संवाद

BULLETIN

of Political Science Department
P.G.D.A.V. College, University of Delhi

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Editor-in-Chief Message

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present the second edition of the Political Science Department's newsletter संवाद, which exemplifies the intellectual rigor and cultural awareness, that are hallmarks of our institution. This edition offers a rich array of articles, thoughtfully engaging with themes of academic and societal relevance.

The newsletter provides a comprehensive exploration of India's socio-political, cultural, and technological landscape. It delves into the significant milestone of 75 years of the Indian Constitution, reflecting on its foundational principles and transformative role in shaping India's democratic ethos. The edition analyses the New Education Policy 2020 and its transformative potential for India's educational ecosystem. Geopolitical insights are provided through comprehensive coverage of the Quad Summit 2024 and a nuanced discussion on digital colonialism and cyber sovereignty, highlighting India's strategic positioning in the global digital arena.

Further, the newsletter pays homage to cultural icon like Guru Nanak, celebrating their timeless wisdom and philosophical contributions. The data insights section offers an in-depth analysis of electoral dynamics. Additionally, an incisive analysis of recent elections covering the Maharashtra and Jharkhand Assembly elections, and the US Presidential elections provide insights intro the complexities of democratic processes.

ThePress Freedom Index segment critically examines the state of media independence and challenges. Cultural celebrations find their space with a detailed exploration of Chhath Puja, showcasing the rich traditional practices that continue to bind communities. An exclusive interview section with an expert on war artifacts, offering a unique perspective on the interplay of history, diplomacy, and material culture, is a notable highlight. I commend the department for curating such an insightful and comprehensive newsletter and extend my best wishes for an enriching reading experience.

Warm regards,

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

Editor Message

Dear Readers,

It is with immense pride and enthusiasm we present the second edition of our newsletter संवाद, a testament to our dedication to fostering dialogue and exchanging ideas that contribute to societal and national progress.

This edition of the संवाद Bulletin is expression of our collective academic resolve for mapping the vertiginous changes in the geo-economics and geo-strategies with discernible shifts in the terms of trades and the referents of the national interests of the stake holders in the comity of nations.

As we celebrate 75 years of the Indian Constitution, this moment invites reflection on its extraordinary journey. More than a legal framework, the Constitution embodies ideals of justice, liberty, and equality, steering the evolution of our democracy in post-independence Indian.

The present issue encapsulates the foundational imaginings of the political economy and the interlinkages between the heritage, knowledge systems, imperatives of history and the contingent prerequisites of posterity.

Philosophical foundations, heritage of traditions and policy visions are instricably intertwined with trajectories of their own therefore the contributors to this volume have engaged to the process analytically.

This edition explores diverse, contemporary themes. Dr. Pawan Singh's article, "Press Freedom Index: Biased Ranking," critiques global press freedom metrics, while R. Abimathi's "Digital Colonialism and Cyber Sovereignty" examines digital age dynamics on global power. The "Voter turnout in parliamentary elections and increasing percentage of women." offers an engaging analysis of voter trends in India. Insightful election reviews by Bhawesh Binwal and Ayush Tripathi on the U.S. Presidential and Maharashtra Assembly Elections 2024 enrich this issue.

On cultural dimensions, Gaurav Singh's "Nanak Naam Ek" and Abhayraj Singh's article on 'Chhath Puja' underscore the enduring value of our rich traditions. Hemant Yadav's analysis of the National Education Policy 2020 broaden the scope of our national policy discussions.

An insightful interview with Mr. Rakesh Rao emphasizes preserving India's artefacts heritage, while Krisha's review of The India Way offers a nuanced take on evolving foreign policy.

– Prof. Abhay Prasad Singh
Teacher-In-Charge

भारतीय संविधान का 75 वर्ष
एकात्मता का जीवंत ग्रंथ

✎ भानु कुमार

26 नवंबर, 1949 को भारत की संविधान सभा ने भारत के संविधान को स्वीकार किया, जो 26 जनवरी, 1950 से पूर्ण रूप से प्रभावी हुआ। प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के व्यक्तिगत पहल पर 2015 से संविधान को स्वीकार करने की तारीख़ 26 नवम्बर को संविधान दिवस के रूप में मानने की शुरुआत हुई। इस तारीख का महत्व इसी तथ्य से समझा जा सकता है कि ब्रिटिश हुकूमत के शासन की पीड़ा से स्वतंत्र हुआ भारत, मात्र 2 वर्ष 11 महीने और 18 दिनों में विश्व का सबसे बड़ा एवं लिखित संविधान बना चुका था। यही कारण है कि आज हमारी लोकतांत्रिक ढांचे की आधारशिला उतनी है मज़बूत है जितना लिच्छवि और वैशाली के गणराज्यों में होता था। साथ ही इस ग्रंथ ने 75 वर्षों से राष्ट्र की प्रगति को जिस प्रकार आकार दिया है उससे आज भारत विकसित होने के पथ पर अग्रसर है। संक्षिप्त में कहा जाए तो इस लेख का उद्येश्य वही है जो राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मू ने संविधान दिवस के उपलक्ष्य पर कही थी, "तीन-चौथाई सदी की संवैधानिक यात्रा में राष्ट्र ने जो पाठ सीखे हैं, उन्हें अगली पीढ़ियों तक पहुंचाना आवश्यक है।"[1] लेख में संविधान के निर्माण और इसके पश्चात् के मंथन पर विस्तृत विमर्श है। किस प्रकार इस मंथन से निकले अमृत ने भारतीयों को अधिकार, न्याय, समानता, स्वतंत्रता और बंधुत्व जैसे मूलभूत अधिकार से सुशोभित किया, वहीं जब विषपान करने का समय आया तो आपातकाल में लगभग दो वर्षों तक संविधान स्वयं निलकंठ बन गया।

ब्रिटिश हुक्मरानों को संविधान निर्माण से समस्या:

स्वतंत्रता संग्राम में स्वाधीनता की माँग का सबसे बड़ा आधार स्व-शासन था, जो बिना स्वयं निर्मित संविधान के संभव नहीं था। ब्रिटिश सरकार, भारतीयों को इस योग्य नहीं मानती थी कि वे अपने व्यापक विविधताओं को ध्यान में रखते हुए एक समग्र विधि-ग्रंथ बना सकें। 1925 में भारत के राज्य सचिव, लॉर्ड बोरखेनहेड ने भारतीयों को चुनौती दी, "उन्हें एक ऐसा संविधान तैयार करने दें जिसमें भारत के लोगों के बीच सामान्य सहमति का एक उचित स्तर हो।"[2] इस चुनौती को 1927 में साइमन कमीशन का विधेयक प्रस्तुत करते हुए पुनः दोहराया गया।[3]

संविधान निर्माण पर ब्रिटिश सरकार के बड़बोलेपन का यह सिलसिला यहीं नहीं रुका। जब संविधान सभा का काम शुरू हुआ, तो चर्चिल और साइमन जैसे नेताओं ने संविधान सभा के बारे में अपमानजनक टिप्पणियाँ करना शुरू कर दिया। राजेंद्र प्रसाद के शब्दों में, उन्होंने संविधान सभा का अपमान भी किया।[4] चर्चिल ने संविधान सभा के बारे में कहा, "पिछली बैठक में सभा जिस रूप में बैठी थी, उसमें हिन्दुस्तान की केवल एक बड़ी जाति का प्रतिनिधित्व हुआ था।"[5] साइमन ने इसे "हिंदुओं की एक सभा"[6] घोषित कर दिया। इन तथ्यों को साझा करने का उद्देश्य यह है कि ब्रिटिश मानसिकता भारत के प्रति कैसी थी, इसे समझना जरूरी है, जिसमें आज भी व्यापक बदलाव नहीं हुआ है।

1. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2077417 (Accessed on 29th November 2024).
2. Dr. Sudarsan Pradhan, *Making of the Indian Constitution*, Odisha Review, 2020,p.1.
3. https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/763238/1/cad_20-011947_hindi.pdf#search=null%201947, p.1. (Accessed on 12th November 2024).
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/763514/1/cad_26-11-1949_hindi.pdf, p.4247. (Accessed on 29th November 2024).

संविधान: लोकतंत्र का यंत्र

भारतीय संविधान के 75 वर्ष की यात्रा सिर्फ़ हमारे लिए उत्सव का विषय नहीं है। बल्कि इसके महत्व को समझने का भी समय है। व्यापकता में।ताकि भारत का भविष्य सुरक्षित रह सके। इस यात्रा का महत्व इस बात से समझा जा सकता है, कि जिन उद्देश्यों से संविधान निर्माताओं ने इसे निर्मित किया उसमें यह पूर्ण रूप से सफल रहा है। अर्थात् लोकतंत्र के सफलता का संचालन यंत्र। संविधान सभा के अध्यक्ष राजेंद्र प्रसाद ने 25 नवम्बर 1949 को अपने भाषण में स्पष्ट किया था, "संविधान एक यंत्र के समान एक निष्प्राण वस्तु है। उसके प्राण तो वे लोग हैं जो उस पर नियंत्रण रखते हैं और उसका प्रवर्तन करते हैं।"[7] उपराष्ट्रपति जगदीप धनकड के शब्दों में इस लोकतंत्र के यंत्र को और व्यापक रूप से समझा जा सकता है, अपने संविधान दिवस (2024) के भाषण में उन्होंने कहा कि "संविधान निर्माताओं ने लगभग तीन वर्षों में हमारे देश की नियति को जो आकार दिया, मर्यादा और समर्पण का जो उदाहरण प्रस्तुत किया, और असंगत तथा मतभेदों वाले मुद्दों को सर्वसम्मति और समझदारी से जिस प्रकार सुलझाया।उसी का परिणाम यह उत्कृष्ट संविधान है।[8] अर्थात् संविधान निर्माण से लेकर वर्तमान तक भारतीय लोकतंत्र के सफलता के यंत्र के रूप में ही कार्य कर रहा है। साथ ही समय के साथ संविधान में लोगों की बढ़ती आस्था इसके और भी कुशल होने का उदाहरण है।

लेकिन इसे एक यंत्र के रूप में संविधान निर्माताओं ने भी गढ़ा था। इसीलिए उनके विचारों का परीक्षण भी आव्यशक है। 25 नवंबर 1949 को संविधान सभा में बी आर अम्बेडकर ना कहा था, "यदि हम लोकतंत्र को केवल रूप में ही नहीं वरन् यथार्थ में बनाये रखना चाहते हैं तो हमें क्या करना चाहिये? मेरे विचारानुसार सबसे पहले हमें यह करना चाहिए कि अपने सामाजिक और आर्थिक उद्देश्यों की पूर्ति के लिए हम संवैधानिक रीतियों को दृढ़ता पूर्वक अपनायें।"[9] अम्बेडकर ने संविधान की सफलता को प्राप्त करने को लेकर जो बात कही थी, वह सदा प्रासंगिक रहने वाली बात है।उनके अनुसार संविधान के सवीयकर्ता से ही भारत भविष्य में सुरक्षित रह पाएगा। तथा अतीत में हुए भूल को सुधार पाएगा। उनके अनुसार, "हमें केवल राजनैतिक लोकतंत्र से ही सन्तुष्ट नहीं हो जाना चाहिये। अपने राजनैतिक लोकतंत्र को हमें सामाजिक लोकतंत्र का रूप भी देना चाहिये। सामाजिक लोकतंत्र का क्या अर्थ है? इसका अर्थ जीवन के उस मार्ग से है जो स्वातंत्र्य, समता और बंधुत्व को जीवन के सिद्धांतों के रूप में अभिज्ञात करता है।[10] 1968 में बी शिवा राव की पुस्तक 'द फ़्रेमिंग ऑफ़ इंडियाज कॉन्स्टिट्यूशन: ए स्टडी' के भूमिका में तत्कालीन राष्ट्रपति एस राधाकृष्णन ने संविधान के महत्व को व्यापक रूप में स्पष्ट किया, जो आज भी प्रासंगिक है। उनके अनुसार "हमारे संविधान ने वयस्क मताधिकार को अपनाया है। यह मनुष्य द्वारा सामाजिक और आर्थिक अन्याय को समाप्त करने और मानव मस्तिष्कों को बंद करने वाली दीवारों को तोड़ने के लिए तैयार किया गया सबसे शक्तिशाली यंत्र है।"[11] आज इसका स्पष्ट उदाहरण है भारत में संसद से लेकर ग्राम पंचायत तक इस प्रणाली पर टिका हुआ है।

आपातकाल के संकट में संविधान:

स्वतंत्र भारत में संविधान पर एक समय संकट का बादल छाया था। 1975 से 77 तक लगे आंतरिक आपातकाल में संविधान के मूल्यों के साथ छेड़छाड़ करने की कोशिश की गयी। 26 फ़रवरी 1976 को तत्कालीन कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष देवकांत बरुआ ने सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह के अध्यक्षता में 12 सदस्यीय कमिटी बनाई। कमिटी को 'कामागाटारु नगर प्रस्ताव' को लागू करने की ज़िम्मेदारी दी गई। जिसका तात्पर्य यह था कि, संविधान की समीक्षा हो जिससे संविधान को जीवंत बनाया जा सके।[12] हालाँकि तत्कालीन विधि आयोग

7   https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2077380 (Accessed on 29th November 2024).

