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संवाद

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P.G.D.A.V. College, University of Delhi

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* This newsletter is published monthly by the Department of Political Science. Responsibility for all published articles rests with the authors. The articles have been peer-reviewed by the department's faculty members.

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Editor-in-Chief Message

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to present the third edition of *संवाद*, the newsletter of the Political Science Department. This achievement reflects the dedication of the editorial team and the commitment of our students to academic growth and intellectual excellence.

संवाद, has become a dynamic platform that promotes positive & critical thinking, fosters dialogue, and highlights the academic efforts of our institution. Each edition represents the collaborative work of our students and faculty, offering insightful analyses, creative reflections, and discussions on contemporary political and social issues.

I congratulate the editorial team, political science department and contributors for their outstanding efforts and encourage readers to engage with the ideas shared in this edition.

Wishing you a meaningful and enriching reading experience!

– **Prof. Krishna Sharma**
Principal, P.G.D.A.V. College
University of Delhi

Editor Message

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to present the third edition of *संवाद*, featuring a diverse range of articles that examine key academic and societal topics.

This edition opens with an editorial on Indian Foreign Policy and the challenges posed by various ideologies. R. Abimathi contributes a reflective piece titled *Remembering Subramania Bharati: A Conversation with My Mother*. Muskan Ahmed explores the strategic importance of North-East States, while Khushi highlights the contributions of Dr. Manmohan Singh.

The Student Editorial Board has also added valuable pieces, including a data analysis of the Delhi State Assembly Election and a reflective article on the Indian Constitution. Additionally, Kajal Yadav discusses the impact of Ayushman Bharat, and Anshika Pandey reviews B.R. Ambedkar's work, *Who Were the Shudras?*.

We hope this edition will inform, inspire, and deepen your understanding of the important issues discussed.

– **Prof. Abhay Prasad Singh**
Teacher-In-Charge

Indian Foreign Policy and Emerging Challenges from –‘isms’

✍ Bhanu Kumar

Indian foreign policy has undeniably succeeded in achieving its objectives, a fact acknowledged by both politicians and the general public. Over time, it has undergone substantial transformations, evolving from the era of non-alignment following independence to its current stance of fostering active relationships with all nations. This evolution reflects India's growing engagement on the global stage.

At present, India's foreign policy is strategically focused on safeguarding national interests while promoting the country's overall development. On one hand, it seeks to expand its network of friendly nations, underpinned by the values encapsulated in *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, the idea that "the world is one family." On the other hand, India has positioned itself as the voice of the Global South, advocating for equitable policies within international institutions and global politics. However, India's increasing global prominence has also sparked resistance from various international organizations and countries. Consequently, new challenges to India's foreign policy have emerged, although similar challenges have existed in the past.

While India is actively pursuing

strategies to strengthen its global market presence, attract investments, and acquire advanced technologies, it is also addressing ideological threats originating from external sources. Ideological security, a critical component of national security, aims to protect a state's dominant ideology from both internal and external challenges, ensuring the stability and continuity of the state. This concept spans both state and societal dimensions, with states primarily focused on external ideological threats and societies addressing internal challenges, particularly those that target the ruling class or broader societal structures.

In his maiden speech at the United Nations on 27th September 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated, "The concept of the world, for every nation, is defined by its civilization and religious traditions. India, with its eternal wisdom, envisions the entire world as one family. And when I say this, I wish to clarify that every nation has its own philosophy. I am not referring to ideology here. A nation progresses inspired by its philosophy."¹

India's tradition of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world as one family) originates from the Vedic era, reflecting a

1. PM Narendra Modi Statement at the United Nations General Assembly on 27th September 2014. <https://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-the-pms-statement-at-the-united-nations-general-assembly-6660> (Accessed on 21st December 2024).

worldview where harmony with nature is prioritized over conflict. This philosophical perspective continues to shape India's development trajectory, underscoring the profound influence of its civilizational and philosophical heritage on its global outlook. As Prime Minister Modi has emphasized, India's timeless wisdom envisions the world as one family, driving its commitment to justice, dignity, opportunity, and prosperity for all. This belief in multilateralism forms the cornerstone of India's foreign policy.

However, on the global stage, certain forces persistently propagate anti-India narratives. These challenges require careful recognition and a strategic response from both the nation and the state, as discussed in the following paragraph.

Defining the Threat of 'isms':

In the era of globalization, ideological security has become a fundamental aspect of national security, addressing threats from foreign ideologies, non-mainstream beliefs, and subnational identities. Spanning both political and cultural spheres, ideological security integrates traditional and non-traditional security paradigms. Its primary objectives are to protect political legitimacy and preserve the independence and unique characteristics of national culture. As a key component of political security, ideological security connects political and cultural dimensions, reinforcing the state's foundational ideological framework.

Extremist ideologies, particularly orthodox fundamentalism in its various forms, pose a significant challenge by framing

conflicts as existential battles between opposing worldviews. India's strategy must transcend traditional approaches by focusing on countering the appeal of such ideologies through economic development, education, and inclusive governance. It is vital to recognize the nuanced differences among these movements and avoid treating them as monolithic entities.

This article explores the challenges posed by these "-isms" and proposes strategies to address them comprehensively. Specifically, the discussion will concentrate on three critical issues: *Wokeism*, *Indexism*, and *Deep-State Conspiracism*. Other related concerns will be examined in subsequent articles in the coming months.

Wokeism as a Global Challenge to Democratic Ideas:

The rise of "wokeism"—a movement focused on extreme political correctness and identity-based social justice—has sparked debates around the world about its impact on democratic values. While it is based on the desire for fairness and inclusion, its more extreme forms often suppress free speech, divide societies, and weaken institutional systems. For India, a country with strong democratic traditions and rich cultural diversity, the unchecked spread of woke ideas presents a significant challenge to both domestic and foreign policy.

Karan Thakur observes that 'while wokeism may have originated with noble intentions, its encroachment into Bharatiya society has begun to distort traditional values, thereby threatening the foundational principles of cultural identity and social

harmony.² He further emphasizes instead, we must seek homegrown solutions to our problems—solutions that respect our traditions, foster unity, and encourage progress without eroding the values that make Bharat strong. Only by staying rooted in our time-tested traditions can we continue to thrive as a nation, united in our diversity.³

Ram Madhav, in his critique of the BBC’s controversial 2023 documentary, highlighted how the woke theory prioritizes “minority opinion” as being of greater value than the “majority.”⁴ He argued that this framework has been weaponized by global institutions and media outlets to paint Indian democracy as a draconian regime. Such narratives, often rooted in woke ideology, have sought to delegitimize India’s democratic governance and tarnish the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a trend that dates back to 2002. Today, these wonkiest attempts to malign India’s democratic institutions have grown more sophisticated, leveraging global platforms and academic discourses to propagate their agenda.

Senior Journalist Amarjeet Verma further observed that “the emergence of wokeism as a prominent challenge of the

modern age calls for a closer examination of its impact on Indian society. It is not only about the adoption of Western ideas, but also how these ideas are used for other agendas that are not necessarily in line with the best interests of the country. There is a danger that if we are not vigilant, these woke-narratives could gradually erode the foundations of our cultural identity.”⁵

Mohan Bhagwat, the chief of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), also highlighted the dangers posed by wokeism and related ideologies, stating, “Deep State, wokeism, and cultural Marxism are declared enemies of all cultural traditions. In a multi-party democracy, petty selfish interests have become more important than mutual harmony, pride, and the integrity of the nation. In the competition among parties, these key aspects are considered secondary.”⁶ He further noted, “Attempts to create divisiveness on caste, language, and province lines have become bigger than national interest. Their modus operandi is to stand in support of one party and advance their destructive agenda in the name of ‘alternative politics.’” These observations underscore the subversive potential of wokeism and related ideologies to undermine India’s unity and cultural heritage.

2 <https://organiser.org/2024/10/27/261692/bharat/wokeism-an-unwanted-disruption-to-bharats-time-tested-traditions/> (Accessed on 21st December 2024).

3 <https://organiser.org/2024/10/27/261692/bharat/wokeism-an-unwanted-disruption-to-bharats-time-tested-traditions/> (Accessed on 21st December 2024).

4 <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/bbc-documentary-on-pm-modi-a-hit-job-that-is-a-damp-squib-8408293/> (Accessed on 24th December 2024).

5 <https://chintan.indiafoundation.in/articles/awakening-india-navigating-woke-narratives-and-culture-wars-in-the-pursuit-of-narrative-sovereignty/> (Accessed on 24th December 2024).

6 <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/rss-chief-flags-threats-from-deep-state-wokeism-cultural-marxist/20241012.htm> (Accessed on 24th December 2024).

In the global sphere, wokeism is reshaping diplomatic narratives, particularly in Western democracies. It has permeated policy dialogues, academic institutions, and international organizations, influencing how countries engage with issues such as human rights, gender equity, and climate change. India's foreign policy, traditionally focused on strategic autonomy and the primacy of sovereign decision-making, faces challenges in countering these ideologies. Western critiques of India, framed through the lens of wokeism, often overlook the country's socio-cultural complexities and risk undermining meaningful collaboration in trade, technology, and geopolitics.

To address these challenges, India must develop robust institutional frameworks. Firstly, foreign policy institutions should enhance their capabilities to navigate the ideological dimensions of wokeism. This includes building a nuanced understanding of the cultural and historical contexts that shape global discourses and ensuring that India's voice remains assertive in multilateral forums. Secondly, educational reforms are needed to foster critical thinking among the youth, promoting a balanced understanding of justice and equity without succumbing to ideological extremes. Finally, media and civil society must be engaged to uphold democratic dialogue, countering divisive narratives and fostering inclusivity in a pragmatic manner.

India's ability to safeguard its democratic ideals while navigating the pressures of

wokeism will determine its resilience as a global power. The strategic incorporation of these measures into foreign policy will not only protect India's interests but also reinforce its leadership role in shaping a multipolar world order.

Indexism:

One of the foremost challenges to India's foreign policy lies in managing its global reputation, as reflected in various international indices. These indices, which assess aspects such as political stability, democratic governance, human rights, and economic performance, often project narratives that challenge the integrity of India's democratic institutions and ideals. As the world's largest democracy, India finds itself navigating the paradox of having its robust democratic systems scrutinized through frameworks that frequently fail to account for the complexities of its diverse political, social, and cultural milieu.

In this context, international organizations and specific interest groups have increasingly targeted India's democratic values and institutions under various pretexts. A notable instance occurred in September 2023, when Daniel Block, a senior editor at *Foreign Affairs*, questioned S. Jaishankar, India's Minister of External Affairs, about concerns surrounding the country's global image. Block asked: "Are you concerned that the perceived democratic backsliding in India is going to undermine its efforts to emerge as a rising global power?"⁷ In a candid response,

7 A Conversation With External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar of India on 27th September 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQhv65Xi5qo> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

Jaishankar addressed the biases inherent in such narratives, stating, “The people who are writing these reports have strong biases, and they often distort facts. Many of these reports are riddled with inaccuracies. So, I put it to you: there is a political agenda behind them.” This exchange underscores the ongoing challenge India faces in countering skewed global perceptions and reaffirming the resilience of its democratic framework.

For instance, the *Freedom in the World* report, published annually by Freedom House, has consistently ranked India as “partly free.” In its 2024 report, India scored 66 out of 100, placing it in the “partly free”⁸ category due to concerns over freedom of expression, media freedoms, and the treatment of religious minorities. This classification has been a point of contention, as India’s vibrant democracy and robust electoral process stand in contrast to the criticisms levied by the report, which often emphasizes incidents of political unrest and regional tensions, particularly concerning Kashmir and religious minorities. Despite India holding regular and largely peaceful elections, its ranking in this index fuels global criticisms of its democratic health.

Similarly, the *Democracy Index*, published by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), has consistently ranked India as a “flawed democracy.” In the 2023 edition of the index, India was placed 46th out of 167 countries with a score of 6.99 out of 10, categorizing it under “flawed democracies.” The index takes into account factors such as

electoral process, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation, and political culture. Although India’s democratic framework is robust, issues such as religious and ethnic polarization, regional political instability, and increasing incidents of political violence are often cited, contributing to its lower ranking compared to other democracies.

India also faces significant challenges in the *Corruption Perceptions Index* (CPI), compiled by Transparency International. In its 2023 report, India was ranked 85th out of 180 countries, with a score of 41 out of 100, indicating a high perception of corruption in its public sector. Despite substantial efforts to combat corruption, such as the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the enactment of anti-corruption laws, India’s performance in this index highlights global concerns regarding inefficiencies and corruption within government institutions, particularly at the local level. The perception of widespread corruption continues to undermine India’s attempts to project itself as a transparent and efficient economy on the global stage.

Another crucial index, the *World Press Freedom Index*, published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), also casts a shadow over India’s democratic credentials. In the 2023 ranking, India was placed 161st out of 180 countries, a position which reflects ongoing concerns over the suppression of media freedom, violence against journalists, and increasing governmental interference in the media landscape. The index points

8 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-world/2024> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

to incidents where journalists have been targeted for reporting on sensitive issues, particularly in Kashmir and other regions facing unrest. These factors contribute to India's poor ranking and the perception that press freedoms are under threat.

Moreover, in the *Human Freedom Index*, published by the Cato Institute, India ranks 111th globally in its 2021 edition, with concerns over civil liberties, freedom of expression, and personal autonomy. The *World Justice Project Rule of Law Index*, which measures the rule of law in various countries, ranked India 69th out of 139 nations in its 2022 report, reflecting concerns over the protection of fundamental rights, the independence of the judiciary, and the effectiveness of law enforcement.

The cumulative effect of these indices is the portrayal of India as a country struggling with significant democratic challenges, despite its achievements in economic growth, technological advancement, and poverty reduction. These rankings influence how India is perceived globally, often overshadowing its accomplishments. To address this, India must engage more actively in global dialogues, emphasizing the complexity of its political structure and the ongoing efforts to strengthen its democratic processes. By tackling the issues raised by these indices, India can enhance its international reputation and better navigate the challenges posed by global scrutiny, while simultaneously safeguarding the core values of its democracy.

Deep-State Conspiracism:

The concept of “deep-state conspiracism,” which refers to the belief that a covert network of elites operates independently of elected governments, poses a significant challenge to India's foreign policy. Such conspiracies often thrive on misinformation and distrust, undermining the credibility of state institutions and their strategic decisions.

Instances such as the remarks by Hungarian-born American businessman George Soros fuel these narratives. The *Sunday Guardian* wrote, “Hungarian-born American businessman George Soros has been pretty vocal about his ‘mission’ or ‘dream’ for India—dislodge Prime Minister Narendra Modi and ‘make democracy flourish again’ in the country.”⁹ This, to some analysts, appears to be nothing but an open threat to meddle with the electoral process in the world's largest democracy. As things stand today, Soros networks' attempts to run down Indian institutions and democracy are testing the maturity of the masses.”¹⁰

In February 2023, Soros again stirred controversy by stating that the turmoil surrounding the Adani Group crisis could open the “door to a democratic revival” in India. In response, BJP leader and Union Minister Smriti Irani accused Soros of harbouring “ill-intentions to intervene in the democratic process of India” and seeking a government “pliable to his need.” Warning against attempts to weaken Indian democracy, Irani said, “The man who broke

9 Special Correspondent, George Soros remote controls anti-India campaign, The Sunday Guardian, 3rd September 2023. <https://sundayguardianlive.com/news/george-soros-remote-controls-anti-india-campaign> (Accessed on 29th December 2024).

10 Ibid.

a bank in England, an economic offender, has announced his ill-intention to intervene in the democratic process of India.”¹¹

Misinformation and disinformation, ranked as the most severe global risk over the next two years and among the top five over the next decade¹², play a pivotal role in fuelling deep-state conspiracism. This disinformation not only undermines public trust but also provides adversaries with tools to exploit domestic divisions, disrupting India’s diplomatic initiatives and tarnishing its global image. Moreover, societal polarization, ranked third in short-term risks and ninth in long-term risks, compounds the challenges by eroding social cohesion. Similarly, cyber insecurity, which ranks fourth in the short term and eighth in the long term, facilitates the spread of conspiracy theories through digital platforms, further destabilizing India’s foreign policy landscape.

To counter these risks, India must enhance media literacy, regulate online platforms to curb misinformation, and foster trust in democratic institutions. Transparent communication by political leadership is equally crucial. In sum, deep-

state conspiracism is not merely a domestic issue; it has far-reaching implications for India’s foreign policy, undermining trust, stability, and strategic coherence. A concerted effort is necessary to safeguard India’s diplomatic and democratic resilience.

Conclusion

India’s foreign policy, guided by the principles of strategic autonomy and the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, has shown remarkable resilience and adaptability in an ever-changing global environment. However, new ideological challenges such as wokeism, Indexism, and deep-state conspiracism threaten to undermine its growing global influence. Effectively addressing these challenges requires comprehensive efforts, including institutional reforms, public awareness initiatives, and assertive diplomatic strategies. By protecting its democratic principles, promoting regional collaboration, and countering divisive ideologies, India can strengthen its global position and contribute to building a just, inclusive, and multipolar world rooted in its cultural and civilizational heritage.

