

2nd November, 2020

Press Release

JMI organises Online Lecture on 'India as a Reluctant Power: Promise and Potential'

The MMAJ Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia(JMI) organised an online lecture on the topic 'India as a Reluctant Power: Promise and Potential' on 26th October, 2020. The lecture was delivered by Dr. Aparna Pande, Director, Initiative on the Future of India and South Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington D C. She has authored many books, prominent among them are From Chanakya to Modi: The Evolution of India's Foreign Policy, Explaining Pakistan's Foreign Policy and The Routledge Hand Book on Pakistan.

Professor Ajay Darshan Behera, Officiating Director, MMAJ AIS, welcomed the speaker and highlighted the rapidly changing international context and how India can position itself. He spoke of the multiple attributes of power and how the trajectory of power is going to be different for each country.

Dr. Aparna Pande began her lecture by highlighting India's power attributes, notably its demographic dividend, economic potential, its large professional military and its plural political system, which, she argued, would make India a natural partner for many countries. What lends authenticity to the promise of India is the belief of Indians all over in its manifest great destiny. The vast Indian Diaspora is considered an asset in this regard.

She put forward the view that India's aspiration for a great power role is, however, not augmented by matching steps to actualise its dreams. She dwelled on the fallacy of focusing on the past with no blueprint for the future because century-old culture and historical greatness are not themselves sufficient to accord the great power status.

Dr. Pande underlined the dichotomy between ambition and reluctance to undertake policies and desired actions to achieve the goals. In this context, prevalence of structural discriminations, she added, 'does not augur well with India's sense of self.' She reiterated that India should come up with new tools and smart measures by investing on its human resource capital, upgrade its military, work seriously on the economic recovery, improve its health-care, women empowerment project and maintain cordial relations with its neighbours and beyond. She maintained that the Indian state has not done well in multitasking. Accounting for the dismal record, she pointed out several factors, ranging from the lack of focus on planning and half-hazard policy implementation to the absence of a vision for wealth creation rather than wealth redistribution.

Dr. Pande emphasized that the world would take notice only when Indians show the resolve and intent to build power. To achieve this, she forcefully argued for shift in focus from so-called 'soft power' assets like yoga, Bollywood and along with all this, popular complacency.

Countries like USA, Australia, Japan and Southeast Asian states are all rooting for India to be the rule-maker but the major limiting factor is the lack of commensurate efforts by India. The need

of the hour is to ensure consistent high rate of economic growth and reforms, not to mention the need for market liberalisation and effective resource management.

Dr. Pande summed up her presentation by concluding that Ancient India was otherworldly but modern India needs to be this- worldly so as to be recognised as a great power.

Ahmad Azeem
PRO-Media Coordinator

باب مولانا ابوالکلام آزاد
Bab-e Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Gate
7

