

Crowdsourcing ideas for I-Day

Ahead of the 71st Independence Day celebration, the crowd has been generous in telling the Prime Minister what he should include in his speech



NOT FOR PROFIT

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Crowdsourcing, by definition, is a participative online activity where an entity proposes a voluntary task to a group of individuals of varying knowledge and heterogeneity. The exercise should ideally result in mutual benefit. While the participant could get social recognition or a sense of self esteem (and in some cas-

es, economic gains too) for making the contribution, the crowdsourcer derives advantage from what is shared. The concept has, for some years, been a political tool the world over from Iceland to Finland to the US for bringing about change, made particularly famous by Arab Spring.

India too has kept pace with the world, effectively tapping the crowd for data-mining, at least for the last four years. Ahead of the 71st Independence Day celebration, the crowd is active once again, telling the Prime Minister what he should include in his speech from the ramparts of Red Fort on August 15. It's a heady mix of suggestions (around 7,000 odd have already poured in), from education to health, job creation to social media scrutiny. All meant for the PM's eyes and ears, across online platforms and apps that are supposed to reach out to him.

At a time when the battle between

social media companies and the government has reached a certain pitch, this is what one of the netizens has to say to make KYC a part of the Facebook-WhatsApp-Twitter universe: "Dear PM, please impose restrictions on the use of social media. There should be investigation into those posting abusive, sexual, harmful content that may promote terrorism, dangerous acts, spam... KYC should be made compulsory for opening any social media account."

Then there's a bizarre suggestion to create a ministry for men. Objective: To remove gender-biased laws, as "often there are fake dowry and domestic violence cases..." This contributor for the PM's Independence Day speech asks, "How will the Hindu population grow if there's a fear of fake cases, prolonged litigation and risk of losing properties?"

One had heard of mandatory rural posting for government doctors, or

compulsory military service in some countries, but hear this one out: "We should inspire and compel each Indian young professional to serve Indian startups for a certain period before taking up any other job. It's the duty of each one of us to strengthen new startups to create more jobs and healthy economy and better India." He adds, "Let's pledge my country first."

That's not the only *swadeshi* tune in the Independence season. "Focus on the public procurement policy, to give preference to make in India," another Independence Day enthusiast told the PM. "This is an excellent policy that can resurrect domestic manufacturers..." He also says, "Invoke emotions on *swadeshi* as that is the only way we can revive our industry, create jobs, absorb technology and make India self-reliant."

There's more. "Let's declare the next freedom fight, freedom from religious conflicts while putting the nation first. Make all religious public address sound systems to play patriotic content in local language before any religious content everyday..."

And even more. The PM is expected to ensure that the national flag finds a place at all religious places. "A

law should be put in place for that... If possible, national anthem should be allowed to be sung at all religious places. That's because "nation is the first religion", he adds.

Giving it a contemporary touch, one of the posts wants the PM to look into the real estate fiasco. Builders have taken money from people and houses have not been delivered for years, a home buyer has written. "The police has refused to lodge a complaint and I haven't got any refund for four years. Kindly help."

There's request in the entertainment department too, both for big screen and small screen. "I feel pain while watching TV serials and news channels as negativity has crept in everywhere. There are negative characters in every serial and the directors are a social menace..." The letter writer has requested the PM to "make efforts to remove negative characters from these TV serials..."

Indeed, there's a lot that the PM has to sort through before he finalises his speech for the D-Day. Meanwhile, the jury is out on whether the ideal definition of crowdsourcing, where both sides benefit, would apply here or not.