8   https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/763515/1/cad_25-111949_hindi.pdf#search=null%201949, p.4225. (Accessed on 29th November 2024).

9   Ibid, p.4226.

10   B. Shiva Rao, *The Framing Of India's Constitution A Study,*1968, IIPA, p.6.

11   Ram Bahadur Rai, *Bhartiya Samvidhan: Ankahi Kahani,* 2022, Prabhat Prakashan, p.10.

12   Ibid.

के अध्यक्ष पी वी गजेंद्रगडकर ने इंदिरा गांधी को इस कमिटी के सुझाव के आधार पर संविधान में संशोधन न करने की सलाह दी। किंतु 42वाँ संविधान संशोधन किया गया। राम बहादुर राय इसे संविधान का पुनर्लेखन मानते है।[13] संविधान पर इस कहर की आग आपातकाल के बाद भी राजनीति को झुलसाती रही है। यह दुर्भाग्य की बात ही है कि जिस वर्ष संविधान में व्यापक संशोधन का प्रस्ताव पारित हुआ, वह वर्ष संविधान की रजत जयंती का वर्ष था। 75 वर्ष के इस अवसर पर वर्तमान राजनीति में उन भूल को सुधारने की माँग पुनः तीव्र हो चुकी है। संविधान निर्माताओं ने जिन शब्दों को स्वीकार नहीं किया था, उसे प्रस्तावना में सम्मिलित करना, कितना न्यायोचित था? यह प्रश्न भी आज विमर्श का विषय बना हुआ है। राम बहादुर राय मानते हैं कि, "संविधान की प्रस्तावना में जीवनमूल्य है। भारत की संस्कृति है। उसकी श्रेष्ठ परम्पराएँ हैं। वे उद्येशिका में रहनी चाहिए। किसी राजनीतिक विचारधारा का अर्थ देने वाले शब्द के लिए उद्येशिका में कोई जगह नहीं बनाई जा सकती है।"[14]

सभी के उम्मीदों की पूर्ति :

स्वतंत्र भारत में संविधान भारत के अंतिम जन की इक्षा पूर्ति का आदर्श साधन बन कर उभरी है। राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मु के अनुसार "हमारा संविधान एक जीवंत और प्रगतिशील दस्तावेज है।[15] इसीलिए आज संविधान के माध्यम से लोगों के जीवन पीड़ा को दूर करने में कार्यपालिका तत्पर है। स्वतंत्र भारत की अधिकांश सरकारों ने जन भावना के अनुरूप ही कार्य किया है। विधायिका ने अधिनियमों द्वारा लोगों की आकांक्षाओं को अभिव्यक्ति दी, कार्यपालिका ने समाज के सभी वर्गों, विशेषकर कमजोर वर्गों के विकास के लिए अनेक कदम उठाए, तथा सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के प्रयासों से देश की न्यायपालिका न्यायिक प्रणाली को अधिक प्रभावी बनाने का प्रयास अभी भी निरंतर जारी है।यह सभी इसीलिए संभव

हो पा रहा है क्योंकि संविधान इन सभी संस्थाओं का पथ प्रदर्शक बनी हुई है। इसका सबसे बड़ा उदाहरण है संविधान में 106 संशोधन। जिसके द्वारा विकास और अधिकार को व्यापकता प्रदान किया गया है। नारी वंदन अधिनियम 2023 इसका सबसे तात्कालिक उदाहरण है। इसके अलावे भी इन संशोधनों का अध्ययन इस विचार को स्पष्ट करता है की भारत लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों को न्यायोचित रूप से स्थापित करने के सदा प्रगतिशील रहा है, और यह संभव हो पाया है तो केवल भारतीय संविधान के कारण। संविधान दिवस के उपलक्ष्य पर 26 नवंबर 2024 को राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मु ने कहा कि "हमारा संविधान हमारे लोकतांत्रिक गणराज्य की सुदृढ़ आधारशिला है। हमारा संविधान हमारी सामूहिक और व्यक्तिगत गरिमा सुनिश्चित करता है।"[16] अर्थात् संविधान में समूहिक विश्वास भारत के सर्वांगीण विकास किया सूत्र बनी रहेगी।

75 वर्ष की संवैधानिक यात्रा: विश्व को एकात्मता का संदेश

वैश्विक स्तर पर संविधान की यात्रा हमारे लिए गर्व की अनुभूति करवाता है। भारत आज न सिर्फ इस तथ्य को स्थापित करने सफल हुआ है की, 'भारत लोकतंत्र की जननी' है बल्कि इस आधार को भी मज़बूत किया है कि विविधताओं में सबसे न्यायोचित शसान प्रणाली भी भारत के पास हीं है। अगर हम दुनिया के अन्य देशों की स्थिति देखें, जो उपनिवेशवाद से स्वतंत्र हुए, तो कई देशों में संविधान या तो विफल हो गए या फिर उन्होंने अपनी प्रगति में बाधाएँ महसूस की। द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध के अंत में, दुनिया में केवल 12 संवैधानिक लोकतंत्र स्थापित थे।[17] 1987 तक यह संख्या बढ़कर 193 संयुक्त राष्ट्र के सदस्य देशों में से 66 हो गई, और 2003 तक यह आंकड़ा लगभग दोगुना होकर 121 हो गया।[18] वर्ल्ड पॉपुलेशन रिव्यू के अनुसार, 2024 तक 201 देशों ने अपने संविधान को स्वीकृति दी है।[19] हालांकि, वास्तविकता इससे काफी अलग है। भारत के पड़ोसी देश जैसे नेपाल, श्रीलंका, पाकिस्तान,

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13   Ram Bahadur Rai, *Supreme Court ka Sahi Aashay Samajhne*, Yugvarta, 01-15 December 2024, p.6.

14   https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2077417 (Accessed on 1st December 2024).

15   https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2077417 (Accessed on 1st December 2024).

16   Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century: 1914–1991, Abacus*, 1995, p.112.

17   Samuel Issacharoff, *Populism versus Democratic Governance*, GLT, p. 445.

18   https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-with-constitutions (Accessed on 18th November 2024).

19   https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2077771 (Accessed on 1st December 2024).

म्यांमार और अफगानिस्तान या तो अपने संविधान की रक्षा करने में विफल हो गई या इसे कई बार पूरी तरह से संशोधित कर दिया, जिसके कारण राजनीतिक अस्थिरता उत्पन्न हुई है। इस अशांत स्थिति के बीच, विश्व पटल पर भारत एक संवैधानिक राज्य का प्रतीक बनकर उभरा है, विशेष रूप से उन तीसरी दुनिया के देशों के लिए जो राजनीतिक स्थिरता चाहते हैं, और शेष विश्व के लिए भी। भारत की 75 वर्ष की संवैधानिक यात्रा पूरे विश्व के लिए इस बात का स्पष्ट संदेश है कि विविधता के साथ जीते हुए एकात्मता को कैसे स्वीकार किया जा सकता है।

संविधान: वर्तमान और भविष्य का मार्गदर्शक

प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के अनुसार, "हमारा संविधान हमारे वर्तमान और भविष्य का मार्गदर्शक है"[20], इस विचार को स्पष्ट करता है कि भारत की शांति और समरस विकास की यात्रा में संविधान ही ऐसा तंत्र है और रहेगा जो सभी चुनौतियों से निपटने में मदद करता रहेगा। संविधान ने पिछले 75 वर्षों में सामने आई विभिन्न चुनौतियों से निपटने के लिए जो सूत्र नीति निर्माताओं को दिया है, उसको लेकर सभी में आम सहमति रही है। यही कारण है की भारत में सभी विवादों का अंतिम समाधान संविधान रहा है। कभी किसी ने संविधान की सीमा को पार करने की चेष्टा न की है और भारतीयों का संवैधानिक स्मृति इन्हें ऐसा करने भी नहीं देगी। आज देश जिस भारत की संकल्पना पर कार्य कर रहा है, संविधान ही उसका सबसे प्रमुख आधार ग्रंथ बन कर उभरा है। प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के शब्दों में "आज प्रत्येक नागरिक का लक्ष्य विकसित भारत का निर्माण करना है। विकसित भारत का मतलब है एक ऐसा स्थान, जहाँ प्रत्येक नागरिक को जीवन की गुणवत्ता और सम्मान मिले। सामाजिक न्याय सुनिश्चित हो, और यह बिना संविधान की भावना का सम्मान की बिना संभव नहीं है।"[21] इसीलिए ज़रूरत इस बात की है कि भविष्य में संविधान को देश की नई चुनौतियों से निपटने के लिए अनुकूलित करने में, भारतीय समाज को और अधिक समृद्ध और सशक्त बनाया जाए।

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20   https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2077771 (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

21   https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2077771 (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

Press Freedom Index: Biased Ranking

✎ **Dr. Pawan Singh**

In the previous edition, a detailed critique of the Global Hunger Index highlighted its biases against India and the Global South, reflecting broader inequalities in global governance. Building on this analysis, the current issue critically examines the methodology of the Global Freedom Index, questioning its perceived anti-India bias. Published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the index has faced significant criticism over the years, with many questioning its ideological basis and transparency. RSF's recent rankings seem to downplay India's democratic strength, which raises concerns about the politicization of such indices. This is particularly relevant as India celebrates 75 years of constitutional democracy, sparking broader discussions on the impact of global indices on the Global South.

Classification

The Press Freedom Map provides a visual representation of the global press freedom landscape based on the scores assigned to countries in the index. These scores are categorized into five distinct classifications, each represented by a specific colour.[1] Countries scoring between 85 and 100 points are classified as "good" and marked in green, while those scoring between 70 and 85 points are deemed "satisfactory" and shown in yellow. Scores ranging from 55 to 70 points fall under the "problematic" category, represented by light orange, whereas countries scoring between 40 and 55 points are categorized as "difficult" and marked in dark orange. Finally, the "very serious" category, for scores ranging from 0 to 40 points, is denoted by dark red. This map thus serves as a crucial tool for understanding the geographical disparities in press freedom worldwide.

Methodology

The assessment of press freedom in each country or territory is based on five contextual indicators, which collectively capture the multifaceted nature of press freedom: political context, legal framework, economic context, sociocultural context, and safety.[2] Each indicator produces a subsidiary score ranging from 0 to 100, contributing equally to the overall score. All questions and sub-questions within each indicator are weighted equally.

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1. https://rsf.org/en/methodology-used-compiling-world-press-freedom-index-2024?year=2024&data_type=general (Accessed on 6th November 2024).
2. Ibid.

The political context indicator, consisting of 33 questions, evaluates the degree of media autonomy in relation to political pressures, the acceptance of diverse journalistic approaches, and the media's role in holding political actors accountable. The legal framework indicator, with 25 questions, examines whether journalists can operate without censorship, judicial sanctions, or excessive restrictions, and whether they have equitable access to information and protection from violence.

The economic context, also with 25 questions, explores the impact of government policies, non-state actors like advertisers, and media owners prioritizing business interests over journalistic independence. The sociocultural context, consisting of 22 questions, assesses societal pressures, including discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, and religion, or cultural norms that discourage certain types of coverage.

Finally, the safety indicator, made up of 12 questions and an "abuses score," evaluates the risks journalists face, including bodily harm, psychological distress, and professional harm. These indicators together provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating press freedom globally.

Mind games against those countries whom you don't like[3]

India ranks 159th[4] in the 2024 World Press Freedom Index (WPFI), published annually by the Paris-based organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF). This reflects a marginal improvement from its 2023 position of 161 out of 180 countries but highlights the persistent challenges faced by the Indian media landscape. Within South Asia, Pakistan (152nd) and Sri Lanka (150th) rank slightly higher, underscoring a similarly restrictive environment for journalistic freedom across the region.

The WPFI evaluates 180 countries on the extent to which journalists can work freely and independently. In the Asia-Pacific region, recognized as the world's second most challenging for press freedom, five countries are among the ten most dangerous globally for media personnel: Myanmar (171st), China (172nd), North Korea (177th), Vietnam (174th), and Afghanistan (178th). Notably, unlike previous years, no Asia-Pacific nation is listed among the top 15 countries in the Index, reflecting the region's increasingly constrained media environment.

India's ranking in the WPFI has seen a steady decline since the Index's inception in 2002, when it ranked 80th. By 2010, India had dropped to 122nd, followed by further declines to 131st in 2012 and 159th in 2024. This downward trajectory has ignited widespread debate among media professionals, political leaders, policymakers, and civil society actors, as well as on social media. These discussions often call into question the methodology

3. https://www.firstpost.com/explainers/jaishankar-world-press-freedom-index-mind-games-ranking-process-controversial-12561312.html (Accessed on 6th November 2024).

4. https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2024 (Accessed on 6th November 2024).

and evaluative frameworks of the WPFI, particularly its contextual relevance to diverse democracies like India.[5]

Saumya Chakrabort, a consultant for NITI Aayog's DEMO project, highlighted in her article that when a limited sample of approximately 150 respondents and 18 NGOs is tasked with evaluating 83 questions for each country, the likelihood of bias and a disconnect from the actual political and social realities becomes considerable. With each respondent assessing only one country's parameters, it is implausible for any individual to provide an accurate and comprehensive evaluation of press freedom. This raises concerns about the objectivity of the World Press Freedom Index (WPFI) rankings, suggesting they may be inherently subjective. Such limitations could also explain the reluctance of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) to disclose the parameter scores or even anonymized responses from individual countries, further casting doubt on the transparency and credibility of the index.