11 <https://indianexpress.com/article/political-pulse/george-soros-smriti-irani-adani-hindenburg-row-8450912/> (Accessed on 29th December 2024).

12 Global Risks Report 2024, <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/01/global-risks-report-2024/> . (Accessed on 29th December 2024).

बांग्लादेश : धर्मनिरपेक्षता, इस्लाम और कट्टरपंथ

✍ रविंद्र कुमार मीना

बांग्लादेश में हालिया घटनाएँ, जैसे चिटगांव में इस्कॉन मंदिर पर किए गए संगठित हमले और असम के श्रीभूमि जिले में बॉर्डर गार्ड बांग्लादेश (BGB) द्वारा भारतीय क्षेत्र में घुसपैठ,¹ भारत के लिए गंभीर चिंता का कारण बन गई हैं। भारत द्वारा व्यक्त किए गए आधिकारिक असंतोष के बावजूद, इन घटनाओं के प्रति अब तक की प्रतिक्रियाएँ बांग्लादेश में उत्पन्न परिस्थितियों के दीर्घकालिक सुरक्षा प्रभावों को पूरी तरह से समझने में विफल रही हैं। 5 अगस्त 2024 की घटना और उसके पश्चात उत्पन्न घटनाक्रमों पर गहन विश्लेषण की आवश्यकता है, क्योंकि ये घटनाएँ भारत को अपने पड़ोसी क्षेत्र की सूचना क्षमता को सुदृढ़ करने की आवश्यकता का अहसास कराती हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त, सीमा विवादों और हिंदू मंदिरों के पुनर्निर्माण में BGB की दखलअंदाजी जैसे बढ़ते तनाव, क्षेत्रीय सुरक्षा के लिए एक नए खतरे को जन्म देते हैं, जिससे कूटनीतिक संवाद और सीमा प्रबंधन में सतर्कता बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता उत्पन्न होती है।

बांग्लादेश इस स्थिति तक कैसे पहुँचा और इसका भारत पर क्या प्रभाव पड़ेगा, यह वर्तमान में एक महत्वपूर्ण विमर्श का विषय बन चुका है। इस पत्रिका के आगामी अंकों में हम बांग्लादेश के विषय को व्यापक रूप से प्रस्तुत करने का प्रयास करेंगे। हालांकि, बांग्लादेश की वर्तमान स्थिति को समग्र रूप से समझने के लिए उसके इतिहास, निर्माण, राष्ट्रीय यात्रा, उभरती हुई अर्थव्यवस्था के रूप में विकास और बढ़ते इस्लामिक कट्टरपंथ का विस्तृत विश्लेषण आवश्यक है।

इस अंक में हम बांग्लादेश में धर्मनिरपेक्षता, इस्लाम और कट्टरपंथ पर विचार करेंगे, और अगले अंक में इस विमर्श को आगे बढ़ाएंगे।

बांग्लादेश : धर्मनिरपेक्ष राज्य से इस्लामिक राज्य

बांग्लादेश ने अपनी राजनीतिक यात्रा का प्रारम्भ 1971 में एक धर्मनिरपेक्ष राज्य के रूप में शुरू किया था। लेकिन अन्य इस्लामिक राज्यों के तरह बांग्लादेश भी 1988 में एक इस्लामिक राज्य बन गया, और 1990 आते-आते इस्लामिक उग्रवाद का 'ज्वलंत उदाहरण'² बन गया। लेकिन एक महत्वपूर्ण बात यह रही है कि बांग्लादेश में धर्मनिरपेक्षता और इस्लाम धर्म स्वीकार करने के बाद भी बांग्ला संस्कृति की पहचान जीवित रही। हालाँकि समय के साथ कट्टरपंथ का बढ़ना तय था। इसीलिए 2006 के मध्य ही 2008, अली रियाज ने इसे 'एक कॉम्पेक्स वेब'³ और हिरानमय कारलेकर ने इसे 'अगला अफगानिस्तान'⁴ की संज्ञा दे दिया था। इस अवधि में मैं बांग्लादेश इस्लामिक उग्रवाद की तरफ उन्मुख करने में स्थानीय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय कारकों का प्रमुख योगदान रहा है।

कट्टरपंथ का उदय :

स्थानीय कारकों में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण योगदान **जमात-ए-इस्लामी** का रहा है। जिसने फरवरी 1991 में लोकतंत्र की पुनः बहाली के बाद बांग्लादेश नेशनल पार्टी एवं 1993 में आवामी लीग के साथ राजनीतिक गठजोड़ करके देश के राजनीतिक परिदृश्य में इस्लामिक माहौल को जागृत करने

1 <https://swarajyamag.com/states/outrageous-act-bangladeshs-border-guards-cross-over-into-india-try-to-stop-construction-of-mandir> (Accessed on 2nd January 2025).

2 Veena Kukreja, M. P. Singh, Unpublished ICSSR Research Project on "Democratization of the State in South Asia", New Delhi, p.178.

3 Ali Riaz, *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: A Complex Web*, New York, Routledge, 2008, p.2.

4 Hiranmay Karlekar, *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan*, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 2006, p.46.

में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभायी। लेकिन इस दौर में समाज में इस्लामीकरण की प्रक्रिया को आगे बढ़ाने में सबसे अग्रणी भूमिका जमात-ए-इस्लामी का विद्यार्थी संगठन, **इस्लामी छात्रा शिबिर**⁵ की रही है। इस संगठन का एक प्रमुख उद्देश्य बांग्लादेश में अफगानिस्तान-तालिबान प्रकार की इस्लामिक शासन प्रणाली स्थापित करना है।⁶ साथ ही यह संगठन आधुनिकीकरण, धर्मनिरपेक्षता और लोकतंत्र की ताकतों का विरोध करता है।⁷ जिसने देश के शिक्षण संस्थाओं में इस्लामिक मूल्यों के प्रोत्साहन के साथ-साथ देश के प्रमुख इस्लामिक उग्रवादी संगठनों जैसे- हरकत-उल-जिहाद अल-इस्लामी और जगरता मुस्लिम जनता बांग्लादेश आदि इस्लामिक उग्रवादी संगठनों को हथियार एवं अन्य सुविधाएँ उपलब्ध करवाकर देश में इस्लामिक उग्रवाद को बढ़ावा दिया।⁸

अन्य घरेलू कारकों में कौमी मदरसों का बढ़ता इस्लामीकरण प्रमुख कारक रहा है। हालांकि कौमी मदरसों में इस्लामीकरण की मुहिम की शुरुआत 80 के दशक में कुवैत तथा सऊदी अरब के इस्लामिक संगठनों जैसे **'रेस्टोरेशन ऑफ इस्लामिक हेरिटेज सोशायटी'** तथा **'राबिता-अल-अलाम-अल-इस्लामी'** के द्वारा आर्थिक मदद पहुंचाने के बाद हो चुकी थी, लेकिन कौमी मदरसों का जिहादीकरण करने की प्रक्रिया को आगे बढ़ाने में असादुल्लाह गालिब की सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रही है। जिसने 1994 में अहले हदीथ आंदोलन बांग्लादेश की स्थापना करके इसको और उग्र बनाया। गालिब ने सऊदी सरकार द्वारा प्रायोजित गैर-सरकारी इस्लामिक संगठन 'अल-हरमेन फाउंडेशन' और 'अल-जमीयत-अल-अहया-अशुना' (Al-Jamiyat-ul-Ahya-assunnah) आदि की मदद से देश में कौमी मदरसों तथा मस्जिदों का निर्माण किया, जिसने इस्लामीकरण की पृष्ठभूमि को आधार देने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभायी।⁹

इसके अलावा देश में विशेष संस्कृति जैसे संस्कृति जैसे **'वज महफिल'**¹⁰ और इस्लामिक प्रेरणा गीत 'हमद', 'नथ' और 'फतवा' आदि के द्वारा भी देश में उग्र इस्लामिक विचारधारा को आगे बढ़ाने में सहायक हुआ। इसी प्रक्रिया में सितम्बर 1993 में सहाब सैनिक परिषद नामक इस्लामिक संगठन के द्वारा तसलीमा नसरीन के खिलाफ जारी किया गया 'फतवा' भी विशेष संस्कृति के ज्वलंत उदाहरण के रूप में देखा जा सकता है। जमात-ए-इस्लामी का विद्यार्थी संगठन इस्लामी छात्र शिबिर का सांस्कृतिक धड़ा सपानदान शिल्पी गोस्ठी व रोनानगान शिल्प गोष्ठी आदि के द्वारा भी 'तालिबान एक्शन' और 'कमांडर इन चीफ' इत्यादि एलबम के जरिए मुल्ला उमर और ओसामा बिन लादेन की प्रशंसा के साथ, मुस्लिम नायकों के रूप में दर्शाया जा रहा है। जो देश में बढ़ती इस्लामिक संस्कृति के प्रभाव को साफ-साफ परिलक्षित करते हैं।¹¹

कड़रपंथ के कारण हिंसा के दौर का प्रारंभ :

विदेशी कारकों में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका अफगान युद्ध (1979-92) की रही है। जिसके कारण 30 अप्रैल 1992 में अफगान युद्ध में विजयी होकर आए मुजाहिद्दीनों ने हरकत-उल-जिहाद-अल-इस्लामी नामक संगठन की स्थापना करके, बांग्लादेश में इस्लामिक उग्रवाद का मार्ग प्रशस्त किया। कालान्तर में इसी संगठन ने 1998 में ओसामा बिन लादेन द्वारा घोषित अमेरिका के खिलाफ फतवा का आधिकारिक तौर पर समर्थन किया था। इस तरह देश में 90 के दशक के बाद उपजा इस्लामिक उग्रवाद का परिदृश्य घरेलू तथा विदेशी कारकों का मिला जुला परिणाम है जिसके तहत बांग्लादेश में 2005 के बाद आत्मघाती हमले, गैर मुस्लिम समुदाय के खिलाफ हिंसा, सामाजिक संस्थाओं का इस्लामीकरण के रूप में देखा जा सकता है। साथ ही, कौमी मदरसों का जिहादीकरण भी इसी का परिणाम है।

5 <https://www.satp.org/terrorist-profile/bangladesh/islami-chhatra-shibir-ics> (Accessed on 2nd January 2025).

7 Ibid.

8 Zayadul Ashan & Pavitra Banavar, who are the militants?" in Ali Riaz & C Christine Fair (Eds.) *Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh*, New York, Routledge, 2011, p.85.

9 Mumta Ahmad, 'Islam, State and Society in Bangladesh, in John L. Esposito, John O. Voll, Osman Baker, (Eds.) *Asian Islam in the 21st Century*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.70

10 'वज महफिल' सार्वजनिक भाषण के दौरान किसी विषय पर इस्लामिक व्याख्या का नाम है।

11 Ali Riaz & Md. Abu Naser, 'Islamist Politics and popular culture, in Ali Riaz & C Christine Fair (Eds.) *Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh*, New York, Routledge, 2011, p.146.

अतः यह रोचक है कि बांग्लादेश एक सेक्यूलर देश से कैसे इस्लामिक उग्रवाद की तरफ अग्रसर हो गया। बांग्लादेश का निर्माण 1971 में पाकिस्तान से अलग होने के बाद हुआ था। जिसमें सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका आवामी लीग के संस्थापक शेख मुजीबुर्रहमान ने निभायी थी। मुजीब ने बांग्ला संस्कृति, भाषा, पश्चिमी पाकिस्तान द्वारा आर्थिक शोषण, पाकिस्तान सेना व नौकरशाही में नाम मात्र के प्रतिनिधित्व के आधार पर लोगों को संगठित किया था। लेकिन स्वतंत्रता के बाद धर्मनिरपेक्षता का दायरा केवल ढाका के विद्यार्थी समूह, और सम्भ्रात तक सीमित होने के कारण यह विचारधारा देश के ग्रामीण इलाकों में अपना प्रभाव जमाने में असफल रही है। जिसका प्रमुख कारण बांग्लादेश में इस्लाम का जटिल स्वरूप रहा है जो देश की स्थानीय भूमि, परम्परा और संस्कृति मूल्य के अनुरूप विकसित हुआ है।¹² स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के बाद मुजीबुर्रहमान ने अपने करिश्माई व्यक्तित्व के कारण बांग्लादेश में लोकतंत्र, सामाजवाद, राष्ट्रवाद व धर्मनिरपेक्षता को आधार बनाकर शासन की नींव डाली।¹³ जिसको मुजीबबाद विचारधारा का नाम दिया। लेकिन जल्द ही जनाकांक्षाओं एवं आर्थिक चुनौतियों से निबटने में असफल रहने के कारण मुजीब ने अपने शासन का रुख सेक्यूलर से हटाकर इस्लाम की तरफ करना शुरू कर दिया, जिसके कारण तहत 1971-1973 की अवधि में मंदरसों का वार्षिक बजट 2.5 से 7.2 लाख टका कर दिया। इसके साथ ही 1975 में 'इस्लामिक एकेडमी' की स्थापना फरवरी 1974 में लाहौर इस्लामिक शिखर सम्मेलन तथा 1975 में 'इस्लामिक विकास बैंक' का संस्थापक सदस्य आदि कारणों से मुजीबुर्रहमान ने देश की पहचान धर्मनिरपेक्षता एवं बांग्ला से हटाकर इस्लाम की तरफ से मोड़ दी।¹⁴

अस्थिर राज्य :

वही दूसरी तरफ देश की आन्तरिक राजनीतिक चुनौतियों से निबटने के लिए बनाया गया व्यक्तिगत सैन्य

दस्ता जातियां रक्खी बाहिनी तथा विभिन्न संविधान संशोधन अधिनियमों आदि के चलते न केवल लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था के स्थान पर अधिनायकवादी शासन का रूप सामने आया, इससे देश की सेना के भीतर भी अविश्वास और संशय की भावना का विकास हुआ।¹⁵ 15 अगस्त 1975 को देश के संस्थापक शेख मुजीबुर्रहमान की सेना द्वारा हत्या करके शासन का तख्ता पलट दिया गया और पूरे 84 दिनों की अस्थिरता के बाद जिया-उर-रहमान ने शासन की बागडोर सम्भालकर देश में सैनिक शासन की नींव डाल दी। जिया-उर-रहमान के शासनकाल की महत्वपूर्ण बात यह रही की इसने देश की बांग्ला संस्कृति के स्थान पर इस्लाम धर्म को स्थापित करना शुरू कर दिया। जिसमें प्रमुख रूप से संविधान में उल्लेखित आठवे अनुच्छेद के तहत 'धर्मनिरपेक्षता' को हटाकर 'अल्लाह व उसकी शक्ति की धारणा' का प्रस्तावना में शामिल करना आदि रहे। इसी प्रक्रिया में 1976 एवं 1979 के बीच जिया उर रहमान ने विभिन्न कार्यपालिका आदेशों के जरिए जमात-ए-इस्लामी की राजनीतिक प्रक्रिया में भाग लेने की अनुमति तथा विभिन्न मुस्लिम देशों के साथ सम्बन्धों को मजबूत बनाने की नीति की पहल की।

इसी क्रम में देश के अगले शासक जनरल हुसैन मोहम्मद इरशाद (1981-90) ने भी अपने पूर्ववर्ती शासक की मुहिम को आगे बढ़ाते हुए देश को 1988 में इस्लामिक राष्ट्र के रूप में घोषित करके देश की राजनीति में इस्लाम के प्रभाव को सुनिश्चित कर दिया। इरशाद ने देश के सामाजिक परिदृश्य में इस्लामिक माहौल को बढ़ाने के लिए शैक्षिक पाठ्यक्रम में अरबी भाषा के समर्थन के साथ-साथ कौमी मंदरसों, मस्जिदों एवं इस्लामिक संगठनों को प्रोत्साहन देकर देश में इस्लामिक कट्टरवाद को बढ़ाने में अग्रणी भूमिका अदा की। लेकिन इसी दौरान एक अच्छी बात यह रही कि सभी विपक्षी दलों ने एक आवाज में लोकतंत्र की स्थापना के लिए जनरल मोहम्मद इरशाद के शासन के खिलाफ आवाज उठायी। जिसके

12 Ali Riaz, 'Traditional Institution as Tools of Political Islam in Bangladesh, Journal of Asian and African Studies, Vol.40, No.3, 2005, p.176.

13 Maidul islam. *Limit of Islamism: Jamaat-e-Islami in Contemporary India Bangladesh*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p.15.

14 Ali Riaz, 'Traditional Institution as Tools of Political Islam in Bangladesh, Journal of Asian and African Studies, Vol.40, No.3, 2005, p.173.

15 Veena Kukreja, *Civil Military Relation in South Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh and India*, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1991, p.134.

