

TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY

Indian middle class may be the most travelling people in the world today. Given the surging incomes of Indians and yearning to experience, the Indian tourists are even supporting the tourism industries of many south East Asian countries. Domestically, too the families and individuals are spenind more on travelling then before. Be it tourists sports or pilgrimage centers, there is a huge rush everywhere or long weekends of vacations. While it’s good for economy, tourism operators or national unity, the phenom-enon throws up questions about travel etiquettes and responsibilities of a traveler. Many places of tourism interest are often crowded and the roads leading to them chocked with traffic. The littering by visitors often throws another challenge for the civic authorities and become a nuisance for the locals. What needs to be done? First of all the concept of responsible travel has to be introduced in the Indian tourism sector. Both the consumers, service providers and local communities have to follow this trend. Tourism is a major economic activity but it must never be dissociated from social realities. The tourists cannot remain cut off from the needs and sensitivities of the local communities. Most importantly, the authorities will have to create safe and inexpensive accom-modations to support the trend of growing young women taking to solo travelling. To avoid overcrowding or traffic congestion, the au-thorities can regulate the flow of tourists based on the data of book-ing of accommodation. It is being notices that many youngsters party on roadsides and dumps their bot-tles and plastic wrappers on the spots. This can be tackled with awareness campaigns and imposi-tion of heavy fines on violators. On the global circuit, Indian must learn to be less noisy and must honour lo-cal customs. International travelers are not only tourists but also repre-sentatives of their countries and cultures and, therefore, have as added responsibility.

How Modi changed Odisha's growth story

Mohan Charan Majhi

In Odisha, Modi's impact is increasingly visible — in roads and railways, ports and airports, investment and tribal develop-ment. The larger question is whether this Centre-State partnership is doing more than building infrastructure: is it reshaping Odisha's place in India's economic land-scape?

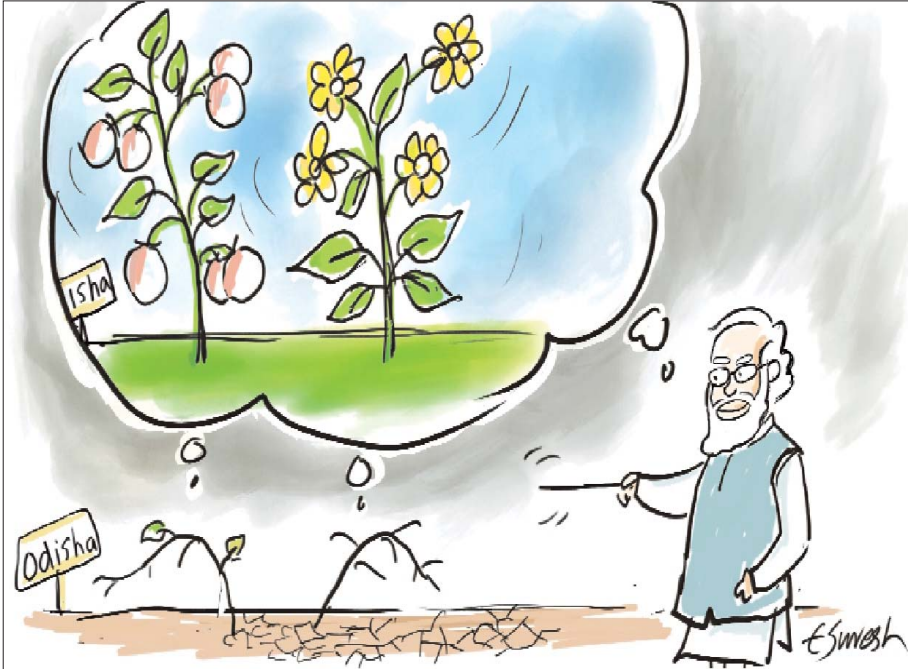
On September 17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi turned 76. Birthdays like this usually bring out tributes. I could write one easily enough. But I'd rather ask a simpler question. It's the kind of ques-tion a state government owes its own peo-ple. Has this leadership actually changed how Odisha grows? I think it has. I want to walk you through 'why' and 'how'.

