To give every Indian
a share of the income
from the public wealth of India.

It is the morally right thing to do.
And it will lead to faster economic growth,
job creation, the eradication of poverty,
and reduction in public corruption.

DhanVapasi.com
September, 2018
Why you must read this

This essay introduces the simple idea that every Indian must be given an income that is derived from the public wealth of India. That is, their wealth must be returned — Dhan Vapasi.

The periodic distribution of income to us the people of India from the public assets of India is our right, not a gift from any government. It’s not a scheme by a political party to buy votes. It’s a birthright that every Indian has.

If you are convinced by this short article, there is something that you must do — demand that your wealth be returned to you. If we want Dhan Vapasi to happen, we have to collectively demand it. Only if there is a popular demand for the return of our wealth, only then will the politicians (of any party) give us back our wealth.

At the end of this essay you will find instructions on various ways to indicate your support for Dhan Vapasi such as signing a petition on the web, sending an SMS, etc.

But first, please take a few minutes to read this article. We are sure you will find it interesting. And then pass on this article to friends and family. They too will thank you.

If we work collectively, we are sure to succeed.

Dhan Vapasi is your birthright. It is your wealth and you must get it back.
The Path to India’s Prosperity — Dhan Vapasi

This is a guide to what Dhan Vapasi is, and what you have to do to make this a reality. By demanding Dhan Vapasi, you will help yourself, your family and make India a prosperous nation.

The building blocks of Dhan Vapasi are these:

- We, the people of India, as the rightful owners of India’s public wealth, have a claim to the income from our public wealth
- Public wealth is all that is not privately owned. It consists of public lands, minerals, public sector corporations, financial institutions like banks, and resources such as spectrum
- The public wealth of India is estimated at Rs 50 lakhs per family
- Dhan Vapasi is the claim that every family must receive a dividend income of Rs 1 lakh year from the public wealth they own
- The government must be prohibited from taking any portion of that wealth for its own use
- Dhan Vapasi will eliminate extreme poverty
- Dhan Vapasi will create millions of additional jobs every year
- Dhan Vapasi will reduce public corruption — by stopping leakage of funds meant for public assistance
- Dhan Vapasi will eliminate the need for the dozens of public assistance schemes that are riddled with corruption
• Dhan Vapasi does not discriminate among people. Therefore it cannot be used by the politicians as a “vote bank” scheme. It is for every citizen, and therefore it is democratic. It’s the wealth of the people, for the people, and to be used by the people.

What is Public Wealth?

The people of India collectively own wealth that is not privately owned. That is called “public wealth”, which is in the form of public lands, the minerals, the improvements on the land, water resources, public sector corporations, financial institutions like banks, and resources such as the spectrum. These are public assets or wealth.

Properly employed public wealth produces a continuous stream of income which in turn increases the wealth. Since the wealth belongs to all Indians, India’s public wealth should provide income to Indians every year. And that is what Dhan Vapasi is. It’s the claim that the people must be given their share of the income from the public wealth and assets. The demand is that every family must get Rs 1 lakh per year as income from the productive use of public wealth.

The Government takes our Wealth

The unfortunate reality is that we the people never receive any income from the public assets that we own. Maybe there is some income or maybe there is zero or even negative income. If there is some income from those assets, we don’t
get it because the government takes it and spends it. Maybe they use some of it for public services but in the main the government spends it on supporting the politicians and the immense bureaucracy that it has created.

What’s worse is that when the government mismanagement of public assets leads to losses, we the people are forced to pay for them through our taxes. Since the government does not suffer for its incompetent management of our public assets, it does not have an incentive to improve. They, the people who rule over India, gain either way, whether the assets are productive or not. And we the people lose either way.

Since the politicians and the bureaucrats are in control of the public wealth and assets, they behave as if they are the owners. They behave as if our public wealth is their private wealth. They live in big houses for free with lots of servants and services, paid for by us; they travel for free on public transportation system (including Indian Railways and Air India) paid for by us; they get police protection, paid for by us. We are forced to work hard and pay heavy taxes so that they can live like kings and rule over us.

**Stop the Theft**

How much do we pay in direct and indirect taxes? To put it very simply, half of our earnings are taken away from us through taxes by the government. In effect, we work for the government for six months of the year and for ourselves the other half of the year. We work and the government spends.
We the people pay the taxes so that they live like kings, just the way the British did during their Raj. Too many Indians starve so that the rulers can feast.

