



## EDITORIAL

### IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY IN EASTERN INDIA: VISION 'PURVODAYA'



Dr. Sujit Kumar Pruseth\*

'Purvodaya' is a new scheme by the Government of India with the aim of increasing the connectivity among other things. In addition, it is also to ameliorate the regional disparities. As we know the Indian growth story is incomplete without the development of eastern part of India. So balanced regional development and reduction of the regional disparities are the two features of the 'Purvodaya' policy.

Last month only a magazine called 'Purvodaya' was released by the Honorable Minister of Education, Government of India Shri Dharmendra Pradhan ji and The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkota has been stressing on the point that the continuous discussions and debate around the issue of development of the Eastern part of India will help in filling the existing gap in policy deliberation and formulation.

Connectivity will certainly trigger the complete economic development of India. As we are in the middle of the new generation of economic reforms, the focus is on the balanced economic development. At the same time, taking the benefits of economic reforms and economic growth to the door step of the common people is equally being stressed upon.

This has been the prime focus of the 'Purvodaya' policy of Government of India. It is a proven fact that connectivity has been an important factor in bringing in development. And the lack of connectivity not only impacts everyday life and

livelihoods, but also the regional development and the national security as well.

The poor state of transport infrastructure and regional connectivity has serious implications for trade, tourism, trade commerce etc. So, the moment the growth story of India is written about, it will definitely be incomplete without the development of the eastern part of India.

So connectivity has been given importance in 'Purvodaya'. Connectivity in terms of roads, railways and in terms of the benefits to the common people, it will benefit the entire Eastern part of India, and it will also usher in a new investment in tourism industry, agriculture education, and the blue economy etc. Recently, the Government of India has launched the SATAT that is the Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation, which aims in providing a sustainable alternatives towards affordable transportation as a development effort that would benefit both retail users as well as the farmers and entrepreneurs. In recent years, Government of India has also increased the rail connectivity. The entire North-East region has been converted to the broad gauge network. Recently the Hon'ble Railway Minister also has laid stress on the Khurda-Balangir; Haridaspur-Talcher railway lines in Odisha. At the same time, Sikkim is expected to get the rail connectivity with the rest of India by the year 2023.

Similarly, in West-Bengal and Sikkim important railway lines are said to become operational in very short span. Next is Government of India's new policy initiative

which is named as the 'BharatmalaPariyojana', which is stressing on the road connectivity. In addition, under the 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana' also, the road length has been increased in almost all states. States in eastern India like Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal have been given priorities. The other milestone in terms of connectivity is the very popular scheme called the UDAN. So connectivity and economic development, go hand in hand and the common people get the most benefit.

Taking the benefits of economic progress, which impact the life of people, has remained the top priority of the Government of India. So 'Purvodaya' has been one of the big policy initiative which has started making big changes in the lives of people in the eastern part of India.

So far the theoretical modelling are concerned, there exists a strong correlation between economic progress and connectivity. One study by the Price Waterhouse Coopers in 2016 estimated that \$1 spent on infrastructure in Canada increased the GDP in long term by between \$2.46 to \$3.83.

Evidence abounds on the positive effects of connectivity of infrastructure on the economy; even at the micro level. So in a very short term, the impact of investment in connectivity of infrastructure, there will be medium and long-term effects as well. So, this will strengthen the foundation of future economic growth including the labor market. It will make the labour markets more efficient, productive and it will also reward the labour market economically. So the 'Purvodaya' mission has brought in many rapid changes in economic development and changed the lives of people in the eastern part of India.

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## PROGRESS THROUGH IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY & 'PURVODAYA'



Dreamstime



**Dr. Rashmi Das \***

Improving connectivity in Eastern India and the vision of Purvodaya has many dimensions in terms of integration. Physical integration is a prerequisite for the emotional and the security integration of that part of our country. The extremely capable Government of India has done a big plan for public private partnerships and all kinds of models BOT model, the annuity model and SPV for infrastructural development.

The connectivity is really meaningful as it brings in rapid progress.

Under mission Purvodaya, Kolkata was supposed to be the integrated steel hub in the eastern, India. It's one of the major objectives of Purvodaya. So, if that is achieved, if that target is achieved, it would also help all these countries neighboring countries in the East, on our eastern plank Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan because any development, any construction activity requires steel and if it is sourced from Kolkata. Kolkata, being the hub, becoming the hub of the integrated steel plan and even the 75% incremental need of our country, also can be met from this eastern hub. So not only does it serve the neighbours, but it

becomes the main source for India as a whole. So there's a huge economic opportunity for the eastern part of India also, because the eastern belt of our country iron rich region.

There remains few crucial questions. The physical infrastructure being there in North-east, there have been no cargo movements on that part . It requires a critical examination of tax structure an impediment; buying preferences of people and factors that prevents the cargo movement etc.

So, whatever in project infrastructure, junctions are put up or have to be alive, aligned with the commodities structure, the commodity interface and the preferences, basically the commodity preferences and what is allowed. It is known that only 29 items are allowed

from our part of the our side to Bangladesh side. It requires bilateral negotiationst ensure trade facilitation, well being and economic prosperity coming to people in that part of our world.

Mission Purvodaya is a great idea, it has a lot of promise and it means a lot of economic prosperity. And positivity is also premised on two parallel networks to multilateral networks working, very well as a very well-oiled machinery. One is the BBIN and another is the BIMSTEC which are hamstrung by certain bilateral movements.

There should be the acceptance that there is kind of a no movement zone and then the negotiations should start for the movement ahead. Whenever that happens, Purvodaya will really get a huge strength . It will also help remove the neighbourhood anxieties.