This question isn't abstract for me. For Odisha, a state long rich in mineral wealth but historically kept on the edge of na-tional economic planning, the answer isn't just rhetorical but measurable. You can see it in rail connectivity, in port capacity and in investment inflows. A policy archi-tecture called Purvodaya now treats east-ern India's growth as central and not something of secondary importance. In-diancurrent events

From welfare list to growth strategy

The Prime Minister's idea of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas gets talked about mostly in political terms. The more useful test for me is administrative. Has it actually changed who gets access to the state? In Odisha's case, it has. Our tribal commu-nities make up 23 per cent of the state's population. They used to be treated mainly as a welfare category. Now they sit at the centre of how we plan industry and infrastructure, including value addition in the mineral belt and coverage under Ayushman Bharat and PM Awas Yojana.

The point I want to make here is struc-tural, not personal. When a government treats tribal-belt development as a core economic strategy rather than a mere side welfare programme, outcomes change at scale. That shift will possibly outlast me and every other Chief Minister.



What has the double-engine govern-ment built?

Since our government took office, closer coordination between Bhubaneswar and Delhi has produced things we can actually track. A rail programme built to connect all 30 districts of the state. Continued ex-pansion of capacity at Paradip Port. There is a massive effort to build new roads, ports and airports. We are building con-nectivity across land, water and air. A real and sustained push to bring in global cap-ital.

That last point isn't theory for me right now. I got back from a three-day invest-ment roadshow in the UAE, and our dele-gation across Abu Dhabi and Dubai proudly came away with proposals worth roughly `2.43 lakh crore. The potential is well close to nine lakh jobs, along with eight signed MoUs. The total investment proposals with us now are over `22.5 lakh crore. We are already witnessing invest-ments worth over `3.11 lakh crore on the ground. Factories are being built, produc-tion being commissioned and jobs being created.

I must proudly say that Odisha can now

walk into a room with sovereign wealth funds and be taken seriously. Not as a place you extract minerals from but as an investment destination in its own right. That is the change I keep trying to de-scribe.

That is what Purvodaya actually means in practice. It isn't a slogan about eastern India rising. But it's about infrastructure spending and investor attention finally going to a region that spent decades ex-ported raw minerals and getting very little value addition back. Indiancurrent events

Our own state initiatives add to that, which is a reduced stamp duty for eco-nomically weaker sections under PMAY-U 2.0, along with new irrigation and water security projects. All of it is meant to keep that investment local, not let it pass through.

Security first

Growth needs peace before it can take root. Odisha's security situation has ge-nuinely changed. Districts that were Maoist strongholds for three decades, places like Malkangiri, Koraput and Kandhamal, have seen a real and sustained fall in Naxal activity. Growth corridors and se-

curity corridors have finally lined up. That didn't happen consistently in earlier decades. I count it as one of the quieter but more important results of Centre-State coordination under this government.

Closing the gap

Odisha's per capita income and human development indicators still trail several peer states. We are working to close them, not explain them away. One such instance is our Subhadra Yojana. This is one at-tempt to close income gaps for women. The scheme, along with the rest of the Purvodaya effort, is actually delivering measurable effects. The reports of several organisations, like IIM Sambalpur and SBI, are encouraging. Women are increas-ingly attracted to doing business.

Confident abroad, close to home

In the end, what strikes me most about the Prime Minister's decade in office isn't any one particular scheme. It's the way he holds two things together that rarely sit comfortably in Indian politics. First, a for-eign policy that is confident enough to ne-gotiate as an equal at G20 forums. Second, a domestic style, Mann Ki Baat above all, built around direct connect with people in India's smallest villages.

Odisha's international profile used to be thin despite our coastline and our mineral wealth. That global confidence has had a real spillover effect now. International capital is now willing to look at eastern In-dia for investments, and not just as a de-velopment liability. Indiancurrent events

With Modiji at the helm, we are confi-dent of Odisha's transformation in a few more years. Odisha is narrowing the gap. The coming years are going to be our years of destiny. Samruddha Odisha is in the offing.