We have to stop this.

We have to stop this theft of public wealth, and we have to stop the government from keeping us poor by taking a large part of what we earn. And we have to restrict the government to the job that is properly its main purpose, and make sure that it does it efficiently and effectively.

India's top politicians and bureaucrats live like their British predecessors. In over 1,000 bungalows occupying as many acres of prime land in Lutyen’s Delhi, they live ostentatiously in lavish comfort, at our expense.

The value of these houses is around Rs 2,00,000 crores. We, including the hundreds of millions of slum-dwellers, pay for them to live in style with immense lawns tended to by an army of servants.

One particular minister's bungalow is larger than five badminton courts.

This is obscene and immoral.
The Proper Role of the Government

The role of the government should be that of a watchman, or *chowkidar*. Which means:

- Provide an army to defend against external threats;
- Provide a police force to protect people and property, and enforce laws;
- Provide a judicial system to adjudicate disputes.

To discharge those duties, the government has to collect taxes from various sources. That is the only legitimate reason for taxes. But the government taxes us and also takes our public wealth and wastes much of it. We allow this to go on. We should not tolerate this anymore.

There should be accountability and transparency. The government must not be allowed to use our public wealth to fund whatever it wants. Let the government collect taxes to discharge its proper functions. That way it will be clear how well it is doing its job, and at what cost.

We have to restrict the government to the job that is properly its main purpose, and make sure that it does it efficiently and effectively.

We have to stress this point. The government has a proper role. It must do that and only that. For discharging that duty, the funds it needs must come only from the taxes it collects, and it must not take the income from our public wealth. The income of the public wealth must be given to us the public so that we spend that income the way we choose. That is part of economic freedom — the freedom to use our wealth and income as we see fit, and not allow others to interfere in that.
Our Wealth, Our Income

The income from all public assets also belongs to us because those assets belong to us. There the income must be given to us, the public, so that we can decide how to spend that money. The government cannot take the income from our assets and use it any which way it wants. That’s theft. It may be legal but it is theft nonetheless. They don’t own our public assets.

Unfortunately, the politicians and bureaucrats behave as the owners of India, and treat the people as their servants. This was what the British did — they ruled over the people of India. The British stole from India and enriched themselves. And that is what the Indian politicians and bureaucrats have been doing since the British left. Instead of being chowkidars, the people in government have become the zamindars.

*Instead of being chowkidars, the people in government have become the zamindars.*
A Bank Account Story

We can illustrate how caretakers (*chowkidars*) can become owners (*zamindars*) through this simple story.

Let’s imagine that your ancestors left you some money in a savings account at a bank for your use. The money you inherit in the account is part of your wealth. You decide when and how much to withdraw to meet your needs. And you know that if you wish, you could deposit money into that account for use by your descendants. So far so good.

But suppose the bank manager never allows you to operate your savings account. He does not give you periodic statements on how much is in your account, how much interest it has earned, etc. When you need to withdraw some funds for your use, the bank manager says, “Sorry, you can’t have it. It is for your descendants.”

It becomes clear to you that your descendants will also be told the same thing when they try to get access to the money — “You can’t have it. It’s for your descendants.” The bank will never allow anyone to withdraw any amount.

“You can’t have your money. It’s for your descendants.”

What you then realise is that the bank manager is actually spending your money on himself, his family and friends. It is also clear to you that he will spend it all eventually, and your descendants, just like you, will never see a paisa of it. And the worst part is that the bank manager is gambling with your money and losing large amounts.

You would not tolerate this blatant theft. You would fire the bank manager and the system should punish him with jail time.
This is exactly what is happening with our public wealth. The bank manager is the government. The savings account is our public wealth. The government does not tell us how much our public wealth is. It does not tell us how much our wealth has grown. It uses our public wealth for its own use. It does not give us access to that wealth when we need it. It keeps telling us that it is for our descendants. It gambles with our wealth when it uses it in loss-making public sector enterprises.

We must not tolerate this legalised theft. Just like we would fire the bank manager and punish him for theft, we must fire the government that denies us our inheritance.

