

Redefinition/Change in our role

1. Be an Awakened, Active, Aware, Informed and Determined Citizen.
2. Start thinking of being an Indian – make that your primary identity.
3. Start becoming law abiding citizens. The moment we use shortcuts, we have forsaken our right to demand anything from our government
4. Create citizen groups amongst your friends. It's always better to approach politics and governments in groups. Politicians respect groups and crowds.
5. Register to Vote. Make sure at least 2 months before any election you reconfirm your name is on the electoral rolls of your constituency
6. Read up the manifestoes of Parties and familiarize yourself with the candidates.
7. Remember you have rights. Familiarize yourself with your rights and establish those rights from your government and your elected representatives. Use the Right to Information act to get the data and details you want.
8. Make sure the media is aligned to your interest. Boycott media that doesn't help your cause of a better governance and transparency. Remember media survives on advertisements and advertisers depend on you and me. If you choose to stay away from a particular media or support a particular one and do so visibly, advertisers will follow you.
9. Be more aware about what your government is doing. There is no substitute to this. Getting into an uninformed debate leads to loss of credibility, which is what the accusation against civil society all along has been – that we have talk through our hat. Be prepared to take to the streets and participate in opposing/protesting instances of bad governance or lack of response from our governments.
10. Be prepared for and commit to a 2 to 3 year struggle to make this change happen.

Log onto: www.rajeev.in
Email: rajeev.c@nic.in

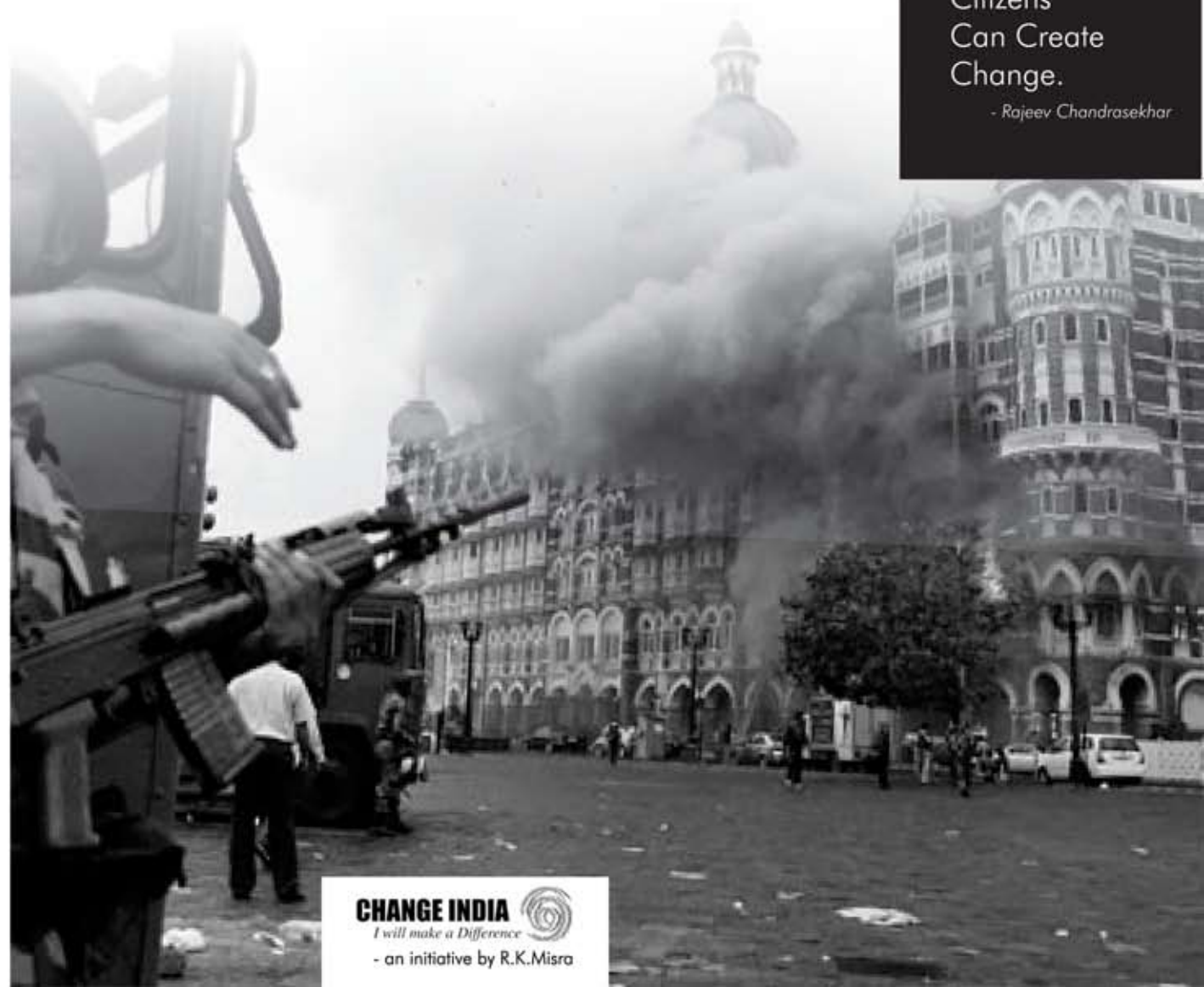


Author:
Rajeev Chandrasekhar
– Member of Parliament

CHANGE INDIA
I will make a Difference

“Awakened,
Aware, Active,
Informed and
Determined
Citizens
Can Create
Change.”

