting our ancient system of medicine like Ayurveda, Gurukul system of education, etc. We must do away with the individual-centric western model of development and shift towards our sustainable and collective way of life as practiced in our ancient civilization.

The next speaker Dr. Amna Mirza, Assistant Professor, SPM College for women, University of Delhi, Delhi, spoke on 'Debating challenges and opportunities of self-reliance amidst contemporary global context'. She started with the fact that this pandemic has exposed the unequal trade wars going on between the countries at the global level. There is an increase in the non-traditional threats visible in the world today. The world is looking for a new world order with a deep commitment to maintaining global harmony, improving socio-economic equity, and preserving nature's balance. India is in a position to redefine the world order. The government of the day announced various initiatives like Aatma-nirbhar package, reforms in the coal sector, defense production, Health reforms, etc. to prepare the nation for future pandemics. Swadeshi is all about the humanitarian approach to development. More reformed multilateralism is going to be visible at the global level and developing countries will have a larger say in envisaging the new world order.

Vote of thanks was given by webinar convener Dr. Rajpal Bhullar, Head, Department of Political science in D.A.V. College Naneola (Ambala), Haryana who provided a fitting closure to the webinar. Extending his gratitude to the various esteemed speakers who made the webinar a truly enriching experience for one and all present, Dr. Bhullar gratefully recognized the contributions made by every speaker to the issues on Aatma Nirbhar Bharat and its many tangents. Furthermore, acknowledging the many hours of tireless work and efforts put into making this webinar a success, he extended his heartfelt gratitude to the organizers Dr. Rahul Chimurkar, Mr. Deepak Kumar, Mr. Divyanshu Shangari, Mr. Rohit Bharti, Surajit Gogoi and others without whom, the webinar could not have turned out to be the success that it achieved.



Deepak Kumar
Convener
President (GUHAR)