That is what Dhan Vapasi is. It is a collective demand that our wealth be under our control, and for our use. We have tolerated the theft of public wealth long enough. Now it is time for us to get our wealth back.
Government Wastes our Wealth

The government uses only a part of our public assets productively. The rest is not put to use. For example, much of our public lands are misused or entirely unused. This leads to economic losses that could be avoided if properly managed. The government does not have an incentive to do a good job because all this is hidden from public sight.

Our assets are wasted through neglect and incompetence. They mismanage our wealth. Our public sector corporations incur huge losses, to the tune of thousands of lakhs of crores.

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<td><strong>Loss incurred by every Indian family</strong></td>
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Air India - Mismanaged and Wasteful

Air India is a typical example of waste and mismanagement from incompetence. And how we pay for their incompetence. Even the poorest person in India pays for Air India’s losses. There is absolutely no reason for a government to run an airline. And if for some reason it has to do so, it should be run competently.

Air India has so far lost Rs 52,000 crore. That is, it has destroyed that amount of wealth, instead of adding to our wealth. The losses amount to Rs 500 per person. That means every Indian has paid Rs 500 for the incompetence of Air India’s management. Even the poorest person who probably cannot afford a bus ticket has paid for Air India’s losses. Why don’t they shut down Air India? Because the politicians, bureaucrats and employees of Air India use it as their free, private airline. We pay, they fly.

Why Government Wastes

The Air India and other examples illustrate the sad fact that the government is incapable of managing public assets or running commercial enterprises. Why is that? Primarily because the politicians and bureaucrats don’t actually own those public assets. They only have temporary control, and they use that temporary control to extract as much as they can for their own use, and they don’t care if they waste any.
Remember that politicians and bureaucrats only rule temporarily, for a few years, not indefinitely. Then they are gone. When they are in power, they use our public property as their private property but don’t care about wasting our public property because it does not matter to them.

*They use our public property as their private property but don’t care about wasting our public property.*

When people have temporary control of an asset, they have no reason to work hard to preserve the value of the asset or to derive the most income from it. What matters to them is how much of the assets they get to use now, not how much is being wasted or how much will remain when they leave office.

**We Suffer the Neglect and the Waste**

All Indians, most especially the poor, are suffering economically as a consequence of the waste of public assets. The loss of income from public assets amounts to lakhs of crores a year.

If that income were distributed equally to every Indian, it would make a tremendous difference, especially to the poor. Those whose incomes and wealth are in the tens of lakhs per year can afford to ignore the lack of the income from public assets but to those in extreme poverty — about 500 million Indians — this is a matter of life and death.

*To those in extreme poverty – about 500 million Indians – this is a matter of life and death.*
At this point, let’s take a quick look at what wealth is, and how it is created.

**Creating Wealth**

Wealth is anything that we value for its use. Food, clothing, shelter, tools are obvious examples of wealth. Wealth is not the same as money. Wealth is measured in terms of money because it is easy for everyone to understand, and money is exchanged for wealth. You can always print more money but that would not mean that wealth has been created.

Wealth is created through effort. Raw materials exist in nature but to create wealth, we have to do work. The more wealth we produce, the more our lives are materially rich. Tools help us create wealth more efficiently than we could without them.

Tools themselves have to be created by us from the raw materials that exist in nature. The knowledge about how to create tools, and how to use them to create wealth is called technology. As human civilization has proceeded over the centuries, people have figured out better ways of making and using tools. The progress of civilization depends on how we use our knowledge (which is what technology is) and our tools to turn the raw materials (the land, the minerals, water, sources of energy) into the things we value. Simply put:

\[
\text{Raw materials} + \text{Technology} + \text{Tools} + \text{Work} = \text{Wealth}
\]

For example, for producing food (wealth), we need land (raw material), and knowledge of farming (technology), and ploughs (tool), and human labor (work). If any of the components are missing, we cannot produce food.
Land is Special

Land is special among inputs for wealth creation because every activity requires land. You need land for farming, factories, houses, roads — whatever you can imagine, requires land. Therefore, if land is inefficiently used or not allowed to be used, it inhibits the production of wealth. Private land holdings are more efficiently used because people who own the land attempt to use it as best as they can. They bear the costs and they enjoy the benefits of the use of the land.

Public lands are not owned by the people who control the land. They are not entitled to the benefits and they don’t bear the costs. Public lands are therefore not efficiently used. This leads to social losses.