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*The writer is the Chief Minister of Odisha; Views presented are personal.*

THE POWER OF CHANGING OUR PERSPECTIVE

Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunj Ji

It's a common thing for us to experi-ence emotions directly through the body. For example, when we go out to meet someone whom we love a lot, we walk lightly with our hearts pounding with ex-citement, whereas anxiety might tighten our muscles and make our hands sweat and tremble before an important job in-terview, right? Numerous studies carried out over the last decade or so have estab-lished that emotion systems prepare us to meet challenges encountered in the environment by adjusting the activation of the cardiovascular, skeletomuscular, neuroendocrine and autonomic nervous systems. Libraries

This link between emotions and bod-ily states is also reflected in the way we speak or behave. For example, a young girl who is about to get married in a week's time may suddenly have cold feet and experience nervousness. Similarly, those lovers who have had a bad break-up and are heartbroken may experience a shiver down their spine on hearing their favourite song being played somewhere. To put it in simple words, all the above examples mean that our thoughts and feelings can affect our body directly, and



they can very well have an effect on what we think, what we feel and what we do.

Shakespeare rightly said, "For there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." The fact is that even though we are not faced with sabre-toothed tigers every day, life presents us with lots of situations which can be perceived as threatening, naturally triggering a stress response from within us. For example, if you climb the stairs instead of taking a lift to your fourth-floor apartment and,

immediately after entering your home, you experience uncomfortable symp-toms like a pounding heart and excessive sweating, you might instantly have the thought: "Gosh, I'm not as fit as I used to be; maybe I need to see my doctor and get a thorough check-up."

Now suppose that instead of having a negative thought on entering home, you just sit down calmly and do a simple deep-breathing exercise. You may feel completely fine in a few minutes and

continue with your day as usual, without any great change in how you feel. This example clearly shows that the same ex-perience, if interpreted differently, can result in very different feelings and emo-tions.

Today, most of us are living in body consciousness resulting from the false identification of the self with the body. Such limited identities then influence our thoughts and actions and give rise to emotions like insecurity, fear, selfishness and hatred. Thus, those who are ignorant of the soul are severely bound by their body, and they think, act and live their whole lives in a narrow, limited way that makes everything in their lives limited.

Hence, in order to live a liberated life, we need to realise the truth that we are all spiritual beings in a human body and, birth after birth, we continue to play dif-ferent roles. Thus, by being soul-con-scious, we can transcend our fears, at-tachments and vices, and we can also conquer the fear of death and any kind of physical loss, thereby experiencing our original qualities such as peace, joy and love in an unlimited way.

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The beauty standard that is quietly costing Indian women their health

Ishani Sirohi

Forty-six million Indian women over fifty have osteoporosis. Not be-cause their bodies failed them. Be-cause we taught them that small was beautiful, and they listened.

I was one of them, or nearly. There was a period in my life when I was skinny. Not lean, not athletic, skinny. And everywhere I went, people told me I looked wonderful. Colleagues, relatives, acquaintances at parties-the compliments came freely. What nobody could see was that my nutrition was so poor that my bones were fracturing under the load of training. I was breaking, quietly, on the inside. But I looked great. So nobody was worried.

Then I started lifting seriously. I gained muscle. My posture changed, my performance changed, my health transformed in ways I could measure and feel. And the comments changed too. "She's look-ing bulky." "Too masculine." The same people who had praised my fragility now questioned my strength. That experience taught me something no coaching certification ever could: India has a profound, deeply ingrained problem with what we believe a woman's body is supposed to look like. And that

problem is quietly driving women out of sport and into a healthcare crisis.

"I was breaking on the inside. But I looked great. So nobody worried." Let's be honest about where these standards come from. Bollywood has, for decades, served as India's most powerful mirror and its most powerful distortion. The ideal is consistent: slim, toned but never muscular, achieved through a full-time team of nutritionists, trainers and dieticians that most Indian women will never have access to. The look is presented as aspira-tional. The machinery behind it re-mains invisible.

When ordinary women, stu-dents, professionals and mothers attempt to replicate that look without the infrastructure, what they repli-cate instead is the restriction. The skipping of meals. The obsession with the scale. The quiet hostility to-wards their own bodies when those bodies refuse to comply. And sport, which demands that a body be ca-pable rather than decorative, be-comes the first casualty.