A former Prime Minister of Singapore[6] characterized the World Press Freedom Index (WPFI) as "a subjective measure computed through the prism of Western liberals." Additionally, scholars and media professionals in the United Kingdom have critiqued the index,[7] asserting that press freedom indices often rely on a homogenized conception of mass media, which in turn facilitates simplistic comparisons between countries. Such perspectives highlight the limitations of these indices in capturing the diversity and complexity of media landscapes across different political and cultural contexts.

Criticism of the World Press Freedom Index's (WPFI) credibility has been voiced by several prominent Indian leaders, reflecting broader scepticism about the methodology and criteria used by such global indices. India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, expressed his surprise at the country's poor ranking during an interactive session on the Modi government's foreign policy, remarking, "I was amazed at our number. I thought we had the most uncontrollable press, and somebody is getting something fundamentally wrong. Afghanistan was freer than us. Can you imagine? Look, these are all—I mean, I see the democracy index, freedom index, religious freedom index, and press freedom index."[8] His comments highlight concerns about the ideological assumptions and the applicability of these indices, particularly for a complex and pluralistic society like India.

In a similar vein, in 2022, when India was ranked 150th on the WPFI, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur voiced his disagreement

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5.   https://www.niti.gov.in/deciphering-world-press-freedom-index (Accessed on 6th November 2024).

6.   Ibid.

7.   Ibid.

8.   https://www.firstpost.com/explainers/jaishankar-world-press-freedom-index-mind-games-ranking-process-controversial-12561312.html (Accessed on 7th November 2024).

with the index's findings. He cited issues such as a "very low sample size," the lack of consideration for democratic principles, and a "questionable and non-transparent methodology." Thakur made these remarks in response to questions from Congress MP in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and AAP leader Sanjay Singh, also emphasized that the government remains committed to safeguarding the right to freedom of speech and expression as enshrined under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.

Conclusion

Sanjeev Sanyal and Aakanksha Arora, in their working paper "Why India Does Poorly on Global Perception Indices," advocate that independent Indian think tanks should be encouraged to develop similar perception-based indices for the world to break the monopoly of a handful of Western institutions.[9] This initiative would challenge the monopoly of a handful of Western institutions that dominate global rankings, often imposing narratives that fail to account for the complexities of nations like India. By creating alternative frameworks rooted in transparency and contextual nuance, India can address biases against itself and other Global South nations. This is a pivotal moment for India to assert its voice on the global stage. As a leader of the Global South, India must not only defend its democratic and developmental achievements but also empower other nations to challenge similar biases. Such efforts would contribute to a multipolar and equitable global order, ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented in international discourse.

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9. Sanjeev Sanyal and Aakanksha Arora, Why India Does Poorly on Global Perception Indices, EAC-PM Working Paper Series EAC-PM/WP/06/2022, p.24.

Digital Colonialism and Cyber Sovereignty

✍ R. Abimathi

The Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which marked a turning point in the evolution of international law and international relations, is where state sovereignty first emerged.[1] But in the twenty-first century, the concept of sovereignty goes beyond territorial control and can be characterized by technological and digital prowess of nations.

Cyberspace could be understood as a virtual space consisting of interconnected infrastructures of information technology. It is also regarded as one of the global commons, along with earth, water, and air. In contrast to natural commons, cyberspace, however, is a human-made common that permits the unrestricted movement of data and information.

Countries employ various strategies to address cyber security and cyber deterrence. This article examines the differences in their approaches and explains why it is crucial for India to expand and enhance its own cybersecurity policies and infrastructure.

Geopolitical Debates around Digital Colonialism and Cyber Sovereignty

Cyber-Colonialism denotes the aspect of imperialism on indigenous cultures, languages, lifestyle, politics, folk media and other native identities through cyber space.[2] According to Antonio Gramsci's theory of ideological hegemony, mass media are tools that ruling elites use to "perpetuate their power, wealth, and status by popularizing their own philosophy, culture and morality."[3] Cyber-colonialism leverages digital technologies to perpetuate historical power dynamics through online platforms, that could manipulate public consciousness, control information flows and marginalize indigenous perspectives. Online social network platforms like X, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Netflix, Amazon prime and WhatsApp can directly or indirectly disseminate agenda that influence political outcomes, consumer behaviours, and cultural perceptions, that could profoundly lead to the gradual erosion

1. *Cyber Sovereignty | Stanford University Press.* (n.d.). Stanford University Press. https://www.sup.org/books/politics/cyber-sovereignty (Accessed on 1st December 2024).

2. Sekar, J., & Siwach, K. (2021). 'Cyber- Colonialism': Ethical solutions and Ethnographic Alternatives. In International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT),Vol. 9, Issue 2, pp. 2266–2268.

3   Lull, J. (1995). Media, Communications and Culture: A Global Approach. Columbia University Press.

of local cultural identities.[4]

Ever since Edward Snowden exposed the surveillance programs operated by the National Security Agency of the United States, the fear of cyberspace being misused has been felt globally.[5] The global landscape of cyberspace is shaped by diverse ideologies and strategic national measures adopted by different countries.

As cited in "Quest of Data Colonialism and Cyber Sovereignty: India's Strategic Position in Cyberspace."[6], China and Russia have pioneered stringent cyber sovereignty models, characterized by extensive state control and surveillance. China's approach, articulated by President Xi Jinping, advocates for national sovereignty to determine developmental paths and models of the internet. The country has systematically restricted US technology firms and mandated domestic technological control, with regulations requiring 75% of banking ICT products to be locally controlled by 2019.[7]

Russia's Digital Sovereignty Bill, or "Runet", represents another radical approach through a separate Domain Name System, that aims to protect against cyber-attacks, and enables monitoring of international digital connections. However, this strategy has sparked significant domestic criticism, with protesters arguing that such measures severely limit internet freedom.[8]

In contrast, Western nations, particularly the United States and EU countries, traditionally view the internet as a free-flowing, market-driven ecosystem.[9] The US has responded to increasing cyber threats by elevating its Cyber Command to a unified combatant command (2017), developing comprehensive deterrence strategies that include diplomatic, defensive, and economic mechanisms.[10]

Philosophy behind India's Cyber Security Approaches

With 503 million internet users, India ranks second in the world in data consumption.[11] The nation's approach to cybersecurity and data protection is deeply rooted in its constitutional values. Unlike China's model, where the state sees itself above the individual, or the contrasting US - Europe individualistic approach, that views liberty as freedom from state control; India rather views individual rights as a collective good. Therefore, even in the arena of cyberspace, India seeks to lead by example in the developing world

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4   Ibid.

5   Gupta S., Sony R.A.L. (2021) Quest of Data Colonialism and Cyber Sovereignty: India's Strategic Position in Cyberspace. Legal Issues in the Digital Age, no 2, pp. 68–81.

6   Ibid.

7   Ibid.

8   Ibid.

9   Ibid.

10   Ibid.

11   Ibid.

by adopting a balanced path that protects personal data while fostering a free and fair digital economy. This nuanced approach was evident in its response to initiatives like Facebook's Free Basics and WhatsApp's data-sharing policies. The government has taken proactive measures, such as banning 267 Chinese apps that potentially compromised national security and sending queries to WhatsApp after it sought consent from users to share data including transaction history and location details with Facebook, despite the latter being criticised for the Cambridge Analytica Scam.[12]

India's Measures to Address a Changing Cyberspace

India faces certain challenges in balancing national security with digital innovation.[13] Before joining the Wassenaar Arrangement in 2017 as its 42nd member, India did not have access to its sensitive technologies, particularly in cryptography and information security. India shall now leverage access to these technologies as it progresses to become a digital and knowledge-based economy. The encryption landscape also presents a complex dilemma. While end-to-end encryption protects user privacy, it simultaneously poses challenges in combating extremism and circulation of misinformation.[14]

Despite these obstacles, research in quantum information and computation is being carried out by organizations such as the Indian Institute of Science and the Harish-Chandra Research Institute. Programs that explore technological frontiers have also been started by government departments, such as the Department of Science and Technology and Defence Production. Certain key institutions in India's cyber deterrence approach include the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) and National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC).[15] The National Cyber Security Policy of 2013, proposes an effective partnership and collaborative engagements between the public and private entities to provide a secure and resilient cyberspace for citizens, businesses and government. However, it is imperative that it be updated to reflect the evolving demands.[16]

Further, through its international engagement, India strives to proactively participate in global cyber governance; seeks internationally agreed behavioural norms through its engagement and cooperation with organisations like BIMSTEC, SAARC and QUAD. Further, its emerging technological approach includes potential use of artificial intelligence by

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12 Ibid.

13 Samuel, C., Sharma, M., & INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES & ANALYSES. (2019). India's strategic options in a changing cyberspace. PENTAGON PRESS LLP. Pp. 37 – 46.

14 Ibid.

15 Samuel, C., Sharma, M., & INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES & ANALYSES, 2019, India's strategic options in a changing cyberspace. PENTAGON PRESS LLP. Pp. 37 – 46.

16 Ibid.

integrating machine learning for advanced threat analysis and deterrent strategies.[17]

Conclusion and Way forward

Being the largest democracy in the world, India faces the challenge to strike a balance between not being oblivious to the emerging landscape of deterrence in cyberspace, and at the same time, to not adopt absolute sovereignty measures that could curb the digital privacy and rights of individuals. Beyond this challenge, India seeks to lead by example in the developing world, through its evolving approach to cyberspace, which emphasizes a balanced strategy of protecting individual rights and promoting digital economy. Additionally, following Gandhi's vision of cultural openness, while maintaining individual identity, it becomes increasingly important for India to preserve and promote its indigenous culture and knowledge in the digital space.[18]

Hence, moving forward India's cybersecurity infrastructure requires a multifaceted strategy of collaborative approach that bridges various stakeholders through cross - sectoral coordination. Key to this approach is fostering cooperation between private and government agencies. The government shall play a facilitative role, creating platforms to address India's specific needs while maintaining global competitiveness. Academic research and innovation can help prioritize critical domains like cryptography, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and quantum information sciences.[19] Therefore, in former IT minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar's words, "Multistakeholderism in India will be cornerstone of how the future of Internet will be shaped in policy, regulation and technology landscape."[20]

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17   Ibid.
18   Ibid.
19   Ibid.
20   https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1982801 (Accessed on 4th December 2024).

DATA CHART ON
Voter Turnout in Parliamentary Elections and Increasing Percentage of Women
Compiled by the Student Editorial Board

Year of Election	Registered Electors (in million)	Voter Turnout (%)	Female Voter Turnout %
1951-52	173.2	44.87	NA
1957	193.7	45.44	38.80
1962	216.4	55.42	46.60
1967	249	61.33	49.10
1971	274.2	55.27	50.60
1977	321.2	60.49	51.20
1980	356.2	56.92	53.40
1984-85	400.3	64.01	53.60
1989	498.9	61.95	54.90
1991-92	511.5	55.88	55.50
1996	592.6	57.94	59.30
1998	605.9	61.97	57.30
1999	619.5	59.99	57.70
2004	671.5	57.98	55.60
2009	717	58.19	55.80
2014	834	66.44	65.50
2019	910	67.4	67.20
2024	969	65.79	65.78

The data presented in the chart on voter turnout and the increasing proportion of female voters in India provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolving trends in electoral participation from 1951-52 to 2024. The number of registered electors expanded from 173.2 million in the first general election of 1951-52 to 969 million by 2024, reflecting a significant enlargement of the electorate. Voter turnout exhibited a steady upward trajectory, commencing at 44.87% in 1951-52, peaking at 67.4% in 2019, and subsequently experiencing a slight decline to 65.79% in 2024. This trend signifies a growing public engagement in the democratic process, alongside a marked increase in the accessibility of electoral mechanisms over time.

The participation of female voters demonstrates substantial progress, with their turnout steadily increasing from 38.80% in 1957 to 67.20% in 2019, thereby narrowing the gender disparity in electoral participation. Although data on female voter turnout was not available for 1951-52, the consistent rise in subsequent decades highlights the effectiveness of policy interventions designed to enhance women's political empowerment and promote their active involvement in democratic processes. By 2024, the female voter turnout (65.78%) nearly mirrored the overall voter turnout, signalling a significant shift toward achieving gender parity in India's electoral participation. □

2024 U.S. Presidential Elections

✍ **Bhawesh Binwal**

Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 U.S. Presidential election marks a major shift in global politics. His "America First" approach, focused on strong national policies, is set to reshape the U.S. and its relationships worldwide, including India. This election was influenced by the differing approaches of Trump and Kamala Harris. Trump's win is reflective of American voters' preference for a leader focused on domestic issues, economic protection, and a tough stance on immigration and foreign policy.