Dhan Vapasi improves land use efficiency. It makes public land for use by private parties, and the rent from the use of the land is distributed to every citizen.

The decrease in the price of land leads to the decrease in the cost of production.

Because this increases the supply of land, it brings down the price of land. This is simple supply and demand economics. Because land is an essential input to all production, the decrease in the price of land leads to the decrease in the cost of production. So everything — from food to housing to education to manufactures — becomes more affordable. This benefits everyone but the poor benefit more than the rich.

In summary, simply by making more land available for use, the entire economy improves. Bringing public land into production, first, raises revenues that can be distributed as
income to everyone; and second, brings the costs of production which reduces prices all around, benefiting everyone, especially the poor; and finally, it increases employment because it creates jobs in every sector of the economy.

**Arguments Supporting Dhan Vapasi**

There are two powerful arguments that support Dhan Vapasi: the economic and the moral. We have mentioned them both in passing in the above. This is a restatement.

The case for Dhan Vapasi can be framed on simple moral and ethical grounds. It is every individual’s right to have access to his share of the collective wealth. No individual, rich or poor, should be legitimately denied the right to their property, private or public. To do so would be morally and ethically wrong.

**The Economic Argument**

The economic argument depends on efficiency. For something to be efficient, it has to be free of waste. If you waste effort or resources, you are not being efficient. You can do better and if you do, you are efficient. Bringing all the assets — public and private — into production increases efficiency, and therefore produces more than before. Countries that are more efficient are more wealthy.

When people have control of the assets that they own, they are diligent in preserving them.

When the public wealth is under the direct control of the people, they deserve the consequent gains or losses. But if they are denied the ownership based on the argument that
they are incapable of exercising that responsibility, then that questions the very principle of democracy. It questions the capabilities of the people and judges them inadequate.

If the people are capable enough to assume the responsibility of choosing their political leaders — that’s democracy — why are they incapable of deciding what they should do with their own wealth? In fact, it is a demonstrable fact that when people have control of assets that they own, they are diligent in preserving them.

Dhan Vapasi brings all the available resources such as land into production. It also provides the proper incentives for people to put in the effort to use those most efficiently because they are the owners. Owners care more than do managers.

**The Moral Argument**

The economic argument stresses efficiency and gain. But even if you were to disregard that, even if people were not very good at economic decisions, even then it would be morally right to give people direct control over what belongs to them.

*Depriving someone of their property is theft.*

The moral argument hinges on the immorality of theft. Depriving someone of their property is theft, even if the law says that it is OK to do so, and even if the taking is done by the government. Not all legal acts are moral, and not all immoral acts are illegal. In our case, it is legal for the government to take our public wealth but it is not moral. It is still theft.
The Moral Argument is Sufficient

If a thief were to argue that he uses your money more efficiently, and that he’s doing this for your own good, even then the theft of your money would still be morally wrong. It is immoral to take someone’s property away under the excuse that they are somehow incapable of making the best use of their own property.

So also, the government’s capture of our public property is theft, even if the government were to claim that it knows better than us about managing our property.

Doing what is moral is sufficient justification, even if that act is inefficient in the economic sense. Even if a person manages his money badly, it would still be immoral to take his money. An immoral society cannot be a good society.

Dhan Vapasi is Democratic

Finally, let’s remember that India is a democratic republic. The Indian government must not be allowed to treat the citizens as incompetent children that need to be forced and managed. Doing so is immoral and unprincipled.

Happily both the economic efficiency argument, and the moral argument for Dhan Vapasi point in the same positive direction. Therefore there is no reason for us to hesitate in demanding it that our public wealth be returned to us.

The Poor will Benefit

The poor who desperately need the money to get out of poverty, will benefit enormously. Dhan Vapasi will finally eradicate poverty from India.

Dhan Vapasi increases economic efficiency and therefore the
creation of wealth. Poor people will benefit directly because they will be able to use the Dhan Vapasi income to meet their urgent needs. Secondly, due to the expansion of the economy, they will have better employment opportunity and therefore their own incomes will go up.

**Even the Poor Own Wealth**

A person who has little private wealth is considered to be poor. But if his share of the public wealth were to be taken into account, maybe that person is not actually poor. Therefore if the private wealth of a person is in some sense inadequate for a decent quality of life, it is morally and ethically wrong to withhold his share of the public wealth.