फलस्वरूप देश में 1991 के दौरान लोकतंत्र की वापसी का मार्ग प्रशस्त हुआ।

1991 में लोकतंत्र और इस्लामिक उग्रवाद की वापसी:

बांग्लादेश में 1991 में लोकतंत्रीकरण का मार्ग प्रशस्त होने के बाद देश में इस्लामिक उग्रवाद एक नए स्वरूप में उभरने लगा। इसके लिए तात्कालिक राजनीतिक परिवेश प्रमुख कारक रहा है। जिसमें मुख्य रूप से 1991 में गुलाम आजम का जमात-ए-इस्लामी का प्रमुख बनना, बांग्लादेश नेशनल पार्टी का सरकार बनाना, आदि कारकों ने देश में इस्लामिक उग्रवाद की भावना को आगे बढ़ाने में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दिया है।¹⁶ लेकिन बांग्लादेश में लोकतंत्र की बहाली के बाद देश में इस्लामिक मूल्य बढ़ाने एवं धर्मनिरपेक्षता को आहत करने में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका आवामी लीग ने निभायी। जहाँ 1994 में आवामी लीग ने जमात-ए-इस्लामी के साथ राजनीतिक गठजोड़ करके जमात-ए-इस्लामी के राजनीतिक सहभागिता को हरी झंडी दे दी, वहीं शेख हसीना के द्वारा सार्वजनिक सभाओं में इस्लामिक पहनावा तथा व्यक्तिगत स्तर धार्मिकों मूल्यों जैसे- हजयात्रा और 'तस्बीह' (Prayer beads in her hand) आदि के माध्यम से देश की राजनीति में इस्लामिक मूल्यों को बढ़ावा देना शुरू कर दिया।¹⁷ अली रियाज ने इस संदर्भ में बांग्लादेश की 90 के दशक की राजनीतिक परिदृश्य को उजागर करते

हुए उल्लेख किया है कि इस दौरान देश के दोनों राष्ट्रीय दलों आवामी लीग तथा बांग्लादेश नेशनल पार्टी ने एक दूसरे के शासनकाल में विरोध प्रदर्शन, हड़ताल और हिंसा के द्वारा लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रिया में अवरोध उत्पन्न करके देश में राजनीतिक गतिरोध को बनाए रखा। लेकिन देश के इतिहास में इस्लामिक उग्रवाद लिए स्वर्णिम काल खालिदा जिया के नेतृत्व में बांग्लादेश नेशनल पार्टी के शासन काल (2001 से 2006) में आया। जिसमें बी.एन.पी. ने जमात-ए-इस्लामी एवं इस्लामिक ओगा जोते (यूनाइटेड इस्लामिक फ्रंट) के साथ मिलकर सम्पूर्ण देश में इस्लामिक: उग्रवाद के विकास में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दिया। अली रियाज के अनुसार खालिय जिया सरकार के शासनकाल में प्रकट हुए जमात-ए-इस्लामी एवं इस्लामिक उग्रवादी संगठनों के परिदृश्य ने देश में एक 'कॉम्पलेक्स बेब' अर्थात् 'जरिस जाल' को जन्म दिया है जो विशेष घरेलू कारकों तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय परिदृश्य का परिणाम है। हिरातमय कारलेकर के अनुसार 90 के दशक में बांग्लादेश में इस्लामिक कट्टरवादियों ने अपना प्रभाव दो तरीके से बढ़ाया है, प्रथम शासन प्रक्रिया में भाग लेकर राजनीति में इस्लामिक मूल्यों का समावेश करना। तथा समाज में कौमी मदरसों में जिहादीकरण की प्रक्रिया को आगे बढ़ाकर कट्टरवाद का प्रभाव बढ़ाना।¹⁸

आगामी अंक में चर्चा को आगे बढ़ाया जाएगा।

16 Partha S. Ghosh, 'Bangladesh at the Crossroad: Religion and Politics', *Asian Survey*, Vol.33, No.7, 1993, pp.697-710.

17 Dina Mahnaz Siddiqui, 'Political Culture in Contemporary Bangladesh: Histories ruptures and contradictions in Ali Riaz & Christine Fair (Eds.) *Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh*, New York, Routledge, 2011, p.20.

18 Hiranmay Karlekar, *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan*, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 2006, p.66.

Remembering Subramania Bharati: A Conversation with My Mother¹

✍ R. Abimathi

On 11 December, 2024, marking the 143rd birth anniversary of national poet and freedom fighter Subramania Bharati; Prime Minister Narendra Modi released 12 volumes of complete works of Subramania Bharati, titled '*Kaala Varisaiyil Bharathiyar Padaippugal*,' compiled through six decades of tireless work by Shri Seeni Vishwanathan. In his speech, the Prime Minister added, "Subramania Bharati's literature is a treasure for the Tamil language, one of the oldest languages in the world. When we spread his literature, we are also serving the Tamil language. And in doing so, we are preserving and promoting our nation's ancient heritage."² However, even after being a revolutionary, who spoke not just for Tamil Nadu, but for all of India, Subramania Bharati remains largely unknown to many.

Just like how Bharati first came alive in my memory through my mother's voice; this article too stems from a long conversation with her, in which she shared her profound understanding of Bharati's works and his impact, as someone who has studied and taught

about Bharati throughout her life. While I have transformed these conversations into written words, the perspective, emotions and insights are entirely hers, apart from the section in which I intend to share my own reflections. Through her lens, this article explores Bharati's multifaceted legacy, his fierce nationalism, revolutionary feminism, vision for social equality, deep connection with nature, and his profound spirituality. Through this exploration of his life and works, I invite you to view Bharati as I have come to know him – a visionary who wrote not just for his time, but for ours, and for generations to come. The following themes in this article shall be read in the voice of my mother.

"Bharathiyar; Antha Bharati Yaar?" – Bharati, Who Was He?

On the 11th day of December, 1882, a poet was born in Ettayapuram, Tamil Nadu. 'Subramania' was the name given to him by his parents - Chinnaamy Iyer and Lakshmi Ammal. 'Bharati,' a name for the Goddess of Knowledge was bestowed upon him at the age of 11 for his natural poetic talent. Later on, this title became his commonly

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2 https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/pm-releases-compendium-of-complete-works-of-great-tamil-poet-subramania-bharati/ (Accessed on 6th January 2025).

used name. However, he is also popularly known as *Bharathiyar*, *Maha Kavi* (great poet), *Desiya Kavi* (national poet), and *Shakti Dasan* (devotee of Shakti), among other names.

Bharathiyar was a polyglot who knew several languages including Tamil, Hindustani, Telugu, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Bengali, and even French. He was not just a poet, but also a great writer, orator, singer, editor, patriot, and a strong advocate for women's rights and freedom. His words in the form of poems, speeches, and songs left a profound impact in the minds and hearts of the people. His image is always etched in our minds with his *Mundas* (turban), his thick Mustache, the tilak on his forehead, and his black coat - all of which form the figure that we recognize as Bharati. Today, we can say that there is no one in Tamil Nadu, who does not cherish Bharati's poems as an essential source of inspiration.

On nationalism

One cannot view Bharati separately from his devotion towards our nation. His thoughts were revolutionary, and his words powerful. He was a great orator who inspired people with his speeches, and his poetry was filled with bold, visionary ideas. Bharati's sincere passion for independence, his revolutionary ideas on social justice, and his unwavering belief in the power of the people, were all voiced in his powerful writings, which ignited hope and rejuvenation among the masses.

“Senthamizh nadenum podhinile, Inba then vandhu payudhu kaadhinile. Enga thanthaiyar nadenum pechinile,

Oru shakthi perugudhu moochinile.”

Through this poem, Bharati expresses that thinking about his heritage fills him with strength and pride. He compares the thought of his homeland, Tamil Nadu to “sweet honey flowing into his ears.” Generally, we all call our land “*Thainadu*” (Motherland). However, in this song, Bharati refers to it as “*Enga Thanthaiyar Naadu*” (Our Fatherland), giving it a distinctive significance.

“Endru thaniyum indha sudhandhira thaagam, endru madiyum engal adimayin mogam.”

By asking, “When will this thirst for freedom be quenched? When will the curse for our slavery end?” Bharati expressed his longing for freedom from oppression, and raised his voice against the tyranny of the British rule.

“Bharata Bhoomi pazham perum Bhoomi, neer adhan puthalvar in ninaivagartrathe.”

“Bharata Bhoomi, the vast and ancient land; remember you are its children.” Through his unwavering patriotism, he encouraged everyone to recognize the glory of our nation and instilled a sense of responsibility in us – as children of this ancient land, to honour and preserve its legacy.

“Achham illai, achham illai, achham enbathillaiye, Ucchi meethu vanidinthu veezhuhindra pothilum, Achham illai, achham illai, achham enbathillaiye.”

This verse translates to “There is no fear, there is no fear, there is absolutely no fear;

Even if the sky falls upon our heads, there is no fear, there is no fear, there is absolutely no fear.” Through these powerful words, he inspired people to stand up against colonial rule fearlessly, even in the face of the most difficult circumstances. His rallying cry, “*Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram,*” often resounded when he encountered British officers. Bharati was among the pioneers to proclaim this slogan for the cause of India’s independence.

“Bharata samudhayam vazhgave; Jaye jaye Bharata samudhayam vazhgave!”

Among his notable compositions, are these inspiring lines in which he glorifies and celebrates the spirit of India.

“Aaduvome pallu paduvome, Aananda sudanthiram adainthu vittomendru”

“Let us dance and sing folk songs, for we have achieved blissful freedom.” Even before achieving independence, Bharati had immense faith in its inevitability. Sadly, he did not live to see this day, but by singing this verse, he envisioned and celebrated freedom as though it was already achieved.

Further, Bharati had manifested Bal Gangadhar Tilak, as his political Guru. Among the many individuals across Tamil Nadu and India, who played significant roles in the freedom struggle, some of them shared a deep friendship and camaraderie with Bharati. Specifically, Subramania Siva, Aurobindo, and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai were key figures who worked closely with him. Bharati eventually aligned with Gandhiji’s ideologies, recognizing their shared goal of securing freedom for the nation.

As a Patriot, who used his words as weapon, he intended to ignite a spark in people’s hearts through his words. His publications and writings went beyond poetry to embrace the national cause. In those days, he contributed significantly to the press, whether it was weekly or monthly editions. He wrote extensively for several magazines and newspapers; to name a few - *India, Bala Bharata, Swadesamitran, Gnana Bhanu and Gnana Ratham*. He was also the first to introduce the use of caricatures to convey his message in Tamil newspapers, and strongly opposed the use of English language in paper headers. His special influence gave these journals a unique identity and brought attention to national issues with a voice that was distinct and clear.

Viewing his writings as a significant threat to the colonial power, the British government had continuously attempted to suppress his voice by imposing strict censorship and regulations on his writings. However, his determination in using his pen as a weapon against the British Raj remained unshaken, for which he even put himself in exile in Pondicherry.

In the face of these challenges, Bharati’s contributions and his leadership in the press made him a prominent figure in the freedom struggle. However, his writings were not just limited to patriotic themes; they also addressed women’s liberation, national unity, social equality, and spirituality. Through his works, he carried a vision of a united and free India, where all its citizens could live with dignity and equality.

For women empowerment

During his lifetime, the fight for national independence was one thing, and freedom of women was another. Under British rule, women were confined to their homes, and their freedom was limited. The idea of freedom was terrifying for them, which is why Bharati used his poetry to instil a sense of independence and empowerment within them, even in songs for ‘*Kummi dance*’ (folk dance in circles with clapping of hands), in order to reach out to common women.

Through the verses,

*“Ettaiyum pengal thoduvathu
theemaiyendru enni irundhavar maindhu
vittaar”*

(Those who thought that it was evil for women to handle everything on their own, have perished) and

*“Aanum pennum nigarenak kolvathal;
Arivilongi, iv vaiyam thazhaikkumaam”*
(Only by considering women and men as equals, knowledge and intellect will flourish in this world); Bharati declares the death of restrictive thinking and directly links gender equality with societal progress. Through his idea of “*Pudumai Penn*” or Modern Woman, who is fearless, empowered, and capable of standing tall everywhere she goes; he urged women to break free from their constraint, and argued that regardless of one’s gender, education was crucial for all.

“Enga enga kaninum shaktiada” (In whichever direction I see; I see Shakti) Through this phrase, he visioned the whole world as the manifestation of divine feminine energy while also focusing on the universality of women’s potential and

power. Bharati’s revolutionary ideas about women’s rights and their role in society were revolutionary for his time. His work in this area has continued to inspire generations of people who advocate for women’s rights and equality.

One prominent incident in Bharati’s life served as a testament to his commitment towards reforming not just society but also his personal life in terms of gender equality. Once, Bharati went to meet Sister Nivedita, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, and upon his arrival, Sister Nivedita asked Bharati why he had not brought his wife Chellammal along with him. For which Bharati replied that according to the customs of the time, women typically stayed indoors and didn’t accompany men outside. Hearing this, Sister Nivedita immediately pointed out, “Then you are no different from other men who treat women the same way.” This remark struck Bharati deeply, leading him to introspect on his views and actions. And from that moment, Bharati made it a point to take Chellammal out with him, putting a hand over her shoulder with love and pride. However, his actions faced resistance even within his own family, as such ideas were considered unconventional and radical at the time. Despite this, Bharati stood firm, embodying the change he wanted to see in society. It’s a profound example of how he practiced what he preached.

Equality and Social Inclusiveness

Considering the time Bharati lived in, when caste system and untouchability was deeply entrenched in our society, Bharati, who was born into an upper-class family, held a high ideal of equality, treating all

people as one. During that era, there was a rigid hierarchy, that distinguished people through their social status and racial classification. Bharati, however, vehemently opposed such divisions, advocating for equality and unity among all people. An excellent example of his thoughts on this is reflected in one of his poems:

*Vellai nirathoru poonai
Engal veettil valarudhu kandeer
Pillaihal petrradhap poonai
Avai perukoru niramaagum
Saambal nirathoru kutti,
Karum saanthin niram oru kutti
Paambin niramaoru kutti
Vellai paalin niram oru kutti
Entha niram irundhalum
Avai yaavum orey tharam andro
Indha niram siridhenrum
Ithu yetram endrum sollalaamo.*

“A white cat lived in our house,
It gave birth to kittens.
One was ash-coloured,
One was black and sand-coloured,
One was the colour of a snake,
One was white as the colour of milk.”

The kittens were of different colours, but they were all still cats. Through this poem Bharati declared that colour or appearance might differ, but they all belong to the same species. In the same way, through “*Ellorum oru kulam, ellorum oru inam, ellorum Indiyargal,*” Bharati proclaimed that “We are all one kin, one race, all Indians.” He wrote, “*Vannangal vettrumai pattal, adil manudar vettrumai illai,*” meaning that even if appearances differ, there is no difference in the essence of people. He

believed, “*Ellorum im naatum mannargal,*” which means, “Everyone in this country is a king.” Therefore, he emphasized that our actions, thoughts, and intentions must reflect unity and equality.

On nature and Spirituality

Bharati’s devotion to the nation and language was matched by his deep devotion to divinity. This is evident in his devotional songs where he extensively sang about deities like *Vinayakar, Murugan, Parashakti, Kali, and Kannan*. He often sang to Parasakthi about his troubles and worries, which used to make him feel content. Kannan (Lord Krishna) was Bharati’s favourite deity. He envisioned Kannan in various roles such as his mother, father, beloved, king, minister, friend, and even disciple, and composed numerous songs about him. One of his notable songs, “*Kaakai Siraginile*” (In the wings of the crow), he manifests Krishna in a crow and instils a profound sense of love and devotion towards him.

During his stay in Kashi for his education, Bharati composed many devotional songs inspired by the sacred river Ganga. He also expressed his love for nature through his poetry. He admired and sang about the sky, stars, the Sun, the Moon, ocean, mountains, and wind. In his song

*“Kaakai Kuruviyum Engal Jathi, Neel
Kadalum Malaiyum Engal Koottam”*

(The crow and sparrow are our kin, the ocean and mountains are our companions), his broad perspective on nature and his regard for all creatures become apparent. Bharati had a profound admiration for the English poet Shelley, which significantly

influenced his works. One such example is the song “*Kaatre Vaa, Methuvaaga Vaa*” (Oh wind, come softly), inspired by Shelley. He even proudly called himself *Shelley Dasan* (Shelley’s devotee). In his song “*Nirpathuvae, Nadappathuvae, Parappathuvae*” (That which stands, walks, and flies), Bharati beautifully conveys a deep philosophical truth, portraying all worldly phenomena as illusions and asserting that the creator of these illusions, the divine, is the only ultimate reality.

Legacy and beyond

We have learned a lot about Bharati and his remarkable life, but when we examine the final phase of his journey, it deeply saddens us to understand the challenges he had faced. Bharati, who gifted us countless songs that are celebrated to this day, lived a life of hardship and poverty, which extended to his family as well, who shared in his difficulties. It is disheartening to know that he had to face such financial problems to even cover his medical expenses during his illness. Eventually, he succumbed to the illness and passed away. It is truly a matter of regret that this great poet, whom we now proudly regard as *Desiakavi* (National Poet), received little support during his time of need.

Bharati passed away at a young age, not even reaching 40 years, leaving behind a legacy of timeless songs and revolutionary thoughts. There is no doubt that Bharati’s words and spirit will live on as long as this world exists. In Tamil Nadu, schools and universities have incorporated his works and teachings into their curricula. But Bharati’s vision and ideas transcend linguistic and

cultural boundaries. Therefore, efforts must be made to introduce his legacy to everyone in their respective languages, ensuring his wisdom reaches every corner of India.