Campaign Overview

This election highlighted a clear contrast between Kamala Harris's focus on continuing the Biden administration's policies and Trump's bold endorsements from influential figures like Elon Musk, that boosted his popularity. Musk's support reflected Trump's appeal to business leaders who favour fewer regulations and more innovation opportunities. His campaign appealed to conservatives by promising economic protection, stricter immigration rules, and less involvement in global alliances. Unlike Harris, who focused on global cooperation and social reforms, Trump concentrated on policies that address national security and economic concerns.[1]

Key Issues and Contrasting Approaches

The 2024 U.S. election showcased sharp differences between Trump and Harris on several key issues. On immigration, Trump plans to enforce stricter laws, including deportations, while Harris supports reforms to help immigrants contribute to the economy.[2] On technology and AI, Trump favours fewer restrictions to promote innovation, whereas Harris advocates for regulations to ensure ethical and responsible AI use. Their climate policies also diverged. Trump opposes global agreements like the Paris Accord and prioritizes energy independence, while Harris supports clean energy investments and international climate initiatives.[3] In foreign policy, Trump's inward approach

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1   https://www.businesstoday.in/personal-finance/investment/story/us-elections-2024-how-donald-trumps-victory-will-impact-fpi-inflows-to-india-analysts-share-insights-452820-2024-11-06 (Accessed on 25th November 2024).

2   https://fletcher.tufts.edu/news-events/news/key-issues-2024-united-states-presidential-election (Accessed on 25th November 2024).

3   https://www.ceew.in/blogs/how-us-elections-outcomes-can-shape-energy-security-and-supply-chains-in- indiahttps://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-donald-trump-won-and-kamala-harris-lost-an-early-analysis-of-the-results/ (Accessed on 25th November 2024).

focuses on national interests and reducing global commitments, while Harris emphasizes strengthening alliances and global partnerships.[4] Lastly, on public health, Trump's scepticism of expert-driven policies contrasts with Harris's science-based approach, which could shape future healthcare systems and public trust. [5]

America in the time of transition: From Biden to Trump

Before being sworn in as President, Donald Trump effectively announced tariffs on Canada and Mexico, as well as its rival China on first day of his administration. The next day President Joe Biden announced an agreement to end more than a year of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah[6]. Trump seeks leverage to force trading partners to halt the flow of migrants and drugs. Further, Elon Musk was authorized to open discussions with Iran, to manage a precarious standoff between the Islamic republic and Israel. Trump has also vowed to end Russia's war in Ukraine before the inauguration. On the other hand, Biden still hopes to use his remaining time in office to broker a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Implications for India

There are several reasons for the Modi government to be delighted with Trump's victory as he has made it clear that he intends to build on his past history with India, which will include building trade ties, opening up more technology for Indian companies, and making more U.S. military hardware available for Indian defence forces[7]. Trump is likely to pick up the broken threads of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement of 2019-2020 and encourage India to buy into U.S. oil and LNG, along the lines of MoU for the Driftwood LNG plant in Louisiana in 2019, which would have brought $2.5 billion in investment from Petronet India into the U.S.[8]

Trump's administration has historically prioritized policies that support the expansion of domestic businesses. While a stronger dollar and higher U.S. bonds could pose a challenge to the international market and foreign investments, on the other hand, service sector companies in India may benefit through their outsourcing supply. A higher dollar may also entice NRIs to invest in Indian real estate.[9]

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4   https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-donald-trump-won-and-kamala-harris-lost-an-early-analysis-of-the-results/ (Accessed on 26th November 2024).

5   https://www.pmg.com/insights/the-impact-of-social-media-on-the-2024-presidential-election (Accessed on 26th November 2024).

6   https://www.deccanherald.com/world/elon-musk-met-with-irans-un-ambassador-iranian-officials-say-3277466 (Assessed on 2nd December 2024)

7   https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/what-trump-20-means-for-india-and-south-asia/article68837750.ece (Assessed on 2nd December 2024)

8   Ibid

9   (Assessed on 2nd December 2024) https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/trumps-victory-what-it-means-for-indias-markets-and-key-sectors/articleshow/115107954.cms?from=mdr

His tough stance on China could further strengthen defence and strategic ties with India, especially through initiatives like the Quad,[10] and tariffs on China could benefit Indian metal producers, especially those exporting to the US. India will also seek Trump's intervention in ending Israel's war in Gaza and Lebanon, which would reopen talks with Gulf countries, and revive its plans for the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor.[11]

Conclusion

Donald Trump's return to the White House signals a potential shift in U.S. domestic and foreign policies, presenting India with a mix of challenges and opportunities. As trade and immigration policies undergo transformation, India must strategically navigate these changes while reinforcing its ties with the United States.

Arvind Subramanian underscores that Trump's tariffs, though often perceived as solutions in search of problems, offer India a vital chance to attract capital relocating from China and to deepen bilateral cooperation. Modi's government must capitalize on this moment, transforming Trump's policy preoccupations into strategic advantages for India.[12]

This election underscores the critical role of the U.S.-India relationship in shaping global dynamics. As Trump's America turns its focus inward, India must adapt to sustain and strengthen collaboration in key areas such as defence, trade, and technology, leveraging this pivotal juncture in international politics to its advantage.

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10 Ibid
11 Ibid
12 ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN ,Trump's Return Is an Opportunity for India, Nov 27, 2024, https:// www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/how-should-india-respond-to-trumps-tariffs-by-arvind-subramanian-2024-11 (Accessed on 26th November 2024).

Analysis of Maharashtra Assembly Election 2024

✍ **Ayush Tripathi**

The 2024 Maharashtra Assembly election was a dynamic and politically significant event, characterized by strategic alliances, welfare initiatives, and the mobilization of diverse voter bases. The BJP-led *Mahayuti* alliance, consisting of the BJP, the Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde faction), and Ajit Pawar's NCP faction, emerged victorious with a commanding majority of 233 seats in the 288-seat assembly.[1] The alliance got nearly 50% of the vote share. In the Konkan, North Maharashtra and western Maharashtra regions, its vote share crossed the halfway mark. This victory reflects a well-executed strategy of welfare politics, caste-based coalitions, and robust urban-rural engagement.

Background to the Election

The 2024 Maharashtra Assembly Election marks a distinguished political fragmentation with complex alliance dynamics.[2] Maharashtra, a critical battleground state with second-largest number (48 Constituencies) of legislators in the Lok Sabha, featured two competing alliances: the Mahayuti alliance (comprising BJP, Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, and Ajit Pawar's NCP) and the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance (including Congress, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena, and Sharad Pawar's NCP) in this election. The political crisis of 2022, which saw major party splits led to the formations of these alignments.

Caste dynamics play a pivotal role in this election. Political leadership has always been dominated by the Maratha minority, which makes up approximately 30% of the population. However, recent agrarian challenges and reservation movements have complicated this narrative. By increasing the creamy-layer income ceiling and adding seven castes to the government OBC list, the BJP strategically targeted the OBC communities. Further, multiple regional parties, independent candidates and groups, including the Vanchit Bahujan Aaghadi, All India Majlis-e-Ittihadul Muslimeen & Maharashtra Navnirman Sena have played an active role in this election.

A shift in Election Dynamics

Districts in Maharashtra were divided into five economic groups based on their per capita Net District Domestic Product (NDDP) at current prices in 2022-23,

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1 https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/maharashtra/maharashtra-assembly-election-results-2024-in-charts/article68901391.ece (Assessed on 1st December 2024).

2 https://caravanmagazine.in/politics/2024-maharashtra-assembly-election-explained (Assessed on 2nd December 2024).

including: 'Very rich' category (per capita NDDP of over ₹3 lakh); 'rich' category (₹2.4 lakh-₹2.9 lakh); 'middling' category (₹2 lakh-₹2.3 lakh); 'poor' category (₹1.5 lakh-₹1.9 lakh); and 'very poor' category (₹1.4 lakh)[3]. In comparison to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Mahayuti alliance's number of seats in the "poor" and "very poor" categories grew by 31 and 14, respectively, and by 59 seats in the "middling" category in the 2024 Assembly elections. In the Lok Sabha elections, in the "poor" and "very poor" areas, the MVA received 44–45% of the vote, while the Mahayuti alliance received 38–41%. However, with more votes than the MVA coalition in every district type, the Mahayuti was able to turn the tide in the 2024 Assembly elections.[4]

Welfare Schemes and Identity Politics

One of the key factors behind the Mahayuti's success was its emphasis on welfare programs aimed at economically vulnerable groups and the women in society. Initiatives like the Mukhyamantri Majhi *Ladki Bahin Yojana*, which provides a monthly stipend of Rs 1,500 to women aged 21 to 65 with a family income below Rs 2,50,000 annually and the Ladki Bahin Yojana which extends the monthly allowance to women aged 18 to 65 experiencing financial difficulties[5], resonated deeply with rural and low-income urban voters, particularly homemakers and daily wage earners. Apart from these, electricity bill waivers, crop insurance schemes, fee waivers for students, OBC schemes, free or cheap food grains implemented for almost 70 per cent of families, together contributed to their appeal.[6]

The Maharashtra victory restored BJP's dominance as it managed to mobilise religious, regional, caste and class sentiments in its favour, decimating opponents and rendering its partners irrelevant. The BJP's Hindutva platform, which also includes a Maratha language pride strand and regional iconography, such as the invocation of Shivaji and V.D. Savarkar, has supplanted Maharashtra's provincial politics.[7]

However, the Maratha agitation for reservations remains a contentious issue that could challenge governance and influence future elections.

Fragmented Opposition

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance—comprising Congress, the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction), and

3   https://www.thehindu.com/data/maharashtra-election-results-2024-mahayuti-reverses-its-losses-in-poor-and-very-poor-regions/article68901497.ece (Assessed on 2nd December 2024).

4   Ibid.

5   https://www.zeebiz.com/personal-finance/news-mazi-ladki-bahin-yojana-official-website-know-eligibility-benefits-age-limit-documents-rs-1500-monthly-by-maharashtra-mukhyamantri-scheme-he-res-how-to-apply-328419 (Assessed on 2nd December 2024).

6   https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/maharashtra-assembly-election-2024-bjp-mahayuti-historic-victory-analysis/article68908131.ece (Assessed on 2nd December 2024).

7   https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/maha-victory-on-the-mahayuti-the-maharashtra-election-result/article68906163.ece (Assessed on 2nd December 2024).

Sharad Pawar's NCP faction—struggled to present a united front. Internal conflicts, ideological shifts, and defections weakened its appeal. Uddhav Thackeray's shift towards a secular image alienated core Hindutva supporters, while Sharad Pawar's diminished influence failed to revive the NCP. The lack of a cohesive opposition strategy further solidified the Mahayuti's position.

Conclusion

The 2024 Maharashtra Assembly election highlighted the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance's ability to craft a winning formula through welfare initiatives, caste-based coalitions, and strategic voter mobilization. While the opposition faces significant challenges in rebuilding unity and credibility, the Mahayuti now bears the responsibility of managing coalition dynamics and fulfilling its promises. The election saw 105 candidates win with margin of less than 5%; 69 Assembly seats won with a landslide margin of over 30%; and BJP wining 39 seats by narrow margin, which is highest in this Assembly elections.[8] These insights highlight that every vote matters, especially in closely contested constituencies and teaches parties the importance of unity, strategy, and strong local connections.

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8   https://www.indiatoday.in/diu/story/maharashtra-assembly-elections-2024-maha-vikas-aghadi-mahayuti-alliance-mva-2639781-2024-11-25 (Assessed on 2nd December 2024).

Jharkhand Assembly elections 2024

✍ Rishita Lamba

The 2024 Jharkhand Legislative Assembly elections have not only captured the political spotlight but also ushered in a new era of governance—one that promises a deeper connection to the state's indigenous roots and a more localized vision for development. Held in two phases on November 13 and 20, the elections culminated in a dramatic victory for the JMM-led *Mahagathbandhan* alliance, securing a commanding 56 of the 81 seats in the assembly. This electoral outcome affirms the desire for a localised government, addressing specific concerns of the marginalized communities for their upliftment.[1]

Voter Turnout: A Renewed Commitment to Democracy

The 2024 Jharkhand elections also witnessed an impressive surge in voter turnout, with 67.74% of the electorate heading to the polls.[2] This marked a significant rise from the previous election's 2019 assembly poll turnout of 67.04%, signalling a heightened level of political engagement. The first phase saw a turnout of 66.65%, while the second phase, which included some of the state's most remote and tribal regions, recorded an even higher participation rate of 68.45%.[3]

This increase in voter engagement portrays the changing political landscape in Jharkhand. The electorate, particularly the youth, is becoming more politically conscious and eager to participate in shaping the state's future. This wave of political awareness signifies a growing confidence in the democratic process and a desire for change—one that transcends the traditional power structures and aims to address the specific needs of local communities.[4]

A Triumph for Hemant Soren and Local Governance

At the heart of this transformation is the leadership of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who now embarks on his fourth

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1   https://www.deccanherald.com/elections/jharkhand/jharkhand-assembly-elections-2024-hemant-soren-takes-oath-as-14th-chief-minister-of-state-3295833 (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

2   https://www.thehindu.com/elections/jharkhand-assembly/final-phase-of-jharkhand-polls-records-6759-turnout/article68890870.ece (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

3   https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/elections/jharkhand-2024-voter-turnout (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

4   https://www.telegraphindia.com/elections/jharkhand-voter-turnout-impact (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

term at the helm of the state.[5] His victory is emblematic of the growing importance of state-centric, politics in Jharkhand, the state has long struggled with balancing its rich natural resources and the socio-economic needs of its indigenous tribes. The JMM-led alliance, which includes the Indian National Congress (INC), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), and CPI(ML) Liberation, campaigned on a platform of *"Abua Raj, Abua Sarkar"* (our state, our government), which encapsulates the people's desire for self-governance and the need for empowerment at the grassroots level.[6]

Key Factor in BJP's Setback

A critical factor in the BJP's setback in the 2024 Jharkhand elections was its failure to present a credible local leader who could resonate with the aspirations of Jharkhand's electorate. The disconnected approach of heavily relying on national figures, left voters feeling that their local issues were not being adequately addressed[7]. In stark contrast, Hemant Soren's brief incarceration in 2023, further solidified his image as a resilient leader fighting for Jharkhand's local issues. This narrative strengthened his appeal, particularly among marginalized communities, and played a crucial role in securing his leadership for a fourth term.[8]

These results underscore a new political reality in which regional leadership is becoming the focal point of Indian politics. For national parties, this shift poses a significant challenge—how will they adapt their strategies to remain relevant in a landscape where local voices are increasingly demanding recognition? The balance between national influence and regional empowerment is being redefined, and it will likely shape the future of Indian governance for years to come.