*Landscape View of Durgapur Power Plant*

Dreamstime

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## IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY IN EASTERN INDIA: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

*Seagoing tugboat at Paradeep Port*

Dreamstime



**Dr. Nihar R. Nayak \***

Historically, the eastern region had contributed economic prosperity, maritime security, and an extended cultural neighborhood to India. Once again, in this century, the region has strongly figured in India's economic, strategic, and foreign policy. Therefore, perpetual peace and economic growth in eastern India supplements two subsets of India's foreign policy-- the 'neighborhood first' and 'Act east' policy.

Given the interdependence in the region, India has urged its neighbors to view India as "an opportunity, not a threat," and to share its economic growth. India has offered to open its markets and share technology to help its South Asian neighbours to become partners in its dynamic growth. India offered the establishment of a free-trade zone that would allow South Asia's 1.3 billion people to share in 'collective prosperity.' On 18 June 2019, Prime Minister Modi reiterated that India strongly believes that its economic growth must bring benefits to its neighbours.

Guided by Prime Minister's motto "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikash and Sabka Viswas" India has brought out special programmes for development in the eastern region. Development in eastern parts of

India would supplement India's 'neighbourhood first' policy and sub-regionalism. Because this region is located in a tri-junction. Most importantly, the improved infrastructure could be utilized by our neighbouring countries especially by two landlocked Himalayan countries-Nepal and Bhutan.

In this context, the declaration of mission 'Purvodaya' could additionally benefit Nepal and Bhutan to accelerate their transit trade and tourism business. At the same time, the mission could further strengthen mutual confidence and cooperation with countries located in the eastern flank of India. In this regard, it is pertinent to analyse the benefits of mission Purvodaya to these countries.

The paper discusses the following issues related to India and its two Himalayan neighbours. How would Nepal and Bhutan be benefited from the 'Purvodaya' project? Second, what are the challenges before the connectivity network which aims to facilitate trade in the sub-region? Since India has been concerned about security concerns in this region, how to reconcile India's security concerns and the developmental aspirations of Nepal and Bhutan?

### **Mission Purvodaya**

On 11 January 2020, the Ministry of Steel, Government of India, in partnership with CII and JPC launched Purvodaya-Accelerated Development of Eastern Region through an Integrated Steel Hub (ISH), in line with Prime Minister Modi's vision for focused development of the Eastern States. Time and often, Prime Minister Modi has highlighted the need for focused development of the Eastern states to unleash their untapped potential thereby ensuring the growth of the region as a whole and the country at large.

The objective of the mission is to propel

socio-economic development in the Eastern region. "Steel capacity addition as envisioned in the hub would entail capital investments of >70 Bn. \$ and lead to an incremental GSDP of >35 Bn. \$ through steel alone. The growth of the steel industry through such a hub would lead to significant employment opportunities across the entire value chain, creating over 2.5 Million jobs in the region. The creation of world-class logistics and utilities infrastructure would also spur the development of other manufacturing industries across sectors. This would also be accompanied by social infrastructure in the form of cities, schools, hospitals, skilling centers, etc". Most importantly, the mission will play a significant role in the overall socio-economic growth of Eastern India, by reducing the disparity between the East and other regions of the country. Infrastructure developments due to the ISH could be beneficial to India's neighbours.

### **Strategic strength of Eastern India**

The decision of setting up the region as an ISH with Kolkata as the center is very timely and based on resources available in the region. First, this region has huge mineral deposits both on land and offshore. Around 80 percent of India's total iron ore is deposited in the region. There are already many iron ore mining and industries operating in the region.

Second, four Indian major deep-sea ports-Haldia, Dhamra, Paradeep, and Vishakhapatnam-are located in the eastern flank of India. From Nepal and Bhutanese points of view, seaports in Bangladesh could be taken into consideration for transit trade.

Third, in terms of connectivity, there have been strong road and railway connectivity in the region. The National Highway 16 has been the lifeline of the entire eastern flank of India and also connects to these four seaports. Most importantly, this region is a meeting point between trilateral highways and Asian highways. In addition to

that, the BBIN(Bangladesh,Bhutan,India,Nepal) motor vehicle agreement would supplement the sub-regionalism further. Most importantly, this growth project may emerge as a major project to counter China's BRI(Belt and Road Initiative) project in the eastern part of the sub-continent.

Last, not least, this region has strong cultural similarities with neighbouring countries of India. This could facilitate tourism and people-to-people connectivity. From the Nepalese point of view, tourism is important where they could receive Hindu and Buddhist tourists.

### **Benefits to Nepal and Bhutan**

The mission could provide multiple platforms because these are smaller countries and weak states and they believe in basically multilateral forums and arrangements to strongly put forward their demands and negotiate strongly with big countries like India.

Second is a wide-ranging issue. All these network connectivity networks give access to seaports, beyond India, like they can access Bangladesh, they can back out of Myanmar, even to Thailand to Vietnam, to go for the transit trade. It also gives basically an affordable, faster and seamless cargo movement with multiple transit corridors like over the entire eastern plank is available to them. There will be no loading and unloading activities in case the framework comes under the BBIN because BBIN is a big platform which is emerging in this region and the most important advantage for both the countries is with zero investment. It means without investing in infrastructure they can utilize all those dedicated infrastructure coming up in this region. And there remains a cultural connection and geographical closeness for Bhutan and Nepal. This is a big and immediate potential market. So they will be interested to take advantage of that.

As India's growth is concerned, it's not possible if the Eastern plank of India is not developed properly.

These two smaller countries like Nepal and Bhutan have a lot of anxiety over particular related to connectivity programs. From the Bhutan's point of view, when Government of India or any programs coming under the BBIN networks programs they try to reconcile between ecology, economy and security. From the Nepalese point of view, how to reconcile between that Belt and Road in a setting, which is offered by China and 2013 onwards and then Millennium Challenge Corporation offered by US government and the BBIN. So they have to reconcile between these, major programs being offered by three major countries which are very much active in the Himalayan region.

