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When we were slaves of the British, Industrial Revolution took place in the west. Huge industrial units were set up there. Production started on a massive scale. They needed large markets to sell their products. At the time, Indian villages were totally self-reliant. Besides vibrant agriculture, a network of small-scale and cottage industries in our villages produced low-cost, high-quality goods for local, as well as worldwide consumption. Basic needs of all the people would be met locally. This integrated economy was destroyed when the British Raj used its political and military might to further its economic agenda. To eliminate competition for its factory-produced goods and source raw material for its hungry manufacturing units, it decimated India's village-based industry. It turned the country into a source of raw materials and a market for Britain's finished goods.

Britain, to achieve its own ends, perpetuated the myth that India was an agricultural country without the technology or the means to produce processed goods. To this day, our planners are prisoners of that myth.

True self-reliance can be achieved only by restoring the balance between agriculture and industry. We are uniquely blessed with a vast base of natural resources, which can power balanced and rapid growth in both sectors. Our country had achieved a balanced growth even at that time. And it has the capacity to do so even today. Few countries in the world enjoy such a fortune.

My biggest problem with the western model of development is that it is devoid of the human element. It is not powered by a humanitarian vision or an impulse to benefit all mankind. The good of one takes precedence over the good of many. This traditionally narrow outlook and bazaar mentality sanctions the exploitation of other nations, seeing them in terms of markets rather than as part of the vast pool of humanity. The imperialist western world wants to extend hegemony over the entire globe, using economic rather than military weapons.

While on the subject of weapons, I must mention the proliferation of increasingly dangerous weapons, manufactured by powerful defence lobbies and sold to newly-independent nations at an exorbitant cost. With so much