

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Stand united as a nation



■ **Jaggi Vasudev** ■

INDIA AS a nation is an idea; however, we have not done much in the last 60 years to instil that idea in the minds of our people. We have not capitalised on the rich cultural heritage and intellectual capacity drawn from the country's diverse, complex people. Our identities of caste or religion are secondary when we think of the dream we have to emerge as a nation — as one people. Mahatma Gandhi was able to engineer a unique idea about the individual's integrity, to take on the mighty British empire. Sixty years later, we are witnessing the integrity of our nation as a whole come down phenomenally.

Corruption is, today, so deep-rooted in our society that we often end up asking the question, "Who is honest?" rather than asking, "Who is corrupt?" Our youth are influenced by these ideas, too. When I visited a school in Tiruchi, recently, a 14-year-old student said he wants to become a Regional Transport Officer (RTO); the reason being that he can make good money in that job! Here is an explicit desire to acquire money even if it is through being corrupt! When the ambitions of our youth boil down only to a desire to get into the most corrupt position, we can imagine the extent to which integrity, as a value, has fallen in our country.

Media has a tremendous role in changing this scenario. While they give a lot of space for the corruption and negative things in the country, they can encourage honest individuals who are doing some good for the nation. The idea of one nation should get into everyone's mind for the common good. First and foremost, the thing to do is take the nation ahead as one group.

While the spiritual process approaches it from within, the scientific approach is to seek knowledge outside—the Experiential and the Empirical. You yourself are a piece of nature. You can experience this from within and understand what it means. Whatever you see within yourselves, you will see the same thing in everybody else. This will bring a certain sense of unity and inclusiveness. When you experientially know that your very body is a piece of planet, you will feel earth is for the entire humanity. Everyone around you is part of you. This feeling of inclusiveness is necessary in order that we progress as one nation and one people.

Achieving a sense of unity is necessary in order to deal with hatred and anger. But integrity is fundamental to this. Unless we, as a nation, decide to work together, it is going to be a painful process all along. India, as a nation, has left a large section of people in poverty, without even adequate food, shelter and clothing.

We are on the threshold of economic prosperity. Never before in the history of humanity, have we had this opportunity. We, this generation of humans, have this unique opportunity to provide our poor with food, education and pleasant dwellings. Will we do it? Our people and the leaders should do it. Otherwise, our story will end in a tragedy.

Sixty percent of our people are in villages. Many of them do not even know that we are on the threshold of an economic opportunity. The requisite consciousness, both among the leaders and the people, is missing. That has to be filled up. This is the time we can do it. When leaders are willing to bring about an inclusive change, people will be enthused about it.

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