It is very heartening to see the government taking steps to promote Bharati’s legacy by releasing the compendium of his works recently. Definitely, Bharati is not just a Tamil poet; he belongs to all of India. So just as we honour world-renowned poets and take pride in their works, we shall also recognize and celebrate Bharati as a national treasure and carry forward his ideals.

Bharati as an Inspiration to My Mother

I studied entirely in Tamil Nadu, in Tamil medium. From my primary school days, we were introduced to Bharathiyar’s songs. One such song,

*“Oodi Vilaiyadu Paapa, Nee
Ointhirukkalagathu Paapa, Koodi
Vilaiyadu Paapa, Oru kuzhanthaiyai
Vaiyadae Paapa”*

taught us not just to play and enjoy our joyful childhood, but also conveyed the value of unity among us all through its simplicity.

During our school days, we memorized these songs for their rhythm and melody. However, we only came to understand the deeper meanings behind them as we grew older. Similarly,

*“Olipadaitha Kanninaai Va Va Va;
Urudikonda Nenjinaai Va Va Va”*

was another song we were taught, which calls everyone to come forward with enlightened eyes and courageous heart.

This early exposure sparked my interest

in Bharathiyar and his works that despite being a science student in my high school years, I decided to pursue Tamil as my major in college. I can confidently say that Bharati was a significant reason for earning all my degrees in Tamil.

However, even now, I feel I haven't fully explored all of Bharati's works. His writings are vast and profound, much like an ocean, and it is impossible to say I've comprehended all the depth and wisdom within them.

I hail from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, where I completed both my schooling and college education. I mention Madurai specifically because Bharathiyar served as a Tamil teacher at a school there, now known as Sethupathi Higher Secondary School. It is a great source of pride for me, as I too am a Tamil teacher.

Today, as a Tamil teacher in a reputed school, I feel it is my duty and privilege to share Bharathiyar's greatness with my students. Regardless of their linguistic background, it is my responsibility to introduce the next generation to Bharathiyar's contributions and the greatness of his works.

My Own Reflections

My mother used to teach me Bharathiyar's poetry for recitation competition when I was five or six years old. Memorizing and reiterating them as broken syllables without understanding the depth of their meanings, often used to feel like a punishment. However, after all these years, approaching Bharathiyar's works as a Political Science student has been eye

opening to me in many ways.

In context of language politics that often divide communities, one could find solace in Bharati's works, who as polyglot, used language not just as a tool of communication but as a chariot for social change and to promote national unity.

From the above sections, we learnt that Subramania Bharati was not just a poet, but also an editor and journalist; who used his editorial platform to communicate powerful messages. From him we can learn the power of words to instigate change. Prime Minister, in his speech, had also highlighted the same, by laying emphasis on the concept of '*Shabda Brahma*' from Indian Philosophy.

One particular work of Bharati that I would like to highlight here is '*Panchali's Vow*,' which resonates as a powerful commentary on institutional justice and women's rights. Through his portrayal of a moment in history when all earthly protections failed a woman, Bharati examines the collapse of societal morality and the institutions meant to uphold justice. The narrative captures the themes of – complete breakdown of righteousness; upholding the courage to ask uncomfortable question like "Is it fair? Is it legal? Is it right?"; and the transformative power of resistance, shown through Draupadi's evolution from a victim of circumstance to a catalyst for change. Through this retelling, Bharati instils a sense of collective responsibility among all, suggesting that silence in the face of injustice makes society complicit. In today's time it serves as a reminder to uphold the morality of our Constitution and to inculcate its values and principles in our practices.

Northeast India – Strategic Advantages

✍ Muskan Ahmed, Evesita Rai

Northeast India is a region of immense cultural and geopolitical significance. Its rich heritage, geographical diversity, and historical importance have been preserved for centuries. However, a lack of awareness about its unique identity often leads to oversimplification of its cultural heritage and exclusion from national discourse. However, celebrating its traditions and understanding its strategic importance can bridge gaps and strengthen national unity. Therefore, it is vital to educate ourselves about this vibrant region to foster inclusivity and respect. This particular article explores its geographic setting and strategic advantages. In the upcoming editions, more work will be done to study other significant aspects pertaining to this region.

Geographical Significance

Northeast India, comprising eight states—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim—spans 262,179 sq km. This region is connected to mainland India by the narrow 20-km-wide Siliguri Corridor, known as the Chicken Neck. The

terrain, dominated by hills and mountains, opens into the fertile Brahmaputra and Barak valleys. Rich in biodiversity, it houses nearly 50% of India's plant species, including 700 orchids and important gene pools of citrus and rice.¹

The Brahmaputra and Barak rivers dominate the hydrology of Northeast India, supporting agriculture, transportation, and livelihoods. Mountain passes have historically facilitated trade and migration. Nathu La in Sikkim, part of the ancient Silk Route, reopened in 2006, enhancing Indo-China trade. In Arunachal Pradesh, the Bum La and Bomdila passes hold military significance, while Pangsau Pass connects India to Myanmar, contributing to trade and ecological preservation.²

The region's rugged terrain and seismic activity make it highly prone to natural disasters, including earthquakes, landslides, and floods. The Brahmaputra's seasonal flooding poses recurring challenges, requiring flood management and transboundary river agreements with China and Bangladesh. Strategic military preparedness in passes like Bum La is vital

1 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282007847_BIODIVERSITY_IN_NORTH_EAST_INDIA_AND_THEIR_CONSERVATION (Accessed on 4th January 2025).

2 https://www.rajraf.org/article/trans-himalayan-commerceindia-china-cross-border-trade-options-via-nathu-la-and-possible-resumption-of-historic-jelep-la-route/1083?utm_source=chatgpt.com (Accessed on 4th January 2025).

for border security. Comprehensive disaster response frameworks and sustainable development policies are key to mitigating risks and ensuring resilience.³

Geopolitical Importance

The geopolitical landscape surrounding Northeast India reflects the intersection of historical, cultural, and strategic regional dynamics. China's five-finger policy extending territories including Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh, and Tibet's incorporation into China has led to an evolving security paradigm. Its territorial claims in areas like Tawang, Aksai Chin, and the Doklam plateau; and strategic control over Chicken Neck Corridor underscores the region's vulnerability. China's involvement with local ethnic communities and cross – border relationships add another layer of complexity to security landscape. Therefore, strengthening border infrastructure, securing water treaties, and fostering regional alliances becomes important.⁴

Myanmar, bordering four northeastern states, plays a crucial role in insurgency containment. The NSCN-K and ULFA operate from camps in Myanmar, leveraging ethnic ties. India's 2019 joint operations with Myanmar's military aimed to dismantle these networks.⁵ However, Myanmar's

evolving relationships with China makes it important to reinforce military cooperation, improve infrastructure, and engage in diplomatic dialogues to stabilize border security.

Bangladesh's shared borders with Northeast India and water-sharing links are geopolitically significant. China's investments in Bangladeshi hydropower projects could exacerbate water disputes. Historical insurgent activity necessitates continued cooperation in border management. The 2015 Land Boundary Agreement significantly improved relations, facilitating insurgent tracking and cross-border security.⁶ Expanding trade partnerships and implementing joint river basin management, have been vital for sustaining peace.

10 Years of Act East Policy (2014)

The year 2024, marked ten years of India's Act East Policy (AEP), unveiled by the India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 9th East Asia Summit in 2014, a diplomatic step-up from the earlier Look East Policy.⁷ This policy aims to strengthen India's economic and strategic relations with Southeast Asia, positioning Northeast India as a pivotal bridge in this engagement. Over the past decade, several initiatives have been undertaken to enhance connectivity, trade, and cultural ties in the region.

3 https://www.undrr.org/disaster-risk-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development?utm_source (Accessed on 4th January 2025).

4 https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-xi-resurrects-mao-five-fingers-strategy-by-brahma-chellaney-2020-07?utm_source=chatgpt.com (Accessed on 6th January 2025).

5 https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/05/over-year-later-myanmars-military-coup-threatens-indias-national-security?utm_source=chatgpt.com (Accessed on 6th January 2025).

6 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337760983_India_and_China_in_South_Asia_Bangladesh%27s_Opportunities_and_Challenges (Accessed on 6th January 2025).

7 <https://www.orfonline.org/event/ten-years-of-india-s-act-east-policy> (Accessed on 6th January 2025).

Significant investments have been made to improve infrastructure in Northeast India. Projects like the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway are designed to facilitate seamless movement of goods and people between India and Southeast Asia. Additionally, the expansion of rail and road networks within the northeastern states has been prioritized to integrate the region more effectively with the rest of the country and neighbouring nations.⁸

The AEP has led to a notable increase in trade between Northeast India and Southeast Asian countries. Border trade points have been activated, and efforts to simplify cross-border trade procedures have been implemented. The region has also attracted foreign direct investment in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and information technology, contributing to economic growth and employment opportunities.⁹

Further, cultural exchanges and educational collaborations have been promoted to strengthen ties between Northeast India and Southeast Asia. Initiatives such as student exchange programs, cultural festivals, and academic partnerships have fostered mutual understanding and goodwill, reinforcing the region's role as a cultural conduit between India and its eastern neighbours.

Role of Local Communities

Tribal communities in Northeast India are vital to the region's socio-economic fabric. Their traditional knowledge in agriculture, crafts, and sustainable resource management fosters eco-friendly practices. Tribes significantly contribute to cultural heritage, enriching India's diversity with unique festivals, handloom artistry, and indigenous cuisines. With over 200 tribes, including Nagas, Mizos, Khasis, and Garos, the region represents rich ethnic diversity. States like Nagaland and Mizoram have over 85% tribal populations, making the Northeast one of the most culturally diverse regions globally.¹⁰

SHGs have empowered tribal communities, especially women, through micro-finance and small enterprises. In Assam and Manipur, SHGs promote traditional crafts, organic farming, and local entrepreneurship, aligning with sustainable rural development. Matrilineal societies, such as the Khasis and Garos, place women at the center of inheritance and decision-making. Tribal women also excel in SHGs, environmental conservation, and political participation, contributing to regional economic growth and governance.¹¹

Constitutional Provisions

The Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution protects tribal rights in

8 https://www.claws.in/static/IB-315_India%E2%80%99s-Act-East-Policy-and-North-East-India-Opportunities-and-Impediments.pdf?utm_source (Accessed on 6th January 2025).

9 https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/09715231231197096?utm_source (Accessed on 6th January 2025).

10 <https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/43014> (Accessed on 6th January 2025).

11 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348554447_Empowerment_of_Scheduled_Tribe_Women_Role_of_The_Self_Help_Groups (Accessed on 8th January 2025).

mainland India, while the Sixth Schedule empowers autonomous district councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram. These councils control land, resources, and cultural preservation, ensuring tribal self-governance.¹² Tribal communities are custodians of biodiversity. Practices like jhum cultivation and sacred groves protect ecosystems. Tribal leaders have played key roles in political movements for autonomy, leading to the creation of states like Nagaland and Mizoram. Their representation in state legislatures and autonomous councils strengthens democratic governance.

Towards a Brighter Future

Northeast India plays a pivotal role in India's national security and strategic positioning due to its geographic proximity to international borders. As a gateway to

Southeast Asia, it serves as a crucial link for India's engagement with neighbouring countries through initiatives like the Act East Policy.

Over the years the government has addressed the challenges of underdevelopment, border tensions, and insurgency with a focus on inclusivity, infrastructure, and economic growth through various schemes such as NEC, NESIDS with two Components viz. NESIDS-Road and NESIDS, other than Road Infrastructure and PM-DevINE.¹³

By continuing to foster mutual trust, promoting comprehensive development, and implementing forward-thinking strategies, India can secure both the region's stability and its economic potential, ensuring a prosperous future for Northeast India.

12 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342821446_Sacred_groves_of_India_repositories_of_a_rich_heritage_and_tools_for_biodiversity_conservation (Accessed on 9th January 2025).

13 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1990737> (Accessed on 9th January 2025).

Report of the webinar on “Development as Swaraj”

✍ Bhawesh Binwal

The webinar titled “Development as Swaraj,” organized on 3rd December 2024 by *Samvaad*—The Political Science Society, in collaboration with the Gandhi Study Circle, offered a profound and engaging exploration of Gandhian ideals in addressing contemporary development challenges. Under the convenorship of Professor Abhay Prasad Singh, the session featured Dr. Sumanas Koulagi, a distinguished Gandhian scholar renowned for his transformative contributions to understanding and practicing the concept of Swaraj. The event served as a platform for meaningful discussions on the relevance of Gandhian philosophy in reimagining sustainable and equitable development in the modern era.

Dr. Koulagi holds a Doctorate in International Development from the University of Sussex, UK. His thesis, *Development as Swaraj (Self-rule) and the Quest for Non-violent Social Order: A Case Study of the Khadi Sector in Karnataka, India*, highlights his deep engagement with Gandhian principles. Dr. Koulagi also earned a Master’s in Biodiversity, Conservation, and Management from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor’s in Botany, Zoology, and Earth Science from the University of Mysore. His illustrious career includes numerous grants, publications,

and international talks, establishing him as a key advocate of sustainable development rooted in Gandhian ideals.

Dr. Koulagi serves as the coordinator of the Janapada Khadi Initiative, a project under the Janapada Seva Trust, which has worked towards establishing a non-violent social order since 1960. This initiative exemplifies Swaraj by redefining Khadi production as a means of community empowerment rather than merely an economic activity. Based in Melkote, Karnataka, the project involves a small group of workers, primarily women, who actively participate as both workers and co-owners. This ownership model fosters shared responsibility, equity, and collective decision-making, with financial transparency as its cornerstone.

In his talk, Dr. Koulagi began by grounding the discussion in the Gandhian concept of Swaraj, which transcends political independence to embrace a broader vision of self-reliance, ethical labor, and non-violence. He emphasized that Swaraj envisions a society free from exploitation, where development is not measured by material wealth but by human dignity and ecological harmony. This philosophy, he argued, directly challenges the profit-driven, competition-centric paradigms of modern economic systems.

Drawing from his work with the Janapada Khadi Initiative in Melkote, Dr.

Koulagi provided a real-world example of Swaraj in action. This initiative, involving a small group of workers—primarily women—redefines Khadi production not as a mere economic activity but as a means of community building. Here, the focus is on empowering individuals, fostering equity, and prioritizing human well-being over material output.

One of the initiative's most notable aspects is its ownership model, which eliminates the traditional hierarchy between owners and wage laborers. Each participant is both a worker and an owner, creating a system of shared responsibility and collective decision-making. Financial transparency is a cornerstone of this approach, with all participants having access to the enterprise's financial records and playing an active role in its governance.

Dr. Koulagi also highlighted how Swaraj promotes limited production, tailored to local needs, as a way to address environmental degradation and resource inequality. By focusing on sufficiency rather than surplus, such initiatives disrupt systems where 70% of resources are controlled by just 10% of the population. This approach aligns with Gandhi's vision of self-reliance as interconnectedness rather than isolation, recognizing the interdependent nature of human existence and the environment.

A particularly engaging part of the session was the discussion on the tension between Swaraj and contemporary development models. Dr. Koulagi critiqued the inherent contradictions in frameworks like sustainable development, which seek to balance economic growth with environmental and social equity. He

argued that economic growth, by its nature, often undermines ecological and social sustainability. Swaraj, on the other hand, offers a model that prioritizes cooperation, local self-sufficiency, and ethical labor over competition and unchecked growth.

The webinar also shed light on innovative practices inspired by Swaraj. Dr. Koulagi spoke about the annual Padi Yatra—a week-long walking pilgrimage where participants engage with rural communities, observing and learning about their lives through the lenses of gender, caste, ecology, and livelihoods. This practice fosters a deeper understanding of interconnectedness and offers a counterpoint to the speed-driven modern world. Another initiative, the Human History Module, traces the evolution of humanity and its relationship with the environment, helping participants appreciate the need for balance and sustainability in development.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Koulagi emphasized that Swaraj is not merely a historical concept but a dynamic and relevant framework for addressing today's global crises, from climate change to growing inequality. He urged the audience to rethink development beyond the metrics of economic growth and surplus production, advocating for systems that honor dignity, harmony, and self-reliance.

The event, hosted by Samvaad and the Gandhi Study Circle, left participants with a powerful message: true progress lies not in material accumulation but in creating a society rooted in equity, sustainability, and shared prosperity. It was a call to action to embrace Gandhian principles as a guide for building a better future, one that respects both humanity and the planet.