The Mahagathbandhan's Vision: Development for All

The central promise of the Mahagathbandhan's campaign was to usher in an era of inclusive development—one that addresses the economic, social, and infrastructural challenges facing Jharkhand.[9] A state rich in natural resources yet mired in poverty, Jharkhand has long been a paradox. The Mahagathbandhan's focus on creating jobs, improving healthcare and education, and prioritizing the rights and welfare of indigenous communities resonated deeply with voters, especially in

5   https://www.thehindu.com/politics/jharkhand-hemant-soren-leadership (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

6   https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/elections/jharkhand-mahagathbandhan-2024. (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

7   https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/jharkhand-elections-analysis (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

8   https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/jharkhand-2024 (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

9   https://www.ndtv.com/jharkhand-election-2024 (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

rural and tribal areas.[10]

Hemant Soren's government has consistently championed policies aimed at addressing the historical inequities faced by Jharkhand's tribal populations, particularly in terms of land rights, displacement issues, and access to basic services. The alliance's victory gives them a clear mandate to continue these reforms and to further empower the state's marginalized communities.

One of the standout features of the Mahagathbandhan's platform was its commitment to making Jharkhand economically self-reliant. The alliance promised to leverage the state's rich natural resources—not for corporate exploitation, but for the benefit of its people. This vision for a self-sustaining, resource-driven economy struck a chord with voters, offering hope for a future where the state's wealth is used to benefit those who need it most.[11]

A Surge of Wealth in the Legislature: The Crorepati Phenomenon

One of the more fascinating—and controversial—aspects of the 2024 Jharkhand elections was the rise of 'crorepatis' (millionaire legislators). An overwhelming 89% of the newly elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are wealthy, with assets surpassing ₹1 crore.[12] Among them, Congress leader Rameshwar Oraon stands out, boasting a personal fortune of ₹42.20 crore.

This increasing concentration of wealth in Jharkhand's political sphere raises intriguing questions about the evolving nature of governance. While wealth and political power have always been intertwined in India, the sheer number of affluent lawmakers in this election suggests a new reality for the state. Will this new breed of affluent politicians translate their financial success into tangible progress for the state's impoverished citizens, or will it further entrench existing inequalities? Only time will tell if this financial elite will govern with the same zeal for development that their campaign rhetoric promised.

Looking Forward: A New Dawn for Jharkhand

As Hemant Soren takes the reins for a fourth term, all eyes will be on his government to see if it can deliver on the promises of development, inclusion, and local empowerment. Jharkhand stands at a crossroads, and the next few years will determine whether it can break free from the shackles of underdevelopment and build a future where its people—not its resources—are its greatest wealth.

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10 https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/politics/3170237-wealthiest-mlas-in-jharkhand-assembly-analyzing-the-2024-elections (Accessed on 29th November 2024).

11 https://www.indianexpress.com/elections/jharkhand-crorepatis-2024 (Accessed on 28th November 2024).

12 https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/politics/3170237-wealthiest-mlas-in-jharkhand-assembly-analyzing-the-2024-elections (Accessed on 29th November 2024).

नानक नाम एक

✍ गौरव सिंह

गुरु नानक (1469-1539) संत और महान चिंतक होने के साथ सच्चे समाजवादी थे, उन्होंने समाजवाद के अर्थों को समझा और उसका जन साधारण में प्रचार और लोगों को उसके प्रति प्रेरित किया।आज के समय में साम्यवादी समझते हैं कि मानव के सभी दुःखों को दूर करने के आर्थिक विषमता को दूर करना होगा अर्थात् आर्थिक विषमता के दूर होते ही संसार की सभी समस्याए सुलझ जाएगी। उन्हें एक व्यक्ति का करोड़पति और दूसरे का गरीब होना सहन नहीं है। नानक ने समाजवाद का नया रूप रखा, जिस समाज में मनुष्य को धन कमाने और उसका खर्च स्वयं और समाज के अन्य लोगों पर करना आवश्यक था। जहाँ मनुष्य का सहारा धन न होकर भगवान का नाम स्मरण होना चाहिए। उनके समाजवाद में सब लोग एक साथ भजन, कीर्तन आदि कर सकते थे, उनके विचारों के आधार पर चलाए लंगरों में जाति और आर्थिक स्थिति के भेदभाव के बिना सभी भोजन करते थे। लंगरों की प्रथा के अनुसार लोग आर्थिक रूप से ही नहीं अपने शारीरिक श्रम से भी समर्थन देते थे। वह इस विचार से प्रेरित थे कि अगर दूसरे के पास अधिक धन है और वह उसके द्वारा मेहनत से कमाया गया है तो उस धन को छीनना गलत होगा, उनकी दृष्टि में परायी वस्तु हिन्दू के लिए गोमांस और मुसलमान के लिए सुअर के मांस के सामान्य रूप से त्याज्य थी। उनके विचारों में सच्चा समाजवाद अपने धन और उपलब्धियों को सबमें बांट कर उपभोग करना सिखलाता है। जिसमें दान यह सोचकर ही होना चाहिए कि जिसकी वस्तु है उसी को दे रहा हूं। उनके समाजवाद का एक उदाहरण मिलता है जिसमें, नानक अपनी गद्दी पर अपने पुत्र को ना बैठकर अपने एक शिष्य भाई लहना को बैठाते हैं जो उसके योग्य था। नानक का समाजवाद रूढ़िगत समाजवाद नहीं था, उसमें एकता और भाईचारे की भावना निहित थी।

नानक एक ऐसे आदर्श समाज चाहते थे जिसमें ना कोई छोटा था, ना कोई बड़ा, ना ऊंच, ना नीच। उन्होंने देखा प्रत्येक धर्म अपनी रूढ़ियों में बंधे हुए हैं। लोगों के कपड़ों से उनकी जाति का अनुमान लगाया जाता, हिंदुओं में छुआछूत और जातिगत भेदभाव से शोषित समूह इस्लाम धर्म अपना रहे थे क्योंकि उसमें भाईचारे की भावना निहित थी। उन्होंने हिंदू और मुसलमान दोनों धर्म की कमजोरियों का अध्ययन किया और सुधार का एक नया तरीका निकाला। जिसमें न मुसलमान की तरह जन्नत में व्यक्ति के पुण्य की प्रस्तुति को दिखाए। उन्होंने समझाया हर व्यक्ति अपने सत्कर्मों के द्वारा उच्च स्थान प्राप्त करता है। उन्होंने हिंदुओं के विश्वास, की मनुष्य अपने कर्म अनुसार अलग-अलग जातियों में पैदा होता है, इसका खंडन किया। आठ वर्ष की अवस्था में नानक ने समाज सुधार हेतु पूरे भारत और विश्व की यात्रा की इस यात्रा में कई तीर्थस्थलों पर भी गए। उन्होंने हिंदुओं के जनेऊ संस्कार पर अपने विचार रखे कि सच्चे जनेऊ संतोष, करुणा संयम, सत्य, आचार्य आदि गुणों को धारण करते हैं, वही नमाज मानसिक होती है भौतिक नहीं। सूर्य ग्रहण के समय खाना बनाने पर ब्राह्मण सूतक मानते थे, तो उन्होंने कहा तब तो सूतक प्रत्येक जगह है गोबर लकड़ी अन्न और पानी क्योंकि इनमें जीव है और आपके रसोई में है। नानक कहते हैं सूतक वस्तुओं के परित्याग से नहीं सच्चे ज्ञान से ही दूर हो सकती है।[2] अड़सठ तीर्थों में स्नान आदि करने से मन के मैल नहीं उतर सकते। उनका मानना था कि वही मनुष्य संसार में भले है जो अंदर से शुद्ध और बाहर से मैले हैं।[3] इस प्रकार उन्होंने बहुत से लोगों का हृदय परिवर्तन भी किया जिसमें तालम्बा नामक लूटेरे और काम रूपी नर्तकी जो मर्दों को अपने आकर्षण से बांध लेती थी उसने नानक को भी बांधने की कोशिश की परंतु उन्होंने उसका स्वभाव ही परिवर्तित कर दिया। उन्होंने हिंदुओं की तीर्थयात्रा, उपवास, सूर्य को

जल चढ़ाने आदि और मुसलमानों के नमाज और रोजे का नया अर्थ बताया। उस समय नारी जाति की स्थिति दयनीय थी, उन्हें धार्मिक सामाजिक और अध्ययन किसी भी प्रकार का अधिकार नहीं था। उन्हें भोग की वास्तु मात्र समझा जाता था। मुस्लिम स्त्रियां सात पर्दों में रखी जाती थी, गुरु नानक ने स्त्रियों को महत्व दिया पुरुषों के बराबर माना अपने धार्मिक सम्मेलनों में आने के लिए उनके स्वागत के द्वार खोल दिए। उन्होंने नारी की निंदा करने वालों से कहा, उनकी निंदा कैसे कर सकते हो, मनुष्य जन्म लेना उन्ही से संभव है, उनके गर्भ में प्रत्येक पुरुष निर्मित होते है, वे उससे विवाह करता है संसार स्त्रियों के कारण बना और रिश्तो में बंधा हुआ है। उन्होंने मानव के मन आत्मा को शुद्ध करने हेतु माया बंधनों से मुक्त होने के ढंग बताए। नानक ने सर्वांगीण मानव की कल्पना की आत्मा के साथ शरीर को मस्जिद और मंदिर जैसा बताया जिसके माध्यम से सत्कर्मों द्वारा ईश्वर मिल सकता है। वो मानवता की सेवा भगवान की सेवा मानते थे उनके आदर्श भक्त, कर्म और ज्ञान तीनों से युक्त था, उनकी कल्पना का आदर्श व्यक्ति लोभ, गर्व, इच्छा, क्रोध आदि से मुक्त था। नानक के लिए मानवता कैसे सर्वोपरि है। उसे एक घटना जुड़ी है, जब वे गांवों की यात्रा पर थे एक गांव में पहुंचे वहां पर उनका बहुत आदर हुआ उन्होंने वहां के ग्रामवासियों को उजड़ जाने का आशीर्वाद दिया अगले गांव में उनका बहुत निरादर हुआ उन्होंने उन सबको बसे रहने का आशीर्वाद दिया। उनके शिष्य मर्दाना ने प्रश्न पूछा आपने ऐसा आशीर्वाद क्यों दिया नानक ने उत्तर दिया, बुरे लोगों को बसे रहने का आशीर्वाद इसलिए दिया जिससे अन्य गांवों और मानवता में दुर्व्यवहार न फैले और अच्छे लोगों को उजड़ने का आशीर्वाद इसलिए दिया जिससे उनके अच्छे कर्म, गुण, ज्ञान और व्यवहार पूरे समाज में फैल जाए और जहां भी जाए वहां सत्य की सुगंध फैलाए।

लेखक, डॉ भाई जोधसिंह को राजस्थान विश्वविद्यालय में गुरु नानक के धर्म और दर्शन पर बोलने का अवसर मिला परंतु इससे पहले दर्शन और धर्म की परिभाषा समझ लेना आवश्यक है। केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री मौलाना अबुल कलाम आजाद ने दर्शन को इस प्रकार परिभाषित किया- "एक फारसी कवि ने संसार को एक पुरानी पुस्तक बताया इसके प्रथम और अंतिम पृष्ठ गायब है उसकी शुरुआत और अंत होने का पता नहीं चलता जब मनुष्य को समझ आया तब भी इन पृष्ठों को

