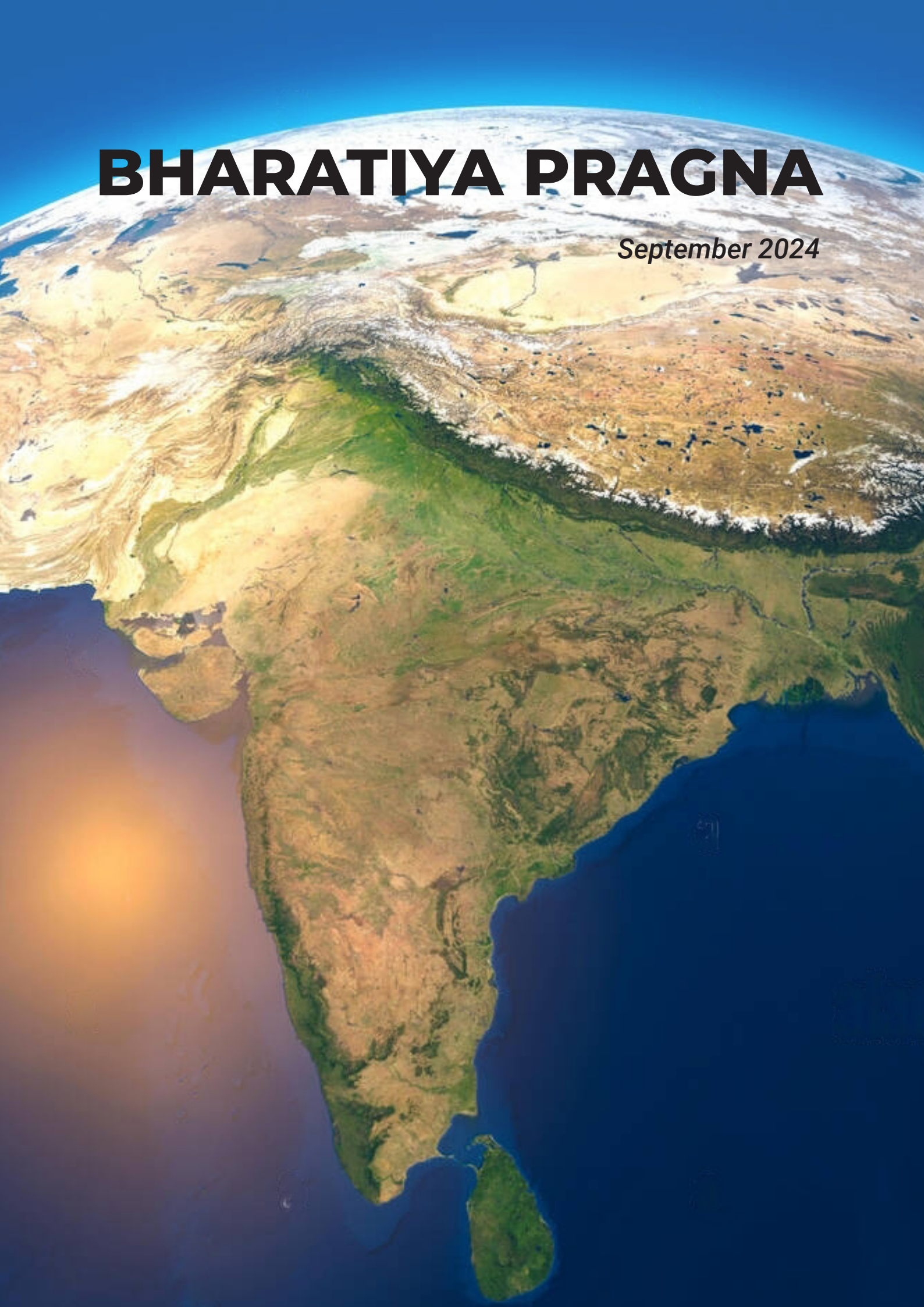


BHARATIYA PRAGNA

September 2024



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Printed and Published by
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202, Classic Court Annexe,
Somajiguda, Hyderabad -
500082
Tel: +91 9848467669

Printed by

Deepthi Technicolour Printers
1-1-562/1, Opp. Balaji Towers,
Gandhi Nagar, Hyderabad-80
Telangana, India

**Mob: 7075203882 /
9949703224**

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES AND
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Biennial subscription in India:

₹ 1000

For Rest of the World: \$ 150

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Sanatan, Hindutva and Bharat

Prafulla Ketkar

“If anthropometry is a science which can be depended upon to determine the race of a people, then the result obtained by the application of anthropometry to the various strata of Hindu society disprove that the Untouchables belong to a race different from the Aryans and the Dravidians. The measurements establish that the Brahmin and the Untouchables belong to the same race. From this it follows that if the Brahmins are Aryans the Untouchables are also Aryans. If the Brahmins are Dravidians the Untouchables are also Dravidians. If the Brahmins are Nagas, the Untouchables are also Nagas. Such being the facts, the theory propounded by Mr. Rice (of Aryan Invasion and racial explanation of untouchability) must be said to be based on a false foundation.”

– Dr Babasaheb B R Ambedkar, Who were the Shudras? In Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 7, Government of Maharashtra, 1990. p. 302

The new Dravidian dynast of the Karunanidhi family, Udhayanidhi Stalin, through his rant against the Sanatan Dharma, has created a recent controversy. Though this is nothing new for Dravidian politics, the organisation of the Abolition of the Sanatana Conclave was the first official pronouncement of the real intent of the Marxist-Missionary conglomerate, influenced by the colonial construct and using the mascot of Dravidianism. Congress and other allies of the Dravidian party got unsettled with the remarks and found it challenging to do the damage control. Still, the justifications and more vociferous attacks on the Sanatan Dharma in a more crude language continue unabated. As the spell is on the foundation of our nationhood, their arguments on Sanatan, Hindutva and Bharat require deeper scrutiny.

The so-called Progressive Writers' Association of Tamil Nadu have been preparing for this conference, a continuation of Dismantling Global Hindutva and Cutting South initiatives of the anti-Bharat brigade. Equating Sanatan Dharma to caste-based discrimination is their favourite intellectual pastime. They forget that the word Sanatana, literally means eternal, represents the values and mission of this ancient civilisation. Ekam Sat Viprah Bahuda Vadanti (Truth is one, Sages explain them differently), Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah (Let All be Happy) and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (Whole world is one family) are the foundational principles of this civilisation. This civilisation is our collective journey of continuous unfoldment. Yes, due to wrong interpretations of the scriptures and incessant invasions from outside, certain evil practices crept into our social psyche, like untouchability and caste-based discrimination. Against that also, there has been a continuous process of reforms and refinement. From Bhagwan Buddha, many Saintly figures and reformists, including Dr Ambedkar, followed the same path of refinement. Hence, Dr Ambedkar could say: "The Hindus wanted the Vedas and they sent for Vyasa who was not a caste Hindu. The Hindus wanted an Epic and they sent for Valmiki who was an Untouchable. The Hindus wanted a Constitution, and they sent for me."

The convenient explanation to avoid the outrage is to target Hindutva (Hinduness). Again, in the name of social justice, denouncing the Hindu way of life is the mainstay of Marxist-Missionary ideology. Hindutva is nothing but a worldview based on the Sanatan values; spiritual democracy, meaning equal acceptance and respect for all ways of worship, is its philosophical basis. Hindutva resists and exposes the forces that

believe in imposed monotheism and evangelism. Omnitheism (a belief that the same spirit exists in every living and non-living thing) and its manifestation in various deities is the strength of our society and not a weakness. The forces that failed to impose their monotheistic ideas after centuries of colonial projects have been using Dravidianism, sometimes even the name of Bhagwan Buddha and other reformists, to further their agenda. Udhayanidhi's utterance is part of the same.

Bharat is the sacred geography where Sanatan flourished and has been practised as Hindutva. 'India' is a colonial name. Our Constitution permits equivalent use of both Bharat and India. The Constituent Assembly debate and the judicial interpretation of the same ratify the same. The idea of Bharat represents the eternity and continuity of the Hindu worldview, which is now recognised globally in the form of Yoga, Ayurveda or Vaccine Maitri.

Dr Ambedkar rejected the racial origin of untouchability and called the Aryan Invasion theory 'mere speculation' by the British colonial anthropologists. Are the dynastic politicians of Tamil Nadu ready to get rid of their fake notion of the Aryan-Dravidian divide as the faithful followers of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar? Similarly, Dr Ambedkar believed more in the union than the federation and rejected the idea of regionalism and secessionism. Hatred and language of abolition would not make one a proponent of social justice envisaged by Dr Ambedkar; equality and fraternity for national unity would.



Which 9/11?

Rohit Gupta



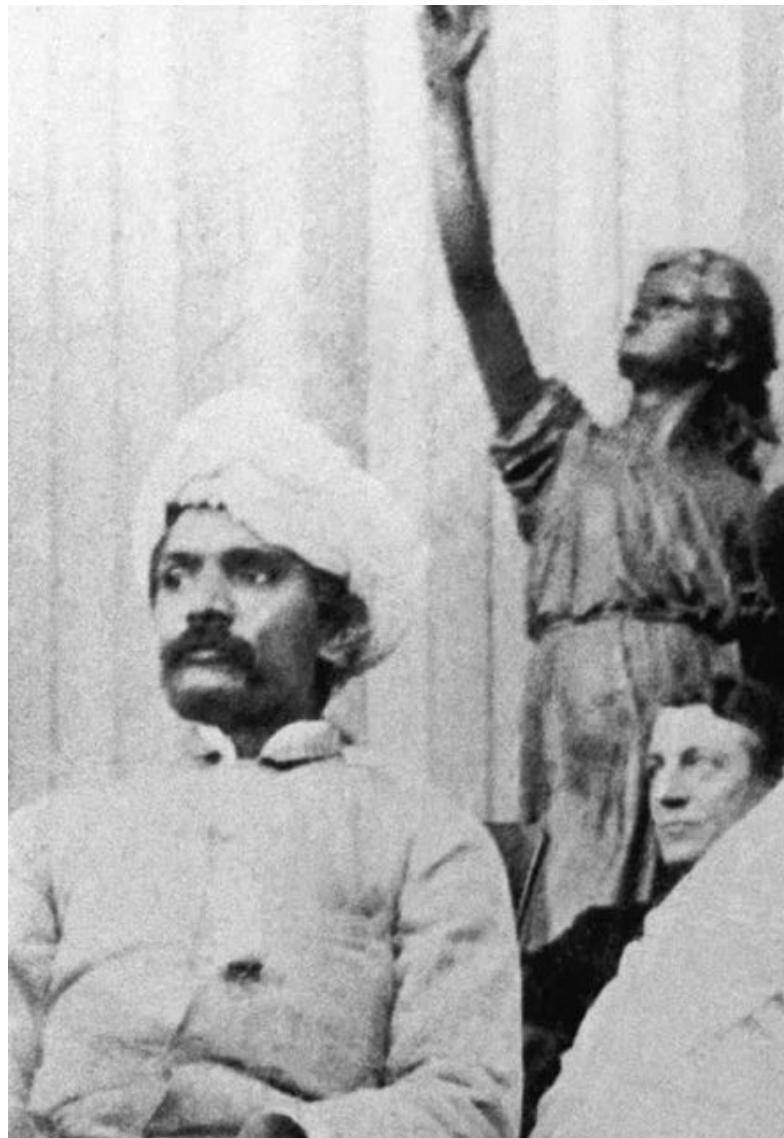
At the heart of the above question, there are two ideas. The 9/11 of 1893 was represented by Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu and Bharatiya, at Chicago in the Parliament of Religions. The message of love, triumphs, hate and how all the humanity must seek to find one world religion was at its core. The 9/11 of 2001 was represented by Islamists who disseminated the message of violence and division. Who should we emulate? The time has come to retrieve the message of love from the hurl of hate.

Dates and events in history are the primary tools in manufacturing narratives. How do we mark the significance of one day over the other? Of course, it is done by the collective experience of the same. One date- 9/11 has been also marked in the same way, but more for the horrors, violence, and bloodshed it brought. The four different attacks on this same day in the US, most horrifyingly captured in our imagination by the sight of an airplane collapsing into the World Trade Centre in Manhattan, New York is still fresh in our memories. The world also has not forgotten the following Afghanistan War, Iraq War and many aerial attacks around the West Asia by the US-led NATO forces, calling it the 'War on Terror'. This war still continues, persists and complicates itself. The Bush and Obama administration in America plunged a fair share of the world's physical geography into bloodshed after the same Islamic Jihadists came haunting them, who were nurtured by the Americans at the heyday of the Cold War, to oust Soviet Union from Afghanistan.

Swami Vivekananda and the 9/11 represented a left behind legacy which was truly Hindu and Bharatiya and which accentuated the fact that love triumphs hate

However, by disbanding the date: 9/11, we tend to forget that some 108 years before the September 11, 2001 attacks, one monk from the heartland of Bharat had reached America as well. He won over the Americans with the message of love, and not hatred. He was open to accept all, and thought that to claim to be tolerant is actually an insult to others. The monk who claimed to have represented the ancient order of Vedic Sanyasis in then the youngest of the nations was accepted and embraced by all for his firm beliefs in the humanity.

Why must we not then celebrate 9/11 in the name of that Sanyasi- Swami Vivekananda? Why must we associate 9/11 to an Islamic Jihadist Osama bin laden and the American aggression which brought miseries to many innocent people for a whole decade or more? Before, answering those questions, we must go back to history to refresh our memories.



9/11 of 1893

On September 11, 1893, the first session of the Parliament of Religions was opened in the great Hall of Columbus, where were seated representatives of the religious beliefs of twelve hundred millions of the human race. In the centre sat Cardinal Gibbons, the highest prelate of the Roman Catholic Church on the Western Continent. On the right and left of him were gathered the Oriental delegates- Pratap Chandra Majumdar of Bengal and Nagarkar of Bombay who were representatives of the Brahmo Samaj; Dharampala who represented the Buddhists of Ceylon; Gandhi (a distant relation of Mahatma Gandhi) representing Jains, and Mr Chakravarty representing Theosophy with Mrs Annie Besant.

Among them was also seated Swami Vivekananda who, with his noble bearing, bright countenance



and gorgeous apparel, drew the attention of the assembled thousands and soon became the cynosure of all eyes. When Vivekananda's turn came up to speak, the history was awaiting its high wave! Hardly had he pronounced the very simple opening words, 'Sisters and Brothers of America', when hundreds rose to their feet with deafening shouts of applause. The Parliament had gone mad-everyone cheering the Swami enthusiastically. For two minutes he attempted to speak, but the wave of wild enthusiasm created by this significant form of address prevented it. He was certainly the first to cast off the formalism of the Congress and speak to the audience in the language for which they were waiting.

When Swami Vivekananda's speech commenced, he quoted two beautiful, illustrative passages taken from the Hindu scriptures: 'As the different

streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so O Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they may appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'

He continued with the second one, remarking that, 'Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.' The short introductory speech, manifesting its spirit of universality, its fundamental earnestness and broadmindedness completely, captivated the whole assembly. The effect of these mighty words was tremendous. Over the heads of the official representatives of the Parliament they were addressed to a wider public, and Swami Vivekananda at once became the most celebrated personality of the Parliament. The American press rang with his fame! The New York Herald referred to him as 'undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions' and added, 'After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation!'

Swamiji had reached America after travelling through many countries. He went by way of Ceylon, Penang, Singapore, Hongkong, and then visited Canton and Nagasaki. From there he went by land to Yokohama, seeing Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo. From Yokohama the ship sailed on to Vancouver-from the old World to the New; then by train he reached Chicago towards the end of July, 1893. Throughout his journey, Swamiji was much impressed by the sight of the various remains of the Bharatiya Dharma. In China he found to his amazement Sanskrit manuscripts, and in Japan Sanskrit mantras written in old Bengali script. Therefore, one can assume, that belief with which Swami Vivekananda captivated the American audience and delivered the message of Bhartiya Dharmik universality had been witnessed by him also! It was not just a speech; it was an experience, a manifestation of a historical truth! This historical truth of universal brotherhood has lived with the principle of acceptance, harmony, and respect for all encompassing everything which is Bharatiya and Hindu.



9/11 of 2001

On September 11, 2001, 19 militants associated with the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda hijacked four airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two of the planes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, a third plane hit the Pentagon just outside Washington DC, and the fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. Almost 3,000 people were killed during the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which triggered major U.S. initiatives to combat terrorism and defined the presidency of George W Bush.

The 9/11 escalated the on-going 'Clash of Civilisation' theory! American President Bush in his address soon after the attack declared, "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." Now who harbored those terrorists?

Operation Enduring Freedom, the American-led international effort to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and destroy Osama bin Laden's terrorist network based there, began on October 7. Within

two months, U.S. forces had effectively removed the Taliban from operational power, but the war continued, as US and coalition forces attempted to defeat a Taliban insurgency campaign based in neighboring Pakistan.

The planning of 9/11 attacks had started taking shape at least two years before the attacks. The idea for the attacks came from Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, who first presented it to Al-Qaeda chief and mastermind of the attack, Osama Bin Laden in 1996. At that time, bin Laden and al-Qaeda were in a period of transition, having just relocated back to Afghanistan from Sudan. In late 1999, a group of men from Hamburg, Germany arrived in Afghanistan; the group included Mohammad Atta, Marwan al-Shehhi, Ziad Jarrah, and Ramzi bin al-Shibh.