Next important question is what are the challenges and will the connectivity network facilitate regional integration? Obviously, there are a couple of challenges for Government of India. The Government of India needs to be more pro-active in pushing 'Purvodaya' program which will be beneficial to our neighboring countries. However, the governments of neighboring countries may not take advantage of it. Then, our passenger protocol may not be beneficial to our development program, as the motor vehicle agreement on the BBIN and the cargo protocol motorbike have to be ratified. Then the BBIN and motor vehicle agreement is silent on transit trade. That's one of the most important part of this growth corridor in the eastern part. Subsequently, the bottle-necks are still there are related to the non-tariff areas. In addition, quality of roads in that region; particularly connecting Nepal-Bangladesh and Bhutan-Bangladesh is still in a very shape. And the last one important challenge which we have to understand the requirements of Nepal and Bhutan.



One is that Nepal is recently trying to transform its remittance-based and aid based economy to investment economy and export oriented economy. Nepal requires multiple faster and seamless transit corridors by road and railway connectivity. Then connecting with international rail links by accessing Bangladesh or Myanmar, or any other part of other countries electricity is a major concern for Nepal.

For Bhutan, which is a smaller economy is transforming the aid based economy to investment economy and it is focusing more on the green economy. So, Bhutan does really not to get identified with the India or China. Then there exists the trust deficit. Despite India emerging as a big democracy and economy and so many development projects have come up in the Eastern region that is serious trust deficit between India and Nepal; India and Bhutan; and India and Bangladesh. The needs to Government of India address trust deficit that is emerging because of the bilateral issues.

India's economy and industrialization process is in nascent stage. A net carbon zero approach could bring more benefits over time. The country can adopt green technology since the global economy will be obliged to climate change agreements and impose a carbon tax on exports from economies where carbon emissions remains high. If the ISH achieve a green stamp that may find better market access.

Second, declare these projects as national pride projects to get immune from non-cooperation from the state governments since a large number of regional provinces in this region are governed by regional political parties.

Moreover, a disaster resilient infrastructure is crucial. Whatever infrastructure Government of India is bringing out whether the port, railway connectivity or bridge, all should be resilient infrastructure, as this is a highly disaster prone area. Finally, the BRI offering, which is a low interest based projects to Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan is important. So, Government of India has to frame its policy accordingly to targeting how to counter BRI in this region.



Dreamstime

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## CONNECTIVITY IN 'PURVODAYA': NEED FOR ALIGNMENT WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



*Cargo ship transporting goods in the sea in Chattogram, Bangladesh*

Dreamstime



**Arnab Ganguly\***

Purvodaya's overall objective is to strengthen the manufacturing capacity of eastern region of India. There remains a competitive advantage in the steel iron and steel production and 'Purvodaya' is definitely going to strengthen that.

But 'Purvodaya' should not be considered as a standalone project. It should be also considered along with projects, like the Gati Shakti, the Bharatmala Pariyojana and the Sagar Mala Initiatives because all these projects would help in exploiting the true potential of 'Purvodaya'. These initiatives are also targeted to bring the countries in the BBIN region closer to each other, and improve the connectivity with the North East India, given NEI's importance from a security point of view.

Bangladesh which is a significantly large consumer of iron and steel. Bangladesh is also investing in strengthening its own iron and steel capacities. Before Covid, most of the iron and steel, the TMT bars etc. used to go either by the road or through railways. The Covid actually triggered, the use of waterways. Which is also an impetus to the 'Purvodaya'.

It is imperative to improve our inland waterway transport especially, when it comes to freight movement. So, one should also consider how 'Purvodaya' scheme and Bangladesh's growth story can complement each other and establish sustainable value chains.

Bangladesh is right now, one of the fastest growing economies in this region and significant infrastructure developments are happening, especially in the northern Bangladesh, both in the northwest and in the northeast. There is a constant and a continuous effort from the Government of Bangladesh to develop these areas to counter geographical backwardness, high poverty ratio, low literacy rates etc.

So, one of the important things that the Government of Bangladesh did was to start planning to set up export processing zones in this region. The Export processing zone at Niphamari had a tremendous impact on the local economy. Similarly, there are a lot of infrastructure development happening Mymansinh and Sirajganj. Lot of roads, bridges, etc are coming up. So, in a way these will absorb lot of iron and steel and course, the 'Purvodaya' scheme will give that additional impetus to the iron and steel sector in Eastern India. While 'Purvodaya' will boost the manufacturing sector, other initiatives like the Bharatmala, the Gati-Shakti will help improve the cross border trade logistics and reduce trade costs.

In Bangladesh, almost 80% of the freight are moved by roadways. What India is also trying to do is to enter into a motor vehicle's agreement with the Government of Bangladesh and Nepal. Once this road infrastructure is strengthened it will ease up is the pressure from the Siliguri corridor and also will help connecting India

and the northeast India via Bangladesh.

The next could be the ship building industry in the Northeast through 'Purvodaya'. Bangladesh and the eastern states in India can complement each other in the ship building industry.

'Purvodaya' scheme will help integrate India with Bangladesh better because the products in the Eastern India will act as raw materials in Bangladesh, and help them grow in terms of trade. Bangladesh can help the Northeast India grow through better connectivity.

A vibrant and symbiotic relation can happen in cement industry.

However, there are a few challenges that needs to be addressed to unlock the transformative potential of schemes like 'Purvodaya', Gati-Shakti, Bharatmala, and Sagarmala.

The 'Purvodaya' scheme, similar to the Gati Shakti Scheme, is a framework developed by the Central Government and these will be implemented with the support of respective state governments. Now, the question is are the states aligned with the centre in implementing the initiatives.

Bulk of the trade among BBIN countries happen through roadways involving a number of informal Exchanges. Such exchanges are not possible for transporting cargo via railways and/or inland waterways. The question is can railways and inland waterways accommodate such informal exchanges.