Delhi State Legislative Election Data Chart Since Independence

✍ Student Editorial Board

Assembly Election Year	Total Voting Percentage	Male Voting Percentage	Female Voting Percentage
1951	58.52%	N/A	N/A
1972	68.86%	69.05%	68.62%
1977	55.85%	55.87%	55.83%
1983	55.29%	55.34%	55.21%
1993	61.75%	64.56%	58.27%
1998	48.99%	50.89%	46.41%
2003	53.42%	54.89%	51.53%
2008	57.58%	58.34%	56.62%
2013	65.63%	66.03%	65.14%
2015	67.12%	67.63%	66.49%
2020	62.59%	62.66%	62.52%

Delhi Assembly Elections and Chief Ministers: A Timeline

<p>1951: First Assembly Election Voter Turnout: 7.44 lakh voters Assembly Strength: 48 seats Chief Minister: Chaudhary Brahm Prakash (Congress) Party Performance: Congress secured 39 out of 48 seats</p>	<p>1956: Transition to Union Territory Delhi's Legislative Assembly replaced by the Municipal Council and Metropolitan Council. The Lieutenant Governor assumed administrative authority. No Chief Minister appointed for the next 37 years.</p>
<p>1972, 1977, and 1983: Elections Under Union Territory Status During this period, Delhi was classified as a Union Territory without a legislative assembly. These elections were held for the Metropolitan Council, which had limited administrative powers, overseen by the Lieutenant Governor.</p>	<p>Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991. An Act to supplement the provisions of the Constitution relating to the Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers for the National Capital Territory of Delhi and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.</p>

<p>1993: Resumption of Elections Voter Turnout: 58.5 lakh voters Assembly Strength: 70 seats Bhartiya Janata Party, which won 49 of the 70 seats in the Assembly. Chief Ministers: Madan Lal Khurana: 1993-1996 Sahib Singh Verma: 1996-1998 Sushma Swaraj: 1998, tenure of 52 days.</p>	<p>1998-2013: Congress Dominates Election Outcomes: 1998: Congress won 52 out of 70 seats 2003: Congress won 47 out of 70 seats 2008: Congress won 43 out of 70 seats Chief Minister: Sheila Dikshit: 1998-2013</p>
<p>2013: Entry of AAP Voter Turnout: 1.2 crore voters Assembly Strength: 70 seats Party Performance: BJP won 31 seats, AAP won 28 & Congress 8 out of 70 seats. AAP formed a minority government with Congress support. Chief Minister: Arvind Kejriwal (49-day government)</p>	<p>2015: AAP's Historic Victory AAP won 67 out of 70 seats Chief Minister: Arvind Kejriwal</p>
<p>2020: AAP Retains Power AAP secured 62 out of 70 seats Chief Minister: Arvind Kejriwal (resigned on 17th September 2024) Ms. Atishi : 21st September 2024 to till date.</p>	<p>General Voter Statistics :2025 Total Voters: 1.55 crore Men: 83.49 lakh Women: 71.74 lakh Transgender Persons: 1,261 Number of Seats: 70 (58 General and 12 Reserved) Biggest Constituency: Vikaspuri (4.62 lakh voters) Smallest Constituency: Delhi Cantonment (78,893 voters)</p>

Top 5 Constituencies with Decreased Voters (2020-2025)

Constituency	Voters in 2020	Voters in 2025	Decrease (%)	Reasons for Decline*
Delhi Cantonment	1,29,338	78,893	39%	Out-migration, reduced military personnel base
New Delhi	1,45,901	1,09,022	25.30%	Shift in administrative populations
Rajinder Nagar	1,77,159	1,57,461	11.10%	Urban housing redevelopment
RK Puram	1,57,620	1,40,229	11%	Outflow due to infrastructure work
Laxmi Nagar	2,21,651	2,06,438	6.90%	Commercialization and relocation

Constituencies with Increased Voters (2020-2025)

Constituency	Voters in 2020	Voters in 2025	Increase (%)	Reasons for Growth*
Bawana	3,19,366	3,81,779	19.50%	Migrant influx, growing residential areas
Chhatarpur	2,18,580	2,59,314	18.60%	Expansion of urban fringes
Kirari	2,73,696	3,19,006	16.60%	Affordable housing attracting new settlers
Burari	3,61,583	4,20,157	16.20%	Increase in urban and semi-urban settlements
Tughlakabad	1,77,616	2,04,561	15.10%	Development projects boosting local population

डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह: भारत के आर्थिक और राजनीतिक परिदृश्य में एक युगपुरुष

✍️ खुशी

“मुझे भारत के भविष्य के बारे में पूरा विश्वास है। वह समय आ गया है जब भारत दुनिया की बदलती हुई अर्थव्यवस्था में एक महत्वपूर्ण शक्ति के रूप में उभरेगा।” यह वक्तव्य 17 मई 2014 को भारत के तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह ने अपने अंतिम भाषण में दिया था। उनके शब्दों में एक आत्मविश्वास झलकता था, जो आज एक सशक्त भारत के रूप में मूर्त रूप ले चुका है। उनकी मृत्यु पर भारत सहित वैश्विक नेताओं ने उन्हें श्रद्धांजलि दी, जिसमें उनकी दूरदर्शिता, ईमानदारी, और ज्ञान के प्रति सम्मान स्पष्ट रूप से झलका।

जीवन परिचय और प्रारंभिक शिक्षा:

1932 में अविभाजित भारत के पंजाब प्रांत के एक छोटे से गांव में जन्मे डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह का जीवन संघर्ष और उपलब्धियों से परिपूर्ण रहा। बचपन से ही शिक्षा के प्रति उनकी गहरी रुचि थी। उन्होंने पंजाब विश्वविद्यालय से 1954 में अर्थशास्त्र में स्नातकोत्तर डिग्री प्राप्त की। इसके बाद, कैम्ब्रिज विश्वविद्यालय (1955-57) और ऑक्सफोर्ड विश्वविद्यालय (1960-62)² में उच्च शिक्षा अर्जित करते हुए वे एक उत्कृष्ट अकादमिक विद्वान के रूप में उभरे। भारत लौटने के बाद उन्होंने दिल्ली स्कूल ऑफ इकोनॉमिक्स में अध्यापन किया और अर्थशास्त्र के क्षेत्र में अपनी विद्वता को सुदृढ़ किया।

राजनीतिक जीवन और प्रधानमंत्री पद तक का सफर:

डॉ. सिंह का राजनीतिक जीवन 1971 में आर्थिक सलाहकार के रूप में भारत सरकार से प्रारंभ हुआ। इसके पश्चात उन्होंने योजना आयोग के उपाध्यक्ष, भारतीय रिजर्व

बैंक के गवर्नर, और विदेश व्यापार मंत्रालय में महत्वपूर्ण पदों पर कार्य किया³ 1991 में, जब भारत एक गंभीर आर्थिक संकट से जूझ रहा था, प्रधानमंत्री पी.वी. नरसिंह राव ने उन्हें वित्त मंत्री नियुक्त किया। इस भूमिका में, डॉ. सिंह ने आर्थिक उदारीकरण की शुरुआत की, जो भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए एक ऐतिहासिक मोड़ साबित हुआ। उनके सुधारों ने भारत को वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था में प्रतिस्पर्धा के लिए तैयार किया और 'लाइसेंस राज' के युग को समाप्त किया।

2004 में, डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह भारत के 13वें प्रधानमंत्री बने। उनके नेतृत्व में गठबंधन सरकार ने आर्थिक और सामाजिक नीतियों में प्रगति की। 2009 में, उन्होंने लगातार दूसरी बार प्रधानमंत्री पद की शपथ ली। वे अब तक के पहले और एकमात्र सिख प्रधानमंत्री हैं।

1991 का ऐतिहासिक बजट भाषण:

24 जुलाई 1991 को संसद में डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह ने जो बजट भाषण प्रस्तुत किया, वह भारत के आर्थिक इतिहास में मील का पत्थर बन गया। उस समय भारत विदेशी मुद्रा संकट से जूझ रहा था। सिंह ने इस चुनौती को अवसर में बदलते हुए आर्थिक उदारीकरण की दिशा में कदम उठाए। उन्होंने न केवल राजकोषीय नीतियों में सुधार किया, बल्कि भारतीय उद्योगों को वैश्विक प्रतिस्पर्धा के लिए सक्षम बनाया। उनका भाषण न केवल एक आर्थिक नीति का दस्तावेज था, बल्कि विकास के लिए व्यापक दृष्टिकोण का प्रतिबिंब भी था। डॉ. सिंह ने अपने भाषण में विकटर ह्यूगो को उद्धृत करते हुए कहा, “पृथ्वी पर कोई भी शक्ति उस विचार को नहीं रोक सकती

1 प्रधानमंत्री का राष्ट्र के नाम सन्देश, 17 मई 2014, <https://archive.pib.gov.in/archive2/hindirelease.aspx> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

2 https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/former_pm/dr-manmohan-singh-2/ (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

3 Ibid.

जिसका समय आ गया है।⁴ यह भारत के लिए आर्थिक सुधारों की अपरिहार्यता को दर्शाता है।

अकादमिक जीवन :लेख

डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह द्वारा लिखित लेख उनके व्यापक आर्थिक दृष्टिकोण और विकासशील भारत के प्रति उनकी प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाते हैं। 1963 में प्रकाशित *अतीत की झलक: विकास के लिए निर्यात रणनीति* में उन्होंने भारत की निर्यात नीतियों की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया, जो आज भी प्रासंगिक हैं। 1989 में लिखे गए *उत्तर-दक्षिण व्यापार: मुद्दे और अवसर* में उन्होंने विकसित और विकासशील देशों के बीच व्यापार असंतुलन और इसे सुधारने के उपायों पर चर्चा की। 1962 में प्रकाशित *1971 तक आत्मनिर्भर विकास: भुगतान संतुलन पर प्रभाव* में भारत में आर्थिक आत्मनिर्भरता और इसके भुगतान संतुलन पर प्रभाव का विश्लेषण किया गया। 1959 के लेख *कम कट्टरता: एक व्यावहारिक कार्य रूपरेखा* में उन्होंने आर्थिक विकास के लिए व्यावहारिक दृष्टिकोण अपनाने का सुझाव दिया। ये लेख भारत की आर्थिक नीतियों को बेहतर ढंग से समझने और वैश्विक परिप्रेक्ष्य में उनके योगदान को रेखांकित करने में सहायक हैं।⁵ उनकी पुस्तक “इंडियाज एक्सपोर्ट ट्रेड्स एंड प्रॉस्पेक्ट्स फॉर सेल्फ-सस्टेन्ड ग्रोथ”⁶ भारत की अंदरमुखी व्यापार नीति की प्रारंभिक आलोचना थी। इस पुस्तक में डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह ने भारत की निर्यात नीतियों और आत्मनिर्भर आर्थिक विकास की संभावनाओं का गहन विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत किया। उन्होंने तर्क दिया कि एक समृद्ध और सतत विकासशील अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए वैश्विक व्यापार के साथ जुड़ाव अनिवार्य है। पुस्तक ने यह दर्शाया कि निर्यात को बढ़ावा देकर भारत आर्थिक स्थिरता और दीर्घकालिक विकास प्राप्त कर सकता है।

डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह की इस पुस्तक की समीक्षा में डब्ल्यू.बी. रेडवे ने भारत की निर्यात आय (1951-1960)

में ठहराव और भविष्य की निर्यात संभावनाओं पर चर्चा को सराहा है। समीक्षा में इसे भुगतान संतुलन की समस्याओं के बीच निर्यात गतिशीलता को समझने के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण योगदान बताया गया है।⁷ हालांकि, इसमें पद्धतिगत सीमाओं की ओर इशारा किया गया है, जैसे कि निर्यात विश्लेषण और व्यापक आर्थिक नीतियों के बीच अपर्याप्त समन्वय। मुख्य कमियों में घरेलू मांग के कारण लौह अयस्क के निर्यात में बाधा, कृषि निर्यात अधिशेष प्राप्त करने की चुनौतियाँ, और व्यापक आर्थिक संदर्भ का अभाव शामिल हैं। समीक्षा में पुस्तक के अद्यतन और व्यापक दृष्टिकोण वाले संस्करण की आवश्यकता बताई गई है, जिससे इसकी प्रासंगिकता और उपयोगिता बढ़ सके। यह अध्ययन उनके व्यापक आर्थिक दृष्टिकोण और सुधारवादी सोच का प्रमाण है।

डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह को श्रद्धांजलि:

डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह का 92 वर्ष की आयु में निधन के बाद, राजनीति और उद्योग जगत के दिग्गजों से शोक संदेशों और श्रद्धांजलियों की बाढ़ आ गई। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह के निधन पर गहरा दुख व्यक्त किया और इसे “राष्ट्र के लिए बड़ी क्षति बताया। उन्होंने डॉ. सिंह के जीवन को विपरीत परिस्थितियों से ऊपर उठने और उत्कृष्टता प्राप्त करने का प्रेरणास्रोत बताया। प्रधानमंत्री ने डॉ. सिंह को एक दयालु व्यक्ति, विद्वान अर्थशास्त्री और सुधारों के प्रति समर्पित नेता के रूप में याद किया। मोदी ने वित्त मंत्री और भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक के गवर्नर के रूप में डॉ. सिंह के योगदान की सराहना की और उनके आर्थिक सुधारों को देश के लिए मील का पत्थर बताया। उन्होंने डॉ. सिंह की सादगी, ईमानदारी और दलीय राजनीति से ऊपर उठने की भावना की प्रशंसा की।⁸

कांग्रेस कार्यसमिति ने मनमोहन सिंह को श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करते हुए लिखा, ‘हम एक सच्चे राजनेता की क्षति पर शोक व्यक्त करते हैं, जिनका जीवन और कार्य भारत के

4 https://archives.ashoka.edu.in/paper_details/58 (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

5 <https://www.epw.in/author/manmohan-singh> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

6 Manmohan Singh, *India's Export Trends and the Prospects for Self-sustained Growth*, 1964, Clarendon Press.

7 W.B. Reddaway, *The Economic Journal*, Volume 75, Issue 298, 1 June 1965, Pp. 433–435.

8 प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेंद्र मोदी का पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह के निधन पर शोक वक्तव्य, 27th December 2024. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2088320> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

भाग्य को गहराई से प्रभावित करता है। डॉ. सिंह भारत के राजनीतिक और आर्थिक परिदृश्य में एक प्रख्यात व्यक्तित्व थे, जिनके योगदानों ने देश को परिवर्तित किया और उन्हें विश्व स्तर पर सम्मान दिलाया।⁹

डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह ने 1982 में भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक के गवर्नर और 1991 में वित्त मंत्री के रूप में सेवा की। वित्त मंत्री के रूप में, उन्होंने भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था को विनियमित करने और विदेशी निवेश के लिए खोलने वाले सुधारों की श्रृंखला का नेतृत्व किया। तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री पी.वी. नरसिम्हा राव के साथ मिलकर उन्होंने भुगतान संतुलन संकट का सामना किया और भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था को उदार बनाया, जिससे आने वाले दशकों में तेजी से विकास का मार्ग प्रशस्त हुआ। प्रसिद्ध उद्योगपति गौतम अडानी, जो भारत के दूसरे सबसे धनी व्यक्ति और अडानी समूह के अध्यक्ष हैं, ने लिखा, “इतिहास हमेशा 1991 के सुधारों में उनके महत्वपूर्ण योगदान को सम्मानित करेगा, जिसने भारत को बदल दिया और इसे दुनिया के लिए खोल दिया।”¹⁰

डॉ. सिंह 2004 में राजनीति में लौटे, जब कांग्रेस के नेतृत्व वाले गठबंधन ने चुनावों में जीत हासिल की, और पार्टी नेता सोनिया गांधी ने उन्हें प्रधानमंत्री नियुक्त किया। 2004 से 2014 के बीच, उनके कार्यकाल में भारत का सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) प्रारंभिक वर्षों में तेजी से बढ़ा, जिससे उन्हें राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी अधिनियम (नरेगा) जैसे कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से गरीबों के लिए रोजगार सुनिश्चित करने के लिए नई संपत्ति का उपयोग करने का अवसर मिला। हालांकि, उनके प्रधानमंत्री कार्यकाल के अंतिम वर्षों में आर्थिक मंदी, सुधारों में रुकावट और सरकार के कुछ सदस्यों के खिलाफ भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों ने उनकी छवि को प्रभावित किया।

वैश्विक राजनयिकों द्वारा श्रद्धांजलि:

देश के साथ वैश्विक नेताओं ने भी डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह के निधन पर श्रद्धांजलियां अर्पित किया। नेपाल के प्रधानमंत्री केपी शर्मा ओली ने सिंह के निधन पर गहरा शोक व्यक्त करते हुए उन्हें एक “दूरदर्शी नेता” बताया। ओली ने सिंह के लोकतंत्र के प्रति अटूट समर्थन और भारत-नेपाल संबंधों को मजबूत बनाने में उनके योगदान को रेखांकित किया। उन्होंने सोशल मीडिया मंच ‘X’ पर लिखा, “डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह के निधन से गहरा दुख हुआ। एक दूरदर्शी नेता के रूप में उनका ज्ञान, विनम्रता और समर्पण भारत को आकार देने और इस क्षेत्र को प्रेरित करने वाला रहा। नेपाल लोकतंत्र और स्थायी मित्रता के लिए उनके समर्थन को हमेशा याद रखेगा।”¹¹