The attacks caused the deaths of 2,996 people and the injuries of more than 6,000 others. The death toll included 265 on the four planes (from which there were no survivors), 2,606 in the World Trade Center and in the surrounding area, and 125 at the Pentagon. Nearly all of those who perished were civilians with the exceptions of 343 firefighters, 72 law enforcement officers, 55 military personnel, and the 19 terrorists who died in the attacks.

Numerous incidents of harassment and hate crimes against Muslims and South Asians were reported in the days following the attacks. Sikhs were also targeted because Sikh males usually wear turbans, which are stereotypically associated with Muslims. There were reports of attacks on mosques and other religious buildings (including the firebombing of a Hindu temple), and assaults on people, including one murder: Balbir Singh Sondhi, a Sikh mistaken for a Muslim, was fatally shot on September 15, 2001, in Mesa, Arizona.

On October 7, 2001, the War in Afghanistan began when the US and British forces initiated aerial bombing campaigns targeting Taliban and al-Qaeda camps, then later invaded Afghanistan with ground troops of the Special Forces. This eventually led to the overthrow of the Taliban rule of Afghanistan with the Fall of Kandahar on December 7, 2001, by U.S.-led coalition forces. Conflict in Afghanistan between the Taliban insurgency and the Afghan forces backed by NATO Resolute Support Mission is ongoing. The Philippines and Indonesia, among other nations with their own internal conflicts with Islamic terrorism, also increased their military readiness.

Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal

– Swami Vivekananda,
Parliament of Religions, Chicago, September 11,
1893

Comparing the Two

Shortly after the hijacked planes crashed into New York's World Trade Centre, the Ramakrishna Mission printed a startling poster. For us, said the Mission, every 9/11 is a day for celebrating peace and brotherhood. It is the date on which Swami Vivekananda delivered his famous "Sisters and Brother of America" speech at Chicago in 1893. This reminder was significant then and more significant now!

The 9/11 of 1893 is fascinatingly pertinent to the contemporary conundrums of the contemporary world. The World Parliament of Religions was a uniquely American endeavor- grounded in a celebration of reason as a basis for multi-faith dialogue and confidence in the dawn of an American century.

Vivekananda was there as a messenger of peace and brotherhood. When he arrived in Chicago, he found to his dismay that he had lost the address of the Committee. He was lost and did not know where to go. May be similarly, the way we are entangling with our own problems as the human race. However, the conscience inside Swamiji was not lost, it was awake! He passed the chilly night in a big empty box found in the railway freight yard. In the morning he wandered from door to door only to meet insults and rebuffs from the fashionable residents of the metropolis. He didn't complain! He didn't get angry! And when somehow he reached the Parliament, he addressed audience as "Sisters and Brothers!"

This is the essence of the Hindu thought. Swami Vivekananda and the 9/11 represented a left behind legacy which was truly Hindu and Bharatiya and which accentuated the fact that love triumphs hate, universal brotherhood will win over the communalism, and harmony as a goal must surpass all other pursuits! The 9/11 of 2001 underlines the fact that Islamic brotherhood can lead us to havoc, destruction and partisan. It is not about tolerance, far less about the acceptance of others. Now, it is for the humanity as a whole to decide which 9/11 we want to remember.



G20

THE INDIA MOMENT

Anubha Mishra



The G20 summit that concluded in Bali in November 2022 provided the world's leading economies with a platform to hear and be heard on global issues.

Amidst the ongoing chaos in the global world order, the G20 Summit in Bali came as a ray of hope as it provided a platform where the principal economies of the world came together to try and find common ground in an increasingly divergent world. The core purpose of the G20 has always been to recognize the importance of collective action and inclusive collaboration among major developed countries and emerging economies around the world. And as a leading multilateral platform, it holds a strategic role in securing future global economic growth and prosperity, as its members represent over 85 per cent of global GDP, 75 per cent of global trade and two-thirds of the world's population. Initially, the G20 Summits focused only on matters of macroeconomics, however over the years it has expanded its horizons beyond the economic sphere towards other aspects encompassing issues related to trade, sustainable development, climate change, energy, agriculture, anti-corruption, environment, health, and so on.

India takes the mantle of G-20 leadership from Indonesia; it will be followed by Brazil and then South Africa in 2024 and 2025, respectively. This period of leadership presents an opportunity for the countries of the global south at a time when tensions between great powers threaten to undermine the G-20. But the outcome may also depend on the G-7 group of developed economies, led this year by India's new friend Japan. The G-20 has become an important forum for India, which remains marginal to the decision-making systems of most multilateral organizations, including the United Nations Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. Last year, India's leaders watched as Indonesia had to work hard to ensure that the fallout of Russia's war in Ukraine did not derail the annual G-20 summit in Bali, Indonesia.

This year, New Delhi aims to take the G-20 in a new direction—as well as to cement its status as the leader of the global south, as it saw itself doing it previously. India's Presidency has been regarded by experts across the world as an exceptional and unprecedented opportunity with immense scope and potential. For the Presidency, India's leadership has already committed itself to exploiting the linkages between economic growth, gender equality, peace, and security and the use of technological innovations for universal benefit. The agenda of inclusive growth is well-manifested in the priorities set by India's presidency.

Priorities include Green Development, Climate Finance & LiFE, Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth, Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure, Multilateral Institutions for the 21st century, and Women-led Development. These priorities target inclusive development of infrastructure, challenge the mechanism of WTO, make individuals an important part of environment, conservation (through LiFE) and ensure not only women's participation but essentially women-led growth, among others. G20 is a platform for inculcating the culture of collective action, coordination and consensus building while strengthening multilateralism. Therefore, democratizing the international institutions by bringing reforms in the WTO, WHO, and other UN bodies is one of the top priorities for achieving multilateralism.

There is no contention on the contextual relevance and urgency of these goals, but the rationale for the agenda goes beyond that. Priorities set by India's Presidency are the reflection of the past and present of India's culture, as well as of the pluralistic traditions of the nation. Priorities set by India's Presidency are the reflection of the past and present of India's culture, as well as of the pluralistic traditions of the nation. India, since independence, has envisioned a pluralistic and democratic world sans imperialist superpowers. It has imagined a world where countries collectively engage in coordinated efforts to ensure world peace and the development of the entire world. There is something unique and fundamental to the goals set by India's Presidency.

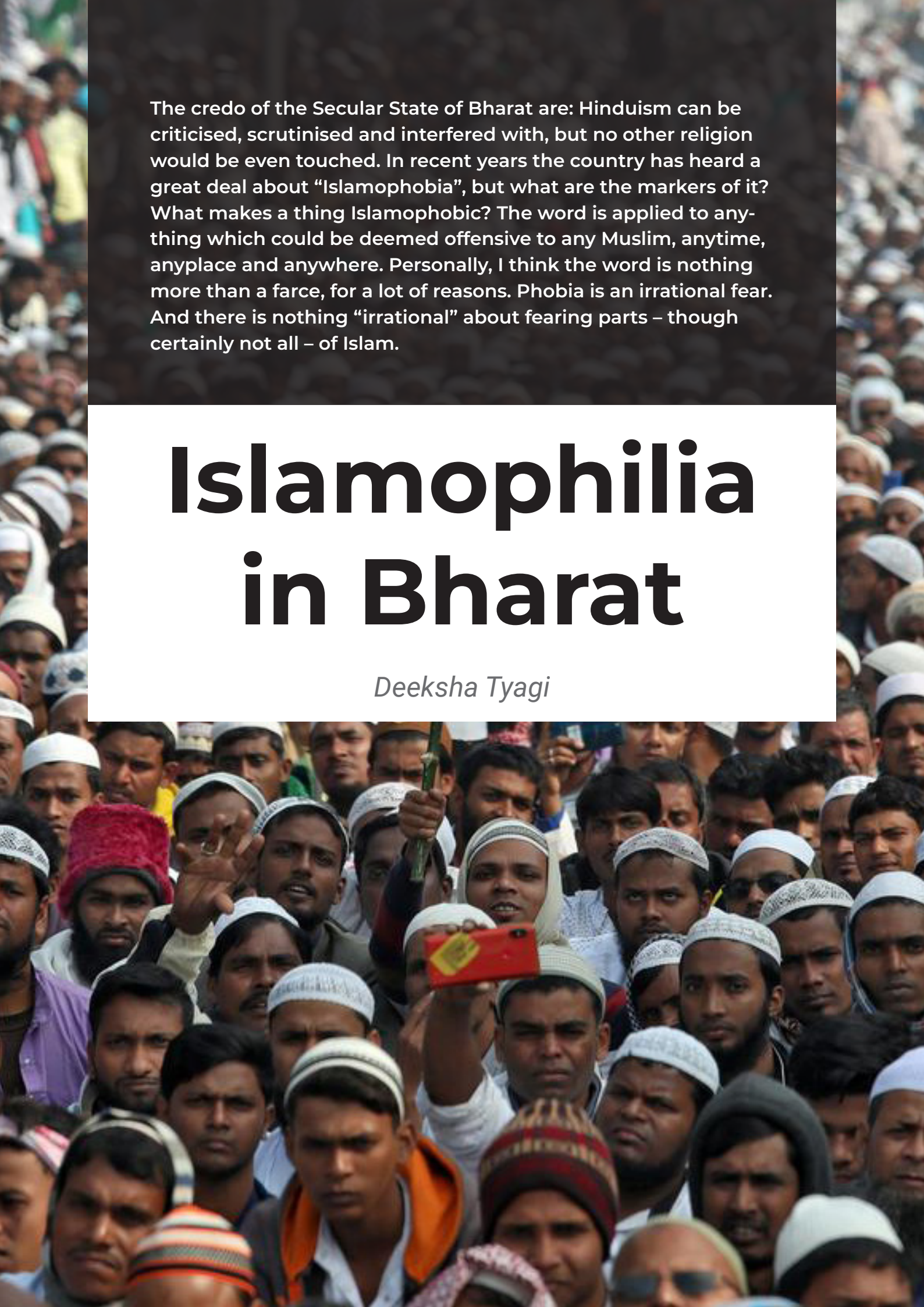
The fundamentals lie in the good economics and philosophy India attaches to G20. The principles of social welfare and equitable distribution are reflected in the commitment to achieving the end goal of ubiquitous improvement in the living standards of the masses and making the world a more equitable place. In the same spirit, India's advocacy for the emergence of the Global South is not an agenda to attain dominance, rather it is an act of raising its voice against discriminatory practices and for equitable distribution of resources, a democratic world order, and better living conditions for all.

The call for South-South cooperation is for bringing countries with common problems and aspirations together, to ensure economies of scale in achieving the goal of a better quality of life. India's stance on

peace is clear with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words that "today's era must not be of war." Whether at climate talks, negotiating for a fairer deal in terms of technological and financial support for developing countries; at the World Trade Organization, India's presence on the table is a proof of growing influence it exerts in global world order. For the Presidency, India's leadership has already committed itself to exploiting the linkages between economic growth, gender equality, peace, and security and the use of technological innovations for universal benefit. India has championed the cause of low-income nations in the past — and it could now do so again.

This time, working toward adopting a Sustainable Development Goals stimulus package to provide these governments with investments and liquidity, offering debt relief and restructuring. Prime Minister Modi also suggested that "data for development" will be an integral part of India's presidency. The digital transformation shouldn't be confined to a small part of humanity, and its greater benefits will be realized only when digital access becomes truly inclusive. India's own experience in the past few years has shown that if digital architecture is made widely accessible, it can bring about socioeconomic transformation.

Thus, under its presidency, India will have to navigate a delicate balance, overcoming partisan pressures from both sides to bridge the East-West conflict. And it will have to do so while carefully wading through issues central to its own strategic self-interests as well as those of the global community, creating an archetype for substantive talks, implementation and outcome for the G20 next year, culminating with a leader's summit to be held in New Delhi in September 2023. Championing the virtue of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" — the world is one family — as its G20 theme, India needs to skillfully manage this disorderly family going ahead. And through this leadership role, it must give priority to a developmental agenda, while creating a blueprint for a faster, more resilient and inclusive global economic recovery. The G20 presidency gives India an unprecedented opportunity to test its clout and credibility in tackling the fragmented global order — and the world to embrace it.



The credo of the Secular State of Bharat are: Hinduism can be criticised, scrutinised and interfered with, but no other religion would be even touched. In recent years the country has heard a great deal about “Islamophobia”, but what are the markers of it? What makes a thing Islamophobic? The word is applied to anything which could be deemed offensive to any Muslim, anytime, anyplace and anywhere. Personally, I think the word is nothing more than a farce, for a lot of reasons. Phobia is an irrational fear. And there is nothing “irrational” about fearing parts – though certainly not all – of Islam.

Islamophilia in Bharat

Deeksha Tyagi

I remember words from Ayaan Hirsi Ali's speech, she says, "Islam is not a religion of peace, it's a political theory of conquest that seeks dominance by any means it can." And then there is nothing irrational in fearing it. Wouldn't it be rational to be "phobic" of 9/11 or 26/11 terrorists? It is rational to be "phobic" about Islam if you are an audacious Indian-born British-American novelist, if you work at French satirical weekly magazine Charlie Hebdo or if you are a brave girl who rejects a Muslim's proposal in this secular country. Now the perpetrators may have their beliefs and what-so-ever, but being "phobic" of such things is a perfectly rational instinct, indeed I might call it a survival instinct.

Anyways, this article is not about the much used term, Islamophobia. It is about something else. The word which you hardly hear, which is a far more useful term and an infinitely more widespread phenomenon – "Islamophobia". And it has gripped India and its political system.

Islamophilia, the expression of disproportionate adoration of Islam. It seems strange that so many people today can be quite so asinine and supine when it comes to 'the religion'. In secular India, where the majority's religion currently get a hell of a time, but Islam does not.

There are kinds of people who adore it and there are reasons for it.

Those who just think Islam is wonderful. As in the case of most of the people, who express over-the-top praise or love for Islam, whether or not they feel it. They do it because they either think they ought to or they feel they have to. Those who wish to be called liberal-minded, fair or otherwise decent. And the most commonly found kind, the people who are Islamophile because they don't want to be tagged as Islamophobes.

It can be found across every spectrum of society. Strangely prominent among Indian politicians, supposedly clever college professors and 'intelligentsia'. And of course the media and Bollywood is awash with sufferers.

In case anyone is under the impression that Islamophilia is a fringe activity, it is worth noting that some of the most powerful people on earth suffer debilitatingly from the condition. Let's take example of the person who has not just affected now almost 4 to 5 generations of India, but Indian and Hindu Psyche as a whole. Yes, Mr. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

MK Gandhi not just supported Khilafat Movement, he went on to state: "I would gladly ask for postponement of Swaraj if thereby we could advance the interests of Khilafat".

Handing out an atrociously infuriating prescription of non-violence for the Hindus to die "bravely", Gandhi stated the following absurdity: "...I see nothing impossible in asking the Hindus to develop courage and strength to die before accepting forced conversion. I was delighted to be told that there were Hindus who did prefer the Moplah hatchet to forced conversion. If these have died without anger or malice, they have died as truest Hindus because they were truest among Indians and men... Even so is it more necessary for a Hindu to love the Moplah and the Mussalman more, when the latter is likely to injure him or has already injured him... Hindu help is at the disposal of the Mussalmans, because it is the duty of the Hindus, as neighbours, to give it..."

Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his 'Young India', 'it is wrong to say that Islam has employed force. No religion in this world has spread through the use of force. No Musalman, to my knowledge, has ever approved of compulsion.' Does this not show that Gandhi practiced political deception?

For Gandhi, no price was too great for appeasing Muslim. And the price for Gandhi's Hindu Muslim Unity was always to be paid by the Hindus. He had let loose a monster that has assumed mythical proportions in Indian polity, the Muslim Appeasement.

In his book prophetically titled as 'Gandhi and Anarchy' published by Tagore and Company, Madras in 1922 he wrote: 'It is impossible to believe that Gandhi and his adherents are not aware that this claim of the Mohammedans to be judged only by the Law of the Koran, is a claim which is the fons et origo of all Khilafat claims of whatever kind. It is well to be clear about this, for not only does the acceptance of the claim mean the death knell of the British Empire or Indo-British Commonwealth, whatever name we may care to give to the great fraternity of nations to which we belong, but specifically as regards India it means a real denial of Swaraj. for it involves Mohammedan rule and Hindu subjection.'

We all know about the Shah Bano Case. The Congress party, which had tacitly encouraged Muslim fundamentalists in order to garner their support during the elections, now played the appeasement card during this. The party could not let the judiciary wrestle Muslim support from its control. Votes were evidently more important than women's rights.

1988, under Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi, India became the first country to ban The Satanic Verses in 1988 as a pre-emptive measure. The ban was put in place even before Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa (religious edict) for the beheading of Rushdie.

H V Seshadri in his seminal book called: 'The Tragic Story of Partition', published in 1982 rightly summed up the Congress Party's disastrous philosophy and policy of Muslim appeasement in these words: 'Congress had been, from its very inception, caught in an ideological trap laid by the British: that the Congress could lay claim to be a national body only if all the religious communities in this land would come together on its platform; then alone would the British Government consider it as representative of all Indians and look into its demands.'

After independence, Nehru considered it his bounden duty to treat the Hindus of India as sacrificial goats in order to quench his thirst for Muslim infatuation through his pernicious policy of secularism and Muslim appeasement duly enshrined in Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian constitution.

