

ONE YEAR IN OFFICE: AN EVALUATION

IDEA OF INDIA COLLECTIVE

May 16-17, 2015

Deputy Chairman Hall, 2nd Floor, Constitution Club, New Delhi

9am to 7pm

The Idea of India Collective is a large inclusive collective of persons, including thinkers, students, activists and concerned citizens, who have come together around the core conviction that central to our idea of India is the affirmation of its diversity. The India we are part of belongs equally to all persons who make it its own – no matter what their religious faith (or the lack of it), their gender, caste, class, language, physical abilities and sexual orientation. The bedrock of the Indian republic is the promise that all its citizens can find space in which to practise their beliefs and cultures, and live freely, confident they will be equally protected by the law of the land. This Collective is also convinced about the central idea of the good state as one which defends the oppressed and disadvantaged, and ensures their access to basic rights necessary for a life with dignity.

On May 2015, the first year will conclude of the central government led by Narendra Modi. In earlier conclaves of the Idea of India Collective organised soon after this election, many of the country's leading public intellectuals, human rights workers and artistes, expressed grave worries that this new government would be driven by another idea of India, an idea of majoritarian domination, which is alien to the social and political philosophy on which this country was built and consolidated. They feared that what this other idea of India could lead to is riots, polarization, the pulling back of the state from public expenditure on health, education and nutrition in favour of large subsidies to the private sector, weakening of labour and environmental protections, and the theft of natural resources in the name of development. And to enable all of this, a curbing of freedom so people can be told what to think, read, write, say, paint.

We will on May 16 and 17 again will bring together many leading public intellectuals, artistes, human rights and other activists to evaluate soberly the actual performance of the new government as it completes its first year in office. This conclave will attempt to assess whether the fears expressed when this government took office were well-founded, and also how well this government has performed both against the standards we have laid out above as representing the Idea of India, and the announcements of the government itself.

The talks will be before a small invited audience, and will be professionally recorded. This will then be edited, and uploaded online and made available for people to see and reflect on.

Hope to meet you at the conclave.

Yours sincerely

Seema Mustafa
Harsh Mander
PrabirPurkayastha
Shabnam Hashmi

NOTE: LIMITED SEATING CAPACITY ON FIRST COME FIRST SERVE BASIS. REACH BY 8.30 TO ENSURE A PLACE.