नेपाल के राष्ट्रपति रामचंद्र पौडेल ने भी इसी भावना को व्यक्त करते हुए सिंह को भारत का “दूरदर्शी नेता” बताया। मॉरीशस के प्रधानमंत्री नवीन रामगुलाम ने सिंह के साथ अपनी पहली मुलाकात को याद किया, जो 2005 के चुनावों से पहले मॉरीशस की एक आधिकारिक यात्रा के दौरान हुई थी। फेसबुक पर उन्होंने सिंह को “जेंटलमैन राजनेता और प्रख्यात अर्थशास्त्री”¹² बताया, जिनकी विनम्रता और ईमानदारी ने गहरी छाप छोड़ी। उन्होंने कहा, “डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह ने भारत के आर्थिक परिदृश्य को बदल दिया। उनकी विनम्रता, ईमानदारी और शांति हमेशा याद की जाएंगी। मॉरीशस के लोगों और सरकार की ओर से, मैं उनके परिवार और करीबी लोगों के प्रति गहरी संवेदना व्यक्त करता हूँ।”¹³ जापान के प्रधानमंत्री शिगेरु इशिबा और विदेश मंत्री ताकेशी इवाया ने सिंह के निधन पर शोक व्यक्त किया। उन्होंने भारत-जापान संबंधों को मजबूत करने में सिंह की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका की सराहना की। भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर को भेजे पत्रों में उन्होंने द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को

9 Condolence Resolution by the Congress Working Committee on the Passing of Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji on 27th December 2024. <https://inc.in/media/press-releases/condolence-resolution-by-the-congress-working-committee-on-the-passing-of-dr-manmohan-singh-ji> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

10 <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/12/27/manmohan-singh-death-draws-tributes-from-political-industry-leaders.html> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

11 <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/global-tributes-pour-in-for-former-prime-minister-manmohan-singh/> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

उंचाई पर ले जाने में सिंह के योगदान को रेखांकित किया।¹⁴ डॉ. सिंह की दिसंबर 2006 में जापान यात्रा के दौरान, उन्होंने दोनों देशों के संबंधों को “वैश्विक और रणनीतिक साझेदारी” के रूप में उन्नत किया, जो पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी और जापानी प्रधानमंत्री योशिरो मोरी के तहत 2000 में शुरू हुई सहयोग की दिशा को और आगे बढ़ाने वाला कदम था। फ्रांस के राष्ट्रपति झैनुएल मैक्रों ने भी सिंह के निधन पर शोक व्यक्त करते हुए उन्हें भारत के लिए “महान व्यक्ति” और फ्रांस के “सच्चे मित्र”¹⁵ के रूप में वर्णित किया। उन्होंने ‘X’ पर लिखा, “भारत ने डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह के रूप में एक महान व्यक्ति खो दिया है और फ्रांस ने एक सच्चा मित्र”¹⁶

डॉ. सिंह ने भारत के वाशिंगटन और मॉस्को के साथ संबंधों को मजबूत करने में भी अहम भूमिका निभाई। उन्होंने प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में कई बार अमेरिका का दौरा किया। 2006 में, जब अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति जॉर्ज डब्ल्यू. बुश ने भारत का दौरा किया, तो डॉ. सिंह ने एक ऐसा समझौता किया जिससे भारत को अमेरिकी परमाणु प्रौद्योगिकी तक पहुंच प्राप्त हुई। जिसे 2008 में अंतिम रूप दिया गया। अमेरिकी विदेश विभाग ने उनके निधन पर कहा, “डॉ. सिंह अमेरिका-भारत रणनीतिक साझेदारी के सबसे महान समर्थकों में से एक थे, और उनके काम ने पिछले दो दशकों में हमारे देशों द्वारा एक साथ हासिल किए गए बहुत कुछ की नींव रखी”¹⁷

डॉ. सिंह ने रूस के साथ भारत के संबंधों को भी प्रगाढ़

किया। वह 2000 में शुरू हुए भारत-रूस वार्षिक शिखर सम्मेलन के नियमित भागीदार रहे, जिसका उद्देश्य दोनों देशों और ब्रिक्स देशों के बीच सहयोग को गहरा करना था। भारत में रूसी राजदूत डेनिस अलीपोव ने कहा, “डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह का हमारे द्विपक्षीय संबंधों में योगदान अतुलनीय था”¹⁸

डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह की विरासत:

डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह का राजनीतिक जीवन एक प्रेरणा है। एक साधारण सिख किसान के बेटे से लेकर प्रधानमंत्री बनने तक का उनका सफर शिक्षा, ईमानदारी और कड़ी मेहनत की ताकत को दर्शाता है। भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था और राजनीति में उनका योगदान युगों तक स्मरणीय रहेगा। वरिष्ठ पत्रकार ने मनमोहन सिंह को श्रद्धांजलि देते हुए अपने लेख का शीर्षक दिया, **‘मनमोहन सिंह की विरासत 1991 से परे: अमेरिका से परमाणु समझौता जिसने भारत के वैश्विक कद को बढ़ाया’**।¹⁹ उन्होंने लिखा कि ‘डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह की सबसे बड़ी सफलता यह थी कि उन्होंने पश्चिमी खेमे के साथ रणनीतिक संबंध बनाने की ऐतिहासिक पहल की। अपनी पार्टी और यूपीए के सहयोगियों से कम समर्थन मिलने के बावजूद, यह बदलाव 1991 के आर्थिक सुधारों से भी अधिक साहसिक था।’²⁰ डॉ. सिंह न केवल एक राजनेता थे, बल्कि एक ऐसे अर्थशास्त्री भी थे, जिन्होंने भारत को नई दिशा में आगे बढ़ाने में अपनी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। उनकी दूरदर्शिता और नेतृत्व ने भारत को वैश्विक मंच पर नई पहचान दिलाई।

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State, Condolences on the Passing of Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, 26th December 2024. <https://www.state.gov/condolences-on-the-passing-of-former-indian-prime-minister-manmohan-singh/> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

18 Denis Alipov, Russian Ambassador to India, Condolences Message on 27th December 2024. https://x.com/AmbRus_India/status/1872350049516339592 (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

19 <https://hindi.theprint.in/opinion/national-interest/manmohan-singh-has-a-legacy-beyond-1991-nuclear-deal-with-us-shows-his-strategic-vision/768642/> (Accessed on 28th December 2024).

20 Ibid.

Transforming Healthcare in India: The Inclusive Vision of Ayushman Bharat

✍ Kajal Yadav

Prime Minister Narendra Modi aptly described the Ayushman Bharat scheme as being designed for the poor, the middle class, and common families, emphasizing a holistic approach to healthcare that focuses not only on health but also on wellness. Over the past few decades, India has garnered global attention as one of the world's top three fastest-growing economies. However, despite significant progress in various sectors, India continues to be classified as a Lower Middle-Income Country according to the World Bank's classification based on per capita GDP. This classification reflects persistent challenges in the nation's socio-economic and health indicators.

Health is universally acknowledged as a fundamental priority for any nation, with investment in healthcare regarded as a cornerstone of societal development. However, in the decades following independence, India's healthcare system suffered from neglect. Successive governments failed to adequately address the needs of the healthcare infrastructure, leaving many villages without hospitals or with facilities lacking adequate staffing and resources. As Prime Minister Modi noted

during his speech on September 23, 2018, in Ranchi, Jharkhand, the lack of attention to healthcare infrastructure remained a significant challenge for decades. "We didn't take that path. We don't want the country to ever return to that path. Our mantra has been 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas.' Ayushman Bharat will not be based upon community, caste, or class discriminations. 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas' doesn't discriminate between caste, community, region, religion, or theists and atheists. It is immaterial whether the person goes to a temple, mosque, gurdwara, or church. Everyone will get the benefit of Ayushman Bharat. This is what 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas' stands for."¹

The launch of the Ayushman Bharat scheme marks a transformative shift in India's healthcare landscape. With its twin pillars—Health and Wellness Centres focused on primary healthcare and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana aimed at providing financial protection for secondary and tertiary care—the scheme represents a paradigm shift toward a holistic approach to health. By integrating preventive, promotive, and curative health services, Ayushman Bharat embodies the spirit of inclusion and equality, ensuring

1 PM's address at the launch of Ayushman Bharat , Ranchi, Jharkhand on 23rd September 2018. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1547032®=3&lang=1> (Accessed on 21st December 2024).

that every citizen, irrespective of caste, religion, or socioeconomic status, benefits from its provisions. This initiative not only strengthens the foundation of India's healthcare system but also sets a significant milestone on the path toward achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), underscoring India's commitment to building a robust and inclusive healthcare ecosystem.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna

The objective of AB-PMJAY is to reduce catastrophic health expenditure, improve access to quality health care, reduce pocket healthcare expenditures of poor and vulnerable families of the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011. It also established 1,50,000 HWCs to provide comprehensive primary healthcare services. Cover secondary and tertiary hospitalization expenses up to INR 5 lakh per family per year.²

Ayushman Bharat adopts a continue of care approach comprising of two inter-related components, which is the Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).³ Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) seek to promote individuals and communities to adopt a healthy lifestyles and take control of their health by bringing these services closer to their community. They are therefore

free to users and provide a wide variety of services including maternal and child health services, care for non - communicable diseases, oral, eye and ENT care, mental health etc. To ensure the continues care of people. 1,50,000 health and wellness centres will be set up with improved infrastructure, assured availability of drugs and diagnostic services along with strengthening.

The second component under Ayushman Bharat is the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana or AB PM-JAY. This scheme was launched on 23rd September 2018 in Ranchi, Jharkhand by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and National Health Authority is the Nodal Agency set up for scheme implementation and oversight.

Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission

Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) with some Central Sector Components (CS) which has an outlay of Rs. 64,180 Crores for the scheme period (2021-22 to 2025-26).⁴

The measures under the scheme focus on developing capacities of health systems and institutions across the continues of care at all levels primary, secondary and tertiary level and on preparing health systems in responding effectively to the current

2 https://www.nhm.gov.in/New_Updates_2018/NHM_Components/Health_System_Stregthening/Comprehensive_primary_health_care/letter/Operational_Guidelines_For_CPHC.pdf (Accessed on 21st December 2024).

3 <https://nha.gov.in/img/pmjay-files/STG-Manual-Booklet-final.pdf> (Accessed on 21st December 2024).

4 Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, responded to a question from Shrimati Sunita Duggal and Shri Subrat Pathak in the Lok Sabha on 4th August 2023. <https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/1712/AU2704.pdf?source=pqals> (Accessed on 24th December 2024).

and future pandemics and disasters. The objective of the scheme is to fill critical gaps in health infrastructure, surveillance and health research spanning in both the urban and rural areas.

12 Central Institutions as training and mentoring sites with 150 bedded Critical Care Hospital Blocks (CCBs) are there. The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) with 5 New Regional NCDCs and 20 metropolitan health surveillance units are made. The expansion of the Integrated Health Information Portal in all States/UTs will connect will all public health labs.

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

On 27 September, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the nationwide rollout of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission¹⁶ (ABDM) (earlier known as National Digital Health Mission) with a budget of Rs. 1,600 crore for five years. ABDM aims to develop the backbone to support the integrated digital health infrastructure of the country as it will also bridge the existing gap amongst different stakeholders of the healthcare ecosystem through digital highways. As on 5 April, 2022 Rs. 45 crore has been released to (NHA) for implementation of ABDM.⁵

The foundations were laid down in the form of Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile (JAM) trinity and other digital initiatives of the government in (ABDM) is creating a widerange of online platform through the

provision of various of data, information and infrastructure services, interoperable, standards-based digital systems while ensuring the security, confidentiality and privacy of health-related personal information in it.

On 28 April, 2022, more than 19 crore screenings have been done for hypertension and around 15.73 crore screenings done for diabetes at these AB-HWCs. Similarly, these functional AB-HWCs have done more than 10.33 crore screenings for oral cancer, more than 3.41 crore screenings for cervical cancer in women and more than 5.06 crore screenings for breast cancer in women.⁶

The screening, prevention and management of chronic illnesses including Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Tuberculosis (TB) and Leprosy have been introduced as part of comprehensive primary healthcare at AB-HWCs. The telemedicine guidelines have also been provided to the States to initiate specialist consultations from the PHCs to the Hub Hospitals. These Centres should become facilitators and platform for all wellness activities including yoga in the community. The Health and Wellness Centres are expected to harness the potential and benefits of technology for improved service delivery, capacity building and reporting in the healthcare sector.

The data above demonstrates that the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) represents a transformative step toward

5 <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2022/apr/doc202243051901.pdf> (Accessed on 24th December 2024).

6 <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2022/apr/doc202243051901.pdf> (Accessed on 24th December 2024).

integrating India's healthcare ecosystem through a robust digital infrastructure. By leveraging the foundational JAM trinity and other digital initiatives, ABDM ensures interoperability, data security, and privacy while bridging gaps among stakeholders. The remarkable screenings conducted at Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) for conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and various cancers underscore the program's focus on preventive and primary healthcare. Additionally, the inclusion of telemedicine and wellness activities like yoga highlights a holistic approach to healthcare delivery. As ABDM continues to evolve, it promises to revolutionize service accessibility, capacity building, and disease management, ultimately enhancing the quality and equity of healthcare across India.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Despite its successes, Ayushman Bharat faces several challenges in different sectors.⁷ Ensuring adequate, well skilled and well equipped human resources at Health Sub Centre level and Primary Health Centre level AB-HWCs and strengthening supply chain to ensure availability of free essential drugs and diagnostics required for providing expanded package of Comprehensive Primary Healthcare (CPHC) services at AB-HWC level. To strengthen the infrastructure of targeted Health Sub Centres and Primary Health Centres for transformation into AB-HWCs especially those public healthcare facilities in rented buildings and dilapidated conditions besides creation of new facilities

as per norms.

Training and skill upgradation of primary healthcare team for expanded range of services. Behaviour change communication strategy increasing for awareness on healthy life style and eat right practices amongst the community. Creation of a robust IT system for registration of population covered by AB-HWC, creation of family folder, referral and return services, linkage with screening, diagnosis, treatment and follow up. Commensurate allocation of financial resources by government for creation of all the above mentioned services and facilities. Issues relating to governance and capacity, especially in the high focus states. Unavailability of proven community outreach strategies and ways to create ownership by the community of the AB-HWC are additional challenges.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The teams involved in formulating comprehensive Standard Treatment Guidelines, understand the necessity of the programme not as a one-time effort but a continuous process. With this objective, empanelment of hospitals (Hospital empanelment module (HEM 2.0) which would be empowered to synchronise with the STGs has already begun. The empanelment criteria have been drawn from the guidance documents and the minimum requirements for hospitals to get into this criterion is formulated.

Based on the inputs received from Experts and States (SHAs) an interim

7 <https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/172/AU3056.pdf?source=pqals> (Accessed on 24th December 2024).

revision has been done in HBP 2.0⁸ with the addition of a few more packages (now termed as HBP 2.1) which is in the process of being integrated so as to include new packages and procedures for common diseases. After consulting speciality experts, the packages would be finalized and drafted accordingly and STGs for the same would be developed.

This ambitious initiative under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) holds significant potential for enhancing healthcare delivery and achieving global standards. The path forward necessitates the full integration and implementation of the remaining Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs). To ensure effective execution, it is essential to conduct periodic orientation

and training programs for Empanelled Health Care Providers (EHCPs) in various States and Union Territories.

A systematic review of feedback collected from States and hospitals through state mechanisms will be instrumental in strengthening the implementation process of STGs. Additionally, monitoring adherence to these guidelines and evaluating their impact through data analytics, facilitated by robust IT platforms, will be critical. Targeted assessments focusing on specific healthcare packages in selected states can provide valuable insights. These findings can guide necessary modifications and updates to the STG development process over time, ensuring their continued relevance and effectiveness in improving healthcare outcomes.

8 <https://nha.gov.in/img/resources/HBP-2.0-Package-master.pdf> (Accessed on 24th December 2024).

The Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India: Reflections in Parliament

✍ Student Editorial Board

On November 26, 2024, the Constitution of India marked a historic milestone by completing 75 years since its adoption. Over the decades, this monumental document has served as the foundation of India's governance, ensuring the preservation of its democratic structure and the realization of its social, political, and economic aspirations. As the supreme law of the land, the Constitution has not only delineated the framework of governance but also acted as a guiding force for India's evolution as a modern state. Its adaptability and resilience have been demonstrated through numerous amendments, judicial interpretations, and progressive developments that reflect the dynamic aspirations of its people.

To commemorate this landmark achievement, special discussions were held in the Indian Parliament. The Lok Sabha engaged in an exclusive two-day debate on December 13 and 14, 2024, followed by the Rajya Sabha's deliberations on December 16 and 17. These discussions provided a unique platform for representatives across the political spectrum to reflect on the enduring relevance of the Constitution, its foundational values, and the modern challenges it faces. The debates were characterized by a rich interplay of historical

retrospection, contemporary analysis, and visionary outlooks, offering a comprehensive understanding of the Constitution's role in shaping India's journey.

