

'DISTORTED REMARK'

Truth twisters feast on Dattatreya Hosabale's poverty statement



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A senior RSS leader Dattatreya Hosabale makes an observation on poverty at a virtual conference and that fires the imagination of many, especially those in the opposition and some sections of the media. Taking the statement out of context, Uddhav Thackeray complimented RSS for showing the “mirror” to BJP, H.D. Kumaraswamy questioned “acche-din”, while Jairam Ramesh targeted RSS saying “even those spreading poison are speaking of poverty”! As expected, several newspa-

pers carried articles on the topic. Authors were quick to conclude that RSS is pulling up the Modi government for non-performance. Some implied that the rift between BJP and the RSS has widened. But no one bothered to look at the “context” in which the statement was made. They seemed to be in a rush to pass judgments—it suited their agenda.

THE STATEMENT AND ITS CONTEXT

So what was the statement and what was indeed the context? “Poverty in the country is standing like a demon in front of us. It is important that we slay this demon,” said the RSS leader at The Swadeshi Jagran Manch meet where “Swalambi Bharat Abhiyan—A Bharatiya Economic Model” initiated by RSS was being discussed. The Abhiyan, that has been underway over the past year, is to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Its goal is to boost local and rural economies. In March 2022, the RSS passed a resolution calling for a labour-intensive “Bharatiya Economic Model” during its Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha meeting. The movement has been activated in nearly 700 districts for a self-reliant India driven by people of the country.

Stating that society has to complement the government's efforts for Atmanirbhar Bharat, the RSS resolution clearly was not about government policies. It was about cumulative efforts of all Indians to address the unemployment challenge fuelled by Covid pandemic. Dattatreya Hosabale's statement was in that context—he sought “collective effort” to address issues like poverty staring at the country.

The opposition and some media houses saw that as an opportunity to malign the Modi government. They either missed the context or

deliberately ignored it. They selectively chose a part of the speech. They distorted the truth and hoped to shake the faith of BJP supporters insinuating that the Modi government is being criticized by its big brother, the RSS. It's not the first time that this community of “Truth Twisters” is at work.

They become alert and react to the lowest decibel noise in the political corridor—be it an organizational change in the RSS or in the BJP Parliamentary Board membership. They attribute bias and imply a rift between BJP and the RSS. One would have noticed a plethora of opinions expressed over the years, especially after 2014. Be it the imaginary power struggle between PM Modi and RSS, the feedback on OROP (One rank One Pension) and farmer welfare by RSS portrayed as admonition, every little thing fires their imagination. They wait to see dissonance and

misgovernance. And when they see none, they resort to imaginative interpolations.

A formidable bond between RSS and BJP lasting over 70 years has historically been a pain point for this community—it became a festering wound given the political clout and the international mindshare the Modi-led government enjoys today.

BOND AND BEYOND

The RSS and BJP are true brothers in arms. The ideological arm working directly with the society ably supports the political arm governing the country. While the BJP-led government is all for good governance, the RSS works on nation building. Where is dissonance here? The RSS, with its 60,000 shakhas and lakhs of swayamsevaks, doubles up as a massive sensor for the government. It gives feedback from the innards of the country for government to better its act. Then why

wouldn't the Prime Minister Narendra Modi who spent more than a decade as a RSS pracharak take it in the right spirit?

These “false” narratives stem from insecurity of the opposition. They cannot stomach the fact that India is surging ahead despite the global economic turbulence. Just to give a perspective consider what the International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Georgieva said recently. She said that the world is very fragile now—with greater uncertainty, higher economic volatility, geopolitical confrontations, more frequent devastating natural disasters—a world in which any country can be thrown off course! She also said that the world's largest economies—Europe, China and the United States—were now slowing down dramatically. But the world acknowledges India's economic resilience—a result of PM Modi's visionary leadership.

A. Michael Spence, a Nobel Laureate, recently praised India for its outstanding performance. He said that India is a powerhouse of advanced technologies in life sciences and digital governance “India's unemployment rate dropped to 6.43% in September as nearly 8 million joined the labour force. Economist Rajiv Kumar confirmed a “K shaped recovery” post Covid with robust performance in both manufacturing and services sectors.

But given the fact that India is not completely insulated from the world economic scenario, we need to remain alert. We have to address poverty inequality stemming from deep recession and stagflation experienced by the world after pandemics—the post 1918 Spanish flu events are a testimony to this trend. Both Narendra Modi led government and the RSS know this fact. Therefore, both BJP and the RSS will move in tandem—carefully

navigating the country to realize her potential.

Perhaps those who want to play mischief in future should know that the Prime Minister's “Make India self-reliant—Aatmanirbhar Bharat” is in fact an inspiration from Third Way of Dattopant Thengadi, an ideological stalwart of the RSS. His work is considered the gospel of “swadeshi” economics. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals aspire to “Leave no one behind”. Compare that with the Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay inspired vision of the RSS “Antyodaya—The Rise of the last person”! A Vision more Lofty. A Vision more Compelling. It's quite clear that no malevolent force can stop this juggernaut led by this divine vision of Antyodaya—least of all a litany of lies.

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