Indira Gandhi amended the Indian constitution to confirm the first class secular special status of the Muslims in India and to relegate all the Hindus of India to the 'communal' degradation of a position of politically condemned second class citizens.

As H.V.Seshadri rightly concludes: 'This was how the Congress – in place of educating the Muslims in lessons of the true content of emotional integration, i.e., making them realize the dangers of separatism and persuading them to share the common national aspirations and joys and sorrows of the rest of their countrymen – began pampering their divisive tendencies

Coming to present, participating in the prayers on the occasion of Id-UI Fitr, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged the Muslim community to unite and vote in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

According to a RTI report revealed that the Delhi government, led by CM Arvind Kejriwal granted over Rs 101 crore of public funds to the Wakf board in the last seven years and Rs 62.57 crore alone in 2021.

Amanatullah Khan, an elected Muslim member of the Legislative Assembly, openly called for a beheading of a Hindu. And we pretended everything's hunky-dory, because he's 'Muslim'

No leading Muslim figures or morally Muslim figures, or Indian politicians in power or the opposition condemned Khan's call for a beheading. This was because this is what Islam stands for. Why would anybody like them condemn traditions of Islam?

If everybody in a country agrees on something, from the Prime Minister, important historical figures to most film stars, almost whole of film industry, writers, professors, brain-boxes—then surely they must be right. Well, no. They are wrong. Wildly, terribly, embarrassingly and dangerously wrong. But Bharat has not yet learned any lesson from the blood soaked pages of their history of the past thirteen centuries caused by the Islam and Christianity.

As a result of historical blunders, the Hindus of Bharat at present, are facing three types of problems, and challenges: One directly from the Muslims, second from the pro-Muslim Hindus, communists and the so-called secularists, the short sighted selfish Hindu leaders, and the third from those Hindu leaders and Dharmacharyas who are neglecting the political aspects of Hindu Dharma in the discourses and dreaming for the eternity of Sanatan Hindu Dharma. Probably they are underestimating the long term consequences of the Jehadi policies and activities of the Muslims and of the 'secularist', being adopted since 1947.

An impartial historical analysis reveals that the Hindus have not lost so much morally and have not been humiliated, neglected and demoralised in the last thousand years, while fighting bravely with the barbarous Muslim invaders as they have been made to suffer in the last century 1901-1947 in British Rule, under Christianity, and 1947- 2002 in independent India, under Muslim appeasement in garb of Secularism.



Marxist Dravidianism

A troubled legacy

by Dr Amaranadha Reddy Manchuri

Sanatan Dharma holds a significant value for millions of people spreading humanity, peace and harmony with a noble vision of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The World is One Family). The Hindus are known for their rich culture, tradition and spiritual practices. There are over two million temples in Bharat for Hindu faith and immense spiritual seekers from across the globe. Over centuries, many temples were looted and destroyed by Islamic invaders. Subsequently, the British colonial rule sought to uproot Hindu Dharmic system. Time and again, all these efforts to spread hatred failed due to the collective efforts of Hindu Dharmic faith. DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's recent conspired outrage on Sanatan Dharma caused widespread disappointment to the Hindus in Bharat and diaspora. Addressing a Marxist outfit, TNPWAA, conference on "Eradicate Sanatan Dharma 2023" (ESD2023), Jr Stalin called for "Just like dengue, mosquitoes, malaria, or coronavirus need to be eradicated, we have to eradicate Sanatan Dharma". Subsequently, Marxism embraced Abrahamics and atheists including DMK MP, A Raja, MK Stalin, and I. N. D. I. A persistently expressed its Hinduphobia in public. Consequently, there has been a mixed response from political and social leaders seeking legal action against Udhayanidhi. While the hatred sequel has raised fundamental questions among common civilians.

Quest of Common Man

- Does Marxism embraced Abrahamics and Atheists nexus conspire to spread hatred on native cultures such as Sanatan Dharma, perpetrating communal disharmony?
- Was DMK's 2021 election manifesto made to lure 87.9 per cent Hindu population in Tamil Nadu?
- Does Bharat need a rational screening on election manifestos of political parties and its implementation by competent authorities like the Election Commission or NITI Aayog?
- Why do only Hindu ashrams and temples are under Government control excluding mosques and churches?
- Were the constitutional authorities like Chief Justice of India sensitive to intervene and protect common man's beliefs in Sanatan Dharma?
- Why are atrocities on Hindus including Love Jihad and Missing 53,780 women, and girl cases reported during 2016-2020 are not of concern to Tamil Nadu?

The Standpoint

It is a proud moment for every citizen that after 75 years of Independence from British colonial rule, Bharat, as a nation, is rising on its strengths in every domain including economy, governance, security, infrastructure, science and technology, education and International affairs. Specifically, the world's scientific diaspora was astonished with ISRO's recent Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1 remarkable success. Abrogation of Article 370 and induction of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 scrapping colonial-era criminal laws strengthened democratic spirit. The G20 presidency further demonstrated Bharat's strength to the world. Also every citizen of Bharat is looking forward to achieving more with Vision@2047 aspiring to raise Bharat as a superpower. Conversely, Marxism embraced Abrahamic atheists' conspiracy attempt on Sanatan Dharma largely to affect the sensitive boundaries of society such as integrity, equality, and freedom.

Evangelism Dominant Colonial Footprints

According to a Cambridge University PhD thesis titled 'The British administration of Hinduism in North India, 1780-1900, the British changed their attitude towards Hindu pilgrimage during the 18th century, picking control over famous Hindu pilgrimage centres especially post-1857 and traditional religious leaders. Consequently, to curb Hindus unique Dharmic unity and freedom, the Evangelical-dominant British firstly in 1817 introduced a rule in Madras presidency, subsequently religious Endowments Act 1863, and Madras Religious and Charitable Endowments Act 1925 commonly for Hindus, Muslims and Christians excluding Sikhs. Responding to a protest, the act was reformed as 'Madras Hindu Religious and Endowments Act 1927', excluding Christians and Muslims. The British successfully launched their divisive impulsive policy. After the Independence continuing colonial era, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act XXII of 1959, was effective from April 28, 1960. Now Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowments Department (HR & CE), Government of Tamil Nadu controls over 46,086 temples, including mutts, charitable endowments along with their assets 4,78,283.59 acres of lands, 22600 buildings and 33665 sites.

Abrogation of Article 370 and induction of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, scrapping colonial-era criminal laws, strengthened democratic spirit. The G20 presidency further demonstrated Bharat's strength to the world

As per HR&CE information to Madras High Court, in 2020 more than 37,000 temples are failing to engage a priest to perform essential daily pooja services. In many cases non Hindu believers from Marxist, Atheistic, or Abrahamic backing employees are being appointed causing further disruption to the Hindu temple activities, devotees welfare and temple assets. A study reveals annually Hindu temples, mutts, ashrams generate huge revenues out of which, in some instances, 65 to 70 per cent of its revenue is being spent for non-temple activities or administration. This informs a need for stringent regulation to protect Hindu spiritual centres' sanctity and their assets.

Marxist, Atheistic and Abrahamic activist groups inherently choose sensitive strategies such as 'Secularism' or 'Human rights' to advocate their ideologies. Impact of this nexus activism is visible in many parts of the world including Africa, America, China, Malaysia, Burma, Australia and Indonesia often resulting in demographic changes, marginalisation or suppression of traditional beliefs such as 'Sanatan Dharma' and directly influencing geopolitics. As per historical archives, there are many sects and subcategories within Islam and Christianity, some of them were engaged in theologically-motivated political atrocities and organised religious conversions. But these facts were hardly questioned either by Atheistic or Marxist leadership, rather they were complemented by collaborative activities conflicting the Sanatan teachings, spiritual beliefs and practices.

Hindu hatred Is Legacy of DMKS & Marxists

Thanthai Periyar (1879 – 1973), a self-proclaimed neo-atheist, is known for professing Hindu hatred in the Dravidian movement along with Marxist and Abrahamic groups. Recent TNPWAA conference and Jr.Stalin's outrage is a classic example of the 'Trio' collaborative works in public. There have been a numerous instances showcases their organised Hindu hatred:

- Strategic drive in spreading North – South divide and class hatred
- Institutionalised slandered canards on Hindu epics and spreading virulent lies from key personalities in 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharat'
- 1853: Karl Marx justified colonial British rule in India in his article 'The British Rule in India.' It has been a meta base for Marxist activities in India
- In 1953, Periyar organised agitations for desecration of Bhagwan Ganesha idols, extensively motivated to break thousands of idols
- In 1956, Periyar led a moment to burn pictures of Sri Ram
- 1974 saw organised Ravana Leela resisting Ram Leela led by Periyar's wife, Maniyammai
- In 2007, DMK Karunanidhi manifested his Hindu hatred by describing Bhagwan Sri Ram as 'drunkard'
- In 2007, Marxists rhetoric hatred on Hindus temple of worship and sacred rituals was showcased
- CPM and DMK Karunanidhi persistent efforts to defame Ram Setu as a myth in 2007
- In 2008, DMK CM Karunanidhi wrote off Hindus smearing tilak on their foreheads as regressive practices
- In 2013, DMK Karunanidhi made hate-filled remarks stating 'Hindu' means 'thief'
- Members of I. N. D. I. A also widely expressed their Hinduphobia on many occasions

'Eradicate Sanatan Dharma 2023' is a sequel to 'Dismantling Global Hindutva 2021', USA.

Conceptualisation of ESD2023 conference was mostly inspired by the 'Dismantling Global Hindutva' (DGH) conference held in 2021, which was organised to build anti-Hindu narrative spreading falsehood among academic scholars and fueling next level activism. The DGH-2021 conference was cosponsored by more than 40 top American universities, engaging several Hinduphobic speakers. While the participants from India are mostly noted Naxal sympathisers or Marxist lean activists such as Anand Patwardhan, Kavita Krishnan, Audrey Truschke, Neha Dixit, Meena Kandasamy, Nandini Sunder, Bhanwar Meghwanshi and many others

who were actively engaged in anti-Bharat activism. Similarly, ESD2023 organisers and main speakers were concurrently working towards divide, defame, and destroy Sanatan Dharma. Some of them include Venkatesan, CPI(M), MP; Udhayanidhi Stalin, DMK, MLA; K. Veeramani of Dravidar Kazhagam; Madhukkur Ramalingam CPI, Radhika Vemula (Mother of Rohit Vemula); and Adhavan Deetchanya member of TNPWAA and DMK Minister etc. Surprisingly these members represented diversified ideological and social affiliations, and portrayed themselves as social reformers. The Organisers conspired to choose specific topics such that the lectures delivered directly humiliates Hindu practitioners. (1) Deadly History of Sanatan (Sanatan Dharma); (2) Sanatan and Women; (3) Tamil Norms and Sanatan; (4) Caste Theory & Conspiracy Theory; (5) Tamil Music & Sanatan; (6) Sanatan Imposition & Opposition in Media; (7) What is the way to oppose Sanatan Dharma Politics or Spirituality; (8) Weapon to destroy Sanatan Dharma. Following two Udhayanidhi's comments proves the synergistic relationship between TNPWAA and DMK, and their deep rooted interests.

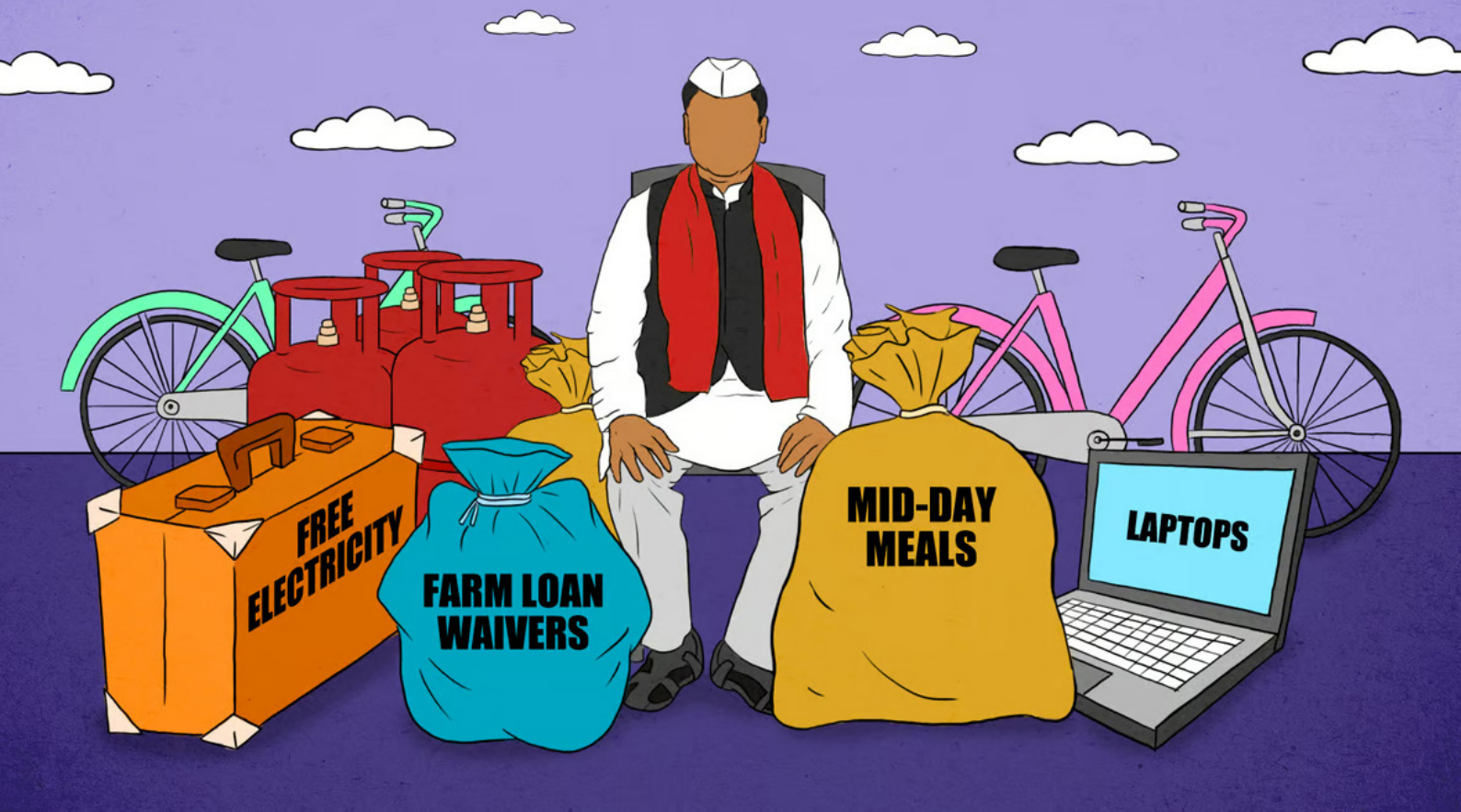
- “Let us take a vow to win in all the 39 Parliamentary constituencies in Tamil Nadu and the one segment in Puducherry (in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls). Let Sanatan fall, Dravidam win.”
- Everything should be changed and nothing is perpetual. The Communist movement and DMK were founded to question everything.

2021 DMK election manifesto to lure Hindu voters

According to the 2011 Census Tamil Nadu has a dominant Sanatan Dharmic population (88.06 per cent). The election manifesto reflects the contesting political party(s) vision for development, which plays a pivotal role in determining voter behavioural patterns. In the 2021 DMK election manifesto, many key promises were made to attract Hindu voters on the basis of religion/ caste/ Sects, including Hindu temple based employment, promoting Spiritual tourism, renovation of temples, establishing Vallalar International Center in Vadalur etc. As a result during the 2021 elections, in the midst of COVID-19, 73.63 per cent of voter turnout was noted. Out of 234 assembly constituencies, DMK+ secured 159 and the remaining 75 by AIADMK+. All contested

candidates were depended on Hindu electorates for their success, but after conspired outrage on Sanatan Dharma hardly any response was observed condemning either TNPWAA or Udhayanidhi Stalin, which prompts a serious quest on credibility and sensitivity of political leaders towards Sanatan Dharma followers.

In a democratic civil society the constitution governs the State, while for a common Sanatan follower, Dharma upholds a significant value throughout their lives. The actions of elected public representative, Jr Stalin and ESD2023 organisers, TNPWAA are unconstitutional and liable for legal charges on their conspired vandalism of Sanatan Dharma. But, the institutionalised Marxist, Atheistic, and Abrahamic ecosystem rampantly spread their Hindu-hatred narrative causing disharmony among common civilians. The ongoing challenge that requires thoughtful and respectful dialogue among political leadership, constitutional authorities, and heads of civil society for prevailing peace and harmony in the civil society. Whereas, the constitutional spirit of Bharat, shall be maintained by adopting 'Uniform Civil Code' along with essential law enforcement.



India must reject the Freebie Culture

Karan Kharb

In the intricate dance between welfare and development, India faces the challenge of crafting policies that not only alleviate immediate concerns but also foster long-term growth both at the National as well as State levels. Lately, a new trend has sneaked into the Indian polity to lure voters by offering freebies like free electricity, water, and monthly cash awards for women or household units.

While traditional freebies like electricity, water, monthly cash packets and other short-term relief measures like free rations, their impact on economic sustainability and development is a matter of concern. There is a need for all political parties to adopt a holistic approach that aligns welfare initiatives with targeted development strategies, striking a balance that empowers citizens while propelling the nation forward.