Lastly, India is building infrastructure in the North East. The recent example being the MaitriSetu and establishment of an ICP at Sabroom, Tripura. These steps were supposed facilitate and enhance trade between Chittagong and Northeast. But, in reality, hardly any cargo has moved along that route. So more alignment with the neighbouring countries are important as well.

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# ଅର୍ଡ଼ିରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ ସହଯୋଗ ଏବଂ ପୂର୍ବୋଦୟର ସଫଳତା



**Sohini Nayak\***

ମିଶନ୍ ପୂର୍ବୋଦୟ ଭାରତ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଏକ ସକ୍ରିୟ ଏବଂ ଶକ୍ତିଶାଳୀ ପ୍ରୟାସ ଯାହାକି ବିଶ୍ୱସ୍ତରରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱର ସହିତ ଦେଖା ଯାଉଅଛି । ଏହି ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ଓଡ଼ିଶା, ଝାରଖଣ୍ଡ, ଛତିଶଗଡ଼, ପଶ୍ଚିମବଙ୍ଗ ତଥା ଉତ୍ତର-ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରପ୍ରଦେଶକୁ ଧରି ଗୋଟିଏ ସମନ୍ୱିତ ଷ୍ଟିଲ ହବରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଏହା ପୂର୍ବ-ଭାରତର ସାମାଜିକ ତଥା ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ବିକାଶରେ ଏକ ଆଲୋକବର୍ତ୍ତକା ରୂପେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଅଛି । ଏହା ନିଜ ଭିତରର ଅନେକ ସ୍ୱଯୋଗକୁ ପାଥେୟ କରି ବିଶ୍ୱ ସ୍ତରରେ ଭାରତର ଭାଗ୍ୟଦାୟକତାକୁ ବୁଝି କରିବା ସହିତ ବହୁମୁଖୀ ମଞ୍ଚ ହିସାବରେ ଆହୁରି ଆଗକୁ ନେଇ ପାରିବ ।

ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବ ଭାରତର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଏବଂ ବିଶେଷ କରି ଭାରତ କିପରି ଏହି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରକୁ ଉପଯୋଗ କରୁଛି ତାହା ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗୋଚିତ ହେବ, ଯେହେତୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ତଥା ଅନ୍ୟ ସକ୍ରିୟ ମଞ୍ଚ ସହିତ ସହଯୋଗ ଆଣିବାରେ ଏହା ଏକ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର । ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବ ଭାରତର ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟା ସମଗ୍ର ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟାର ୩.୮ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଏବଂ ଏହା ଆର୍ଥିକାଭିକ ସାମାର ୫୩୦୦ କି.ମି. ପରିବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ । ଆହୁରି ମଧ୍ୟ ଭାରତ ଏହି ଅଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତିକ ସଂଯୋଗାଳନର ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ବିଶେଷ କରି ବାଙ୍ଗଳାଦେଶ, ମ୍ୟାନ୍ମାର ଏବଂ ଥାଇଲାଣ୍ଡକୁ ଅର୍ଥ ବିନିଯୋଗ ବୁଝି ଦିଗରୁ ଦେଖୁଛି ଏବଂ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ତିନି ନିୟୁତ ତଲାର ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ସ୍ୱଯୋଗ ଦେଖାଏ ଯାହାକି ଉତ୍ତମ ଯାତାୟାତ, ସାମାଜ୍ୟ ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି, ସମନ୍ୱିତ ଇଲେକଟ୍ରୋନିକସ୍, ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ଆଧୁନିକ ସାମାଜ୍ୟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଯୋଗାଣ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାରେ ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ଏହି



ସବୁ, ସାଂପ୍ରତିକ ସମୟରେ ଅନୁଭୂତ ନୂହଁ ତଥାପି ସରକାର ଏହି ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଏକ ଉତ୍ତମ ଉତ୍ପାଦନ ସକାଶେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରତ ଏବଂ ଏହି ସମ୍ଭାବନାକୁ ଯଦି ଉନ୍ନତ କରାଯାଏ ତେବେ ଭାରତୀୟ ନୀତି ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରକମାନଙ୍କ ଆଶା ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଦେଶର ରଞ୍ଜନୀ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ହେବ ଏବଂ ଅଧିକ ପୁଞ୍ଜି ଲଗାଣ ପାଇଁ ଆସିବ । ଆହୁରି ମଧ୍ୟ ସେହି ଆଂଚଳିକ ସମନ୍ୱୟ ବିଶ୍ୱ ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ନିର୍ଭରଶୀଳତା ଦିଗରେ ଉତ୍ତମ ଉତ୍ପାଦନ କରି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବ । ଏହିପରି ଭାବରେ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସମୂହ ପୂର୍ବତଟରେ ବାଙ୍ଗଳାଦେଶ ଏବଂ ମ୍ୟାନମାର ସହିତ ଭାରତର ଆଭ୍ୟନ୍ତରୀଣ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିକୁ ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ତଥା ସାମାଜ୍ୟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ହବ୍ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟକରଣ କରିବାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବ ।

ଐତିହାସିକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୋଣରୁ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ବିଦ୍ରୋହ କାରଣରୁ ଅବହେଳିତ ହୋଇ ରହିଅଛି ଏବଂ ସେଠାରେ ଦୀର୍ଘଦିନରୁ ସଂଯୋଗୀ କରଣ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ଆଗେଇ ପାରୁନାହିଁ ଏବଂ ଏହି ପୃଥକତା ପୂର୍ବୋଦୟ ଭଳି ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଉପରକୁ ଉଠିବ ଯେଉଁଠାରେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ବାସ୍ତବରେ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ପଶ୍ଚିମବଙ୍ଗ ଏବଂ କଲିକତା ଦେଇ ଯୋଡ଼ିବ । ଭାରତର ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ଏବଂ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ପଶ୍ଚିମବଙ୍ଗ ଯେଉଁସବୁ ସୁଯୋଗ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଛି ତାକୁ ଅଣଦେଖା କରି ହେବ ନାହିଁ । ଏବଂ ଫଳସ୍ୱରୂପ, ଇଓଗଢ଼ଞ୍ଚର ଭଳି ବହୁପକ୍ଷୀୟ ମଞ୍ଚକୁ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ, ତାହା ମିଶନ ପୂର୍ବୋଦୟକୁ ସମଗ୍ର ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ତଥା ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତ ଏସାୟ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର, ପୃଥିବୀର ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଏସାୟ ଅଂଶ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଦକ୍ଷିଣ-ପୂର୍ବ ଏସାୟ ଅଂଶ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଏବଂ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ସାମାଜ୍ୟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଯଥା-ବାଙ୍ଗଳାଦେଶ, ଭୂଟାନ, ନେପାଳ ଏବଂ ମ୍ୟାନମାର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଜଣାଇବାରେ ଏକ ସକ୍ରିୟ ଭୂମିକା ନିଭେଇବ । ଏବଂ ଏହି କାରଣରୁ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ସହଯୋଗ ଦିଗରେ ଏକ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ମାର୍ଗ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଅଛି ଏବଂ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସମୟରେ ଏହାକୁ ଭାରତୀୟ ବୈଦେଶିକ ନୀତି ‘ପ୍ରଥମେ ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ’ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଭଳି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟନୁୟନ ନୀତି ପରି ଦୃଢ଼ ସମ୍ମତ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ ଦ୍ୱାର ରୂପେ ବିବେଚିତ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଅଛି । ଆଉ ମଧ୍ୟ ‘ଆଡ଼ୁ ନିର୍ଭର ଭାରତ’ ଭଳି ବିଚାର ଏଠାରେ ପ୍ରଶିଧାନ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ।

ଇଓଗଢ଼ଞ୍ଚର ୨୦୨୧ ବୈଦେଶିକ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ବୈଠକରେ ଭାରତର ବୈଦେଶିକ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜୟଶଙ୍କର ଏହାର ଅତ୍ମଲବ୍ଧ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ସହିତ କାନୁନ୍‌ଗା ଜାଆ ଦିଗରେ ସହଯୋଗ ତଥା ଆଂଚଳିକ ଏକୀକରଣର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା

ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ଉଠାଇ ଥିଲେ ଯାହାକି ଭାରତକୁ ୫ ଟ୍ରିଲିୟନ ଅର୍ଥନୀତି କରାଇବାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବ । ଏକପିପାଇଁ ଇଓଗଢ଼ଞ୍ଚର ସହିତ ଇଟାଲିୟା ମିଶି ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସର୍ବୋତ୍ତମ ବିକାଶ ଆଣି ପାରିବେ । ତେଣୁ ମୁଖ୍ୟ କାର୍ପଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଲା ହିସାବରେ ଭାରତକୁ ଏକ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭୂମିକା ନିର୍ବାହ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ସାଗରମାଳା ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ, ଯାହାକି ଏକ ବନ୍ଦର କୈନ୍ଦ୍ରିକ ବିକାଶ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଅକ୍ଟରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ, ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ, ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ ତଥା ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି-ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସଂଯୋଗକୁ ବୃଦ୍ଧି କରିବାରେ ସହାୟକ ହେବ । ଭାରତ-ବାଙ୍ଗଳାଦେଶ ପ୍ରୋଟୋକୋଲ ଏବଂ ଆଭ୍ୟନ୍ତରୀଣ ଜଳ ପରିବହନ ତଥା ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଏକ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ । ଏବଂ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଭାରତ ସରକାର ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରଯୁକ୍ତିବିଦ୍ୟାରେ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳର ପ୍ରବେଶକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ବାସ୍ତବରେ ଏହା ଇଓଗଢ଼ଞ୍ଚର ସଂଯୋଗୀକରଣ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଯୋଜନାର ଏକ ଅଂଶ ବିଶେଷ ଏବଂ ‘ପୂର୍ବୋଦୟ’କୁ ଇଓଗଢ଼ଞ୍ଚର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଆଗକୁ ବଢ଼ାଇବାର ପ୍ରଭାବଶାଳୀ ମଞ୍ଚ । ଏହା ଏଠାରେ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖନୀୟ ଯେ ବସ୍ତୁତଃ ଜାପାନ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳର ବିକାଶ ନିମିତ୍ତ ଦୀର୍ଘବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ଭାରତ ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ ଏବଂ ଦେଶରେ ଅନେକ ବିକାଶ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ଅଛି ଯେଉଁଠିରେ ଜାପାନ ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ଭାବରେ ଭାରତ ସହିତ କାମ କରୁଅଛି, ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଭାବରେ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳରେ । ଜାପାନ ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ସଂସ୍ଥା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ସଂଯୋଗ ଉନ୍ନତିକରଣ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପର ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ସୁଦୃଢ଼ୀକରଣ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ରହେ ଯେଉଁଠିରେ ବାଙ୍ଗଳାଦେଶ ଏବଂ ମ୍ୟାନମାର ଭଳି ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ସହିତ ସଂଯୋଗୀକରଣକୁ ବୃଦ୍ଧିକରିବା । ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟ ଉପାହରଣ ହେଉଛି ଆସାମର ଧର୍ମପୁତ୍ର ଏବଂ ମେଘାଳୟର ପୁଲପରା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପୋଲ ଯାହାକି ବାଙ୍ଗଳାଦେଶ ସହିତ ସଂଯୋଗୀକରଣ ଦିଗରେ ଏକ ମହତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିକାଶ । ଆଉ ମଧ୍ୟ ଭୂଟାନ ସହିତ ତାଲୁ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ, ଯାହାକି ମେଘାଳୟରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ ଏବଂ ଭାରତ-ଭୂଟାନ ସାମାଜ୍ୟରେ ଆସାମର ହାପିସାରିଆନ ଭାୟା ମେଘାଳୟ ଅଂଚଳର ଟଉରାନ । ତେଣୁ ମୋଟାମୋଟି ଭାବରେ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳର ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ସଂଯୋଗୀକରଣ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ମାର୍ଗ ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମିର ଉନ୍ନତିରେ ସହାୟକ ।

ଏହା ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରିବା ଯଥାର୍ଥ ଯେ ୨୦୨୦ରେ ଜାପାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ସରକାରୀ ଭାବରେ ୧୩.୨ ଟ୍ରିଲିୟନ ଡଲାରର ଏକ ବିକାଶ ସହାୟତା ରଖି ଦେଇଅଛି । ମିଶନ ପୂର୍ବୋଦୟ ଏହି ସମାନ ସ୍ତରର ଯେଉଁଠିରେ ଦୁଇଟି ଦେଶ ଏକାଠି ଆସନ୍ତି ।

ଯେଉଁଠି ସବୁ ଦେଶ ଭାରତ ସହିତ ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ଏବଂ ଯାହାର ସୀମା ଲାଗିକି ରହିଛି ଏଭଳି ଏକ ବିକାଶ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପରୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଲାଭାନ୍ୱିତ ହେବେ । ସବୁ ସଂଯୋଗକରଣ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପକୁ ଦ୍ୱିପାକ୍ଷିକ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାରୁ ବାହାରକୁ ଯାଇ ସଫଳ କରାଇବାକୁ ହେଲେ ସବୁ ସହଯୋଗୀ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଗୋଟିଏ ଯାଗାକୁ ଆସିବାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଅଛି । ସମସ୍ତ ପଡୋଶୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଯୁକ୍ତି ସଙ୍ଗତ, ଅନୁରୂପ ସହଯୋଗାତ୍ମକ ନୀତି ଏବଂ ନିୟମ ତଥା ଏହି ଅଠକର ଆଇନ ଯାହା ଅଛି ତହିଁରେ ସମାନତା ଅଣା ଯାଇ ପାରିବ । ଭାରତ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ଭାବରେ ଏକ ସକ୍ରିୟ ଭୂମିକା ନିଭାଇ ପାରିବ ।

ସମସ୍ତ ଇଇଓପି ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ସମୂହ ଏବଂ କମ ବେଶୀ ହେଉ ସମସ୍ତ ଇଓଗଝଝରତ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଗୋଟିଏ ବହୁପାକ୍ଷିକ ଦାକ୍ଷିଣ୍ୟରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଇଇଓପିର କିଛି ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଇଓଗଝଝରତରେ ମଧ୍ୟ

ଅଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ବଙ୍ଗୋପସାଗର ଏକ ସମନ୍ୱିତ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର । ତେଣୁ ଏହି ସମସ୍ତ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଥରୁଟିଏ ସହମତି ଆସିଗଲେ ପୂର୍ବୋଦ୍ଦୟ ଭଳି ମିଶନ ଆହୁରି ସଫଳକାମୀ ହେବ ।

ଦୀର୍ଘ ମିଆଦି ସୂତ୍ରରେ ମିଶନ ପୂର୍ବୋଦ୍ଦୟ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ରୂପେ ସଫଳ ହେବ କାରଣ ଜାପାନ ଭଳି ସହଯୋଗୀ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ସବୁର ଭାରତ ପ୍ରତି ସହାୟତା ରହିଛି ଯାହାକି ବହୁତ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ଏହା ସହିତ, ଇଓଗଝଝରତ ଏବଂ ବଙ୍ଗୋପସାଗର ଭଳି ଏହାର ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଉତ୍ପ୍ରେରକ ରହିଛି ।

ଯୋହେତୁ ଭାରତ ଏକ ଲାଭଦାୟକ ସ୍ଥିତିରେ ରହିଛି, ଭାରତ ନିହାତି ଭାବରେ ପଡୋଶୀଙ୍କ ଅଗ୍ରାଧିକାରକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱାସକୁ ନେବା ପାଇଁ ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ ହେବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଏହା ସଂଯୋଗକରଣ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ତଥା ଷ୍ଟିଲ ହବସ ବା ବିକାଶ ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ସବୁକୁ ଆହୁରି ସଫଳ କରେଇବ ।



Dreamstime

## BENARAS CORRIDOR: A BOLD INITIATIVE OF DEVELOPMENT



Morning view of Benaras Ghats

Dreamstime



**Sandeep Mahapatra\***

For thousands of years Banaras, also known as Kashi, Varanasi, Avimukta, Anandvana, Rudravasa, Benarasamongst many other names, has been the epicenter of Bharabarsat’sSanatan Hindu *dhrama* and culture. For millenniums, Kashi has been considered the holiest of place, by the Hindus, which one needs to visit at least once in his/her life time. The antiquity of Varanasi could be gauged from what Mark Twain had to say about the city in his “Following the Equator- A Journey around the World”, published in the year 1897. According to him, “*Benaras is older than history, older than tradition, older even than the legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together*”.

