

Any action against black money is welcome; But.....

Black money has been there, running as a parallel economy of the country, jeopardising the economy, for years together. No government in India could take effective and stringent action against the evil forces who stashed away rupees lakhs of crores to foreign countries. So when BJP in their election manifesto promised stern action against black money account holders and bring back the whole money to the country and deposit Rs.15 lakh each to the bank accounts of all the Indian citizens within 90 days of coming to power, there was a big positive response from the people. And this was one of the major factors which enabled BJP to achieve an absolute majority in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

But, what has been done by the government? A Special Investigation Team was appointed to find out the details of the black money account holders in foreign banks, after much criticism in the Parliament and by the apex court. However, this SIT continues to be a non-starter which clearly indicates the approach of the government to this vital issue.

Our Prime Minister in the night of November 7, 2016, declared that the currencies of Rs.1,000/- and Rs.500/- is being made invalid from 08.11.2016 to contain the black money in the country, counterfeit and terrorism. No citizen with a bit of patriotism can oppose any move of the government to eliminate black money in the country and should co-operate with the government. But what are the adverse impacts of the demonetisation being experienced by the people. Rs.1,000/- & Rs.500/- notes amounted to 86.7 per cent of the total currencies in circulation in the country. In the absence of any alternate effective arrangements the people were subjected to run helter skelter. And the worst sufferers are the poor and the lower middle class. Of course the rich and elite class have nothing to worry as they are well equipped to overcome any such eventuality. The unending queues in banks and ATMs tell the real plight of the people even after a month of demonetisation. Some 100 people have already lost their lives. These clearly point to the lack of proper preparation by the government before resorting to demonetisation. Our country has witnessed demonetisation earlier in 1946 and 1978 where in currencies of Rs.10,000/- and Rs.1,000/- were cancelled, respectively. On both these occasions the common people were not affected because these higher denomination notes were not even seen by them. But it is not the case with the present demonetisation, as both Rs.1,000/-, Rs.500/- currencies are within the circulation of the common people. And what is the rationale behind bringing out Rs.2,000/- denomination currency in the place of Rs.1,000? And what is the volume of black money in the country in the form of currency? Only below 2%; most of the black money are diverted to gold, land and shares. And even this meager 2% is being saved in bank deposits and exchanged with new currencies with the 'smart' moves of black money holders in connivance with some corrupt bank officers.

Now, the Prime Minister says the present queues are for ending the queue for ever. He is talking about the cashless system. Well and good. But are the people of this country equipped to move to such cashless system through mobile application. How many have got the mobile in India and how many among them have the smartphone with internet connection? What should be the priority of a government with a bit of social commitment to the people? Even after 69 years of independence, what are the social progress index in the country? We have not been able to provide basic requirements like drinking water, electricity, education, toilets, housing, employment, health care etc. to a vast section of the people. And India stood above 100 from the bottom in such social index among the world countries. Sweeden is the only country which has shifted to cashless system with 97%. Sweeden has the highest social progress index among world countries and can we compare India with Sweeden? Even developed countries like Canada and South Korea are struggling to achieve the target, where as backward countries like Kenya and Somalia have a story of failed attempts.

Renowned world economists have slammed the BJP government's demonetisation. Dr. Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate has opined "only an authoritarian government can calmly cause such misery to the people."