– Rajeev Chandrasekhar



CHANGE INDIA
I will make a Difference
– an initiative by R.K.Misra

Someone wise said that out of every tragedy comes some good! ...

It's difficult to find any silver lining in the cloud that was 26/11, but if there is something at all, it's the collective wakening of the conscience of all of the many thus-far silent Indians.

Civil Society is now realizing that we have a war being waged against us and terror is not something that can be any longer seen as something distant and unconnected to our lives. People of Kashmir, Assam and other states have been suffering terror for many years and we have remained immune and silent. 26/11 has only reaffirmed that our Governments are failing again and again in its basic and most solemn responsibility of protecting its people. This is symptomatic of a larger failure of government. Some of us have been saying for some years now that our Government is broken and the quality of our Politics and Politicians represents the biggest threat to the future of India. The institutions that are supposed to stand up and deliver to its people have long since been compromised, corroded and hollowed out by the all-pervasive and un-opposed effects of Politics and corruption. Unfortunately for the most part of the last 6 to 7 years, our efforts at drawing attention to the threat represented by failing governance, have been swamped in the public debate, by the cheerleading of India and talk of the imminent rise as an Economic superpower and the other accompanying rhetoric about Incredible India in locations like New York, Davos etc.

The reality of our country is a very far cry from these rosy visions of imminent glory and prosperity, as 26/11 has shockingly reminded us! The biggest challenge and hurdle to this economic heaven is our Politics and Governance – being played out in New Delhi and capitals and cities all across our country.

So we want change ? This is good ! Let's talk about defining the change we want – Accountability from our governments – Performance and governance from our

Governments – The ability for our politicians to work together and create political consensus about the real issues that face our people – Transparency in Public policy etc

I have had the good fortune of reading constitutional assembly debates, conducted in the early days of our life as a free nation. It is very clear from those speeches of our founding fathers, that our constitution is a contract between our Politicians and our people – and that Politics was supposed to be a form of Public service and not about Ruling. It was to get rid of Maharajas and the British that we got freedom and a written constitution. It was not to replace one set of rulers with another set. So that's the change we should seek, of transforming our Politics to Public service and demanding that. This can happen only if we and more and more of us seek to force that change, vote in people who come into Politics to serve and make a mark serving and not to make money or any other objectives. The change should be that people are chosen to office on the basis of their public service and not because of their money, caste, creed or any of the other variables that are dominating and determining political success today.

The outpouring of anger and grief all over the country has made a considerable effect on the Politicians of our nation. In recent debate on the new legislations to tackle terror, many MPs who otherwise would've played politics with this were coerced into action purely out of fear of the public reaction. This is clear evidence to you and all of us that this collective voice is resonating in Delhi.

But clearly this isn't enough – we need enduring and permanent change in the direction we are going. Change isn't an easy business – especially to a political system engrained and entrenched over the last 60 years with the worst characters and qualities that one can see.

So two points to note – Firstly, Change will take time – So don't hold your breath and expect change to come tomorrow just because we woke up today and want change. Those who are determined to have change should be prepared for a long 2 to 3 year struggle for change. This coming election gives you all a great opportunity to establish the first marker for change. But some changes relating to Security and counter

terrorism are more urgent.

Secondly, Civil society needs to redefine its own role vis a vis Politics and Government. You need to ask more and demand more. 26/11 and its aftermath represents a lot of what is wrong with our Politics and Governance. But serious as that event was, there are many more examples of the effects of poor governance and rampant out of control politics, all around us, all made possible thanks to a meek, accepting and silent civil society. For real change in our polity, we have to play a new role – of an Awakened, Active, Aware, Informed and Determined citizen. I can promise you that a large group of Awakened, Active, Aware, Informed and Determined citizens will surely succeed in making the change for the future generations and leave them behind an India that we can be proud of and most importantly let's not wait for the next 26/11 to happen and many lives to be lost before we act.

Log onto: www.rajeev.in
Email: rajeev.c@nic.in

Agenda for Change

1. Focus on rebuilding Institutions of Government – The Police, The IAS. Depoliticize them and make them professional and FULLY accountable.
2. Build new Institutions that safeguard Citizen Interests – like institutions of Lok Ayukta – strengthen it and give it more powers, Like Federal and Regional Counter Terror Agencies.
3. Reform our administrative machinery – a form of de-bureaucratization – make things simpler and more transparent.
4. Bring in a regime of respect for Law and enforcement.
5. Bring in a regime of Transparency and Disclosures for all Government decisions.
6. Push for constitutional changes that create more accountability and transparency from our representatives, institutions.
7. Coax, Pressure media to be more focused on researching, understanding and highlighting poor governance and politics. At the same time, media and civil society must recognize and encourage the many silent heroes in the Government system.