खोजने लगा इसी खोज के प्रतिफल का नाम दर्शन है।" खोज का उद्देश्य जीव और उसके अस्तित्व का अर्थ पता करना है, मनुष्य ने सोचना प्रारंभ किया तो दो प्रश्न उसके सामने आए जीव का अर्थ क्या है? और संसार का स्वभाव क्या है? जिस समय मनुष्य ने तर्क एवं विचार करना प्रारंभ किया उस समय दर्शन की शुरुआत हुई। धर्म की परिभाषा डॉक्टर सर्वपल्ली राधाकृष्णन करते हैं, यह आत्मा की स्वरूप का ज्ञान है। वह दिन के प्रकाश की तरह बाहरी जगत से नहीं प्रवेश करता। गुरु नानक सुल्तानपुर में दौलत ख़ां लोधी के भंडारी थे, विभिन्न नदी के किनारे ध्यान लगाते थे, परंतु एक दिन वह स्नान, ध्यान के लिए गए परंतु वापस नहीं आए सब ने सोचा भी डूब गए। नवाब के गोताखोरों ने उन्हें खोजने का प्रयत्न किया परंतु वे नहीं मिले। गुरु की प्राचीनतम जीवनियों में लिखा है कि बाबा ने इसी दौरान ईश्वर का द्वार पा कर, फिर ज्ञान प्राप्त करने के लिए घोर परिश्रम किया। इसके बाद भी ईश्वर के उपदेश का प्रचार करने लगे उन्होंने सिख धर्म में ईश्वर की सत्ता का वर्णन किया है। नानक ने अपनी उपदेश आम बोलचाल की भाषा में दी जिससे लोग उसे समझ सके। उनका मानना है ईश्वर सभी वस्तुओं में है किंतु सभी वस्तु ईश्वर नहीं है। शरीर नस से आत्मा नहीं मरती सभी आत्माओं में भगवान का वास है। जिस प्रकार वृक्ष का ज्ञात उसके फल से हो जाता है मनुष्य का ज्ञात उसके कार्यों से होता है, आध्यात्मिक प्रगति का अर्थ दिमाग से बुरे भाव को हटाने से है।

गुरु नानक योगो की तरह एकांतवास में रहने के पक्ष में नहीं थे क्योंकि समाज सुधार हेतु योगियों की जरूरत समाज को है न कि पहाड़ों में रहने की वहां रहेंगे तो समाज को सुधार के मार्ग पर कैसे लाएंगे। मनुष्य का समाज के प्रति कुछ कर्तव्य है क्योंकि उसी ने उनको जन्म दिया है। उन्होंने कहा मनुष्य को अपनी अहंकार की भावना का त्याग करना चाहिए। नानक के उपदेश कहते हैं, अहंकार की भावना सांसारिक इच्छाओं से उत्पन्न होती हैं इसका नाश हमारा लक्ष्य होना चाहिए। ईश्वरीय भक्ति के लक्ष्य संतोष इच्छा निरोधी मानव सेवा है। वह मानते हैं ऐसे लोगों को अपना गुरु ना बनाएं जो भिक्षु है और दान पर आश्रित हैं। वे मानते हैं ऐसा गुरु सच्चा मार्गदर्शन कर सकता है जो कठोर श्रम से अपनी आजीविका अर्जित करता है और लोगों की भलाई चाहता है। उन्होंने संगति पर प्रमुख बल दिया क्योंकि उससे अनेक गुण व्यक्ति में अनजाने

में ही आ जाते हैं। इसका प्रभाव दिमाग पर सीधा पड़ता है और स्थाई रहता है।

गुरु नानक का धर्म में योगदान दर्शन से ज्यादा मनोवैज्ञानिक तौर पर अधिक रहा है। वे दुनिया में लोगों का विभाजन काले- गोरे, आस्तिक- नास्तिक एवं पुनर्जन्म पर विश्वास नहीं करते थे। दुनिया में दुख और पाप भी हैं जिससे मनुष्य को लड़ना चाहिए और विजय प्राप्त करना चाहिए क्योंकि वह मूलतः पापी और नास्तिक नहीं जब उनका अंतरात्मा जगेगा तो स्वयं को वास्तविक रूप से देखेंगे। गुरु नानक के लिए धर्म एक सामाजिक वास्तविकता थी यदि लोग व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ तक सोचेंगे तो समाज में परिवर्तन नहीं आएगा जिससे सभ्यता का विकास संभव नहीं है। इसी कारण नानक ने संन्यास की जगह गृहस्थ जीवन अपनाया। 30 वर्ष तक हिंदू मुसलमान दोनों के तीर्थों की यात्रा की उनका कहना था कि मैं वहां ना तो हिंदू देखा ना मुसलमान देखा तो बस इंसान। हरिद्वार में उन्होंने पूर्व की जगह पश्चिम में अर्घ्य दिया यह पूछने पर ऐसा क्यों किया तो जवाब था यदि फैका हुआ जल लोगों के पूर्वजों के लिए स्वर्ग तक पहुंच सकता है तो यह मेरे द्वारा दिया गया जल मेरे खेतों को नहीं सींच सकता। वे दीप धूप और फूलों आदि से ईश्वर की आरती उतारने में विश्वास नहीं करते क्योंकि जब प्रकृति ही ईश्वर तक सुगंध पहुंच रही है और ईश्वर मौन संगीत मनुष्यों को सुना रहे हैं तो पूजा करने की क्या जरूरत है? जब उनसे नमाज पढ़ने को कहा तो वह उसमें शामिल तो हो गए परंतु पढ़ने की जगह बस मुस्कुराने लगे पूछने पर कि तुमने ऐसा क्यों किया तो उत्तर दिया, सच्चा मुसलमान तब बन सकते हैं जब करुणा मस्जिद हो विश्वास मुल्ला ईमानदारी से जीना कुरान विनम्रता सुन्नत और आत्म संयम रोज हो। गुरु नानक जिन बातों में विश्वास करते थे उनका पालन भी करते थे, वे जब बाहर यात्रा करते तो अछूतों के साथ रहते थे उनके साथ हमेशा मर्दाना नामक नीच जाति का मुसलमान रहता था। उन्होंने बाबर के रक्तपात का विरोध किया और कई बार जेल गए एवं जेल से तब तक बाहर नहीं आते जब तक उनके जैसे और बंदी मुक्त नहीं कर दिए जाते। तब तक किसी व्यक्ति से संबंध नहीं रखते थे जब तक वह बुरे काम और बुरे विचारों को नहीं छोड़ देता। वे अपने वैभव का प्रदर्शन ही क्यों ना कर लें, लेकिन कोई हत्यारा यदि उचित मार्ग पर चलना चाहता है तो वह उनका साथ देते हैं। जब उन्होंने अपनी यात्राएं समाप्त की तो वे करतारपुर में रहने लगे और कृषि कार्यों में लगे रहे। उनकी मृत्यु के समय कहा जाता है जिस चादर से उनका शरीर ढांका था हिंदुओं और मुसलमान ने बराबर बांट ली एवं हिंदुओं ने उसे जला दिया और मुसलमान ने दफना दिया। गुरु नानक ऐसे सामाजिक क्रांतिकारी थे जो मनुष्य का मूल्यांकन उनकी उपलब्धियां से नहीं बल्कि उनकी आंतरिक चेतना से करते थे। उनका कहना था कि मोक्ष अच्छे कार्यों के जरिए प्राप्त कर सकते हैं एवं सत्य सर्वोपरि है, उनका आचरण इससे भी उत्तम है।

साभार: यह लेख 'गुरु नानक व्यक्तित्व और विचार' पुस्तक से लिया गया है। पुस्तक की लेखिका डा. सीता हाँडा है। चिन्मय प्रकाशन ने 2005 में इसे प्रकाशित किया था।

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Chhath Puja: The Festival of Equality, Fraternity, and Cleanliness

✎ **Abhayraj Yadav**

Folk cultural heritage, deeply rooted in local traditions and oral transmission, holds immense historical and cultural significance but risks fading into obscurity without proper documentation and promotion.[1] One such enduring and eco-friendly tradition is Chhath Puja[2], a Hindu festival dedicated to the worship of the Sun God, Surya, along with his consorts, Usha and Pratyusha. Predominantly celebrated in the Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh, as well as parts of Nepal, Chhath Puja reflects the agrarian society's collective reverence for the Sun as a vital source of life and sustenance.

Globalization and large-scale migration from India, particularly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, have allowed Chhath Puja to transcend its regional boundaries. Among the Indian diaspora, this tradition has evolved into a global celebration, showcasing the resilience and dedication of expatriate communities who ensure its vibrant observance. Today, Chhath Puja stands as a symbol of cultural unity, celebrated with remarkable zeal and enthusiasm across the world, resonating with its enduring cultural and spiritual essence.[3]

Historical Context

Chhath Puja traces its origins to the Vedic period[4], with its rituals and worship practices deeply rooted in the hymns of the *Rigveda*. Vedic texts emphasize the veneration of the Sun God for health, prosperity, and overall well-being, highlighting the ancient significance of solar worship in Indian tradition.[1]

Numerous legends and beliefs are associated with the origins of Chhath Puja. One prominent narrative suggests that Mata Sita was among the first to observe the fast associated with this festival.[5] According to a widely held account, after Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya following 14 years of exile with Mata Sita and

1   Githa Badikilaya, *Chhath Puja - A Study in Religious and Cultural Tourism*, Atna Journal of Tourism Studies, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 2, p.71.

2   Ibid.

3   https://www.outlookindia.com/brand-studio/how-chhath-puja-is-celebrated-across-the-world-traditions-in-the-us-uk-singapore-more

4   Alok Kumar Yadav and Jivesh Jha, *Chhath Puja in India and Nepal: A festival of sun god, cleanliness, equality and fraternity*, International Journal of Social Science and Education Research, 2024,Vol: 6(2),p.82.

5   Githa Badikilaya, *Chhath Puja - A Study in Religious and Cultural Tourism*, Atna Journal of Tourism Studies, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 2, p.71.

Lakshman, a *yagya* was performed to absolve them of the sin of killing Ravana. This ritual was carried out under the guidance of Sage Mugdal. During the proceedings, Sage Mugdal consecrated Mata Sita with the sacred waters of the Ganga and instructed her to worship Surya Dev (the Sun God) on the sixth day of the Shukla Paksha in the month of Kartik. Mata Sita stayed at Sage Mugdal's ashram, observed six days of worship dedicated to Lord Surya, and concluded the rituals on the day of Saptami at sunrise, receiving the blessings of the Sun God. This narrative is often cited as the origin of the Chhath Puja traditionAnother prominent legend linked to Chhath Puja revolves around Karna, the illustrious warrior from the *Mahabharata*, who was the son of Surya. Renowned for his unwavering devotion to the Sun God, Karna is believed to have performed rigorous penance, standing in water for extended periods and offering *Arghya* to the Sun.[6] His practices are considered to have influenced the rituals observed during Chhath Puja.

Additionally, the epic *Mahabharata* recounts the association of Chhath Puja with Draupadi. When the Pandavas lost their kingdom and wealth in a game of dice, Draupadi observed the *Mahavrat* of Chhath Puja, leading to the fulfillment of her wishes.[7] As a result, the Pandavas regained their lost kingdom and prosperity.

Beyond these legendary narratives, Chhath Puja is also intricately tied to agrarian practices and the agricultural cycle. It is considered a post-harvest festival, wherein the worship of the Sun God symbolizes gratitude for the bountiful rice harvest at the end of the agricultural season. This connection underscores the festival's role in celebrating nature and expressing reverence for its contributions to human sustenance.

Rituals

The Chhath Puja begins with a vow to maintain purity by abstaining from onions, garlic, hotel-made food, and non-vegetarian food until the festival's conclusion. This vow is a form of devotion and submission to the God. On the first day, devotees make a commitment to avoid fish and other non-vegetarian foods, as well as any unholy items, throughout the four-day festival. This practice is called "Machh-maruwa Barnai."[8] While it is commonly believed that Chhath Puja begins with Nahay Khay, this is only partially correct. The Puja actually starts a day earlier with the observance of "Machh-maruwa Barnai."[9] On the second day, called Kharna, devotees fast until the evening, when they break their fast by offering and sharing a meal of kheer made from rice, milk, jaggery, and puri. The third day, known as Saunjh ka Arghya or Pahila Arghya, is regarded as the most difficult,

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6   Ibid.

7   Ibid.

8   Alok Kumar Yadav and Jivesh Jha, *Chhath Puja in India and Nepal: A festival of sun god, cleanliness, equality and fraternity*, International Journal of Social Science and Education Research, 2024,Vol: 6(2),p.83.

9   Ibid.

especially for women who observe a strict fast without food or water. In the evening, they offer prayers to the Sun God at sunset, presenting fruits and special foods, such as Thakuwa, Khaja, sugarcane, and vegetables, which are prepared in a separate kitchen. A ritual of applying vermillion to each other's foreheads is also performed, believed to bring blessings for the health and prosperity of their families. On the fourth day, Bhor ka Arghya, devotees conclude their 36-hour fast after offering prayers to the rising Sun. The offerings, which include fruits and Prasad, are then shared with family and friends. The festival is renowned for its focus on sacrifice and discipline by all, such as through rituals by women, who seek divine blessings for the well-being of their families, including the health of their husbands and children. Additionally, the festival traditionally involves offering up to 70 types of homemade foods and fruits. If a devotee is unable to provide all 70 items, they must offer Gamhari rice, a special variety grown in the Terai and northern India, as a substitute.[10]

Deeper Significance

Chhath Puja, apart from its religious significance of thanking the Sun for a good life, also holds scientific value in its rituals. Devotees pray at the riverbank or stand in the water for long hours, as ultraviolet rays of the Sun are at their lowest during sunrise and sunset. These rays are believed to detoxify the mind, body, and soul by removing negative energies.[11] The festival reflects deep spiritual connections and traditional wisdom of women as active participants in preserving and celebrating cultural heritage beyond familial responsibilities. The festival also strengthens familial ties, with rituals involving the entire family, from preparing offerings to participating in prayers. Rigorous rituals, such as fasting, bathing in sacred rivers, and offering Arghya to the Sun, symbolize both physical and spiritual cleansing. Arguably, this is a festival that embodies values of equality, fraternity, socialism, nature, and cleanliness.[12]

Conclusion

Finally, we can say that this ancient Hindu festival, Chhath Puja, dedicated to Chhathi Maiya and the Sun God, celebrates cultural traditions without idol worship. It promotes equality, fraternity, and socialism, as devotees from all backgrounds gather to pray, fasting for over 36 hours. The festival encourages family unity, transcending gender, caste, and economic distinctions.