In the case of the very poor, giving them access to their share of the public wealth would be justified on humanitarian grounds itself. In addition to that giving people access to their share of the public wealth leads to society-wide economic gains. But even if that did not lead to any economic gains at some collective level, justice demands that no one should be denied access to the wealth that they rightfully own, especially the poor who can least afford to forego the use of their wealth.

Even the poor own wealth. It’s their share of the public wealth but they don’t realize it because it is hidden from them.

**Impact on Employment**

Dhan Vapasi will have the beneficial effect of stimulating the economy. When incomes go up, consumption spending goes up. Higher spending means higher demand for goods and services. That in turn means greater production, and
therefore higher employment. That creates a virtuous cycle — more employment means more income for people to spend, which leads to more production, that leads to more employment, and so on.

Because Dhan Vapasi gives money directly to the people (and not through some complicated schemes of subsidies), the effect is entirely people-driven and bottom-up. It gives the people more economic freedom.

**Dhan Vapasi will Reduce Corruption**

An important benefit of Dhan Vapasi will be the reduction in public corruption — the corruption that is associated with politicians and bureaucrats.

All government schemes to help the poor end up as mechanisms for public corruption and waste. The anti-poverty schemes involve huge amounts of money flowing through very complex administrative systems. All administrative systems involve real people. Real people are corruptible. The greater the money involved, the greater the temptation.

Dhan Vapasi will eliminate all those complex administrative systems that are so easily corrupted. This will reduce the cost of government, and therefore lower the taxes we the people have to pay.
Dhan Vapasi is not about “Black Money”

Dhan Vapasi is not about bringing back “black money” from foreign banks. Those schemes are unrealistic to the point of absurdity. There are too many barriers, and many factors out of our control.

The wealth that Dhan Vapasi refers to is our wealth, in our own land, under our control. It’s our decision that does not depend on outside forces.

Dhan Vapasi is not Redistribution

Dhan Vapasi is not about wealth redistribution. Taking from someone by force (taxes) to give to someone else is possible but it has enormous costs. The cost is increased poverty and widespread misery. It can be done for a while but it is not sustainable. All countries that have tried it (under severe socialism and communism) have ended up as failures.

Dhan Vapasi is Non-discriminatory

Dhan Vapasi is not about giving money only to the poor. You don’t have to be poor to receive your share. It is not “means-tested” — even if you have the means to live a good life, you still get your share because it is yours.

Dhan Vapasi is not Vote-bank Politics

Dhan Vapasi does not discriminate based on religion or caste. Therefore it cannot be used by the politicians as “vote bank” scheme. It is for every citizen, and therefore it is democratic. It’s the wealth of the people, for the people, and to be used by the people.
**Dhan Vapasi and Economic Freedom**

Because Dhan Vapasi increases incomes, it directly promotes economic freedom. Economic freedom is the freedom from the dictates of others on what you should buy, sell, consume, produce, give away or save. When the government takes from someone to give to someone else, both parties lose economic freedom.

**Dhan Vapasi and Political Freedom**

Political freedom is an empty concept without economic freedom. And economic freedom is operationally meaningless without actual — not merely notional — ownership of economic resources. In effect, Dhan Vapasi operationalises not only economic freedom but also provides the necessary foundation for the exercise of political freedom.

**Poverty in India**

Too many Indians are poor. Of the world’s population that suffers extreme poverty, more than half live in India. By the World Bank’s definition of poverty, there are approximately 500 million Indians who fall below the poverty line. The fundamental fact about the Indian economy is that it does not produce sufficient wealth.

There are no inherent deficiencies in Indians that prevents them from producing the wealth needed for eradicating poverty. Indians are as capable of wealth production as any other group. Other countries have become rich and developed. So what are the reasons for India’s inability to eradicate poverty and develop? The reason for that is Indians lack economic freedom.
Economic Freedom

There are systemic factors that inhibit wealth creation in some parts of the world, including India. The people are denied access to productive resources, and therefore are not as productive as they could potentially be. Giving all citizens, particularly the very poor, the ownership of those unused assets which the government currently holds is a necessary step to prosperity.

For generations, the public wealth of the nation has been assumed without justification to belong to, and be controlled by, the government instead of the wealth being in the hands of the people. The people are the true owners of those resources which can be invested by the people for their benefit.

