

Sustainable and Holistic India – Need for a New Quit India Movement

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My father went to jail in the 1942 Quit India movement. He was interned for 2.5 years in Delhi and Lucknow jails and was released in 1946.

I often used to ask him whether he and hundreds and thousands of Indians like him who sacrificed their lives for India's independence ever thought that it will become such a chaotic and corrupt country and whether his sacrifice was in vain? We started with such a high moral ground in 1947 and where have we brought our country to? He used to fumble with the answer and was clueless about it.

This is the same question I still ask myself when giving lectures to youngsters in innumerable universities, IITs and other colleges. Yet these youngsters are the future of our country and we should educate and inspire them to do better.

At the time when we are celebrating 75 years of Quit India movement and celebrating 70 years of independent India we should perhaps give a new slogan for Quit India. Just like the original Quit India movement was to banish Britishers from India, so the new slogan should be to banish from India – **poverty, hunger, hatred and violence**. Freedom from these will be true independence for our country.

How do we achieve this ? Not by slogans or posters or twitter! But by solid hard work for changing India from bottom up.

Poverty can be reduced drastically by creating wealth from the land. When 55% of India's population is dependent on farming it is important that we focus very intensely

on agriculture and improving the lot of farmers. Some of the poorest in rural population are farmers. By giving the [farmers proper incentives and regulating the mandis so that the middle men give them good prices for their produce](#), Government of India can really help the farmers increase their income and create wealth for the country. Our survival depends on eating food and not nuts and bolts or software! Proper farming policy and its implementation can be the real game changer for the country and can be the biggest industry.

With increased food availability and wealth of the farmers, the issues of hunger can also be mitigated. India has the dubious distinction of having [one third of its population malnourished](#). A country which has a massive space program of sending the man to the moon and Mars cannot take care of its millions of malnourished citizens is really a matter of shame for all of us and needs introspection.

Hatred and violence are linked and come from the lack of resources and hence the desire to control them. These tendencies exist in all humans but when the resources get diminished, because of overpopulation or for other reasons, then the desire to control and horde them becomes strong. This leads to insecurity and ultimately to violence. The control is practiced in the name of religion, caste, belief or anything which allows a group of people to indulge in violence.

[Spirituality can reduce insecurity](#) and helps us in becoming tolerant to others' points of view and hence less violent. With increased wealth of the country, because of excellent farming, this tendency of control and hatred can be further reduced and checked.

At the same time there has to be a [very conscious effort to teach good moral science and value system in schools](#). Without the students right from school getting proper guidance on how to become good citizens, all the above solutions will not work. Complete overhauling of the schooling system, which presently is based on passing examinations, needs to be done. It should be more focused on imparting value-based education together with skill development.

A true independence will be when we all work together to produce a sustainable and holistic India.

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