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10   Ibid.

11   https://avaada.com/the-science-and-spirituality-behind-chhath-puja-a-journey-into-cosmic-energy-infusion/ (Accessed on 8th November 2024).

12   Ibid, p.84.

National Education Policy 2020: A Leap Towards Transforming India's Education System

✍ **Hemant Yadav**

The purpose of education system as defined by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, is to develop good human beings with compassion, resilience, scientific temper, and rational thought and action, who as productive and contributing citizens of our nation would build an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution. Recognizing that the pursuit of knowledge (Gyan), wisdom (Pragyaa), and truth (Satya) was always considered the highest human goal in Indian thought and philosophy, the National Education Policy 2020 strives to reconfigure the loopholes in the existing education system in India with the aim of attaining the global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 that seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.

The Vision and Mission of NEP 2020

Prioritizing equitable access to education for all was the main goal of earlier educational policies, such as the 1992 amendment to the National Policy on Education 1986 (NPE 1986/92) and the 2009 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act , which established the legal foundations for attaining universal elementary education. The principles of NEP 2020, however strives to transform India into a global knowledge superpower. It emphasizes on a comprehensive way to recognize each student's unique capabilities by prioritizing multidisciplinary literacy and numeracy, through a curriculum and pedagogy that promotes multilingualism, life skills and ethical values, while leveraging technology and local contexts. It places teachers at the heart of the learning process and advocates for a framework of continuous assessment, research, and innovation. Further the policy strives to holistically develop engaged citizens who are rooted in India's rich cultural heritage while being prepared for a complex, interconnected world.

Restructuring School Education

A solid foundation of early childhood care and education is prioritized in the new structure since it holds that a child's nurturing should begin at a young age. Therefore, the main reform brought about by this policy is the replacement of the existing "10+2" structure with the "5+3+3+4" structure, which aims to accommodate the development of children between the ages of 3 and 18.

Reducing school dropout rates was one

of the main goals of the 2020 education agenda. Nearly 100% of students are enrolled in primary school as a result of programs like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act, but data for upper grades shows some significant issues. Classes 6–8 had a gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 90.9%, whereas grades 9–10 and 11–12 had GERs of 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively. Therefore, achieving a 100% gross enrolment ratio from preschool to secondary school by 2030 is the goal of NEP 2020.

The New Education Policy has also made a very important step in filling teacher shortages as soon as possible. A student-teacher ratio of less than 30:1 will be the goal in every school. Areas with a high proportion of socio - economically disadvantaged pupils will strive for a student-teacher ratio of less than 25:1. Additionally, students will have more freedom in selecting the courses they take as academic streams and extracurricular and curricular, and academic and vocational streams will not be strictly divided. Creating national textbooks with local content and promoting the power of language through multilingualism are other such initiatives.

Amendments to Higher education

The key policy objectives include the creation of multidisciplinary universities in every district, establishing a National Research foundation, implementation of merit – based appointments, enhancing faculty training, improving curriculum, pedagogy, and student support by increasing access to scholarships, online education and infrastructure for disabled learners.

A multiple entry-exit mechanism with a flexible curriculum that enables students to study novel combinations of courses and permits students to leave a course at any time with the necessary certificate, diploma, or degree and return to the same course or a different course later, has been decided upon.

The creation of an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), which would digitally preserve the academic credits obtained from different accredited Higher Education Institutes (HEI), is another important step that would allow degrees from HEIs to be granted based on credits gained. Students will get financial aid through a variety of channels.

Further, it aims for establishing research – intensive and teaching – intensive universities and increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. Embracing the concept of '64 Kalaas' (arts) from the traditions of Takshashika and Nalanda, which included creative subjects, scientific field, vocational skills, professional disciplines and soft skills, the policy stresses on integrating humanities with STEM and encouraging cross – disciplinary structures. It also aims to attract international students to India and provide mobility for Indian students abroad. Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to ST, SC, and OBC and socio – economically disadvantaged groups and the national scholarship portal will be expanded to support and track the progress of students receiving scholarships.

It also focusses on enhancing faculty motivation through improved teaching and

research quality and creating supportive academic environments with the help of peer reviews, student feedback, professional development and community service.

Challenges and Way Forward

Finding qualified teachers to teach each topic in their mother tongues and translating study materials into mother tongues are two obstacles to the implementation of this program, according to an article by Dr. Roshni Singh in the "Times of India ." Also, while students from private institutions may be introduced to English earlier than government institutions with subjects being taught in regional languages as per NEP 2020, which might exacerbate social and linguistic divides. The introduction of different levels of entry and exit in higher education might also encourage students to exit midway.

However, the holistic development as outlined by NEP 2020 could only be possible with the efforts and collaboration of both the central and state level governments and institutions focusing on the implementation of the policy from the ground level. For this purpose, the policy recommends expanding the Central Advisory Board of Education and committing to increase public investment to 6% of GDP. Further, the implementation principles include the focus on policy's spirit and intent through phased implementation, prioritization of critical actions, and establishment of collaborative committees at central and state levels for comprehensive periodical reviews.

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The Quad Summit 2024: A Strategic Alliance in the Indo-Pacific Region

✍ Fathima Fidha

On September 21, 2024, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. hosted Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia, Prime Minister Kishida Fumio of Japan, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India in Wilmington, Delaware, for the fourth Quad Leaders' Summit.[1] The Quad Summit of 2024, formerly known as Quadrilateral Security dialogue, has evolved from its origins in disaster relief to become a comprehensive partnership addressing regional stability, economic growth, and democratic values.

Historical Origins and Evolution

As highlighted by the Australian government department of foreign affairs and trade[2], the Quad is a diplomatic partnership, not strictly a security dialogue. Following the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004, India, Japan, Australia, and the United States created an informal alliance to collaborate on disaster relief efforts. The group first met in 2007 on the side line of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), but however, the partnership ceased to exist in 2008. Later in 2017, they re-established the negotiations on the side lines of the ASEAN summit. The four countries agreed to revive their Quad partnership to counter the China's military diplomatic, and economic influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

On 12 March, 2021 an inaugural virtual leaders' summit was conducted and President Biden of USA hosted the first in-person summit in Washington on 24 September, 2021 with PM Scott Morrison (Australia), PM Narendra Modi (India) and PM Yoshihide Suga (Japan) as its participants. On 4 March, 2022 a virtual summit was conducted that focussed on reaffirming Indo-Pacific commitment amid Ukraine conflict and humanitarian crisis. On 24 May, 2022 the second in-person summit was held in Tokyo hosted by PM Kishida (Japan); PM Anthony Albanese (Australia), PM Narendra Modi (India), President Biden (USA) were its participants who were accompanied by Foreign Ministers including Minister Wong (Australia), Minister Hayashi (Japan), Minister Jaishankar (India) and Secretary Blinken (USA). Further on 20 May, 2023 a third in-person summit was held in Hiroshima and PM Anthony Albanese (Australia), PM Narendra Modi

1   https://in.usembassy.gov/fact-sheet-2024-quad-leaders-summit/ (Accessed on 12th November 2024).
2   https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/quad (Accessed on 14th November 2024).

(India), PM Kishida (Japan), President Biden (USA) were its participants. The significant First Quad Vision Statement was issued during this summit. The fourth In-Person Summit in Wilmington, Delaware was held on 21 September 2024, hosted by President Biden, that focused on reaffirming commitment to deepening cooperation and delivering practical outcomes for the region.

Strategic Developments of 2024 Summit

The prime minister of India, giving his opening remarks at the summit stated, "Our meeting is taking place at a time when the world is surrounded by tensions and conflicts. In such a situation, the QUAD's working together on the basis of shared democratic values is very important for the entire humanity." and added "Free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific is our shared priority and shared commitment."[3] The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India[4], emphasised Quad's leading ambitious projects to help partners address pandemics and disease; respond to natural disasters; strengthen their maritime domain awareness and maritime security; mobilize and build high-standard physical and digital infrastructure; invest in and benefit from critical and emerging technologies; confront the threat of climate change; bolster cyber security; and cultivate the next generation of technology leaders.

Resilient collaborators for the Indo-Pacific

For the purpose of addressing common goals and provide opportunities for partners in the Indo-Pacific area, the Quad Leaders and Foreign Ministers have convened six times in the last four years. The leaders unveiled fresh plans to improve collaboration and guarantee the Quad's lasting influence. Each administration pledged to cooperate with their respective legislatures to strengthen inter-parliamentary exchanges and to secure strong funding for Quad priorities.

Global health care and health security

In order to promote health security in the Indo-Pacific, the Quad Health Security Partnership seeks to improve cooperation and coordination. With an initial focus on cervical cancer, the Quad Cancer Moonshot seeks to reduce cancer deaths in the region by utilizing both public and private resources. Along with its ongoing support of the Pandemic Fund, it is dedicated to bolstering health security and resilience initiatives throughout the area. Further, it intends to work together to advance fair access to Mpox vaccinations that are safe, efficacious, and guaranteed to be of high quality.

Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief

For more than 20 years, Quad has collaborated to address disaster relief and humanitarian aid (HADR) in the

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3   https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pm-us-visit-quad-summit-modi-biden-meeting-greenville-global-issues-2604218-2024-09-22 (Accessed on 14th November 2024).

4   https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/38327/Fact+Sheet+2024+Quad+Leaders+Summit (Accessed on 15th November 2024).

Indo-Pacific area.[5] It strives to guarantee preparedness to respond to future natural catastrophes and has contributed more than $5 million in humanitarian aid in the wake of the 2004 earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean. It also focuses on maintaining an open and free Indo-Pacific, enhancing marine domain awareness, and maritime security.

Maritime security

In 2022, Quad established the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), which offers participants state-of-the-art, near-real-time, and affordable radio frequency data. Through this initiative, more than two dozen countries now have access to dark vessel maritime domain. Quad intends to continue providing the region with state-of-the-art capabilities and information by layering additional data and technology into IPMDA. The Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network pilot project aims to share airlift capacity among the four countries and utilize their combined logistics assets. In order to enhance interoperability, it also intends to deploy the first-ever Quad at-Sea Ship Observer Mission in 2025.[6]

Improved infrastructure

To boost connectivity, expand regional capacity, and address urgent requirements, Quad provides the area with high-quality, resilient infrastructure and assists supply chain resilience, essential and emerging technologies, renewable energy, and other high-quality projects in the Indo-Pacific. The Quad also announced its shared Principles for Development and Deployment of Digital Public Infrastructure. The Future Partnership will leverage the Quad's experience to promote resilient and sustainable port infrastructure.

In essence, Quad Summit 2024 is characterized by its commitment to regional cooperation, addressing security challenges, and enhancing collaborative responses to global issues, particularly in the context of countering China's growing influence. Additionally, it also strives to collaborate on technology, climate, energy, space, cyber security and terrorism.[7]

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5   https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/35745/Guidelines_for_Quad_Partnership_on_Humanitarian_Assistance_and_Disaster_Relief_HADR_in_the_IndoPacific (Accessed on 15th November 2024).

6   https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2057454 (Accessed on 15th November 2024).

7   https://in.usembassy.gov/fact-sheet-2024-quad-leaders-summit/ (Accessed on 15th November 2024).

Interview with Mr. Rakesh Rao, CORE Heritage

✎ **Student Editorial Board**

"A museum that displays weapons is not the same as one that is devoted to them. There are many museums on the Indian soil, but none of them are devoted to the country's traditional war literature and art. Therefore, the ultimate goal of the Centre of Oriental Research and Education for Heritage is to study Indian traditional governance and all forms of war literature with the aim to preserve Indian cultural heritage."

– Mr. Rakesh Rao,
Founder CORE Heritage

In an enlightening interview with Mr. Rakesh Rao, a researcher at CORE Heritage, conducted during an educational excursion organized by Samvaad, Department of Political Science of P.G.D.A.V. College, University of Delhi at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, the editorial board got to initiate a fruitful dialogue that delved into the richness of India's warrior legacy during Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's reign and the intricacies of museology.

CORE Heritage, operating as a non-governmental organization, faces several challenges in its preservation mission. Mr. Rao outlined solutions to three primary obstacles faced by them, including that of financial sustainability, finding permanent space to exhibit, and the management of workforce. To tackle these challenges the organization generates revenue through exhibitions, conservation services, and film consultancy, instead of relying on donations. "We've been involved in major productions like 'Mangal Pandey' and current projects like 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Ji's serial,'" he revealed. With the cooperation and support of Pandit Mahadev Shastri Joshi's family, CORE Heritage was able to secure premises at no expense, that allows stable operations. The organization operates through dedicated volunteers and its founders' commitment to working without remuneration. "Around 40 volunteers, through their selfless service, contribute to our goals," he noted.