Genesis of Freebies

The scourge of freebies was first seen in Tamil Nadu in 1967 when the founder of DMK CN Annadurai promised 4.5 kg for a token price of Re 1/- if voted to power. DMK won defeating Congress and the scourge of freebies gradually became competitive in Indian politics. Gifts like TVs, laptops, internet, bicycles, scooters, and even saris became competitive and trendy during electioneering while the development schemes, health and education remained pushed backwards making life difficult for the poor. Amma canteens launched by Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu became quite popular. Along with the rise of youth power, unemployment and the cost of living have been rising in India since the 1990s.

Freebies become Trendy

Arvind Kejriwal and his band of so-called Crusaders against political corruption formed the Aam Admi Party (AAP) in 2012 and made a clean sweep in Delhi (2015) and Punjab (2017) assembly elections riding on their offers of freebies like a monthly quota of free electricity, wi-fi, water, Rs 1000/- for every woman and other attractions like free travels, tours and so on.

Taking the trend further, Congress gave five major guarantees to the voters during Karnataka assembly elections: Rs 2,000/- monthly assistance to women heads of all families (Gruhalakshmi), 200 units of power to all households (Gruhajyoti), Rs 3000/- per month for graduate youth and Rs 1500/- for diploma holders (Yuvanidhi), 10 kg rice per person per month (Annabhagya), and free travel for women in the State public transport buses (Uchita Prayana). All these offers total up to Rs 65,082 crore a year which is 20 per cent of the State budget. Currently, the fiscal deficit of the state is estimated to be Rs 60,531 crore. Add Rs 65,082 crore, and the total deficit rises to Rs 1,25,613 crore! Until now Karnataka has been an economically healthy state, but from now onwards this recurring burden will turn the state into an ill-health.

Although Prime Minister Narendra Modi called this growing trend of freebies a Revadi culture and said it is dangerous for the country and could lead to far-reaching economic consequences, the trend is only gaining momentum. It is forcing the BJP also to play a game that is set on unfair rules.

Long-Term Effects of Freebie Culture

Taking note of the dangerous trend, The Supreme Court warned in 2013, "Budgets for freebies are going above regular budgets. This disturbs the level playing field. Freebies, undoubtedly, influence all people. It shakes the root of free and fair elections to a large degree." But neither the apex court nor the CEC passed any compelling order to put an end to the ever-rising freebie trend. Riding on their promises of providing a quota of a certain amount of water and electricity free of cost to voters in 2015, AAP stormed to power in Delhi.

As far as farmers and their farm produce are concerned, free electricity, free water, farm loan waivers and subsidies are not sustainable solutions. There is an oft-quoted saying, "Give a man a fish,

and he will be hungry again tomorrow. Teach him to catch fish, and you will have fed him and his family for all their future!" Therefore, freebies tend to accustom the beneficiaries to look for more freebies next time. The trend has no incentive to motivate beneficiaries to plan, prepare and endeavour to earn. Freebies extinguish the enterprise in citizens.

Therefore, this trend of freebies must stop and give way to more purposeful and productive methods. Political parties and governments in India must focus their vote-catching tactics to garner public support by launching empowerment programmes to enhance the earning skills and capacities of voters. Some of the measures that are sure to do good to the nation, society, individual voters and the parties contesting in elections are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Incentivise Enterprise and Reward Performance

Skill Enhancement and Job Creation:

In the pursuit of fostering a self-reliant workforce, the Union and State governments should pivot towards skill enhancement initiatives. This approach envisions investing in education and vocational training, equipping individuals with the tools needed to thrive in a dynamic job market. The result is twofold: unemployment is reduced, and the nation's human capital becomes more competitive globally. This approach stands in contrast to unemployment allowances, which might inadvertently discourage active workforce participation and delay the development of a skilled labour force. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched several skill development programs in India to enhance the employability and vocational skills of the country's workforce. Some of the key initiatives include the Skill India Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), and more.

Political parties and State Governments may explore more and innovate more such programmes including incentive-based competitions and facility creation for the enterprising men and women who may need support and guidance.

Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment:

Entrepreneurship emerges as a transformative force that drives innovation, job creation, and economic diversification. By offering seed capital, mentorship, and market access, the Union and State Governments can nurture a culture of self-employment, particularly among the youth. This empowers individuals to shape their destinies and contributes to a thriving business ecosystem. In comparison, monthly rewards for idle women without motivation to work, although well-intentioned, could inadvertently hinder women's financial independence and limit their potential for entrepreneurship and growth.

Strategic Rural Development:

The heart of India's progress lies in its rural landscape. Redirecting focus on the development of rural infrastructure, such as irrigation, connectivity, and access to modern agricultural tools, machines and markets, can spur agricultural productivity and empower local and regional economies. This strategy promotes sustainability and growth, whereas the continuous free supply of resources impedes efficient resource utilisation and strains the State's financial resources.

Digital Literacy and Modernisation:

Digital literacy emerges as a key enabler for the nation's progression into a knowledge-based economy. Launching programs that provide affordable internet access and digital training can bridge the digital divide, enabling citizens to harness the power of information and technology for their benefit. Even though the AAP Government in Delhi had promised free Wi-Fi access all over Delhi in 2015, it has failed to fulfil its commitment even after eight years in office. A singular focus on free resources might sideline the importance of digital literacy, delaying the transition to modern industries.

Healthcare Accessibility:

A healthy nation is a productive nation. Instead of providing free healthcare, the focus should shift towards improving accessibility and quality of healthcare services. Hastily set up make-shift arrangements like Mohalla Clinics have proved wasteful squandering of resources. Instead, setting up well-equipped healthcare centres in rural areas

and utilising technology for telemedicine can ensure equitable healthcare distribution.

Affordable Housing Programs:

A roof over one's head is a basic necessity. Implementing affordable housing programs, supported by innovative financing models, can address the housing crisis in urban and rural areas. Such an approach not only provides shelter but also contributes to the real estate and construction sectors.

Rural Infrastructure Development:

Investing in rural infrastructure, such as roads, irrigation, and connectivity, can transform India's rural landscape. Such initiatives ensure better and easier market access for farmers, reduce wastage and stimulate rural economies, thereby fostering overall development across regions.

Environmental Conservation and Renewable Energy:

Integrating welfare with sustainable development, India can focus on conservation and renewable energy initiatives. Subsidies and incentives for adopting solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and eco-friendly practices can create a greener future while also generating employment opportunities.

Comprehensive Social Security:

Instead of a blanket unemployment allowance or pension, a comprehensive social security system should be devised and established. This system could cover health emergencies, unemployment, and retirement, offering a safety net while encouraging individuals to remain productive and economically active.

Balancing the scales of welfare and development necessitates a comprehensive strategic approach that includes both short-term relief and long-term growth. As India charts its course towards development under the 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas' principle, all the political systems and departments at the Union and State levels must consider innovative measures that empower individuals to actively participate in the nation's journey while bolstering economic sustainability. The dialogue between welfare and development should pivot from immediate gratification towards sustainable empowerment, ensuring that the nation evolves as a powerhouse of self-reliance, innovation, and prosperity.



Why is our land called Bharat?

Dr DK Hari & Dr DK Hema Hari

If we ask the question – “Why is our land called Bharat?”, one of the most common answers will be that it is named after King Bharat, who was the son of Shakuntala and King Dushyant. King Bharat was the progenitor of the Bharata dynasty, a Lunar, Chandravamsa lineage in which came the Pandava and Kaurava, the battle between whom came to be called the Mahabharata.

If we probe further, we will get another reply that this land is called Bharat after the great Rishi Bharatamuni, the composer of Natyasastra, the foundational work for dance, drama, music and other forms of fine art.

Go further and it will lead us to the story of the great sage Jada Bharata and before him, to the King Bharata who was the son of King Rishabh Dev, an Ikshvaku King. This king, Rishabh Dev is also revered

as the first Tirthankar, Bhagavan Adinath in the Jain tradition. King Bharata took over the rule of Ayodhya when his father retired.

He then went on to conquer the rest of the land and is described as one of the early Chakravartin of this land i.e. one who had ruled the land from one coast to the other. The land Bharat is hence said to have got its name after this king. In this Puranic legend and in the geography of Ayodhya, we see a beautiful twinning of early Puranic and Jain legends.

We also have had Prince Bharat, who was the brother of Raja Ram of Ayodhya during Ramayana times.

This land has thus had many illustrious personages who have been called Bharat.

All this raises the question, why were there so many great souls called Bharat, such that the name of this land can be attributed to them?

An Answer To Relish

To unravel this answer, one must try to understand the name “Bharat”. The beauty of the names in this civilization are such that, they are laden with meanings. “Bharat” is one such word which connotes several meanings from an etymological, literal, metaphorical, physical as well as factual perspectives.

An Etymological And Metaphorical Connect

Bha is a syllable that denotes light. It is the root in names such as Bhaskara for Sun, Bhanumati which is also connected with the Sun, Bhanu for its splendour, lustre etc. Light is connected with knowledge and enlightenment. It is apt that the words ignorance and knowledge are metaphorically described as darkness and light.

For, when it is dark, one cannot see anything. For all practical purposes, that thing does not exist or its existence is not known to us. We are ignorant about its existence. We are literally “in the dark” about its existence.

It is only when light falls on anything, can one see that thing. That is when, we begin to see it and know of its existence. We begin to “see light” about it. Hence light has an innate connotation of knowledge or enlightenment too.

If we look at the syllable Ra, it denotes that which is desirable, charming, pleasing. That, which radiates charm and attracts attention. From this, we get words and names such as Rama for one who is the charming one, Ramya for one who is pleasing, charming etc.

We also have Rati for one who is full of delight or delightful to the senses. Rati is the name that has been aptly given to the consort of Manmatha, Kama Deva, the divinity for Love and Desire.

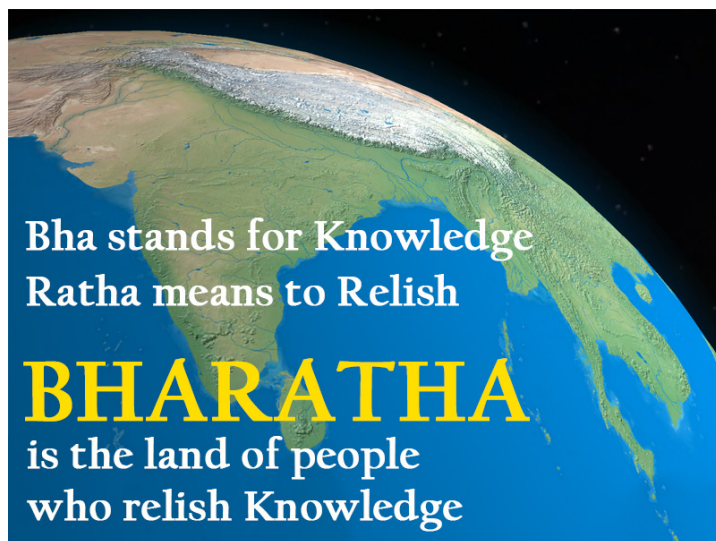
Rati thus connotes that which is to be relished.

Bharat or Bharati therefore connotes one who is a connoisseur of knowledge, who relishes knowledge, seeks out knowledge.

This land is thus, one where people have been seekers and relishers of knowledge from time immemorial and this is why many great personages and Kings were named Bharat and the land

continued to be called Bharat after them and upon the innate character of its people to seek and relish knowledge.

Bharat is a land where people are connoisseurs of knowledge.



A Factual and Physical Connect

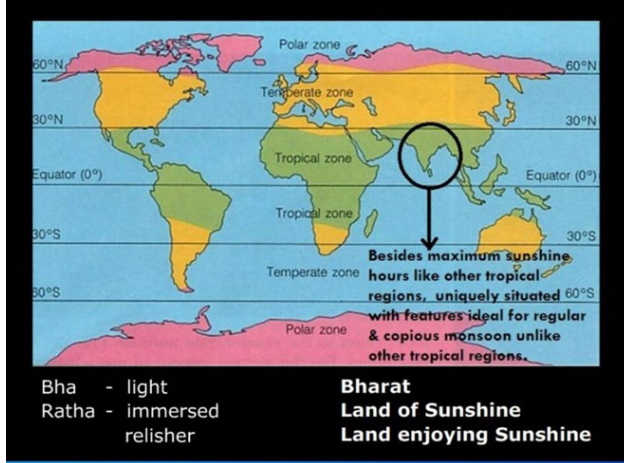
If we notice, we will see that this land does indeed enjoy the physical Bha, the actual sunlight, in abundance too.

Hence Bharat also denotes that land in the world which enjoys sunlight and the bounty that the Sun has to offer.

This is bound to raise the question then, “what about other lands in the world?”. Do not other lands also enjoy the bounties from the Sun?

Even though there are many lands near the equator, this land of Bharat has the advantages:

- of being a fairly big mass of land as against many of the islands along the equator
- of having topological features that aid good rains as well as flow of rivers crisscrossing the land
- of receiving seasonal and copious monsoons, as against brief daily rains like equatorial regions
- of receiving these rains, just after the scorching Summer so that there is both ample water and a cooler weather to cultivate good harvests.



This land, thus enjoys the right amount of sunshine, Bha, neither too hot for long nor too cold for long and just ideal for most of the year. Many other lands in this tropical belt are either deserts, dense rainforests or smaller islands.

This civilization had learnt how to relish this Sunlight and the seasonal Rains that it ushers. They had mastered the art of responsibly harvesting these bounties to cultivate sustainably and produce sufficiently for their own consumption as well as for world trade. All of which, earned them sustained prosperity for millennia. For, they were sought after for their produce and were world leaders in manufacture and trade for millennia.

Even today, we are a leader in harnessing Solar energy in the world. Bharat is also a land where people are experts and connoisseurs of harnessing Sunlight.

- for high quality alloying – especially with Copper, Tin, Zinc to produce fine bronze, brass etc.
- for being able to cast, sculpt and forge these metals and alloys into beautiful artefacts, vessels, instruments, tools and weapons.
- for handling poisonous elements such as mercury, lead etc. and putting them to fruitful uses after detoxifying them etc. to name a few.

It was metallurgy, which was one of the most sought-after produces from this land and had earned this civilization much acclaim as well as wealth through trade from all across the land.

Metallurgy and Pottery in this land can be traced to one of the Rishi called Bhrgu. His very name with the syllable Bhr connotes the effulgence of fire as well as sound made by the wind of fire / flame. Flame needed to smelt and wind are closely connected with metallurgy through bellows, bastrika. It is from Bhrgu that we also get words and names such as Bhargo, Bhargav, Bhargavi which mean effulgence, radiance, brilliance. Friday, after Venus, the brightest planet as seen from Earth, is also called Bhrguvara.



A Metallic Tone To The Name

Besides these perspectives to the name Bharat, there is yet another meaning that can be attributed to the name Bharat. One of the aspects that this civilization has been known for, across millennia, is its prowess in metallurgy –

- for producing the world's best quality, iron and high carbon steel
- for forging out high end steel products
- for smelting Zinc



Thus, the light, radiance of syllable Bha also connotes the effulgence, Bhr from the metallurgical prowess of this civilization.

Bharat is also a land where people are experts and connoisseurs of metallurgy

Acknowledgement As A Land Of Knowledge

Anyone can say they are good. Is that sufficient to be taken as a credential? Should not others echo the sentiment too, for it to be true?

Likewise, when a corroboration for this civilization being a land of knowledge, comes from different quarters, it vindicates our ancestors' choice of the name "Bharat", for our land and people.

A Chinese Corroboration

The Chinese had attributed different qualities to the major civilizations of the past. In their view, this land was the King of Wisdom. They called this land as Tianzhu meaning Heavenly Centre as they looked towards this land for various texts on Sciences and Buddhism. In Chinese language, India is still known as Tianzhu.

Chinese View Of 5 Kings of The World

- Al Jahiz of Basra, Baghdad who lived between 716 to 815 CE
- Abu Umar Jahiz, Baghdad, an Arab philosopher in 868 CE

- Yaqubi an Arabic Historian and Geographer from Egypt in 897 CE

- Said Al Andalusi, an Arabic scholar from Andalusia, Spain (Iberia), 1068 CE

All their writings show, how they had regarded the civilization of Bharat as a land of science, philosophy, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, fine arts, sculpture, metals, musical instruments and many more.

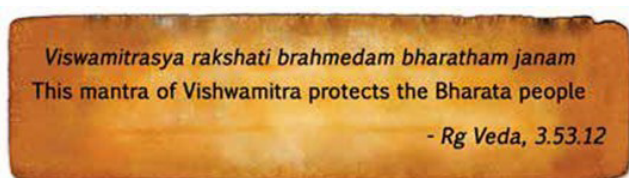
Chinese View 5 Kings of the World



A Timeless Name

This name Bharat, can be found all the way back in the Veda and Purana. Rishi Vishwamitra in the Rg Veda, on the civilization of his times, describes the people living in this land in verse no. 3.53.12 as, "Bharatham Janam".

