them to adopt the model of a franchisee. The fact of the matter is that such discussions are possible only if both sides are willing to listen and do not come to the negotiating table with a holier-than-thou attitude. The government, it seems, wants to smother and cast aside the Opposition instead of deliberating and reaching a better solution. The Prime Minister often speaks as if he knows all and others have only to follow the policies that he proposes. The only choice before the Opposition, therefore, is to accept the policies proposed by the government or reject them. Since by its very nature the Opposition is in the minority, it stands to be defeated in the event of a vote. Therefore, the Opposition has devised the strategy of obstructing Parliament, one that appears legitimate to me given the rigidity of the Government.



Indian Parliament.

The system lacks the basic requirements of democratic functioning. The government is unable to place before the country a vision that would be acceptable to all. Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru placed a vision that was generally accepted. In 2013, there is no public consensus on the government's policy of trying to secure development through big corporate houses and multinational companies. Bill Clinton used to sit with selected friends and listen to criticism of his policies. I doubt if that takes place today. The policies formulated by the government are more designed to enable a particular section of society, especially politicians and bureaucrats, to extract the country's resources for personal gain. There is a disconnect between the stated and real objectives of politicians, irrespective of party lines. The people are not happy; hence the overwhelming distrust of the political system. Faced with this situation, the Opposition has decided to adopt an aggressive stance vis-a-vis the policies of the government. This is at the root of parliamentary stalemate. It might be cynical to suggest that if Parliament functions normally, the country might be saddled with more anti-people policies of the government. But the cynicism may not be wholly misplaced.

– BHARAT JHUNJHUNWALA

The Statesman/ANN

The writer is former Professor of Economics, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore.