



ASPEN INSTITUTE INDIA

Session on  
“The Gilded Age”

With

**Mr. B.J. Panda, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha**  
4:00 pm – 5:30 pm: May 17, 2011  
**Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi**

“There are startling parallels between today’s India and the experience of the other large democracy, the US, over a century ago. The latter part of the 19th century, known as America’s Gilded Age, saw the rapid growth of its economy as well as unprecedented levels of corruption, exactly like present-day India.”



The interactive session on Gilded Age was emphasized by **Mr B J Panda, Member of the Parliament, Lok Sabha** on 17 May in New Delhi. He drew a striking comparison between the Gilded Age and the Contemporary India which has many features in common- rapid economic growth, the structural transformation from an agrarian to a modern economy and coalition politics.

What is referred to as the gilded age in America was the period post civil war and post reconstruction in

the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which inevitably led to the emergence of the Progressive era in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In this entire phenomenal change, a crucial role was played by the middle class and now perhaps their surging numbers through two decades of economic liberalization, combined with their newfound activism reaching a tipping point said Mr Panda.

Another major legislative change that the progressive era brought about was the change of fundamental ways of party’s nomination which had significant campaigns as turning points in recent Indian politics, and all were made possible not by the middle class, but by hundreds of millions of voters who bought into the promise of good governance.

The session was an exploratory exercise in unravelling the progressive era over gilded age and was moderated by **Mr. T N Ninan, Chairman and Editorial Director, Business Standard.**

Watch the video here: <http://vimeo.com/album/1605017>