Not that Kashi required any validation about its place of preeminence as one of the oldest living cities of the World given that much before Twain the great spiritual and religious figures of Indic religions like AdiShanakaracharya, Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavir, Guru Nanak and many more were attracted to the City. It was in Kashi, which means the illuminating one, whereAdiShankarcharya stayed for several years and wrote some of his most important work like *Shankara Bhasya*, his commentaries on *Brahma sutra*



, as also his commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita and principals of Upanishads. It is in Varanasi wherein Lord Buddha gave his first sermon and preached about the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Noble Paths. The place where he stayed was called Mrigadaya "Gift to the Deer" and later came to be known as Sarnath. It is believed by the followers of Jainism that the seventh *jina* (spiritual leader) Suparshva was born in Varanasi. The twenty third *jina* Parsvnath is also believed to have been born in Kashi, he was followed by Mahavir who visited it during his life time and till date the followers of Jainism consider the city as one of the most sacred place for their religion. Guru Nanak also visited Varanasi during his life time and held discourse with the scholars. To commemorate his visit a Gurudwara known as "Gurudwara Shri Guru Ka Bagh" was constructed and is visited by the followers of Sikhism till today. Two of Bharat's well known and greatest poets Kabir and Tulsidas were born in Vanaras and till date their writings are read/recited/sung with devotion. The followers of Kabir known as Kabirpanthi also recognize Kashi as their own centre of pilgrimage. Kashi thus represents the soul of Bharatbarsha and for the followers of all Indic religions it is a sacred place. May be this proved to be its bane when starting the 13th Century till the 17th century, Varanasi bore the wrath of the Muslim invaders. From Qutbuddin Aibak to Mohammad Ghor to Sikandar Lodi to Shah Jahan to Aurangzeb. Each one of them brought destructions and deaths to the holy city. The Lodis destroyed part of the city in the 1500's. Shah Jahan destroyed no less than 70 temples. But Aurangzeb was the most vicious of them all; full of hatred towards sacred sites of Hindus he destroyed some of the oldest temples including Vishvesarra, Kritivasa, Bindu Mahadava forever. Such was his wrath that the guardian deity of Kashi Kala Bhairava was housed in a humble quarters till a temple

was built in the 18th Century. The most sacred Kashi Vishwanath temple was raged to the ground and Gyan Vypai mosque came in its place. Not satisfied with destroying the age old temples, Aurangzeb renamed the city as "Muhammadbad". The sacred geography of Kashi was destroyed by Aurangzeb as a result there is no major religious sanctuary that exists which predates his reign. Even the Buddhist pilgrimage Sarnath was not spared when Qutbuddin Aibak demolished it.

Notwithstanding such destructions and pillage, Kashi, the sacred city could not be destroyed though defaced and remained a centre of learning. It kept attracting the believers of all Indic religions and true to its name kept illuminating thousands of mere mortals. In the 1780 Century, Maharani Ahilya Bai Holkar reconstructed the temple and restored back the glory of the City. Such was the aura of the temple that the great Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh gold plated the dome of the temple in 1835. During the British rule the first Sanskrit College (now Sampurnananda Sanskrit University) was set up in 1791. However, little was done to revive/reconstruct the sacred geography of the City so much so that when Gandhi Ji visited the Kashi Vishwanath temple in 1916, he was appalled by the filth and squalor all around it, lamenting the state of affairs.

In the last 100 years the situation did not change much till Prime Minister Narendra Modi took it upon himself to rejuvenate the holy city. Beginning 2014, many projects were conceived, launched and completed in record time. Be it cleaning of the *ghats*, be it sanitation of the city or be it providing better amenities to pilgrims thronging the city. The much admired "Rudraksh Convention Centre," constructed in association with Japan, is one of many such initiatives successfully implemented by Honourable Prime Minister Modi. The ferry service in river Ganga, operationalising the Patna-Varanasi in land water ways, as an alternative to land and rail transportation ushered in a new era. Aware of the significance of the Kashi Vishwanath

temple and the fact that nothing much had been done to address the issues faced by thousands of pilgrims/devotees visiting this holy site, Modi launched the ambitious KashiViswanatha Corridor project in March 2019 with an outlay of Rs. 800 Crore. It envisaged decongesting the area in and around the temple and enable a devotee to take a dip in the holy river Ganges before entering the shrine. So as to ensure that a 50ft wide corridor/path was to be constructed connecting the Madir Chowk to the Lalita Ghat. This apart the project also envisaged expanding the temple premises to 5000 hectares from the existing 300 sq.ft area. The project also envisaged several facilities for pilgrims, including 'yatri suvidhakendras', a tourist facilitation centre, vedickendra, mumukshubhavan, bhogshala, city museum, viewing gallery, food court among others. This was not an easy task given that it entailed acquisition of properties and ensuring that there is no roadblock in terms of litigation or agitation. This humongous task was achieved with smooth acquisitions of over 400 properties and payment of compensation to the affected parties. Around 1,400 shopkeepers, tenants and homeowners were rehabilitated in record time paving the way for the vision to be made a reality. Within 3 years of launch of the ambitious project on 13 December 2020, Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the 1st phase and the grandeur of the change brought about was visible to one and all. With better amenities in and around the KashiViswanath Temple it is hoped that pilgrims, who, till now were facing issues for a peaceful darshan will benefit

immensely. The various buildings inaugurated on that day will go a long way in attracting pilgrims and tourist from near and far and will ensure that 75 thousand people can come to the temple at any given time. The corridor will boost tourism in Kashi and would provide fillip to the economy of not only the holy city but also the entire Eastern part of India..

In addition to the corridor the construction of National Highways connecting various parts of Uttar Pradesh to Varanasi which would in turn ensure better road connectivity with other places of Eastern Bharat would translate into free flow of both tourist and business not only to Kashi but the entire area. It would be wrong to visualize the project only in terms of the development brought in to Kashi but it has to be viewed in the larger scheme of things of having a deep impact on the psyche of every India in general and the people of Eastern India in particular for whom Kashi has been a centre for learning. On account of geographical proximity, the fruition of the 1st phase of the KashiViswanath Corridor, will go a long way in realizing the dream of "Purvodaya". The expected increase in tourism will provide avenues to the artist and artisans of Eastern Bharat to use Kashi as a launch pad for showcasing their talents to reach out to a larger audience. The better amenities would mean the tour operators/organizers of these States will be better placed to scout for amenities for the tourists unlike in the past where it was an arduous task. This will aid to the economic growth of Eastern Bharat which will help realizing the dream of our Prime Minister to make it the growth engine of India.