A verse from the Rig Veda



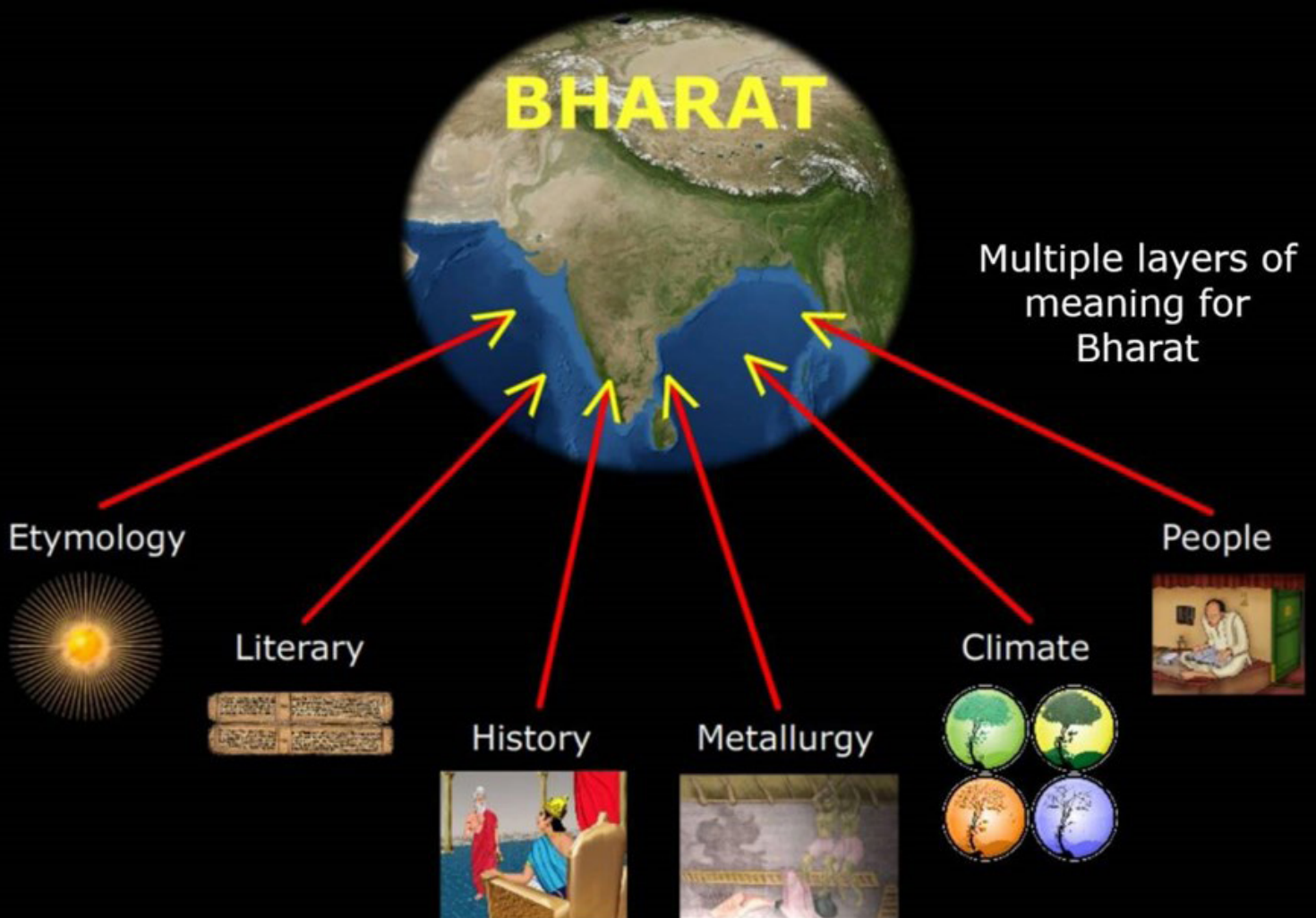
A Multi-dimensional Name

Thus, the name Bharat has stood for a land:

- famed for its knowledge (Bha)
- nourished by its agriculture enriched by the Sun (Bha)
- rich due to its trade in metals and products forged by the flame (Bha).
- Bharat is the name we had given our land and civilization based on our nature and aspirations.

Most countries are named after people or after their geographical or topological aspects.

It is rare to find a civilization which in time of yore itself had deemed it apt to give itself the name "Bharat" based on the Guna, character of its people – of seeking glow of knowledge, of leveraging glow of sunlight, of handling the glow of fire.



A Resounding and Resonating Name

The integrated, indigenous model which had sustained this civilization in the past, now being rejuvenated for the present, will be one that throws light, knowledge, Bharat on the principles of Rata, relishing the bounties offered by Nature in a sustainable, prosperous manner.

Such a thought leadership and practical wisdom is what Bharat can offer and needs to offer to its own people and to the world community at large, to make this world a better place to live in!

Not only will Bharat denote the land where people relished knowledge, but the name "Bharat" will take on a wider meaning in Naya Bharat.

The name "Bharat" will become a brand and stand for a land where people relish the bounties of Nature in an enlightened manner, to achieve sustenance of both self and everything around. All through the times, this civilization has stood for leadership in guiding people on:

- how to understand this world of Science and Nature,
- how to strike a balance with Nature in day to day living and
- how to live Naturally

It is time now, for taking a leaf out of our past, to learn, to put to practice and to propagate the good practices that had made it prosperous and made the world look up to it.

It is time now to gather whatever teachings our ancestors have left behind, in order to model ourselves after a proven model, even if it means daring to be different. Our assured success in becoming self-reliant, Atmanirbhar and Swavrtta, self-sustained, in a wholistic manner, is bound to inspire others to follow.

It has never been our nature to stay behind and follow others. This civilization has been the leader in every sense of the word and has led the world by example. Bharat is a name that reflects all this and more!



"We should stop trying to impress the world, but must inspire the world."

Limiting China's rogue role

A lot has been said about Chinese President Xi Jinping's decision of not attending the G20 Summit in New Delhi. But there is hardly any discussion about why and how the Summit bore a strong stamp of its China-centricity throughout its deliberations and decisions. If analyzed minutely, one can't miss the fact that a large majority of major decisions taken by the G20 in New Delhi are focused on challenging the arrogance, aggression and authoritarian conduct of the People's Republic of China (PRC). More so of its outspoken 'Paramount Leader' Xi Jinping whose agenda is to make PRC the 'Middle Kingdom' and crown himself as the 'Divine Power' who has been sent by the heavens to rule the earth.

of G20. It involves integrating the already operative road, rail and sea links from India to Eastern Europe to establish a dedicated and a fast freight corridor for common use of all the countries along the route and the European Union. The corridor can be later extended to cover the African continent also.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 9, 2023, announced the launch of the India-Middle East-Europe mega economic corridor. The project includes India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, France, Italy, Germany and the US. The IMEC is expected to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe. The IMEC will be comprised of two separate corridors, the east corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe. It will include a railway that, upon completion, will provide a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit



network to supplement existing maritime and road transport routes – enabling goods and services to transit to, from, and between India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe. Along the railway route, Participants intend to enable the laying of cable for electricity and digital connectivity, as well as pipe for clean hydrogen export. This corridor will secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility, improve trade facilitation, and support an increased emphasis on environmental, social, and government impacts. Participants intend that the corridor will increase efficiencies, reduce costs, enhance economic unity, generate jobs, and lower greenhouse gas emissions – resulting in a transformative integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East. In support of this initiative, participants commit to work collectively and expeditiously to arrange and implement all elements of these new transit routes, and to establish coordinating entities to address the full range of technical, design, financing, legal and relevant regulatory standards.

When Xi launched his BRI, also known as ‘One Belt One Road’ initiative, he started with investing hundreds of billions of dollars in the development of infrastructure projects like roads, sea ports, railway lines and airports in nearly 150 countries. The idea attracted not only poor countries but even well to do countries like Italy, Austria, Brunei, Czech Republic, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, New Zealand, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Singapore and South Africa too. Thanks to the Chinese fine art of bribery, intimidation and corruption, most of the agreements on BRI projects are turning out to be too expensive to be viable for the partner host countries. As a result, China, as a cunning money lender, has started confiscating the projects in the name of settling accounts. Pakistan’s Gwadar port, which is part of China-Pakistan’s prestigious CPEC from Xinjiang to the Arabian Sea, and Sri Lanka’s Hambantota port and the Colombo Port City are some of the glaring examples. Despite multilayers of secrecy and camouflage, popular estimates say that Xi has already invested far above equivalent of USD one trillion and has the plans to touch 8 trillion if everything goes as per Xi’s dreams. With Chinese economy already nose-diving for many reasons beyond Xi or his Communist Party’s control, the IMEEEC can prove the last nail.



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A world which had got used to seeing the North-South relations only through its bickering and confrontations since decades, can now hope for a new atmosphere dominated by cooperation and good will.



BRIDGE BETWEEN WEST & AFRICA

The inclusion of 55-member African Union has been rightly hailed as a positive step towards involving the African nations into the international system more intimately. But the impact which this step is going to have on freeing China's suffocating grip over the United Nations and other international institutions is hardly being discussed. It is on the strength of votes of many of these African and other economically vulnerable small countries that China has been holding organizations like the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and World Health Organization (WHO) to ransom. Records of voting in UNHRC over the years show that, leave aside discussing and reprimanding China for its appalling record on human rights in its colonies like Tibet and East Turkistan (Xinjiang), Beijing could use these votes every time to stop the world body from even taking up the matter for discussion. India's emergence as a new bridge between the developed western block and Africa is further going to make it difficult for China to keep dominating developing countries

and grab the rich natural resources of these poor countries.

Similarly, the new approach adopted by G20 about the role and financial capacity of multilateral development banks is surely going to be a great relief for most developing countries. Presence of heads of leading financial institutions like the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the G20 further made it reassuring. Higher allocation for funds on much easier terms as compared to the opaque Chinese system is bound to wean away the developing world from the Chinese financial and political influence.

NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS

Another major achievement of the G20 summit at New Delhi is the fresh air brought into North-South relations which was yet another hallmark of this event. A good part of the credit goes to the personal efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and an unprecedented helping hand from western leaders, especially US President Joe Biden. A world which had got used to seeing the North-South relations only through its bickering and confrontations since decades, can now hope for a new atmosphere dominated by cooperation and good will. This also underscores the realization, of the US-lead western block, that relations with a community of nations which, despite being economically weak, holds the levers of power balance both in terms of numbers as well as geographic spread cannot be ignored. This change is bound to inflict a serious blow to the ballooning arrogance and aggression of President Xi and establish a new power block of developing nations under the leadership of Modi. Moreover, Modi's idea of shifting the international discourse from its GDP-centric values to Human-centric values too holds potential for a better and peaceful world where the role of rogue states like Xi's China is bound to be limited.

Khalistani terrorism

Running after a mirage; end on the cards

Terry Milewski

Spare a thought for the committed, ageing Khalistani. Perhaps he's looking out over the police tape after another gangland shooting in Surrey, British Columbia. Perhaps he's a Dad in Brampton, Ontario, wondering why the referendum on independence never seems to end. They're both entitled to some sympathy. Despite a worldwide campaign to vilify India as a fascist hellscape where Sikhs face an "ongoing genocide," the Khalistan movement seems ever more frantic as it rushes headlong towards a brick wall.

Consider how this trajectory developed. In 2019, a New York lawyer, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, stepped forward as the voice of "Sikhs for Justice" to organise "Referendum 2020", intended to show that the world's twenty-five million Sikhs desire an independent state and seek to win it peacefully – with "ballots, not bullets," as Pannun put it.

This seemed to mean that separatist Sikhs would turn their back on the failed terrorist tactics of their past.

Not for long. Instead, Pannun promptly contradicted himself. He soon arrived with an ambitious deputy named Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia, the modern heartland of the Khalistan movement. There, he announced that the Canadian headquarters of the referendum campaign would be named for "Shaheed Talwinder Singh Parmar." In the history of bungled public relations, this surely deserves its own chapter. The poster boy for the referendum – and, yes, there were colourful posters galore – would be the worst mass-murderer in Canada's history.

Talwinder Parmar, killed by Punjab police in 1992, was a Canadian citizen and psychopath who slaughtered 329 innocent civilians in the so-called Kanishka bombing – the in-flight destruction of Air India Flight 182 on June 23, 1985.

Canada's official caution about confronting Khalistani propaganda hardly sits well with the parallel development of gang culture

So much for "ballots not bullets" – and this was not a temporary mis-step. Pannun soon doubled down, naming voting centres in Ontario for other terrorists in the Canadian pantheon of Khalistani heroes. At the same time, as they built their campaign internationally, a voting centre in Australia was named for the assassins of prime minister Indira Gandhi in 1984. Next, Pannun himself starred in a menacing video called "I Am Dilawar", warning the then-Chief Minister of Punjab, Capt. Amarinder Singh, that any move against the separatists might result in the same fate as a previous Punjab CM, Beant Singh, met in 1995. Dilawar Singh was the suicide bomber who killed Beant Singh and 16 innocent bystanders.

Know the real face of the Khalistani Movement

Mass-murderers, assassins and human bombs – these were the chosen icons of the supposedly peaceful campaign. As the referendum stuttered forward through London, Toronto, Geneva and Melbourne, neither Pannun nor his followers seemed to recognise that they had made a strategic blunder.

Instead, Khalistanis in Brampton, Ontario waded into the next blunder. In a Martyr's Day parade, a flatbed truck was adorned with an elaborate life-size diorama depicting the 1984 assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi. Stuffed figures of the two Sikh bodyguards who shot her were shown with outstretched weapons, while Mrs. Gandhi's sari was daubed with plentiful red paint so that nobody would miss the point – the point that we remember this with pride, and we don't hide it.

According to the Indian census, the vast majority of Sikhs in India (77 per cent) still live in Punjab, where Sikhs make up 58 per cent of the adult population. And 93 per cent of Punjabi Sikhs say they are very proud to live in the state.

Sikhs also are overwhelmingly proud of their Indian identity. A near-universal share of Sikhs say they are very proud to be Indian (95 per cent), and the vast majority (70 per cent) say a person who disrespects India cannot be a Sikh. And like India's other religious

groups, most Sikhs do not see evidence of widespread discrimination against their community

India's Sikhs are nearly universally proud of their national, state identities

% of Indian Sikhs who say they are ...

Very proud to be residents of Punjab*	93%
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Very proud to be Indian	95
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*Among Sikh residents of Punjab. The vast majority of Indian Sikhs (77%) live in Punjab. Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India. See Methodology for details "Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Those pictures inevitably flew around the world and caused an outcry in India. Indians demanded to know, why was this allowed? Why don't the Canadians crack down? India's foreign minister S. Jaishankar had an answer: he said Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, was "constrained" by "vote bank politics".

Jaishankar had touched a nerve. Many Canadians agreed with him that Trudeau's Liberal government has been too gentle on Khalistani belligerence because of its alliance with the NDP, a Left-wing party led by a Khalistani sympathizer, Jagmeet Singh. Still, both Liberal and Conservative governments in Canada have long used the same response to repeated Indian complaints – namely, that Canadians have free speech and can't be locked up for expressing an opinion. This time, though, Indians scoffed, insisting correctly that the assassination display was an endorsement of violence.

Belatedly, some muted disapproval did emerge from some Canadian politicians. Trudeau himself, though, contrived to stoke the fire by calling his Indian critics "wrong" to say he caters to any vote bank, adding that Canada takes terrorism "extremely seriously", and always takes "serious action" in response to violence or threats of violence. That surprised anyone who saw the devastating findings of the judicial inquiry on the Air India bombing – by far the most significant case of terrorism in Canada's history. It described the government's many and varied failures, and those of its agencies, as "inexcusable."

Meanwhile, the potential for looking beyond the free speech law to other laws on hate or incitement all remain wholly unexplored.

Criminals and Khalistanis-Insights into the secret life of a Khalistani potentate.

Canada's official caution about confronting Khalistani propaganda hardly sits well with the parallel development of gang culture, the smuggling of guns from the U.S., and disdain for the law, all seen at frequent crime scenes in Ontario and British Columbia. Take one prominent example which spans the early years of the Babbar Khalsa terrorist group led by Talwinder Parmar and financed by a wealthy businessman, Ripudaman Singh Malik.

Malik joined the BK himself and contributed a series of \$10,000 cheques. He was acquitted at the Air India trial in 2005, but the case offered many insights into the secret life of a Khalistani potentate. It emerged that one of Malik's footsoldiers was a young gangster, Mindy Bhandher, who merrily testified that he had a lucrative career in credit-card fraud and drug-smuggling. Mindy, in short, was Malik's kind of people. He more or less adopted Mindy, but others he simply bought – like Satnam Kaur Reyat, wife of the bomb-maker in the Air India case, Inderjit Reyat. As soon as Reyat was arrested, Malik took his family under his wing, providing cash, free housing and free education for the Reyat children. Was this hush money, to keep the Reyats quiet?

In a strange and sudden ending to his murky life, Malik was shot dead in July of 2022, in one of British Columbia's frequent gangland murders. Again, the Khalistan movement, which he once personified,

seemed to be running in parallel with an epidemic of gangsterism. Malik had incurred the wrath of his old Khalistani friends by writing a gushing letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, thanking him for the wonderful things he'd done for the Sikhs. That must have seemed like treachery to his militant friends, and it may well have led them to wonder what else Malik might say about the Air India plot. Was he a man who knew too much?

Another worrying sign was Malik's defiance of the religious authorities in Amritsar. He set up a business printing the Sikh holy book without a religious licence to do so. Some harsh language about Malik came from younger rivals, notably the president of the Guru Nanak temple – Hardeep Nijjar. There was a lawsuit between the two camps. Then, after Malik was eliminated, Nijjar was told by the police that his life was at risk. Now, the police and the public wonder if someone in the Malik camp took revenge on Nijjar, leaving him bleeding to death in his truck.