Girls who were built to run, lift and compete instead learn to shrink. And we call it discipline. To be fair, there are moments when the industry rises to the occa-sion. When Priyanka Chopra

trained to play Mary Kom, some-thing shifted on screen. That por-trayal, compact, powerful, utterly purposeful, did not try to make an athlete glamorous. It made athleti-cism itself the point. The body was not decorative. It was functional, fierce, and took up space unapolo-getically.

Farhan Akhtar's transformation for Bhaag Milkha Bhaag gave audi-ences a rare glimpse of what a body built for performance looks like: taut, efficient, devoid of vanity.

These portrayals matter. They tell young women that a strong body is a worthy body. That muscle is not masculinity. The tragedy is that they remain exceptions, brief flashes of authenticity in an industry that oth-erwise dedicates enormous re-sources to teaching women to be-come smaller. The athlete's body is celebrated when it serves a story. Then the story ends, and the diet content returns.

The current fitness movement in urban India has brought something genuinely positive: millions of women are moving their bodies in ways they weren't a generation ago. Pilates, yoga, walking clubs, dance fitness-the culture is shifting, and that deserves recognition. Pilates, in particular, builds core stability and body awareness that most of us



need. This is not an argument against any of it.

But a hierarchy is forming, and it is not neutral. Pilates and yoga are considered elegant, feminine, ac-ceptable. Strength training-barbells, kettlebells, heavy deadlifts-still car-ries a quiet stigma of the unfemi-nine. And this distinction is not triv-ial, because when it comes to what your body will need at fifty and sixty, the science is unambiguous. Ac-cording to a peer-reviewed study in the International Journal of Women's Health, approximately 46 million Indian women over fifty have osteoporosis, and Indian

women suffer osteoporotic fractures ten to twelve years earlier than their Western counterparts. The causes are well documented: poor calcium intake, widespread vitamin D defi-ciency, and a lifetime of being dis-couraged from building the one thing that could have protected them: muscle.

Research confirms that just two hours of strength training per week measurably improves bone mineral density. No filter achieves that. Shrinking does not achieve that.

"What if the body everyone com-plimented you on was the most dan-gerous one you ever had?"

This is not an argument against being slim. Lean bodies can be ex-ceptionally powerful; some of the finest endurance athletes on earth carry minimal mass. The problem is not any particular body type. The problem is what we have decided bodies are for. When the only mea-sure of a woman's body is how it looks rather than what it can do, we have failed her completely.

A woman who deadlifts has built something that will protect her spine for decades. A woman who trains with kettlebells develops coor-dination, grip strength and cardio-vascular capacity simultaneously. A woman who plays sport is investing in her bone density and mental health, none of which appears in a before-and-after photo, but all of which will define her quality of life in ways no number on a scale ever will. Trends are fads. Bones are for-ever.

When young girls see women's bodies relentlessly evaluated for aesthetics over capability, they ab-sorb a lesson: their body's purpose is to be looked at, not used. That is why talented athletes quit when their bodies become visibly muscular. It is why women avoid the weights sec-tion of gyms. It is why a girl who could be a national-level thrower goes on a diet instead, trying to re-

semble a film star who has a full sup-port team and nothing else to do with her day.

The influencer economy deepens this. Workout content optimised for visual appeal dominates every feed, producing a generation of women who are active but undertrained in the ways that matter most. Busy but fragile. Moving but not strong.

I am not asking Bollywood to stop being Bollywood. I am asking all of us to be more honest about what we celebrate when we celebrate a body and what we damage when we call a strong woman bulky.

I am asking coaches to hold the line. Asking parents to think twice before complimenting a daughter's weight loss without asking how she feels. Asking gyms to make their strength areas as welcoming as their cardio floors. And I am asking women to trust what their bodies can become when fed properly, trained intelligently, and not shrunk to fit someone else's idea of accept-able.

The body that takes up space, that lifts heavy, that finishes a race-that body is not a problem to be man-aged. It is a life being fully lived.

Strong is not a look. Strong is a ca-pacity. And it is the only beauty standard with a scientific guarantee of serving you well into old age.