The presumption that the government owns the resources on behalf of the people, and invests them for income which is distributed to the people through various public schemes is untenable.
Indians Create Wealth — but not in India

Once upon a time, India was a rich country. India is not rich any longer. It ranks very low in national rankings of income. Here are a few numbers.

![India vs Other Countries - per-capita income, USD](image)

Indians are unable to create wealth in India. Indians do create immense amounts of wealth in some parts of the world. For example, in the US, Indians as an ethnic group are the top creators of wealth in the US. Indians create wealth wherever they have the opportunity to do so.
There’s something in India that prevents Indians from creating wealth like they do elsewhere. What do they lack in India that they find outside India?

**Lack of Economic Freedom**

Indians cannot create as much wealth in India as they do in other places because the Indian government denies Indians the freedom to create wealth. It may sound crazy but Indian government is the biggest barrier to wealth creation. What runs what you can call the PPP machine: the “perpetually planned poverty” machine.

The Indian government could well be India’s biggest enemy. Recall that the Indian government is just a continuation of the British colonial government. The British created all the rules so that they could control Indians. When the British left, they government people changed but the rules remained the same.

**British Raj 2.0**

The British made the rules to rule Indians. After they left, those rules were used by the new rulers. Only difference was the color of the skin. The British masters of India impoverished Indians; the home-grown masters of India continue the British legacy of denying Indians the freedom they need to produce wealth. In the US, by contrast, Indians are free to create as much wealth as they can, and Indians run the top multinational corporations, and many are in the billionaires’ club.

Indians are bound by economic chains. Our goal here is to outline a way that will help break some of the economic chains that bind us Indians in India so that we produce what
we are capable of. The first step therefore is to take back control of our public wealth that the government (starting with the British government) has taken away from us. That is Dhan Vapasi.

**Dhan Vapasi — Why Now?**

Dhan Vapasi is supported by the undeniable logic of basic economics. The economic case also address the important question: why now and not later? The simple answer is: Because there are people in India now — not in some distant future but now — who suffer the misfortune of extreme poverty, and if they had access to their share of the public wealth now — not in some distant figure — they will have an opportunity to escape from that poverty trap.

**How much Public Wealth**

A short list of public property is:

- Public land — land that does not belong to any private individual, association or corporation
- Minerals, water resources and forests on public land
- Improvements on public lands such as roads and railways
- Radio spectrum
- Public sector corporations, and their assets

That list is not comprehensive but it is a good starting point. How much are they collectively worth? A rough estimate works out to be approximately over Rs 1,500 lakh crores.
That’s a large number that is hard for us to comprehend. To get a handle on the amount, let’s look at it in per capita terms. If the market value of the public assets were divided equally among the 200 million families of India, then each family would get Rs 60 lakhs. Dhan Vapasi is the means to return the wealth to its rightful owners, the people of India.

**WHAT’S NEXT**

For Dhan Vapasi to become a reality, we have to tell the politicians that we are ready to take back our wealth. To do that, we have to get involved in spreading the idea so that enough people support Dhan Vapasi that the government will have to do what is right.

India is a democratic republic. As citizens, we are responsible for the kind of government we get. Our wishes have to be followed by our democratically elected representatives. If those elected do not pay attention to our demands, it is our responsibility to elect others what would listen to our voice.

Therefore, please show your support for Dhan Vapasi. And please share this document with your friends and family. Thank you.

The next page has details on how you can support the Dhan Vapasi movement.
Support Dhan Vapasi

Add your voice to the others who are demanding the return of their wealth, here are various ways.

- Sign a petition that is addressed to the Lok Sabha demanding that the Members of the Parliament pass the Dhan Vapasi Bill.  
  DhanVapasi.com
- Give a missed call to 922 390 1111
- Email us at dhan@nayidisha.com

About Nayi Disha

Nayi Disha’s mission is to create a demand for prosperity, put an end to interventions that destroy wealth and initiate actions that enable widespread wealth creation, thus making Indians prosperous.

To know more, visit NayiDisha.com

Know More

Here are some resources to know more about Dhan Vapasi and Nayi Disha.

- Public Wealth Wiki – continuously updated wiki on the public wealth of India
- Nayi Disha Manifesto for making Indians prosperous
- Dhan Vapasi Bill & Report [To be published soon]