The answers are not yet available. What's clear, though, is that gangs are ever-present in the news from British Columbia. Nijjar's elevation to hero status began immediately. As the deputy of Gurpatwant Pannun in Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), Nijjar was quickly anointed as a martyr – and not just any martyr.

Rather, he was a cause for which Sikhs around the world were asked to arise.

The killer posters target the diplomats

SFJ promptly seized on a string of recent deaths in Khalistani ranks to declare that Indian death squads were to blame. The fact that evidence was lacking was no obstacle. In one case, the victim was shot in Lahore – where rumours called it a drug deal gone wrong. In Birmingham, England, another victim's death was said by the hospital to be caused by leukemia. But Nijjar's murder on June 18 was definitely a murder. Like Malik eleven months earlier, he was shot in a mafia-style contract hit featuring two masked men and a getaway car.

The police have made no arrests in the Nijjar case at the time of writing, and have announced no findings as to motive. But the Khalistani forces threw caution to the winds and flatly declared that Indian assassins had Nijjar's blood on their hands. Soon, fresh posters appeared in which SFJ urged Sikhs to "Kill India" and to march on Indian embassies – in London, Washington, Ottawa, Rome and Melbourne – as well as consulates in San Francisco, Vancouver, Toronto and Birmingham.

The image displays three identical posters for the 'KHALISTAN FREEDOM RALLY' organized by Sikhs for Justice (SFJ). Each poster is for a different location and features a map of India with a hand holding a gun, the text 'KILL INDIA', and portraits of Indian officials.

- Toronto:** 8 JULY | TIME: 12:30 PM. START: GREAT PUNJAB BUSINESS CENTRE, MALTON. END: INDIAN EMBASSY, TORONTO. Targets: Sanjay Kumar Verma (High Commissioner, Ottawa, Canada) and Smt. Apoorva Srivastava (Consul General, Toronto). Phone: +1 604 245 3989, +1 604 245 0639.
- San Francisco:** 8 JULY | TIME: 11:30 AM. START: MARINA BERKELEY, 598 University Ave. Berkeley, CA 94710. END: INDIAN EMBASSY, SAN FRANCISCO. Targets: Tarunjit Singh Sandhu (Ambassador, Washington, D.C., USA) and Dr. E.M. Nagendra Prasad (Consul General, San Francisco). Phone: +1 604 245 3989, +1 604 245 0639.
- Melbourne:** 8 JULY | TIME: 12:30 PM. START: BRIDGES RESERVE, COBURG. END: INDIAN EMBASSY, MELBOURNE. Targets: Manpreet Vohra (High Commissioner's Desk, Canberra, Australia) and Dr. Sushil Kumar (Consul General, Canberra, Australia). Phone: +61 420 462 499, +61 420 802 499.

But what caused immediate and intense dismay in India was that the posters targeted and identified senior Indian diplomats serving in all these cities. They were all called “Killers” of “Shaheed” Nijjar, and each was named and pictured, as if to facilitate any attack.

So the Khalistanis had painted targets on the diplomats’ backs. This raised hard questions for free-speech advocates in all western countries. Free speech, surely, was not meant to include death threats, intimidation or incitement to do harm to diplomats or anyone else. Nor were the questions academic as the Khalistanis prepared to march to the embassies.

In the end, though, the turnout for the marches was modest and violence at a minimum. Only a few scuffles and burnt flags were reported. Of course, the notion that some flying squad of deadly diplomats had anything to do with the death of Nijjar seems absurd, and no shred of evidence has emerged to support it.

Khalistani movement – hard to see a silver hope

Today, it’s hard to know how the Khalistan campaign lumbers on under the weight of these bizarre claims. But a reckoning is in sight. At some point, they would wish to declare the long-delayed referendum as a success – a rousing vote for Khalistan – enabling Pannun to go to the United Nations with the wind at his back. He hopes to win UN backing for a vote including the Sikh homeland of Punjab – something the Indian government has banned. It deems the idea unconstitutional and the precedent intolerable.

However, it’s hard to see even a sliver of hope for the Khalistanis even if such a vote in Punjab were allowed. In the last election, a tiny 2.5 per cent voted for the only separatist party on offer – Simranjit Singh Mann’s SAD(A). And that was a banner year for separatists. In the previous election, in 2017, they got a microscopic 0.3 per cent of the vote. The separatist army is not just over the hill. They’ve all gone for lunch.

It is rightly said, no doubt, that an independent state was not an issue in those elections. So what outcome could be expected if Punjabis were to vote on precisely that issue? As it happens, a very reputable pollster, Pew Research – asked that very question just three

years ago. Here is what they found: 95% of Sikhs are “very proud to be Indians” – a figure rarely seen in polling anywhere, about anything. But note also what follows: that 70% of them believe that “a person who disrespects India cannot be a Sikh”.

That is a painful blow to the Khalistani leaders who routinely allege that they are the authentic voice of the Sikhs and that Sikhs are demanding their own country. No, they’re not. A final question arises, then: what is the endgame of this long march to Khalistan? At the moment, it seems hopeless.

What seems probable, then, is that the Khalistan mirage will keep shimmering on the horizon, ignored by most and pursued by a hardy band of dead-enders. Perhaps as the 2030s and ’40s approach, old campaigners will tell tales of the heady days when they managed to set Canadian and Indian politicians at each other’s throats over a Tweetstorm of posters. Ha ha! That was a good one!

But their own country? Don’t bet on it.



Ignorance of Sanatan Dharma is a bliss

Dr Govind Raj Shenoy

Once upon a time, a temple musician named Muthuvel and his wife Anjugam lived in Thirukkuvalai village of Madras province. They named their children Shanmuga sundarathammal, Periyannayagam and Karunanidhi. The last mentioned joined EVR's anti-Hindi movement at the young age of 14 years. He attained fame as a writer in Tamil cinema. Coming under the influence of Periyar, he became a leader of the Dravidian movement that swept Tamil Nadu. He became the second Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1969 and served as a beacon of light for the Dravidian movement and Tamil pride throughout his lifetime. He passed away on August 7, 2018. He served the "Makkal" (people) as Chief Minister for almost 20 years, spanning over five terms.

In the five decades between 1969 and 2018, Karunanidhi's party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and his "Makkal" (Children) flourished throughout Tamil Nadu and beyond. The temple musician's family had the entire State dancing to their tunes. DMK stood for rationalism and

atheism following in the footsteps of EVR or "Thanthai Periyar" or Big Daddy. They celebrated atheism by cutting "Poonal" or sacred threads of Brahmins. Staying true to "true Indian secularism", DMK's atheism was always restricted to insulting Hinduism and cosying up to Islam and Christianity. Being steadfastly opposed to North, Hindu, Hindi and Sanskrit, Karunanidhi's extended family has members ironically named Kalanidhi, Dayanidhi, Udayanidhi, Arulnidhi and Dayanidhi Alagiri. That is a family full of "Nidhi", the Sanskrit name for treasure. They sure have increased their fortunes and "treasures" with every "Nidhi" added to the family. To complete the irony, there is a Vedamurthy too in the Karunanidhi family, also known as Gopalapuram family.

We must view the recent controversy over 'Sanatan Dharma' with this background in mind. Udayanidhi Stalin, whose first name is derived from Vedic Sanskrit, was speaking at a conclave aiming to "Eradicate Sanatan Dharma". He exhorted people

to treat 'Sanatan Dharma' like dengue and malaria mosquitoes. While there was outrage on Twitter, Priyank Kharge, son of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and DMK leader TR Baalu, too, joined this controversial issue. DMK Member of Parliament, A Raja, has gone a step ahead and claimed Udayanidhi was "soft" on 'Sanatan Dharma'. He believes it is more like HIV and leprosy. Hindu organisations have taken offense and demanded action against Udayanidhi and Raja. Cases have been filed against them, along with Priyank Kharge.

Periyarism has dominated Tamil Nadu politics, even though Periyar himself was side-lined like "curry leaves" by his own disciples during later years of his life. Tamil Nadu has been ruled, either by DMK or AIADMK for over five decades, during which the Brahmins have turned into endangered species. Hence, it remains a mystery as to why has casteism not been eradicated in the heartland of Dravida politics? Who should be held accountable for this failure to curb Brahminism or 'Sanatan Dharma'? Let's find out the culprits who failed to eradicate 'Sanatan Dharma'.

Flaunting his Christian Identity

Some time ago, Udayanidhi had announced on social media that he's married to a Christian and that the Sanghis would burn when they find out that he's a Christian too. Having had influential pastors like George Ponnaiah and pro-evangelical celebrity influencers like Kamal Haasan, Christianity hasn't succeeded in eradicating 'Sanatan Dharma' in Tamil Nadu, that could have been Dravidanadu. Dravidian movement like the LTTE has thrived with the support of evangelical organisations. "Islamic franchises" like Al Umma and National Thowheed Jama'at have failed in this utopian Dravidian endeavour. DMK has taken "pride" in demolishing centuries old temples, selling temple lands and allowing illegal encroachments inside the temples. In spite of that, 'Sanatan Dharma' survives in the land of magnificent temples. So whose failure was that?

Between "Cholas were not Hindus" and "Eradicate Sanatan Dharma", a lot of water has flown from Karnataka into Tamil Nadu through Kaveri. Those waters have brought Kuppusamy Annamalai with them and he is creating waves across Tamil Nadu. The real problem is his regular exposure of

humongous corruption cases involving Gopalapuram family. He's been relentless and consistent with proofs. DMK has drawn a page out of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's book. When there are corruption charges against the Government, attack Hinduism, so that all attention is diverted from corruption. Communists of Kerala attacked Sabarimala and their Comrades from Tamil Nadu are targeting 'Sanatan Dharma'. While this tactic may have helped DMK temporarily, it has put Congress and other I.N.D.I.A partners in soup.

Mamata Banerjee, whose party has successfully orchestrated several anti-Hindu riots in West Bengal, has advised Udayanidhi to "treat all religions equally". Essentially, eradicating Hindus is fine; making public statements about it is not. Meanwhile, a controversy has been created to quell a controversy that was created to bury the controversy associated with corruption allegations. Entire opposition, "Soros-wadi" media and social media went on "India Vs Bharat" overdrive. Whatever gains the opposition unity could have made in the recent months, have been undone by Udayanidhi's attack.

While most "secular" parties have maintained a deafening silence, the Supreme Court appears to be facing its first major challenge since the CJI went into activist mode. Within weeks of Chief Justice Chandrachud demanding suo moto action against "hate speech" by Governments, a petition signed by 262 eminent citizens has reached his table. It demands action against Udayanidhi. Does a call to "Eradicate Sanatan Dharma" amount to hate speech? It would be interesting to find out if the CJI finds enough hate in this speech to be recognised as "hate speech".

Why Indian intellectuals led by Communists hate Sanatana Dharma?

Salil Gewali

A person who does not properly know $(a+b)^2$ and perpendicular should not speak about Integral calculus and Matrix Algebra. Unlearned political leaders with self-centered ambitions can hardly define Sanatana Dharma (or Hinduism). Sadly, such immature public figures like Udhayanidhi Stalin, MK Stalin, D Raja, Prof. Divya Dwivedi who deliberately denigrated Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism), hold sway over huge, unsuspecting masses in society. Such people as in Europe's medieval times, lead public into the darkness of ignorance. They pose serious threats to the communal harmony among the different communities.



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Unlike in the West, “Dharma” (religion) in the ancient scriptures refers to a far deeper meaning. If you go into it deeply, you will be amazed to find that it carries under its wing the intellectual wisdom of the highest order



Unlike in the West, “Dharma” (religion) in the ancient scriptures refers to a far deeper meaning. If you go into it deeply, you will be amazed to find that it carries under its wing the intellectual wisdom of the highest order.

Some ascetic said if anyone truly wants to know the depth of Sanatan Dharma, as enshrined in ancient texts, then he must go into solitude. Learning to swim in the “stillness” within by the practice of meditation alone helps prepare one to feel what exactly DHARMA is. As per the ancient scriptures, ‘Sanatan Dharma’ literally means “eternal and universal laws or principles” that govern “everything” and “everyone”, irrespective of culture, race, religion, belief, and practice. Dharmic or spiritual practices should not be touched by the blemishes of the material world. One has to transcend the mundane world and take flight to a higher dimension through self-practice. There is no question of hatred and envy for others in Dharma.

A great American thinker, Henry David Thoreau, writes in his masterpiece WALDEN: “In the Indian ancient scriptures, the idea of man is quite

ILLIMITABLE and SUBLIME. He is at length lost in the SUPREME ENTITY himself.” Can our so-called intellectual who look upon the Western intellectuals as their master refute Henry Thoreau. Therefore, there is a great mantra (mahavakya) in one of the Upanishads: “Tat Tvam Asi”, meaning “Thou Art That” – unity of an individual soul with “Brahman” – UNIVERSAL CONCIOUSNESS, we also call it God.

Of course, the scriptures of “dharma” (or religion) not only speak of ethics, duty, the laws of karma, life, the afterlife and reincarnation; they also expound with absolute precision the cosmic setup and infinite timeline. A great American astrophysicist Carl Sagan says: “The Hindu religion is the only one of the world’s great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology.” – (source – COSMOS by Carl Sagan).

What is most intriguing is that those Indian sages who talked about mysticism also talked about subtle and fundamental principles that govern everything from tiny atomic particles to giant celestial bodies and their functioning and existential phenomena. This very grand concept of Dharma and its allied intellectual wisdom bowled over scientists like Schrödinger, Heisenberg and Oppenheimer almost a century ago. Erwin Schrödinger, the father of Quantum Mechanics, in his deeper studies of “particle” and “wave function”, concluded: “The unity and continuity of Vedanta are reflected in the unity and continuity of wave mechanics. This is entirely consistent with the Vedanta concept of ALL IN ONE.” (VEDANTA is Hindu philosophy based on the doctrine of the Upanishads). Please note that Schrödinger’s “Wave Equation” revolutionised the field of quantum mechanics and paved the way for numerous technological advancements. Its application in understanding the behavior of particles at the electromagnetic level has not only enabled the development of a plethora of modern electronic devices but also played a crucial role in satellite communication, Quantum enhanced GPS, space exploration, et al.

With the finding of pulsating vibration of Quantum physics, David Bohm, David Josephson, Archibald Wheeler, Jack Sarfatti, John Hagelin, and John

Bells had made attempts to plunge headlong into the cosmic sea of “UNIVERSAL Consciousness” of Upanishads as an ultimate answer.

Here is another mind-blowing opinion by a prodigious American scholar, Huston Smith, who says: “While the West was still thinking, perhaps, of 6,000-year-old universe – India was already envisioning ages and eons and galaxies as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. The Universe so vast that modern astronomy slips into its folds without a ripple.” One of the most read scholars, Huston Smith’s “The Religions of Man”, sold worldwide over 3 million copies as of 2017.

Nothing is more disheartening in the country than seeing the “Courts of Law” watch in silence while non-Hindu leaders disparage the profound WISDOM of Sanatan Dharma. There are countless instances when leaders and celebrities have belittled Hindu values and courts do not utter a word against them.

Furthermore, after taking a plunge into Indian scriptures, TS Eliot also exclaimed, “Indian philosophers’ subtleties make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys.”

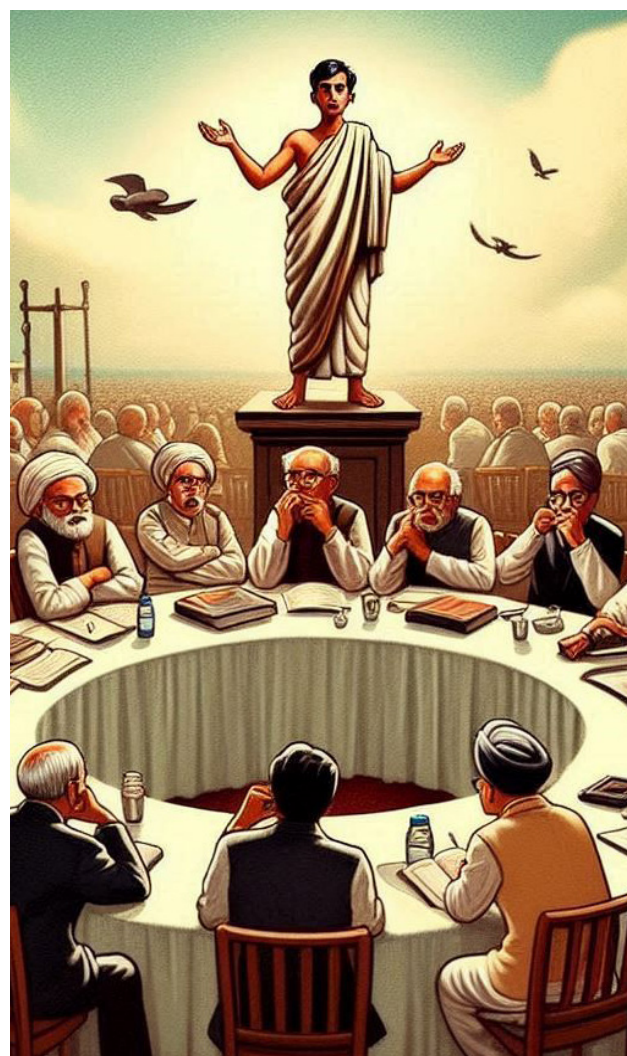
Incidentally, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who was in India for the G20 summit, said that he takes pride in his ‘Hindu’ roots. To the media, he said, “I think faith is something that helps everybody who has faith in their lives, particularly when you have these stressful jobs like I do. Having faith to give you resilience to give you strength is important.”