When asked about the relevance of historical figures like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in today's time, Mr. Rao emphasized their significance by stating, "Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj embodied qualities such as patience, charity, innovation, self-control, and unwavering determination in the face of adversity, making him highly relevant even in today's context."

Nine artifacts directly used by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj are among the remarkable collection of authentic weaponry kept at CORE Heritage. "Six of

these historical weapons are on display, including swords, a shield, a gun, and a Katara (push dagger)," Mr Rao indicated. "These were presented to Sarsenapati Hambirrao Mohite during Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation ceremony."

One of the most fascinating aspects of CORE Heritage's work is to preserve unique artifacts like their poisonous sword and antient bulletproof shields. "Richard Burton, a British officer, documented in his 'Book of Sword' that Indian shields could stop traditional gun bullets," Mr. Rao highlighted. "Through our research and X-ray analysis of preserved shields, we discovered that treated buffalo hide was used to create bullet-resistant protection."

Further, Mr. Rao provided interesting comparisons between Maratha and Mughal artifacts, representing their distinct ideas and use of resources. "Maratha artifacts were primarily functional and practical, designed for utility in warfare, and in contrast Mughal artifacts display higher levels of artistry and sophistication, often incorporating luxurious materials like gold, silver, and precious stones."

When asked about the support provided by women and children during wars, based on the weapons displayed, Mr. Rao noted that the collection includes specially designed weapons for young warriors to groom their martial training since childhood. Further he revealed the contributions made by women warriors like Rani Laxmibai, Rani Durgavati, Rani Rupmati, Rajmata Jijabai, Rajmata Ahilyabai Holkar, who were at the forefront and showed resilience and bravery. "Maharani Tarabai led the resistance

against Aurangzeb's forces for seven years." He highlighted to emphasize that unlike conventional notions, women and children were active participants in warfare and not just passive observers.

Discussing preparation for threats in general setups with reference to a painting on display in which the textiles had pleats, Mr. Rao emphasized on the constant potential for threats by giving the example of Maharana Pratap and Shakti Singh at Haldighati. When Shakti Singh learned his brother was in danger, he abandoned Mansingh's side and joined Maharana Pratap, saving his life. Through this example, he highlighted how warfare has influenced social customs in India through traditions, "For instance, during weddings, the Kshatriya groom and the uncles from both sides carry swords which is a practice that emerged from the uncertainty of conflicts and the need for constant vigilance."

Addressing the relevance of historical weapons in modern warfare, Mr. Rao acknowledged their limitations, given today's technological advancement; even still emphasized on their cultural value, "While it would be impossible to use these historical weapons in today's military operations, the principles of 'Shastra Vidya' (martial arts) remain relevant for self-defence and prevention of wrongdoings."

CORE Heritage runs innovative programs like 'Touch and Feel to Experience the History,' which allows participants to interact with models of historical weapons. "These demonstrations help people understand the challenges of traditional warfare and its relevance to

our understanding of history," Mr. Rao explained. One of the highlights of this initiative was the miniature model of cannon which was stalled to illustrate the challenges faced in traditional warfare. "When facing an enemy, if your gun fails to fire, they'll close in and defeat you. This highlights the importance of staying vigilant and prepared. Even if your instrument malfunctions, it's crucial to remain focused on your objective without abandoning the frontline. We emphasized the significance of standing firm against the enemy with unwavering resolve. This demonstration aimed to convey the importance of historical warfare, spanning 300-400 years, and its relevance to our understanding of history."

When inquired about the potential misuse of martial knowledge, Mr. Rao emphasized on their careful approach, "Just like science, this knowledge can be used for both good and bad purposes. We thoroughly assess a student's character during training through their eyes, lifestyle, and behaviour. If we detect negative intentions, we never proceed with training." He added that they maintain the capability to address any misuse of knowledge by former students as redressal mechanism.

CORE Heritage is engaged in several other ongoing projects including the identification of arms and armour, which has been going on for the past 11 years; conservation and preservation using traditional knowledge over the last 30 to 35 years; manufacturing techniques of arms and armour, since past 45 years; and the current year project, conservation and preservation of jail structures. For those interested in supporting CORE Heritage's mission, Mr. Rao encouraged the development of expertise in their field of study "Do best in your discipline and become an expert in it first, and then join CORE Heritage. We welcome volunteers who can help with public outreach and exhibition arrangements."

Towards the end of the interview Mr. Rao demonstrated some of his basic self-defence techniques and advocated the importance of being educated on the antient scriptures to understand the philosophies of life. Through this valuable interview, we got to learn about CORE Heritage's work which acts as a crucial bridge between India's martial past and its future. Through careful conservation, preservation, restoration and responsible transmission of knowledge, the organization ensures that valuable historical artifacts and traditions continue to inform and inspire future generations while maintaining their authenticity and cultural significance. The interview reveals how dedicated individuals and organizations can overcome significant challenges to preserve cultural heritage, making it accessible and relevant to contemporary audiences while maintaining its historical integrity.

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Peculiar Arms and Armours from CORE Heritage

1. Vila:

2. Khanda:

3. Mugrab:

4. Jamdhar

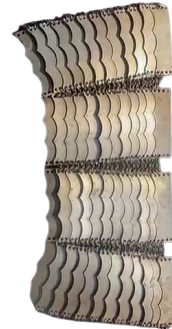5. Horsemen's spear:

6. Sarsenapati Hambirrao Mohite's sword

7. Ghungi

8. Chest plate

9. Lamellar:

12. chain mail:

13. ivory bichua:

10. A large arrow head:

11. arrows:

14. sarota cum daggers

15. European dagger

16. Arab dagger:

17. women and children:

18. kabja:

19. Muzzle loading guns: (in order) Afghan, Turkey, Rajasthan, South India, Madhya Pradesh, Maratha

20. Gun accessories

BOOK REVIEW

The India Way: strategic Diplomacy during Global Complexities

✍ **Krisha**

In an era of unprecedented global uncertainty, S. Jaishankar's "The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World" provides a compelling roadmap for India's diplomatic transformation. The book draws from Jaishankar's extensive 41-year diplomatic career, including pivotal roles as Ambassador to the USA, China, and Singapore to offer a nuanced exploration of India's foreign policy evolution and the need for it to craft its own strategies and solutions in a complex global landscape.

The book meticulously traces India's 70-year journey in foreign policy, outlining six distinct phases that highlight a narrative of gradual strategic maturation. The first phase, from 1947 to 1962, is characterized by an era of optimistic nonalignment. This was followed by the period from 1962 to 1971, marked by realism and recovery. The third phase, spanning 1971 to 1991, saw India asserting itself regionally. From 1991 to 1998, the country emerged as a nuclear power, signalling its growing strategic autonomy. The fifth phase, from 1998 to 2014, involved balancing global power dynamics as India navigated its role on the world stage. Finally, the sixth phase, beginning in 2014 under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, represents a transformative period in India's foreign policy trajectory.

Exploring the Chapters: Perspectives and Strategies

In "**The Lessons of Awadh**" Jaishankar wars against India's strategic complacency, drawing lessons from the downfall of Awadh Nawabs. He criticizes India's past inability to foresee changes in the world, including the postponed advancement of nuclear technology and economic reforms. He exhorts India to pursue a proactive foreign policy stance in order to prevent being taken by surprise by the balance of power in the world.

Focusing on the evolving US-China rivalry, the chapter on "**The Art of the Disruption**" lays emphasis on India needs to strategically handle these upheavals and transform obstacles into opportunities. The chapter emphasizes how crucial it is for India to preserve equilibrium while taking advantage of its special place in the world order.

Chapter 3: **Krishna's Choice,** uses the Mahabharata as a metaphor, where Krishna's counsel to Arjuna reflects the need for tough decisions in the face of moral dilemmas. This chapter resonated deeply with me, as it highlighted the importance of balancing idealism with practicality in decision-making. Krishna's emphasis on duty over hesitation mirrored my own struggles in

making tough choices. Jaishankar's point that India must make hard decisions to secure its future felt especially relevant and thought-provoking.

India's antiquated policies and reluctance to connect with the world are criticized in "**The Dogmas of Delhi.**" Jaishankar demands that these "dogmas" be abandoned in favour of a more bold and contemporary strategy. Instead of holding onto outdated ideals that no longer suit India's strategic interests, he emphasizes the significance of adjusting foreign policy to the realities of the present.

In Chapter 5 "**Mandarins and Masses**," Jaishankar investigates how public opinion is increasingly influencing diplomacy. The chapter highlights the growing interdependence of foreign actions and domestic expectations. He contends that in order to prevent a gap between the expectations of the populace and the acts of the government, officials must successfully manage this equilibrium.

In "**The Nimzo-Indian Defence**," Jaishankar discusses methods for controlling China's ascent. Strong bilateral ties and well-defined boundaries are emphasized throughout the chapter. According to him, India needs a mix of cooperation and competition to handle China's growing influence.

Chapter 7 called "**A Delayed destiny**," Jaishankar examines India's alliance with Japan, emphasizing how it has the potential to alter the balance of power in Asia. He further discusses how shared democratic values and economic goals make the relationship essential for the region's stability and India's strategic interests.

India's marine strategy and its place in the Indo-Pacific region are examined by Jaishankar in the chapter "**The Pacific Indian**" He contends that protecting trade channels and fending off geopolitical challenges require India's involvement in this field. The necessity for India to increase its economic and naval might in the area is emphasized in the chapter.

Reflections and Analysis

The emphasis on the necessity of striking a balance between expert decision-making and the opinions of the general public in foreign policy, particularly in Chapter 5 of Mandarins and Masses, is what most impacted me from this book. According to Dr. S. Jaishankar, diplomacy must take into account the concerns of the general public even if it is frequently influenced by a small number of politicians. The chapter, for instance, addresses how India's international activities, such as trade regulations or strategic partnerships, have a direct impact on people's employment and financial prospects. This got me to thinking about how to better explain foreign policy choices to the common people in order to gain their support and comprehension. For me, the most applicable and accessible takeaway was that a nation's standing in the world is strengthened when national strategy is linked to public ambitions.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that S. Jaishankar's The India Way transcends traditional diplomatic

literature and provides a forward- looking and pragmatic understanding of how India can navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world. The book emphasizes the need for strategic thinking, adaptability, and balancing traditional values with modern realities. It highlights the importance of addressing challenges such as rising global powers, regional conflicts, and shifting alliances while focusing on India's unique strengths. By analysing historical missteps and presenting actionable insights, the book encourages India to take a more assertive and proactive role in global affairs. Jaishankar also underscores the importance of connecting national policies with public interests, ensuring that foreign policy is not just confined to the elite but resonates with the broader population. This approach makes the book a valuable guide for policy – makers, scholars and citizens on understanding how India can shape its destiny in an uncertain world.

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Feedbacks on First Edition

Great initiative by Department of Political Science, P.G.D.A.V. College. The range of intellectual exploration from election analysis, political thought, cultural diversity, data insights, policy analysis, to geopolitical insights, help us to understand political science as a dynamic, lived discipline that beautifully connects all these aspects together.

- *Sanjana, PHD scholar, Department of Political Science, Jawaharlal Nehru university*

This newsletter is a great way to spread awareness and inculcate general knowledge amongst students. For students of political science, knowledge stands as their biggest strengths and SAMVAAD can play a great role in developing that. Major credits to the editors and the faculty co-ordinators for taking up this amazing opportunity for fostering knowledge and critical thinking.

- *Varsha Das, Core-Committee Member, Constitutional Law Studies and Orientation Committee, School of Law, Christ University, Bangalore*

The newsletter is an impressive showcase of academic and intellectual diversity. It certainly goes beyond surface level reporting and offers thoughtful perspectives. This dynamic approach stands out as an inspiration for all. Looking forward for future editions.

- *Bhavana, Editor Head, Women Development Cell, Miranda House, University of Delhi*

Samvaad monthly newsletter is a commendable initiative by the department of political science, P.G.D.A.V. College, University of Delhi. It is a significant step towards fostering a vibrant academic and research culture among students.

- *Chaitanya Bhaskar, Vice President, NITI- The Policy Discourse Forum, Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi.*

I'm glad to know about Samvaad Newsletter; it's a fantastic initiative that highlights the Political Science Department's thriving ecosystem. The professional design, faculty-student integration, and inclusion of a variety of perspectives, display a commendable start.

- *Parina Mehta, President, Republica, Association of Political Science, Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College, University of Delhi*

As a former student and office bearer of the Political Science department, P.G.D.A.V. College, I'm genuinely impressed by this initiative. Back in our time, we had come up with the annual magazine, and now reading this newsletter makes me feel nostalgic and proud. It definitely provides a comprehensive platform for showcasing academic and analytical rigour. The breadth of articles and the professional approach are remarkable. The newsletter is not just a document; it's a reflection of the department's evolving academic vision.

– Ajay Rathod, Cadet, Indian Naval Academy (Alumni)