A recurring theme in these discussions was the dynamic nature of the Constitution. Leaders emphasized its inherent flexibility, which has allowed it to remain relevant in the face of changing socio-political and economic contexts. The importance of the Constitution's core principles—justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity—was underscored as essential anchors for navigating the complexities of modern governance. These values were highlighted not only as a legacy of the founding fathers but as imperatives for addressing emerging challenges in a globalized world.

The deliberations also addressed pressing contemporary issues, including the balance between federalism and centralization, the role of the judiciary in upholding constitutional values, and the need for greater inclusivity in governance. The leaders called for a renewed commitment to constitutional morality, urging citizens and institutions alike to uphold the sanctity of this document in fostering democratic governance.

This article examines the highlights of these parliamentary discussions,

showcasing the diverse voices and perspectives that underscore the vibrancy of Indian democracy. As India celebrates 75 years of its Constitution, the reflections and debates serve as a reminder of its pivotal role in shaping the nation's identity while adapting to the evolving needs of its people.

Lok Sabha Session

The debates in the Lok Sabha began with genuine tributes to the draftsmen of the Indian Constitution, in particular Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, widely regarded as the father of the Indian Constitution. Members cutting across party lines praised the farsighted input of the Constituent Assembly, which laid down the foundations of a democratic state. The deliberations took place over two days, on December 13 and 14. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were some of the most prominent people attending the session. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh opened the session by underlining the enduring importance of the Constitution in shaping modern India. The discussion took place for 15 Hours 43 Minutes in which 62 Members took part and was replied to by the Prime Minister¹.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's Opening Speech

Defence minister Rajnath Singh began his speech by remembering all the martyr security personnel who defended the parliament with their lives – which he refers to as the temple of democracy, during the attack on it. In his opening

speech he poetically expressed his gratitude towards the Constituent Assembly members who drafted the Constitution for newly independent India. He praised the Constitution to be a reflection of the aspirations of the people, beyond just being a legal document. By remembering November 26, 1949, when “We, the People of India” adopted, enacted, and gave to ourselves this Constitution, and the dream of Self – Rule was realised; he highlighted the day when the people of India transformed from subjects to citizens—citizens who had fundamental rights and could not only elect their government but also change it through democracy. He emphasised on how the Constitution as a sovereign document lists the responsibilities of the state while also granting constitutional and fundamental rights to its citizens. How it paves the way for nation – building by encompassing all aspects of social, economic, political, and cultural life of the people, and also serves as a moral trajectory for all. How it ensures cooperative federalism by empowering legislature, executive, and judiciary while also providing a system of checks and balances. And how the Constitution reinstates India's glory and paves its way for reaching heights on the global stage and making it an ideal nation once again. It also provides the roadmap for development, equality, justice, fraternity, unity and integrity of nation, and ensures the dignity of its citizens.

He then rejected the notion that our Constitution holds a colonial legacy or

1 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2086475> (Accessed on 25th December 2024).

that it is merely a compilation of borrowed western ideas; he rather emphasised that our constitution is an expression of our civilizational and cultural values; a nectar born from freedom struggle, that was nurtured by the sacrifices of our freedom fighters. Therefore, our Constitution is the outcome of a series of historical events with contributions of great individuals including Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Sarda Bhagat Singh and Veer Savarkar. He highlighted that the Constitution is the outcome of collective effort and consensus, just like Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee had believed it to be. He mentioned a document titled 'Constitution of the Hindustan Free State' 1944, that guaranteed religious freedom to all citizens, protected cultural and linguistic rights, and declared the state to be secular, to ensure national unity and curb separatist tendencies. This document had huge influence on Dr. Mukherjee who also advocated for a republican Constitution based on the principles of liberty and equality. Explaining the western concept of "night – watchman state," proposed by John Stuart Mill, that limits the government's role to providing security; he contrasted it with the concept of "Raj Dharma," mentioned in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata, in which the king was given the authority to implement his duty of governance, but was not considered its source. The king was also bound by Raj Dharma and his powers existed only for the welfare of the people. Therefore, by highlighting the Directive Principles of State Policy mentioned in part IV of the Constitution, he emphasised on Constitution's commitment towards

ensuring welfare, inclusive growth, and the holistic development of its citizens. Further, he mentioned that the government works towards aligning with these principles and values through the spirit of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, and Sabka Prayas."

Highlighting the progressive and transformative nature of our Constitution as a living document, he highlighted the enactment of new laws like the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (Indian Penal Code), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (Indian Civil Protection Code), and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (Indian Evidence Act). He further mentioned government's resolve of "Reform, Perform, and Transform" and inclusive growth through schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Ayushman Bharat Scheme, and PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna. Initiatives like Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam for ensuring women – led development; giving Constitutional status to National Backward Classes Commission in 2018, and providing 10% reservation for economically weaker section in 2019; implementation of our Constitution throughout the nation through abrogation of Article 370, are some of the amendments to the Constitution mentioned in his speech, made by the government to foster inclusive growth.

He emphasised that the original manuscript of our Constitution, especially Part III, which lists Fundamental Rights, features illustrations of Lord Rama, Goddess Sita, and Lord Lakshman, and the original Constitution's cover that depicts paintings from the Ajanta Caves, all symbolise

our rich heritage and glorious history. Quoting Dr. Ambedkar, he highlighted how parliamentary democracy has always been a part of our value system as it also existed in our ancient traditions. He took a moment to honour the tireless efforts and deliberations of patriots like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar, K.M. Munshi, Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee, in the making of the Constitution. Mentioning a book titled "Founding Mothers of the Indian Republic: Gender Politics of the Framing of the Constitution," he honoured the founding mothers of our Constitution. Further he paid tribute to the 11 women who were among those who signed the document on January 24, 1950, including Durgabai Deshmukh, Ammu Swaminathan, Amrit Kaur, Dakshyani Velayudhan, Hansa Mehta, Renuka Ray, Sucheta Kripalani, Purnima Banerjee, Begum Qudsia Aizaz Rasul, Kamla Chaudhary, and Annie Mascarene. He then took pride in the fact that Indians crafted their Constitution themselves after independence, which has also played a successful role in maintaining the world's largest democracy rooted in its cultural values. He also acknowledged the Supreme Court, as the custodian and interpreter of the Constitution and appreciated the institution for safeguarding the Fundamental Rights all these years. Citing India's former Chief Justice, DY Chandrachud who acknowledged the amendment in the Constitution to bring GST Council as a classic example of cooperative federalism; he highlighted the significance of the GST

Council in making people's lives easier. Highlighting that over 80% of citizens are already governed by codified personal laws, he presented the need for a Uniform Civil Code. He then articulated the importance of moving beyond rights and focusing on duties as we witness the 75th anniversary of our Constitution. By presenting, that in Indian culture, religion holds a significant place, he highlighted that among its many meanings, the most important one is 'duty'. Citing Rigveda in which the word "dharma" appears five times in the context of duty, he reiterated how Indian culture, values, and history all emphasize fulfilling one's duties. Viewing the Constitution as the most sacred document, he expressed why every individual in high office must take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution before assuming their duties. Citing Granville Austin and his book 'The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation,' he highlighted how the constitution framers believed that social unity, social revolution, and democracy cannot be achieved separately. How without national unity, democracy would be endangered and there would be little progress in social and economic spheres. He also emphasised that our Constitution has always played a harmonious role between the citizen and the state, and the individual and society.

He concluded his speech by honouring the Indian Constitution for not only working efficiently by ensuring gender equality, environmental protection, and building a strong federal structure, but for also strengthening over the years by withstanding the tides of challenges. Once

again, remembering Dr. Ambedkar, who in his speech on November 4, 1949 quoted renowned philosopher George Grote and said, that the Constitution is both free and moral; he credited its sustainability to the Constitutional Morality. He also emphasised that politics is shaped by the nature of the individuals holding power by quoting Dr. Ambedkar from his “Grammar of Anarchy” speech, delivered on 25 November, 1949. In which he said, “However good a constitution may be, if those who are implementing it are not good, it will prove to be bad. However bad a constitution may be, if those implementing it are good, it will prove to be good.” Therefore, he stressed on our duty to ensure that such a remarkable document created by our founding fathers and mothers is not compromised.²

Member of Lok Sabha - Priyanka Gandhi Vadra’s Speech

Indian National Congress member, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra began her first speech in Parliament on the 75th anniversary of the Indian Constitution by paying homage to all the soldiers, including their families, who have laid their lives at the altar of the nation and its foundational institutions. She remembered that the Constitution was a fruit of India’s deep heritage of “Samvad” or dialogue and co-operative discourse, richly interwoven with the ancient principles of non-violence, truth, and unity of the country. Gandhi characterized the Constitution as a “Suraksha Kavach” or a protective shield that guards justice, fosters

unity, and safeguards freedom of expression. She underscored its importance in giving even the weakest person the strength to fight for justice and claim their rights. Drawing from her interactions with citizens across the country, she stressed that the Constitution infuses people with strength and courage to recognize their rights and demand accountability. She reiterated that the document serves not merely as a legal framework but also as a beacon of hope and empowerment, guaranteeing that every person, regardless of their background, is able to advocate for their rights. Overall, Gandhi underscored the necessity of protecting the Constitution and upholding its principles to foster a more robust and inclusive India.³

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha - Rahul Gandhi’s Speech

In his speech, Rahul Gandhi expressed the very core principles incorporated into the Indian Constitution, especially the concept of “Abhay Mudra” which symbolises fearlessness, truth, and non-violence. He highlighted that the Constitution is the world’s longest written document, but also emphasised that its real essence lies in the deeply ingrained philosophy of the nation. Gandhi said that by reading the Constitution, one can see the vision and thinking of great men like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru. He asked a very pertinent question about the origin of these ideas and clarified that they are very much rooted in

2 <https://youtu.be/AtafzcTa8sM?si=eKqnBI7YfcrKgJgv> (Accessed on 25th December 2024).

3 *Priyanka Gandhi Vadra’s Speech* | *Economic Times* (Accessed on 26th December 2024).

India's rich cultural heritage, inspired by the teachings of Guru Nanak, Buddha, Kabir, and Mahavir. He further stressed that the Constitution is a modern legal document by arguing that its drafting could not have been possible without the knowledge acquired from historical philosophies and customs. That it is an expression of India's dynamic identity, combining historical significance with contemporary relevance. In essence, Rahul Gandhi emphasised that the document serves not only as a legal framework but also embodies the principles that underpin India's democratic and social structure, urging all individuals to respect and uphold its tenets.⁴

Member of Lok Sabha - Mahua Moitra's Speech

All India Trinamool Congress member, Mahua Moitra spoke lengthily during the parliament debates for the 75th anniversary of the Indian Constitution. She did not hesitate in speaking boldly and making a point by stating that the Constitution is not merely a book; it is a life and soul of India's democratic structure.

She presented the insights of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and added the caution mooted by John Stuart Mill: no person should abdicate his freedom to one great leader or vest him with absolute powers because that is enough to threaten the very foundations of democracy. She emphasized that, although the nation was founded by great men, no individual should consider themselves better than the nation or superior to the core

values incorporated into the Constitution.

Moitra highlighted the greater responsibility of the judiciary and media to guard the Constitution and protection of sovereign rights, where democracy thrives. She strongly argued that the Constitution should be treated as the single divine authority within every home, whose ideals should stand above everything else. By recalling the 15 women who comprised the Constituent Assembly, she remembered the courage and the vision that these women offered while laying the foundation principles of democracy in India. She also mentioned the statement made by Vijayalakshmi Pandit regarding freedom not being for the weak-hearted and how protecting the Constitution needs extraordinary strength, thus highlighting the importance of safeguarding the integrity of the Constitution.⁵

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Concluding Speech

Prime Minister Narendra Modi commemorated his speech by honouring the Constitution – makers and portraying his gratitude towards them. He then highlighted how the Indian Constitution has been successful in defying all the scepticisms raised towards its functionality and sustainability. By citing three notable visionaries including Rajrishi Purushottam Das Tandon, Dr. Radhakrishnan, and Dr. Ambedkar, he emphasised on how the idea and practice of republic and democracy is not foreign to India. That India is not just a

4 Rahul Gandhi Speech in Loksabha.

5 Mahua Moitra's Speech in Loksabha.

vast democracy but also the origin of it.

He proudly remembered the founding mothers of Indian Constitution and the profound impact that they had created. While reminiscing Bharat's presidency in the G - 20 Summit that upheld the concept of women - led development, and the unanimously passed Nari Shakti Vandan Act, he emphasised upon the steps taken towards strengthening women participation in Indian democracy. Quoting Baba Saheb Ambedkar, he emphasised the 'Unity of Bharat' as the prerequisite to fulfil the goal of becoming a developed nation by the time we celebrate the centenary of our independence. Further, he highlighted the significant steps taken by the government in fostering unity and equitable development of the nation, including the implementation of GST to promote the concept of "One Nation, One Tax;" providing accessibility of ration card facilities irrespective of one's location through "One Nation, One Ration Card;" making "One Nation, One Health Card" possible through the initiative of Ayushman Bharat; making electricity available to all through "One Nation, One Grid;" extending optical fibre connectivity to every panchayat by democratising technology; recognizing and celebrating the diverse mother tongues through the National Education Policy and by granting due recognition to various Indian languages as classical languages; and inculcating cultural awareness among younger generations through 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' campaign, and Kashi Tamil Sangamam and Telugu Kashi Sangamam institutionalised initiatives.

The Prime minister remembered Baba Saheb Ambedkar as a visionary who dedicated his life for the upliftment of the marginalised sections of the society, and he highlighted his advocacy towards the reservation of marginalised sections, and the promotion of Uniform Civil Code as essential for the unity and modernity of the nation. Further, citing K.M. Munshi's advocacy towards the same, he emphasised on the government's commitment towards establishing a secular civil code. He also stressed on how the amendments made in the constitution including Women Reservation Act 2023 and 10% reservation for poor people in general categories, were accepted by everyone with warmth and understanding. Further he explained how abrogation of Article 370 let Dr. Ambedkar's Constitution to apply across every part of Bharat, including Jammu and Kashmir.

Emphasising on Constitution's direction towards a welfare state, he highlighted the measures taken by the government to guarantee citizens a life of dignity. It includes the following - ensuring that basic amenities like gas cylinders reached every household; implementation of Ayushman Bharat Scheme, ensuring free healthcare for 50 to 60 crore citizens; loan provisions for people above 70 years without a collateral; ensuring that 'Divyangjan' (differently - abled people) have received a more accessible infrastructure, where their wheelchairs can go all the way to the train compartments; introducing the PM SVANidhi scheme, which allows street vendors to get loans from banks without any guarantee; upliftment of the Vishwakarma community by arranging

for loans from banks, providing them with new training and modern tools; the recognition of Transgender community through legal provisions of rights in the Indian Constitution to help them lead a life of dignity and respect; identifying and working for the most backward sections of the Adivasi community through PM JANMAN, under the guidance of the President; introducing the concept of “Aspirational Districts,” and monitoring them regularly online based on 40 parameters, through which many of these Aspirational Districts have reached the level of better-performing districts in their respective states, and some matching the national averages. The Prime Minister then highlighted the introduction of a separate Ministry for Adivasi Affairs and dedicated Ministry for the welfare of the North – East during Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s government; later the establishment of a separate Ministry of Fisheries for the welfare of fishermen community; a separate Ministry of Cooperation for the welfare of the small farmers; the establishment of Ministry of Skill Development to equip young citizens with skills aligned to global need; along with the launch of the Svamitva Yojana that provides ownership documents to marginalized and underprivileged individuals in villages. “When we talk about “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas”, it is not merely a slogan; it is our article of faith.” He emphasised the idea of saturation in governance, ensuring that the benefits of every scheme shall reach all eligible beneficiaries.

By quoting Mahatma Gandhi, “I learned from my uneducated but wise mother that rights naturally flow from the faithful discharge of one’s duties,” the Prime Minister highlighted that the essence of our civilization lies in dharma, i.e. our responsibilities and duties, which could help in transforming the country into a ‘Viksit Bharat.’ Finally, inspired by the spirit of the Constitution, he presented 11 resolutions for the people of Bharat. Some of them include - fulfilling one’s duties, ensuring ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,’ eradicating corruption, adhering to the laws, rules, and traditions of the nation; taking pride in our heritage, respecting the constitution, promoting affirmative actions, becoming a global example in women-led development, ensuring inclusive development of all regions, and the promoting the goal of ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.’⁶

Rajya Sabha Debate

After the deliberations in the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha had detailed discussions on the 75th anniversary of the Indian Constitution on 16th and 17th December 2024. In these sessions, members from different political parties emphasized the significance of the Constitution, its role in the growth of India’s democracy, and the challenges it has faced over the years. The discussion engaged the House for a total time of 17 Hours 41 Minutes in which 80 members took part and was replied to by the Home Minister⁷. The debate highlighted the need to preserve the very principles in

6 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseframePage.aspx?PRID=2084525#:~:text=This%20is%20an%20occasion%20to,us%20as%20we%20move%20forward.> (Assessed on 13.01.2025)

7 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2086475> (Assessed on 13.01.2025)

the Constitution: justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity; as well as face modern issues in order to further strengthen democratic institutions.