What a paradox! Many top intellectuals in their home country choose to just dismiss and belittle Hindu culture and its intellectual heritage. They neither have respect for Sanatana Dharma nor have they ever put effort into delve into its extensive spiritual texts.

Nothing is more disheartening in the country than seeing the “Courts of Law” watch in silence while non-Hindu leaders disparage the profound WISDOM of Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism). There are countless instances when leaders and celebrities have belittled Sanatana Dharma and respected courts do not utter a word against them. However, when Nupur Sharma, an outspoken social activist, came out in defense of a deluge of offensive

remarks made against Hindu culture, the same court yelled and lambasted her. What if Nupur Sharma on that fateful day was not “provoked”? At least chaos would not have ensued. Who provoked Ms. Sharma, and why are such provocations purposefully ignored while her isolated eruptions are not? Who will answer this reasonably?

Many saints were immediately put behind bars for hate speeches, while non-Hindus, with impunity, deliver hate speeches every day against Hindus, Sanatana Dharma or even the country in various public forums, newsrooms and social media platforms. If Courts of Laws were sincerely strict and unbiased as they are against Hindus, Udhayanidhi Stalin, MK Stalin et al would not have the audacity to ridicule Sanatana Dharma. Therefore, many other leaders are now publicly backing Udhayanidhi Stalin. This is in fact a serious development in the country which is tantamount to leaving the entire Hindu population in the lurch. Are the “custodians” of the constitution listening? Pseudo-secularism has done greater harm to the nation and its integrity.





HAPPY
GANESH CHATURTHI

‘One Nation, One Election’: Is India ready?

Amarjeet Verma

Elections are the lifeblood of a democracy, and the manner in which they are conducted serves as a profound reflection of a nation's democratic values. The recent formation of a Union Government panel to examine the feasibility of ‘One Nation – One Election’ has once again sparked a nationwide discourse in India. Although not entirely new, India had previously held both central and state elections simultaneously from 1951 to 1967. However, due to premature state assembly dissolutions, this practice lapsed and was gradually forgotten.

Presently, the Modi Government's renewed support for ‘One Nation – One Election’ seeks to revive the historic electoral system. This report explores its historical context, potential benefits, challenges and impacts and highlights the need for a thoughtful and constructive debate on this major electoral reform.

A deeply diverse nation comprising 28 states and eight union territories, India remains constantly immersed in election campaigns. Every election, including those in union territories like Puducherry, is often seen as a verdict on the Government of India. This perpetual election cycle can prevent the government from addressing long-term challenges and development goals. The ‘One Nation – One Election’ initiative seeks to address this problem by harmonising elections at the national and state levels, limiting the frequency of referendums and allowing central and state governments to focus on sustainable governance initiatives.



Pros of ‘One Nation-One Election’

- **Cost savings:** One of the most significant benefits of this system is the significant cost savings. Conducting elections is a costly affair, and synchronising them would result in significant savings. The 2019 general election cost India approximately 60,000 crores rupees. These funds could be redirected to essential development projects and initiatives.
- **Efficient use of resources:** The system would ensure proper deployment of security forces during elections and reduce the burden on these vital resources. It would also allow for better disaster management planning as election-related disruptions would be minimised. For example, in 2019, India alone experienced seven elections in a year, which put a strain on officials.
- **Long-term governance:** With synchronised elections, governments would have longer terms of office, allowing for better planning and implementation of long-term projects. Frequent elections often lead to a focus on short-term populist measures to secure votes.
- **Productivity and stability:** Government employees would benefit from fewer election

holidays, leading to increased productivity. Moreover, a stable government resulting from simultaneous elections would instil investor confidence and promote economic stability.

- **Better Administration:** Senior Government officers would have more time to formulate policy and implement projects, leading to more efficient administration. Continuity of leadership would reduce political upheavals associated with elections driven by leadership changes.
- **Increased voter engagement:** A single-election event would make it easier for citizens to exercise their right to vote, which could increase voter turnout and political participation.
- **Reduction of electoral malpractices:** Simultaneous elections could help reduce the number of fraudulent voters and electoral malpractices as there would be a more efficient & strengthened process.

Cons of 'One Nation – One Election'

- **Anti-Incumbency:** 'One Nation – One Election' can lead to a high anti-incumbency factor, especially when both the central and state governments are from the same party or alliance. Voters may be inclined to vote against the incumbent in either election, which could lead to significant policy changes.
- **Hung Parliament/ Legislature:** India's parliamentary setup often results in hung parliaments or legislatures where no party can form a government. In such cases, frequent elections may be necessary, disrupting the 'One Nation – One Election' cycle.
- **Complexity of Transition:** Transitioning to 'One Nation – One Election' would be a complex process involving legal, logistical and administrative issues. Constitutional amendments may be needed, and state governments may be reluctant to give up their power to set election schedules.
- **Political opposition:** The opposition parties have not shown a unanimous willingness to discuss and implement this reform. Their concerns and reservations need to be addressed through constructive dialogue.

Challenges Ahead

The concept of 'One Nation – One Election' in a diverse nation like India is both promising and challenging. It offers a myriad of benefits, including cost savings, better governance and greater voter engagement. However, challenges such as transition complexity and political opposition need to be carefully considered. As India grapples with a perpetual electoral cycle, it is essential to engage in a rational and open debate on this electoral reform.

The Modi Government should not only support this initiative but also engage in constructive discussions with the opposition parties and related stakeholders. In addition, the government should take this message to the grassroots level, explaining the benefits and addressing the concerns of every citizen. This participatory approach can help bridge the gap and pave the way for meaningful electoral reforms.

Ultimately, the question remains: Can India, with its vast diversity and complex political landscape, successfully implement 'One Nation – One Election'? While it represents a promising solution to many of the challenges associated with frequent elections, the road to achieving it will undoubtedly be fraught with obstacles. Nevertheless, it is a conversation worth having for the sake of the nation's progress and democratic vitality.



Bharat: The sacred land of feminine seekers

Deepti J Verma

The passing of the “Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam” or the Women’s Reservation Bill on the first day of the new Parliament has already triggered a lot of debate and gossips in both the political world as well as civil society. While a lot of political parties are trying to take credit for it, there are those naysayers who are trying to completely discredit it, calling it mere lip service to the cause. One such argument was about the Hindi name for the bill. Why is it a Vandan or salutation, some decried.

Honouring Women Scholars and Thinkers

Let’s look at why the name of the bill is not a “granting of rights” but an acknowledgement of the role women play and have played in Bharat and the world but calling it a salutation to Nari Shakti. Nari Shakti has been a part of the Bhartiya political and cultural discourse and Vimarsh since time immemorial.

Brahmavadinis were women who participated in discourses on “Brahman”—which in many ways is the highest level of discourse. It refers to discussions on the circling of the universe in search of the ultimate truth. Just imagine the scale of their thinking, vision, and conversation! Brahman is a concept present in Vedic Samhitas, the oldest layer of the Vedas dated to the late 2nd millennium BCE.

The Rcs are limited (parimita),

The Samans are limited,

And the Yajuses are limited,

But of the word Brahman, there is no end.

— Taittiriya Samhita VII.3.1.4

Brahmavadinis or female scholars of ancient times such as Lopamudra, Ghosha, Sulabha, Maitreyi and Gargi not only studied topics related to Brahman and higher universal truths, but also took part in debates and discussions along with men are. In fact, these scholars then contributed to the scriptures too. Some sources attribute Ghosha as the author of RV 5.39 and RV 5.40, Godha as the author of a Sāman Source, Visvavara as the author of the hymn RV 5.28 and Apala of the hymn RV 8.91.

Then there are the Rishikas, or female Rishis who contributed a lot to the Vedas –the ultimate texts that were written for individual and collective evolution of the human race. The Vedas cover everything related to human existence intensively –from soul evolution to the truths of the universe, to politics, to finance to art and culture.

One of the popular stories about the Rishikas is in the Mahabharata—about a Rishika called Anamika. The reference appears in a story narrated by Bhishma to Yudhisthira in Shanti Parva. The story is about a Rishi who becomes consumed with ego as he meditates and in a fit of rage burns a crow when his meditation is interrupted by its bird dropping. When he visits a home for alms and food, the lady of the house takes her time as she is first tending to her family –her primary Dharma. When he gets angry at her for the delay, she says I’m not a bird that you can burn. He is astonished at her knowledge of the incident. When asked, she says, I’m no enlightened being with magical powers, “I’m just someone who looks after my family at all times as that’s my Dharma. That’s when the Rishi sees her as an accomplished soul—one without ego or anger and with a lightness of being.”

This story illustrates how so many women of Bharatvarsha could’ve been Rishikas – enlightened beings –even by being nameless or Anamikas as they didn’t feel the need to be credited. That’s why Rishikas are also considered to be higher than Rishis

in many respects as they often follow a domestic life, looking after families and societies, and yet contributing to the discourse around them.

The Epic Wisdom: The Panchkanyas

In both Mahabharat and Ramayana, two of the greatest epics ever written anywhere in the world, we see women shaping the narrative and playing decisive roles. As decisive as men! The epics, taken together, celebrate the exploits of the Panchkanyas— Ahalya, Tara, Draupadi, Kunti and Mandodari. The Panchkanyas are often worshipped for their qualities. These qualities are not traditional virtues but more dynamic characteristics like curiosity, questioning, strategising, erring, and determining one’s path to self-realisation. In a country where such ideals of feminism thrived, that too more than 5000 years ago, we don’t need a Western concept of “one size fits all” feminism.

Also, as part of these Upajiva Kavyas, these women don’t just play assisting roles, they take the plot forward. They have their motivations, ambitions and flaws. They are on a journey of their own, where they do their Dharma but also follow their unique path to self-realisation, making one think how even spirituality has been an endlessly diverse journey in Sanatan Dharma. These characters ask questions, challenge the higher powers, and sit amongst the court of men as equals. If Arjun and Krishna’s discourse made the Gita Saar then Draupadi and Krishna’s conversations make for equally relevant and riveting pieces of writing.

As far as politics goes, all of them played important roles. According to many accounts, Ahalya went against her husband’s wishes and supported the tribal community of her region, showing great empathy for animals, humans from all walks of life, and all players of the ecosystem around her. Tara is a master strategist and astute politician, who, when her husband is beaten by Bhagwan Ram, takes on the role of statesman and nurtures her community and family. Instead of crying over her loss, she understands the nuances of Dharma and decides to walk the path.

Mandodari was often considered to be the sanest voice in Lanka and kept the spiritual in the animalistic alive. She later manages the matters of the estate after Ravana’s death. Kunti raised her

five sons as a single mother in a hostile palace, where fear and threat were always lurking. But she understood the value of bringing them up in a joint family, with the infrastructure and value system that came with it. She chose to see the good and focus on bringing up her sons with those values.

Draupadi was we all know was a fierce queen who played equal to all her husbands and helped them strategise. She was also someone who questioned the court of men, when they couldn't protect her, raising questions for generations of women like her.

An Ode to Women's Political Prowess

Besides, being active in their courts and kingdoms, these women also played a great role in raising warriors and heroes. That's why the importance of women in ancient Bhartiya Sanskriti starts from the "Garbha Sanskar" –in the womb. The values and teachings of a mother are considered incomparable in shaping individuals, society and nations. That's

why a lot of the warriors and even gods were known by their mother's name and not their father's, like Kaunteya (for Arjun), Anjaneya (for Bhagwan Hanuman), Devki Nandan for Krishna.

Of course there is also this basic emotion of equating Nari with Adishakti, mother earth or mother nature—that one boundless force from whom comes everything manifested in the creation. Even her forms are endless, with all kinds of qualities celebrated –from Somya (delicate) to Rudra (fierce). The celebration of Nari Shakti in Bharatiya Parampara or Indian tradition is timeless, hence almost natural to our intrinsic culture and value system. A reservation bill in that way becomes only an extension of that value system, where women's participation has always been encouraged and expected. Let's hope it takes the tradition forward and adds to the names of countless women who made Bharat, Bharat.





The declining graph of the Congress party

Abhay Kumar

At present, the Congress Party does not have a single MLA in four states. These four states are Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Nagaland and Sikkim. In these four states where 337 MLAs are elected, the Congress party does not have a single MLA.

Recently, the account of the Congress party in West Bengal was opened in the by-election held on the Sagardighi seat of West Bengal, but the MLA switched to the AITC sooner than later. Again in West Bengal assembly having strength of 294 the Congress Party has no MLA again. In spite of such activity by the AITC the Congress Party and AITC are looking for alliance under I.N.D.I. alliance. In Tripura too, the Congress party did not have a single MLA, but in the recently held assembly elections, the party's account could be opened only with the help of the Communist Party.

At present, there are a total of 4033 MLAs in all the states of the country. It was 4120 during the existence of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, now the number has decreased to 4033 after the formation of these two Union Territories. In these 4033 seats. Post Jammu & Kashmir Delimitation the no. of seats in legislatures has increased to 4123. The Congress party currently has only 725 MLAs, which is only 17.97 percent of the total number. In these, the number of MLAs of Congress party in Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Odisha, Puducherry, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh has been reduced to single digit. There are a total of 1373 assembly seats in all these states and the number of Congress Party MLAs has come up to 44, which is 3.20 percent. The total number of States where the Congress party has zero or single digit members has gone up to 15. In the total strength of 1710 Vidhansabha of these 15 states, the number of Congress members has come up to 44.

If we talk about the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress Party won 52 seats. Of these, the Congress party got 31 seats from three states Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Punjab. In these three states, the Congress Party along with its allies contested on 38 seats, in which it won 31 seats. In the rest of the states, the Congress Party won only 21 seats by contesting 383 seats. It should also be noted that the Congress Party contested on a total of 421 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and forfeited deposit on 148 seats, which is 35.15 % of the seats contested by the party. In the last Lok Sabha elections, the Congress party had won 52 seats and came second on 209 seats. That is, the direct claim of the Congress Party has been reduced to 261 seats. In the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress Party got less than 2 percent votes in 49 seats. In 127 seats, the party got one point i.e. less than 10 percent votes. The Congress party has double digit seats in the Lok Sabha only in one state, Kerala, but in all the remaining 17 states it has single digit seats.

After the Uttar Pradesh 2022 assembly elections, the possibility of the Gandhi family winning the traditional seats of Amethi and Rae Bareilly has become very bleak. The Congress Party got only 142952 votes in the five assembly seats of Amethi Lok Sabha and it relegated to the third spot far

behind BJP/NDA and the SP. The BJP got 418700 and SP got 352475 votes on Amethi seat as per 2022 UP assembly poll results on the seats fall within the Amethi LS seat. The Congress Party got 140706 votes in Rae Bareilly seat and there too the party was far behind the SP and BJP/NDA. The SP got 402179 votes and BJP/NDA got 381625 votes in Rae Bareilly seat. Considering the Congress party dismal performance in 2022 assembly poll the SP supremo Akhilesh Yadav was forced to announce that his party is considering to field candidates on Amethi and Rae Bareilly LS seats too. Though SP and INC are in looking for seat adjustment under newly formed alliance. In the 2022 UP assembly elections, Congress party got less votes than NOTA on 62 assembly seats.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress party and the BJP were in a direct contest on a total of 190 seats, and the Congress party had to face defeat on 175 seats. The Congress party could not get a single seat in the Lok Sabha elections from a total of 18 states or Union Territories.

In Kerala where the Congress party got 15 seats. There is unique type of politics in Kerala. In Kerala people give chance to the Congress-led UDF and the CPI(M)-led LDF alternately. This time it is the turn of the CPI(M)-led LDF in Kerala where it can win Lok Sabha seats in a big way. The Congress party has ambiguous with the CPI (M) and the Communist parties as far as alliance is concerned. While in Tripura and West Bengal the Congress and Communist parties are allies of each other, in Kerala these two parties are main rivals of each other.

Since 1982, LDF and UDF have been getting a chance to form the government election after election in Kerala, but in the 2021 Kerala assembly elections, for the first time since 1982, such an opportunity came when the power of LDF remained intact and UDF was forced to sit in the opposition again. This has happened when Rahul Gandhi is representing Kerala's Muslim-dominated Wayanad seat in 2019. The Gandhi family is representing Kerala for the first time. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Rahul Gandhi got 705034 votes, which was 64.81% of the total votes polled. Whereas in 2021 assembly elections Congress/UDF vote came down to 521825, which is 27% less than Rahul Gandhi got in Lok Sabha election. This is a test of Rahul Gandhi's popularity.

Plight of the Congress party can be assessed from its Meghalaya experiment during last assembly poll. The Congress party fielded MP from Shillong and former Union Minister Vincent Pala in the northeastern state of Meghalaya as the party feared that the party may get zero seats like many other states. But while Congress got 5 seats in Meghalaya, Shillong's MP Vincent Pala lost his own election. It can also be seen as a test of the popularity of the MPs of the Congress party. The by-election for the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat after Bhagwant Mann becoming the Chief Minister had brought a lot of worry for the Congress party in its stronghold of Punjab.

