

Report on leadership talk with Mr. Gautam Bambawale, Ex - India's Ambassador to China on 23rd April 2020

Dr. Abhay Jere, Chief Innovation Officer, Ministry of HRD, Government of India asked Mr. Gautam Bambawale many interesting questions on how this COVID crises offers unique opportunity for India vis à vis China. Mr. Gautam Bambawale shared his valuable views about how this COVID crises offers a unique opportunity for India to present itself in a much better way on global platform.

Mr. Gautam Bambawale mentioned that the current pandemic has spread all across the world hitting 180 countries out of almost 200 countries in the world and it has made a very deep impact especially on western countries. Due to COVID crises the image of China, the credibility of China has received a big setback. He outlined that this provides opportunities for India in three areas:

1. One is the area of **politics**, since USA is increasingly turning inward and it has lots of problems domestically therefore there is lack of Global leadership during the crises and perhaps India could be one of the several countries who could provide Global leadership in the political sphere.
2. Second is the area of **economics**, since many companies and international firms from countries like Japan, Korea, Germany, UK and USA are thinking of relocating their production out of China, so we must capitalise the relocation so that some, if not all manufacture here in India keeping in mind PM Modi's idea of **Make in India**.
3. Third is the area of **soft issues such as education, tourism** etc., here we have the opportunity to get more foreign students to study at our universities as less students may want to go to China or other countries for study.

He further added, apart from these opportunities it is not wrong to say that it is not easy to do business in India, not only for foreign countries but even for India. There are many drawbacks which needs to be targeted, but at the same time we have certain advantages. One is the labour cost which is very low in India as compared to most countries in the world. And secondly India itself is a big market so many companies will want to come here not only to manufacture but to export as well.

He gladly stated that some states like Maharashtra and neighbouring Karnataka have already started moving in this direction to get companies from these countries to invest in India.

Furthermore, he highlighted that there is a big difference between India and China on our basic philosophies and basic structure of our societies. India's philosophy is that of **वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्** which means that the whole world is one single family. On the other hand, China's philosophy is that of middle country. They believe that they are the centre of everything and everything revolves around them.

As per him, as we move towards post COVID world, after pandemic when the world will come into existence a group of middle powers like India will increasingly play a role on focusing aspects of humanity, on problems of humanity including that of pandemic and of environmental pollution, environmental changes, and global warming which needs to be solved quickly. There is a scope for India to play a role of global leadership after post COVID world takes place.

He emphasised there is an urgent need to restructure organisations including UN and in that restructuring, India has a role to play.

Upon being asked about whether the tension between India and China, China and other countries will effect the business in long term, he answered that India China relations have always been very complex because in India China relations there are many elements of cooperation and competition. He added that there is big difference the way Indian economy is structured and the way Chinese economy is structured. Also, there is difference in the way two governments function. We might have our differences but we both are very realistic. We know that we are two neighbouring countries, we have large populations, we have similar goals of wanting to be developed countries and increasing the levels of income and wealth of our population, of our people. As a result, both Governments spend a lot of efforts and work to manage the relationship.

Conclusively, the session was very informative and useful, also it provided insights on post COVID world and India's ability to influence on post COVID world.

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