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*\*Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India*

# The launch of Institute’s Chapter on “ Purvodaya” and Bi-Lingual Bi-Monthly Bulletin “ *Purvodaya: The Rise of Opportunities*”

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India that as an autonomous organization have been addressing diverse areas of developmental perspectives through research, event and regular range of documentations. Given its Eastern working capital, had manifested a considerable interest to look and highlight the matters of East. Therefore as a part of the institute’s endeavours on 26th of November 2021 between 5.30-6.30pm (IST) over a Virtual Platform launched yet another Chapter on Purvodaya- particularly dedicated to discuss the matters of Eastern region from industrialization to education to empowerment and many more.

The Institute commenced on its objectives with the release of Institute’s first Bi-Lingual Bi-Monthly Bulletin on “Purvodaya: The Rise of

Opportunities” within the attributed chapter. The Bulletin comprises of articles written in English and Odia by multi-sectoral stakeholders from the eastern belt.

To initiative was launched in the presence of the Director of ISCS, India- who asserted that the Chapter and documentation both together will not only comprehend and discuss the augmentation of the Eastern India but would also serve as a corridor of engagement amongst disparate stakeholders. The event also received the presence of the Sri. Dharmendra Pradhan- Hon’ble Minister of Education, Skill development and Entrepreneurship who congratulated the institute for its initiative and started his deliberation with a coinage “Purvodaya’: New mantra for good governance” and further added that -The essence of ‘Purvodaya’ is focused development of eastern India to harness the untapped potential. The ‘Purvodaya Mission’ aims at infrastructure development in roads and rail connectivity, port connectivity, augmenting ‘blue-economy’, entrepreneurship, strengthening women SHGs, world-class education institutions and efficient human-resources etc. Under Mission Purvodaya, the Government of India is going to build an Integrated Steel Hub in eastern India which would lead to 3 things:

- i) addition to the competitiveness of the steel sector
- ii) facilitation of regional development and
- iii) job creation

It’s a matter of pride that the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkata has organized the initiative which will bring out many new ideas on ‘Mission Purvodaya’. In addition, the bi-monthly and bi-lingual publication on ‘Purvodaya’ has





brought out various informed opinions by eminent scholars and would continue to do so.

The Editor of the bulletin Dr.Sujit Pruseth who later also coordinated the discussion session described how the initiative can be a host of opportunity to muster the national/ international and regional writers to depict the growth of the region. Also regular documentation and other initiative that will be rolled out as a part of the proposed chapter can help to plot, analyse and sketch the developmental goals of the region persistently.

The launch of the Chapter and the Bulletin was followed with a Discourse on “Mission Purvodaya: A Gateway of Opportunities”. Where the speakers were none other than the writers of the first edition of the Bi-Lingual Bulletin such as Dr. Tapas Kumar Sarangi-Asst. Director, National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development, Dr. Dinesh Kumar Nayak- National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi, Dr Sarbeswar Pradhan- Assistant Professor, Department of Economics- Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Dr. Rajeeb Nayak-



Eminent Journalist and Dr.Arindam Saha-MD,Vista Intelligence. Each of them congratulated the Institute for the initiative and added how the policy and joint endeavours could arch a spree of development and growth for the region and its shareholders. The event received a vote of Thanks by Sri. Krishnendu Baksi, Programme Coordinator, ISCS,India



## REPORT OF THE WEBINAR

# IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY IN EASTERN INDIA: VISION PURVODAYA

‘Purvodaya’ scheme has been launched by the Government of India to ensure balanced economic development and reduce the regional disparities. The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkata has initiated series of intellectual deliberations on various dimensions of the much talked about policy. A webinar entitled ‘Improving Connectivity in Eastern India: Vision Purvodaya’ was organized by the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkotta on 14th December 2021.

Dr Sujit Kumar Pruseth, Editor, ‘Purvodaya’ accorded a warm welcome to the panel of experts and audience and initiated the deliberation. Dr Pruseth highlighted connectivity as one of the salient features of the ‘Purvodaya’ policy. He said that the story of India’s growth will be incomplete without the development of eastern part of India.

The discussion was chaired and moderated by Ms. Rashmi Das, Editor, ‘Telecom live &

Infralife’. Dr Das stressed upon the need for an in-depth analysis of the connectivity issue from multiple perspectives which will enable the policy making and implementation.

Dr Nihar Nayak, Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi made a technical presentation stressing upon the need to engage the neighbours on the eastern sides of India. Dr Nayak argued that the benefits from ‘Purvodaya’ will be more effective and meaningful if India crafts strategic policy on connectivity, trade and culture etc. He argued that the policy should be augmented in such a way which would supplement India's ‘neighbourhood first’ policy.

Mr. Arnab Ganguly, CUTS International argued that ‘Purvodaya’ scheme and Bangladesh can create a synergy for each other and there could be some areas of symbiotic growth. Mr. Ganguly elaborated few key challenges before the Government of India which need to be addressed at the earliest.

Ms. Sohini Nayak, Junior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation critically analysed the ‘Purvodaya’ policy. Ms. Nayak argued that ‘Purvodaya’ policy can be utilized as a platform for larger interactions among the eastern states and ASEAN countries. Ms. Nayak highlighted that two pillars of the Indian foreign policy ‘neighborhood first’ and the Act East policy can be synchronized with ‘Purvodaya’ policy.

Dr Sujit Kumar Pruseth summed up the key points of deliberations which would be provided as key policy inputs. He conveyed thanks to all distinguished experts and audience. The guidance and support by Mr Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and other team members were appreciated and acknowledged.