In Sangrur in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress party stood second on the Sangrur seat with 3,03,350 votes, while in the 2022 by-election, the Congress party got just 79,668 votes. Even the INC lost its deposit during Sangrur LS by-poll. Like Sangrur the Congress party bite the dust on Jalandhar Lok Sabha seat, where the by-election was held due to demise of Congress Party MP Santokh Singh Choudhary during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. The INC was winning the seat since 1999 even by putting different candidates. The INC didnot take any chance and put his widow to play emotional card. But the INC lost the seat for first time since 1999. The results of the seats of Sangrur and Jalandhar brought dismay to the Congress party in Punjab, where they performed well in 2019 LS poll.

The impact of Bharat Jodo Yatra can be assessed in the by-election of Munugode legislative assembly of Telangana. The Congress party had captured this assembly seat by securing 97239 votes in the 2018 assembly elections, even in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress party stood first on this seat with 79843 votes. But in the 2022 by-election, the Congress party got only 23894 votes on this assembly seat and the party's security was also forfeited. It should be noted that this by-election was held after passing of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra through Telangana.

If we analyze the party-wise and alliance-wise performance on assembly seats in Loksabha Election 2019, we find that while BJP was able to establish lead on 2087 (50.65%) seats while the NDA was able to establish lead on 2412 (58.40%) seats. The Congress party was able to establish lead on only 609 (14.78 %) seats, while the UPA was able to

establish lead on 861 (20.89 %) seats on assembly seats.

Recently, assembly by-elections were held on two seats in Maharashtra. The Congress won one seat and the BJP also won one seat. By looking at the votes cast on both the seats, BJP/NDA is ahead of Congress/MVA by more than 25000 votes.

The Congress party was very happy with the victory of Himachal Pradesh, it was also natural for them because they got the taste of victory after a long time. But it is also worth mentioning that the Congress was ahead of the BJP by only 37,974 votes in the entire state. The Congress party suffered a crushing defeat in the assembly election in Gujarat which held along with Himachal Pradesh. In Gujarat the INC has had its worst performance ever. Off course Karnataka assembly election brought positive news for the Congress Party. After Karnataka assembly poll the INC is arranging meetings with its allies. The Congress party didnot venture for such meeting as it was not even accepted by its allies. But its extremely tough for the INC to maintain the momentum it got from Karnataka to continue.

The INC performance in three States of Kerala, Punjab & Tamilnadu. The INC won 31 seats by contesting 38 seats in these three states. While out of these states the INC won 21 seats by contesting 383 seats.



India's Act East Policy With An ASEAN Pivot

Anil Trigunayat

Even as Prime Minister Modi is hosting the G20 Summit in a grand way with major global leaders, he made it a point to embark upon a two-day visit to Indonesia from today to attend the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and 18th East Asia Summit. The two summits will be hosted in Jakarta by Indonesia, the current Chair of ASEAN.

For India and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), this summit will be the first since the two decided to elevate their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership (2022). Apart from the importance New Delhi attaches to its relationship with ASEAN per se, which is also critical to the promulgation of its Act East policy, PM Modi also wished to honour his host and friend, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who will be coming to New Delhi for the G20 Summit after hosting it in 2022, when he handed over the baton to PM Modi.

I remember attending a CII Conference in the 1990s when the then Prime Minister of Singapore was a keynote speaker and I distinctly recall his words that "India only looked to the West and had not been as

keen to engage with its natural habitat – the East". Happily, Indian attention veered towards the East and the ASEAN that has, in terms of internal integration, achieved significant success through consensus.

The trajectory of cooperation is pretty impressive. Starting as 'Sectoral Dialogue Partner' in 1992 and then 'Full Dialogue Partner', India and ASEAN became strategic partners by the time they celebrated the 20th anniversary of their collaboration. By the time they finished 25 years, they had already decided to enhance collaboration in the maritime domain which is a critical element in the ever so accentuated geo dynamic of the Indo-Pacific, Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

India continues to believe and propagate that ASEAN's centrality to the Indo-Pacific, for peace or development, remains the cornerstone of its regional engagement.

Another milestone was the 30th anniversary in November 2022 when at the 19th ASEAN-India Summit, the 'Strategic Partnership' was elevated to 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' and a "Joint Statement on ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" was released. Three decades may not be a long time but the institutional and dialogue mechanisms that have been created in regional and bilateral formats attest to the importance that the two attach, from security to economy to political consultations to defence to cultural to P2P engagement to counter-terrorism and cyber security, S&T etc. Even within the context of QUAD, the provision of vaccines manufactured in India would be for the ASEAN and other regional countries.

Institutional mechanisms are robust and responsive. There is a Foreign Ministers Meeting format (AIFMM) as well as that of the Senior Officials one (AISOM) apart from several working groups. All these culminate in the leadership ASEAN-India Summit. Delhi Dialogue hosted by India's External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, further enhances engagement with ASEAN countries. In particular, India regularly participates in the meetings of the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting+ (ADMM+) and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) meetings and its supporting processes. PM Modi had also invited all the ASEAN leaders as special and chief guests on Republic Day to underscore the importance India attaches to the ASEAN and its Act East policy.

India's engagement with the ASEAN has been driven by key objectives of enhancing connectivity between India and ASEAN in the broadest sense of the term (physical, digital, people-to-people, business etc.); strengthening the ASEAN organisation; and expanding practical cooperation in the maritime domain. ASEAN countries like Myanmar and Thailand have been key to the physical connectivity and blending of the Act East policy with the Neighbourhood First policy, especially through the BIMSTEC and various connectivity corridors which have acquired greater momentum as the China-India-Pakistan dynamic remains adversarial and on tenterhooks.

Apart from strategic considerations, trade and economic exchanges continue to be the driving force. India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement was one of the first to be signed and is now being reviewed to expand its functionality and utility. Therefore, the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA, signed 2009, in force 1 January 2010); the ASEAN-India Agreement for Trade in Services (AITISA, signed 2014, all parties ratified it in 2018) and the Agreement on Investment (signed 2014, has been finalised, ratified by all parties) have become major institutional frameworks for economic engagement. Bilateral trade for the first time crossed the \$100 billion mark with 2021-22 recording \$110.4 billion even as the balance of trade remained in favour of ASEAN. This aspect is often discussed during the Economic Ministers meetings as well as the high-level interactions to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. Likewise, greater efforts are being made

to enhance investments which remained rather low during the two decades (2000-2019) – only a total of \$118 billion, of which \$115 billion came in from Singapore alone which is an offshore destination for major FDIs.

Moreover, these ten ASEAN countries have close and even controversial and conflictual relationships with China, dictated by geography and Beijing's hegemonistic tendencies in the South China Sea. There are dependencies and realpolitik, hence they mostly follow pragmatic policies. They even joined the China-led RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement) from which India opted out due to strategic considerations. Recent cartographic aggression by China (new maps) has engineered more distrust among India and many of the ASEAN countries on whose sovereignty the Chinese hegemony and aggression tend to trample. This provides coagulating contours for the India-ASEAN partnership. ASEAN is also facing challenges from within, with the unsalutary and challenging developments and democracy deficit in Myanmar, which impact on its unified group image.

India's commitment to deepening the historic ties with ASEAN is governed by 3 Cs – Commerce, Connectivity and Culture, and if one adds the potential conflict with another C in the region, it should make them obvious natural partners for a dynamic regional balance.

PM Modi will discuss all the sub-regional, regional and global issues of mutual concern with the ASEAN leaders at the bilateral, and at the East Asia Summit with other leaders, many of whom will head to New Delhi for the G20 Summit and will contribute to the most important outcomes that will impact on global wellbeing and welfare, especially that of the Global South, which India so avidly champions including the converting of G20 into G21 by permanent membership of African Union (AU).

Anil Trigunayat is the former Indian Ambassador to Jordan, Libya and Malta and currently Distinguished Fellow with Vivekananda International Foundation.



Why India's strategic depth is of little value

Gen MM Naravane (Retd)

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Strategic depth — the prevalence or absence of it — is a key determinant of a country's National Security Strategy. It refers to the distance between the front lines, also called the Tactical Battle Area or TBA, and the base, from which the Army draws its strength, in terms of men, material and resources. The space in between, through which pass the roads and railroads connecting the two, the lines of communications, is known as the Communications Zone or Comn Z. This zone has the intermediate logistical and administrative elements to support the troops in the TBA, including population centres. The depth of this zone, and the value objectives that lie within it, will determine if a country can adopt a strategy of 'trading space for time', when confronted with an adverse situation.

What if a country has neither strategic depth, nor a friendly neighbour? Faced with such a situation, this depth has to be created by occupying territories.

Strategic depth or its absence

During World War II, when Germany launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941 against the Soviet Union, the Russians made full use of their strategic depth in the face of rapid German advances. The Russians who were forced to retreat, followed a 'scorched earth' policy, destroying or burning everything of military value, including crops and livestock; plant and machinery; denying any source of sustenance to the Germans within the Comn Z. As a result, the German lines of communication, rearwards towards their base in the German heartland, kept getting longer and longer, eventually becoming unviable, and ultimately succumbing to the severe Russian winter. This 'trading space for time' allowed the Russians to regroup, kick-start their industrial production and then go on the counter-offensive when fully ready.

However, what does a country do when it is not big enough to have strategic depth? Then, it has to look over its shoulder to artificially create that depth, within the neighbouring country or kingdom. The great Maratha warrior, Chhatrapati Shivaji, was among the first to employ this strategy, possibly even before it was ever enunciated. When faced with the overwhelming strength of the Mughal armies, rather than give battle against unfavourable odds, he would fall back to the territory of neighbouring Bijapur, while continuing to harass them using guerilla tactics.

From the early 1980s, Pakistan started looking toward Afghanistan to provide this strategic depth vis-à-vis India, a thought first articulated in their National Defence University, Islamabad. This is the main reason for their interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, namely, securing a sympathetic regime in Kabul. However, their plan does not seem to have worked, with their Western front with Afghanistan as volatile as ever and the Taliban showing that they are not puppets. Nevertheless, this contingency remains part of Pakistan's strategic calculus.

What happens when a country has neither the luxury of strategic depth, nor a friendly neighbour? Faced with such a situation, this depth has to be created by occupying territories beyond one's own boundaries.

Israel is a case in point. Following the six-day war of 1967, Israel continued with its occupation of the Sinai Peninsula, as it afforded them the depth against any surprise offensive by Egypt from the South. This occupation was to pay handsome dividends during the Yom Kippur War of 1973, when Israeli forces could hold off the Egyptians at the Mitla and Gidi passes that lie within Sinai. This occupation continued even after the war until 1982, when Israel relinquished control of the Sinai, as part of the conditions of the Egypt-Israel Peace Accord of 1979. Similarly, Israel continues to occupy the Golan heights to the North, which it had captured from Syria in the six-day war. Additionally, Israel is in occupation of the West bank of the Jordan river, an area of about 5,800 sq kms, which gives it the much-needed depth at its shortest point which is barely 15 km wide East-West.



India's problem

India is blessed to have the advantage of a large land-mass, with its core areas comprising industrial centres, major cities, road and rail networks spread all over the country. Yet, many of these lucrative targets also lie within or close to the TBA where they could be over-run in the initial stages of an enemy offensive. Therefore, it has to carefully calibrate its strategy with respect to its potential adversaries, China to the North and Pakistan to the West. Against each of these too, the strategy at the operational level would be different in various sectors of the border, depending on varied factors such as the terrain, the strategic importance of the area, and the political ramifications of what such losses might entail.

On the Western Front, we may afford to trade space for time in the desert sector, allowing the enemy offensive to run out of steam due to the lack of any inherent natural resources, especially water. However, the same would not be true further North. Major population centres having political and religious significance, Amritsar for example, which is just about 30 plus kms from the international border, and well within the range of enemy long-range artillery, would have to be defended at all costs. Its fall would do irreparable damage to India's reputation, both domestically and internationally. The military strategies for the two sectors, deserts and plains would therefore, differ radically.

To the North, India shares a border of over 3,000 km with Tibet, illegally occupied by China in the 1950s. Here too, the strategies for defending these borders in the different sectors, Northern, Central and Eastern, would vary. Post the Galwan clash of 2020, both the People's Liberation Army and the Indian Army have fortified their positions and are forward deployed, with neither side inclined to cede any space to the other. In the Central Sector, bordering Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand lie places of religious importance, which once again have to be defended strongly right from the outset. The same is true for the Sikkim and Tawang areas of the Eastern sector. If at all the option of trading space for time can be exercised, it would be in the other valleys of Eastern Arunachal Pradesh. But this option has to be exercised with care since China claims this area



as part of South Tibet, a claim reinforced by their official map published as late as 28 August 2023.

The bottom line is that while India might have the luxury of a large landmass, its strategic depth is of little value due to overriding domestic compulsions. India will therefore have to be forward deployed almost everywhere to thwart any pre-emptive surprise attacks, which in spite of technological advances, can only be done by having adequate boots on ground.

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Constitution is a living Document

Ram Madhav

Soon we are going to move into the new Parliament building. The iconic old building was where 299 members of the Constituent Assembly of India toiled for over two years and 293 days to give us an excellent Constitution.

It may be an ironic coincidence that as we vacate the building that gave us the Constitution, a debate is raging over the future of the Constitution too. Fundamental questions like whether we should continue to call ourselves India or change our name to Bharat, whether the word “socialist” in the Preamble is still relevant, whether India is a nation or just a “Union of States” and whether the so-called “Basic Structure” argument is still tenable are being raised by important sections.

Our Constitution, the world’s largest with 448 articles and 12 schedules, has served our country in an efficient manner for the last seven decades. It is a sacred document, a product of great diligence and discussion. Those who were involved in its making, like B R Ambedkar, Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, K M Munshi, Gopalaswami Ayyangar, and others, were political stalwarts. B N Rau, advisor of the drafting committee, and S N Mukherjee, its chief draftsman deserve a mention for their extraordinary contributions. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Syama Prasad Mookerjee too made significant contributions. There were great debaters like H V Kamath, P S Deshmukh, R K Sidhva, Shibban Lal Saxena, Thakur Das Bhargava, K T Shah and Hriday Nath Kunzru who enriched its content. Ambedkar paid tribute to all of them while presenting the final draft of the Constitution in November 1949.

The saga of our Constitution, including the debates, is most inspiring. The suggestion to junk it is premature. Countries do not replace constitutions at

the drop of the hat. However, for a large and diverse country like Bharat, a reexamination of various facets of the Constitution from time to time is important. Talking about it doesn’t make one anti-Ambedkar, as the Opposition says. Except for the Canadian constitution, all constitutions in the world allow amendments. The Indian Constitution has already been amended 106 times.

Quoting the great American statesman Thomas Jefferson, Ambedkar himself argued that no generation has the right to impose its will on future generations. Jefferson had said that “we may consider each generation as a distinct nation, with a right, by the will of the majority, to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generation.” Endorsing Jefferson, Ambedkar stated that he was not “putting a seal of finality and infallibility upon this Constitution”.

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During the golden jubilee of our Republic, in February 2000, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government constituted a commission led by the eminent jurist M N Venkatachaliah to look into the functioning of the Constitution. At the time of the appointment, the government talked about a fixed term for Parliament and legislatures, the abolition of the no-confidence motion and the introduction of “constructive vote of confidence”. However, the “Basic Structure” argument came in the way of implementing the commission’s recommendations at that time. In the famous Kesavananda Bharati judgment in 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that the basic features of the Constitution cannot be altered through amendments. This opinion was reiterated time and again by different benches subsequently. As the Republic reaches its platinum jubilee, a relook into aspects of the Constitution, including the “Basic Structure” argument, is natural.

So far there is no clear definition about what constitutes Basic Structure. In general, it is argued that the Preamble, Article 1 and Part 3, which deals with Fundamental Rights, are inviolate parts of the Constitution. Unfortunately, it is these parts that face major scrutiny today.

The Preamble begins with the statement, “We, the people of India”. India is thus defined as the “people”. Article 1 calls India a “Union of States”. In both cases, and for that matter, in the entire Constitution, India is not described as a nation. Some leaders of the Opposition argue on that basis that India is only a Union of States.

Ambedkar had argued against calling India a nation because Indians were more caste-conscious than nation-conscious. After seven decades, that argument can certainly be revisited. But on the “Union of States” question, Ambedkar was categorical that the “federal” nature of the Constitution was limited to the independence of the Legislature and Executive of the Union and the States. They are not two equal power centres. For that matter, the Indian Constitution doesn’t even use the word “federal”.

No constitution in the world is perfect. Although the US constitution came into existence in 1789, it took 130 years for women to get voting rights and 175 years for the Black Americans to get full civil rights. At least five times in the past, candidates who secured the highest votes were denied presidency due to the electoral college system. The Upper House in the American Congress, the Senate, is technically an undemocratic body in which Wyoming, with a population of half a million, has the same representation as California, which is 90 times bigger.

Yet, the country runs on a constitution that has just seven articles and 21 sections. In 230 years, it was amended only 27 times. Countries like the UK and Israel do not have a constitution at all. They function on rules and conventions.

Ultimately, the Constitution is only a statement of intent. The constitutionalism — acting in its spirit — of those who manage it is critical. We must always remember the American Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story’s caution: “Republics are created by the virtue, public spirit, and intelligence of the citizens. They fall, when the wise are banished from the public councils, because they dare to be honest, and the profligate are rewarded.”