Home Minister Amit Shah's Speech:

On the occasion of 75 years since the ratification of the Constitution of India, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, made a speech which fulfilled two prime objectives. The first is to highlight what India has achieved under the umbrella of the Constitution. The second is on how the Constitution has fortified the democratic structure of the country over the last 75 years.

He stated that discussions taking place in both Houses of Parliament would make the importance of the Constitution clear to parliamentarians, youth, and the common citizenry. While considering India's growth since its independence, he remembered the doubts of several countries about the possibility of maintaining unity and becoming self-sufficient. However, he appreciated the efforts of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in holding the country together and its strength. He emphasized that India's democracy has been strengthened with time, especially when compared to the experiences of many neighboring countries in the democratic system of governance. He pointed out that political changes in India have taken place without bloodshed, which speaks for the strength of its democratic structure. Amit Shah declared with pride that India has risen to become the world's fifth-largest economy, surpassing Britain, its former colonial ruler. He also mentioned that more than 80 Members of Parliament took

part in the marathon 31-hour debate on the Constitution. He thought of the progress of India and quoted Maharishi Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda, who had prophesied that one day India would inspire the world with its power and wisdom.

He praised the Constitution of India, calling it the most complex and comprehensively written Constitution in the world. He emphasized that the drafting of the Constitution involved intense debate among a diverse group of 299 people from various communities, religions, and regions. The drafting process took nearly three years, with extensive debates and public consultations, which is not the case in other countries. He said the Constitution, with 295 articles, 22 parts, and 12 schedules, incorporates liberal human values unrivalled by any other constitutional document. He also paid tribute to the members of the Constituent Assembly, which included Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, among others, who had taken key roles in drafting the Constitution. He accepted the vision of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda whose principles form the very fabric of the Constitution. He then outlined a number of key accomplishments of the government, such as the implementation of GST, which has integrated the economy of India, and the NEP passed in 2020. He further appreciated reforms in the criminal justice system wherein laws bequeathed by British rule were replaced with laws drafted by the Indian Parliament itself. He also spoke about welfare initiatives such as the One Nation One Ration Card system, which benefited 80 crore people, and free grain for the needy. He

concluded by quoting Savarkar's words, "O Motherland, life without you is like death," reflecting Savarkar's deep devotion to India.⁸

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Speech

She started her speech by paying tribute to the 389 members of the Constituent Assembly while highlighting the monumental contributions made by the 15 women members. She emphasized that the debates in the Indian parliament to mark the 75th anniversary of the Indian Constitution called for a restatement of the nation's commitment to building a nation that will reflect the promises of the constitution. Sitharaman reflected on seventy-five years of history for the Constitution and pointed out how, despite the changing circumstances with many amendments, it has remained resilient and dynamic. By quoting constitutional expert Dr. Subhash Kashyap she emphasized how the Indian Constitution, like many other constitutions drafted post-World War II, underwent many crises but even still only grew stronger through it through its resilience.

The Constitution is a living document, and the amendments, she said, have deeply influenced the social structure of the country. She quoted Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the chairperson of the drafting committee, who said that the effectiveness of a constitution does not depend on its design but also on the intentions and honesty of those implementing it. She concluded her speech by reiterating the importance of preserving and protecting the ideals of the constitution

to enable the nation to continue its forward momentum and stability.⁹

Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge's Speech:

In his speech, Mallikarjun Kharge paid tribute to the great leaders who envisioned an egalitarian India and contributed to the framing of the Constitution. He highlighted the Karachi Congress session of 1931 headed by Sardar Patel, in which Jawaharlal Nehru introduced proposals for fundamental rights and economic policies that were accepted, and had further pursued the demand for a Constituent Assembly as a central agenda item during the elections of 1937. During this period, Mahatma Gandhi realized the importance of the Constitution and the process that led to its making.

The preamble of the Constitution outlines the principles of equality, liberty, fraternity, and justice, which were mutually agreed upon by its makers. Kharge emphasized that the Constitution was meant to empower all Indians, ensuring equality and justice for every individual, regardless of caste, religion, gender, or economic status. Kharge further emphasized that at a time when many countries were not yet ready to grant equal rights, India granted universal voting rights to the people, including women. He appreciated the drafters of the Constitution, particularly Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, for framing such a document that safeguards the rights of every citizen. Kharge concluded by emphasizing on the need to always safeguard the Constitution and its ideals.¹⁰

8 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2085487> (Assessed on 13.01.2025).

9 Nirmala Sitharaman's Speech in Rajyasabha.

10 Mallikarjun Khar speech in Rajyasabha.

Analysis of the Book – “Who were the Shudras?” by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

✍ Anshika Pandey

Approaching Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s work “Who Were the Shudras,” as a Political Science student while we celebrate the 75th year of Indian Constitution; it has offered a vantage point to revisit the historical social realities of Indian society, and to appreciate its journey of transformation over the years, by inculcating inclusivity and social justice. Studying Dr. Ambedkar’s work about the rigid social stratification has not only helped in understanding the historical structures of social hierarchy, but also in realising how the framework of our glorious Constitution, of which Dr. Ambedkar was the chief architect, has been successful in reshaping the Indian society through its commitment towards safeguarding social justice, equality and human dignity.

Published in 1946, Dr. Ambedkar had dedicated this book to Mahatma Jotiba Fule, whom he regarded as “The Greatest Shudra of Modern India who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes and preached the gospel that for India, social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule.¹”

In the Preface of the book, Dr. Ambedkar emphasises the significance of this study by

explaining how the Chaturvarnya cannot be simplistically viewed as a mere division of society, as it enforced “graded inequality” through legal and penal measures. In his work, he raises two research questions, “Who were the Shudras?” and “How did they become the fourth Varna of Indo – Aryan society?”

The methodology he undertook in his study was to examine sacred texts critically for historical research and to explain the difference between Brahmin and non – Brahmin scholarly approaches. The objective of this was to emphasise on the continuing impact of Varna system on maintaining social hierarchies despite legal changes, and to target the uninformed Shudras as his primary audience.

Understanding Dr. Ambedkar’s views on Shudras

In the first chapter of the book “The Riddle of Shudras,” Dr. Ambedkar critically examines the Purusha Sukta, which provides a theory of the origin of the Universe and describes the creation of the four Varnas from cosmic being Purusha, i.e. Brahmins (priests) from mouth, Kshatriyas (rulers) from arms, Vaishyas (merchants) from thighs, and Shudras (laborers) from feet. He

1 https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/attach/amb/Volume_07.pdf (Accessed on 2nd January 2025).

explains how the elevation of class divisions to divine ideal status and establishing rigid precedence among classes, often contradicted with other Rigvedic accounts. He further analysed certain terminologies including, Savarnas (within four Vranas), Avarnas (outside Varnas), Dvijias (twice born, wears sacred thread), Traivarnikas (top three Vranas), and Ati – Shudras (fifth class – untouchables); and emphasized on the paradox in including Shudras in the Chaturvarnya system, despite their low status and being non – Dvija; while Ati – Shudras, who are similarly non – Dvija and of low status, are placed entirely outside the system. Implying that the classification was more political, which was possibly made through later modifications of the text. He further raises concerns over the metaphorical division of the classes with respect to different body parts for defining their ranking in the social status.

In the second chapter titled “The Brahmanic Theory of the Origin of the Shudras,” he examines various texts including the Rigveda, White Yajurveda (Vajasaneyi Samhita), Black Yajurveda (Taittiriya Samhita), Atharvaveda, Satapatha Brahmana, and Taittiriya Brahmana, to emphasise on how these sources provide contradictory explanations on the origin of Shudras, thus indicating how the multiplicity of theories attempts to justify the existing social hierarchies.

The third chapter on “The Brahmanic theory of the Status of Shudras,” Dr. Ambedkar examines the extensive list of disabilities and penalties imposed on Shudras by Brahmanical laws including,

giving them the lowest place in social order; not allowing sacred acts to take place in their presence; holding little to no value for their lives by prescribing minimal penalties for the atrocities happening towards them; forbidding them from acquiring knowledge and acquiring property; not allowing inter – class marriage; and making them permanently subjugated in their occupation. He further contrasts the Brahmanical laws with the Roman Laws to highlight how the Roman laws too had disabilities but they were removable, and not permanent; and how penalties were usually equal in criminal matters, irrespective of status.

The fourth chapter on Shudras Versus Aryans; fifth on Aryans Against Aryans; and sixth on Shudras and Dasas; all critique the Western theories of Aryan invasion and racial classification. While western writers proposed that Aryans were white - skinned people, who invaded India and created the Vedic literature; Dr. Ambedkar rejects this theory by pointing out that the word “Arya” in the Rigveda was used in 88 places, but never in the racial sense. It was rather used variously to mean citizen, or as a name for India. He highlights that the Rigveda shows no proof of Aryan invasion and the conflicts mentioned in it were religious, not racial. And that even the Dasas and Aryans often united against common enemies. Pointing out the flaws in the western methodology, which assumed European origin of Aryans; racial superiority; colour prejudice; and that common language meant common race; he emphasises that Vedic Aryans had varied complexions – copper, white and black by using Lord Rama and Lord Krishna

as examples. And that as per the Zend Avesta, Varna meant religious doctrine, not colour. Further by citing verses from the Rigveda, he points out that there were two distinct Aryan races in ancient India and that multiple verses in the Rigveda indicated two Aryan communities that were sometimes opposed to each other, which the Western theory doesn't take into account. Further using anthropometric evidence of Sir Herbert Risley's 1901 survey, which identified four racial groups in India, and Dr. Guha's 1936 research that found two racial groups – long - headed Mediterranean race, and short - headed Alpine race originating near Himalayas; Dr. Ambedkar once again questions the Aryan invasion theory. In the sixth chapter, he emphasises that as per the etymology and the appearances of the word Shudra in the Rigveda, it was not linked with the Dasas or Dasyus. Shudras were not slaves or primitives; they participated in king's coronation ceremonies; served as ministers; could have been wealthy according to Vedic texts; and could become Brahmins within 7 generations, according to Manu. He then emphasises that the Dasas and Dasyus may have been separate groups, who likely referred to non – followers of Aryan religion than race.

In the 7th and 8th chapters, Dr. Ambedkar presents a thesis stating that the Shudras were Aryans; they belonged to the Kshatriya class; and that some of the most eminent kings were Shudras. The main

evidence that he uses to explain this theory is through the story of Pajavana, who is mentioned in the Mahabharata as a Shudra who performed sacrifices. The Brahmins performed sacrifices for him and accepted Dakshina from him. Dr. Ambedkar then identified Pajavana with Sudas by citing verses mentioned in the Rigveda. He writes "Sudas was neither Dasa nor Arya. Both the Dasas as well as the Aryas were his enemies. This means that he was a Vedic Aryan."² The 8th chapter explores why Shudras were degraded from Kshatriyas to the fourth Varna. Dr, Ambedkar argues that this degradation resulted from violent conflicts between Shudras and Brahmins. By highlighting the conflicts of notable kings including King Vena, King Pururavas, King Nahusha, King Nimi, and the conflict between Vasishtha and Vishvamitra; Dr. Ambedkar observed that these conflicts have been misinterpreted as Brahmin vs. Kshatriya, but they were actually conflicts between Brahmins and Shudras.

The 9th and 10th chapters, explore at length the phenomenon of the Upanayana and the adoption of the Gotra, and how it gave immense agency in the hands of the Brahmins to impose hegemony³. Here Dr. Ambedkar highlights that the Brahmins had the exclusive right to perform the Upanayana; they also had the right to say whose Upanayana they would perform and who's not; the support of the Brahmins for the performance of Upanayana could

2 <https://www.bbau.ac.in/Docs/FoundationCourse/TM/MPDC405/Block-2%20Ambedkar%20on%20women-1.pdf> (Accessed on 2nd January 2025).

3 <https://www.allaboutambedkaronline.com/post/volatile-revisions-of-history-through-theory-analysing-who-were-the-shudras> (Accessed on 2nd January 2025).

be purchased by money; the denial of Upanayana by the Brahmins was possible even on political grounds; and the right of appeal against the denial of an Upanayana by a Brahmin was only to a Vidvat-Parishad-an assembly for which a Brahmin alone was eligible to be a member.

In the final chapters – “The Story of Reconciliation” and “The Theory in the Crucible,” Dr. Ambedkar emphasis that Shudras were originally an Aryan community of solar race; they were initially ranked as Kshatriyas in Indo – Aryan society; originally there were only three varnas (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas); a feud happened between Shudra kings and Brahmins; due to this conflict, Brahmins refused to invest Shudras with the sacred thread; and that the loss of sacred thread let to Shudra’s social degradation below Vaishyas, forming the fourth Varna. Further he highlighted the riddles in the text including – why Vedic rishis wished glory to the supposed “non – Aryan” Shudras; why Shudras could perform sacrifices like Ashva – Medha; how Sudas, who was seen as a Shudra, could compose Rigveda hymns; how Shudras could be wealthy despite their restrictions on acquiring property; and how Shudras could be kings if their duty was to serve other Varnas. By posing these questions, Dr. Ambedkar explains his theory on the original status of Shudras.

Reflections and Conclusion

By the time Dr. Ambedkar started writing on history, three dominant modes of writing history had already emerged – The Western methodology following the theories of common Indo – European heritage of Aryans and the supremacy of white race; second was the Orthodox methodology that viewed Indian society as a homogenous cultural group and saw its essence in spirituality, as opposed to the materialist Western civilization; and third was the Marxian methodology of viewing history from base – superstructure perspective, where the historical past was based on the forces of production. Further, the British periodised Indian history on the basis of religion such as – Buddhist Period, Hindu period and the Muslim period. Dr. Ambedkar, however wanted to locate the non – Brahminic society in the historical realm.⁴

His research on “Who Were the Shudras?” emphasises how social hierarchies often result from political conflicts rather than natural or divine order. It also helps us in understanding that exploring historical truth can be empowering for oppressed communities and could support social reform movements. Therefore, through this reading we can better appreciate the profound moral vision that shaped our Constitutional Morality, and realise our duty towards preserving its values and principles.

4 Ibid

Reflections on the Previous Edition

I have gone through the complete article; it is very informative and up to the mark. I must congratulate you and your team for the efforts taken for this article. Wishing you all the best.

- *Mr. Rakesh Rao, Founder and Research Director, Core Heritage*

The Political Science Department deserves accolades for publishing the second issue of their monthly research-oriented bulletin. Congratulations to the editorial team and all the contributors.

- *Dr. Chander Pal Singh, Associate Professor, P.G.D.A.V. College, University of Delhi*

This is an excellent and commendable initiative by the Political Science Department.

- *Dr. Neena Bansal, Associate Professor, Kamla Nehru College, University of Delhi*

All the best to the Samvaad editorial team! Wishing you continued success in this wonderful initiative. Keep up the great work.

- *Dr. Bhuwan Jha, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Delhi*

All the best to the Samvaad editorial team! May this initiative become a DU hit and inspire everyone across the university. Keep up the amazing work.

- *Manoj Kumar, VIITI Research Foundation, New Delhi*

The interview with the founder of CORE Heritage Museum was a delightful read. As a history student, it was enlightening to learn about the efforts of Mr. Rakesh in preserving war literature and artefacts. The subtle nuances in Maratha and Mughal warfare technology were an interesting historical snippet. Samvaad has outdone itself in this edition of their newsletter.

- *Swadha Satpathy, History Honours 2nd Year, Sri Venkateshwara College, University of Delhi*

The Samvaad Newsletter offers a balanced mix of academic, cultural, and contemporary topics. Socio-political themes, cultural heritage pieces, and global issues ensure relevance, while student contributions add uniqueness. Visual aids and creative content enhance engagement; however, including more infographics and lighter content could broaden its appeal. Overall, it is both insightful and engaging.

- *Roqaiya, Executive Head, Samvaad Political Science, 3rd Year*

I recently read this newsletter, and I found it very impressive. The content is well-written and engaging. As a second-year student, I really appreciate such initiatives that are both informative and inspiring. Looking forward to more such editions.

- *Utsav Sharma, Political Science Honours 2nd Year*

As a Stats Honours student, I really appreciate the effort put into this newsletter. The content is not only informative but also very engaging. The inclusion of a data chart was a great touch—it made the information more interactive and easier to understand.

- *Naman Singhal 3rd Year B.sc. Honours, Treasurer (Sankhyiki)*



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THE IDEA OF BHARATVARSHA THROUGH YOUR LENS .

DATE: 31ST JANUARY 2025



TIME: 11:00 AM

VENUE: OLD SEMINAR HALL

PROF. ABHAY PRASAD SINGH
TEACHER IN-CHARGE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

PROF. KRISHNA SHARMA
PRINCIPAL
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TOPIC:
ARE CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES BEING USED AS POLITICAL TOOL ?
EMPHASIS ON ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE AND ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA.

DATE: 31ST JANUARY 2025
TIME: 11:00 AM
VENUE: OLD SEMINAR HALL




PROF. ABHAY PRASAD SINGH
TEACHER IN-CHARGE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

PROF. KRISHNA SHARMA
PRINCIPAL
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