

Year: 2022, Volume:1, Issue:1

ISSN: 2583-6811 (Online)



JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY POLITICS



**Department of Political Science
Bangalore University**

Journal of Contemporary Politics

Official Publication of Bangalore University

July – September 2022, Volume 1, Issue 1

EDITORIAL BOARD

PATRON

Prof. Dr. Jayakara S M
Vice-Chancellor
Bangalore University, Bengaluru

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dr. Veena Devi
Professor and Chairperson
Department of Political Science
Bangalore University, Bengaluru, India

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dr. S. Y. Surendra Kumar
Professor, Department of Political Science
Bangalore University, Bengaluru, India

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Rumki Basu
Head, Centre for Public Policy and
Governance
Institute of Social Science, New
Delhi

Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar
Honorary Professor, Karnataka State
Rural Development and Panchayat Raj
University, Gadag, Karnataka

Dr. Muzaffar Assadi
Professor
Department of Political Science,
University of Mysore, Mysuru,
Karnataka

Dr. Jonathan Schwartz
Professor
Department of Political Science &
International Relations
State University of New York,
New Paltz

Dr. M.H. Ilias
Professor
School of Gandhian Thought and
Development Studies
M.G. University, Kottayam

Dr. K M. Sajad Ibrahim
Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Kerala, Trivandrum

Dr. G.D.R.U. Abeyrathne
Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Peradeniya
Sri Lanka

Dr. Alok Kumar Gupta
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Central University of Jharkhand,
Ranchi

Dr. Manoharan. N
Director, Centre for East Asian Studies
Christ University
Bengaluru

Dr. Jabin T. Jacob
Associate Professor
Department of International Relations
and Governance Studies, School of
Humanities and Social Sciences, Shiv
Nadar University, Delhi NCR

Dr. Avinash Anil Godbole
Associate Professor, International
Relations and China Studies
O. P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat

Dr. Chetan Singai
Associate Professor
School of Social Sciences,
Ramaiah University for Applied
Sciences, Bengaluru

Prof. Sandeep Shastri
Vice-Chancellor
Jagran Lakecity University
Bhopal-462044, Madhya Pradesh India

Dr. M.J. Vinod
Professor, Department of International
studies, Political Science and History,
School of Social Science, Christ
University, Bengaluru-560029, India

Dr.M. Narasimhamurthy
Professor
Department of Political Science
Bangalore University, Bengaluru
India

Dr. Sanjeev Kumar H M
Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Delhi, Delhi

Dr. Adhuri Subramanyam Raju
Professor
Centre for South Asian Studies,
Pondicherry University
Pondicherry

Dr. Manisha Priyam
Professor
Education Policy,
National University of Educational
Planning and Administration (NIEPA),
New Delhi

Dr. Rahul Tripathi
Professor
Department of Political Science
Goa University, Goa

Dr. T. G. Suresh
Associate Professor
Centre for Political Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi

Dr. Mayilvaganan
Associate Professor
National Institute for Advance Studies,
Bengaluru

Dr. Manisha Madhava
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
SNDT Women University, Mumbai

Dr. Harsha. S
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Uma Purushothaman
Assistant Professor
Department of International Studies and
Politics, Central University of Kerala,
Kasaragod

MANAGING EDITOR

Dr. B R Radhakrishna
Librarian
Bengaluru University

Journal of Contemporary Politics

Official Publication of Bangalore University

July – September 2022, Volume 1, Issue 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH ARTICLES

- 1. Will Nation-State Survive?: A Narrative on its Decline, Essentiality and Alternatives**
Muzaffar Assadi 01 - 05
- 2. Inclusion Discourse Amidst Changing Notions of the ‘Idea of India’ Ambedkar’s Legacy and its Relevance Today**
Alok Kumar Gupta 06 – 12
- 3. Indian Politics @ 75: Issues and Challenges**
Rumki Basu 13 - 17
- 4. India in World Affairs during the Last 75 Years: A Reflective Commentary**
P S Jayaramu 18 - 21

BOOK REVIEWS

- 5. *A Ringside Seat to History* - Pascal Alan Nazareth**
D Jeevan Kumar 22 - 23
- 6. *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* - Yual Noah Harari**
M J Vinod 24 - 25



Research Article

Will Nation-state Survive?: A Narrative on its Decline, Essentiality and Alternatives

Muzaffar Assadi^{1,*}

¹Dean, Faculty of Arts and Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysore, Karnataka

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 16.07.2022

Accepted 22.08.2022

Published 19.09.2022

* Corresponding author.

Muzaffar Assadi

muzaffar.assadi@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.53989/jcp.v1i1.3>



ABSTRACT

The debate over whether nation-states are a recent development or a long-standing phenomenon, as well as whether to prioritise the nation or the state when analysing nation-states, has recently taken on a lot of significance. This has sparked discussion on whether the idea itself is a part of the liberal agenda, a project to homogenise the nation at the expense of many cultural practises, or is just a phenomenon that is deeply troubled. There are arguments that attempt to portray the nation-state as vanishing in the midst of globalisation, yet many continue to support its relevance by putting up alternative models.

Keywords: Globalization; McDonaldization; Clash of Civilization; Dialogue among nations

INTRODUCTION

Recent years has seen multiple debates on the issue of nation state:. Whether the concept of the nation-state is fading¹, whether it has become a finished project, whether it has only produced democratic states or authoritarian ones as well? what problems do nation-states in the modern era face, especially in the post-globalization or post-liberalization phase². Other questions include whether nation-states are vanishing. or have they already disappeared? whether nation-states are perishing or coming to an end in the modern day, whether they are becoming outdated, etc.

First, we must analyse the nation-state, either as a single integrated unit or as a discrete entity³. As Anderson⁴⁻⁶ says, a nation is essentially a socio-cultural entity where everybody will have an equal grasp of their political system and culture. In contrast, a state is a political entity. The nation may develop without a state; the state has a set

geography or boundaries. Jews were a nation without a state prior to the creation of Israel, just as the Palestinians are a nation. Hundreds of different nationalities may be represented in one state, but these nations may also form one nation. Even while China and the former Soviet Union both claimed to have a variety of nationalities, in the end, all of them were either Chinese or Russian. In this paradoxical situation, a single nationality's dominance over other, weaker nationalities led to the creation of the nation. For instance, the Hun nationality in China^{7,8} has been dominating other nationalities, and while doing so, it excludes or suppresses other nationalities on the grounds that they are "extreme radicals," "threats," etc. The best example is the Ugihar nationality in the province of Xianjing.

But according to Anderson, nationalism invariably results in the creation of a nation-state. He believes that the nation is an imagined construct, produced by the widespread use



of the printing press rather than any concrete material circumstance in people's lives. Hobswan had an alternative idea. For him, the notion of an imagined society is not a novel one; it is a phenomenon that dates back to the eighteenth century. The factors that brought individuals together to create the envisioned nation were language, culture, and ethnicity. More than that, he thought that national unity was a political idea rather than a socio-anthropological one that is imposed from above. For him, states and nationalism do not create nations; rather, it is the reverse.⁹

Similar to how nationalists encourage the development of nation-states, according to scholars like Gellner In reality, he holds that a nation's economic progress necessitates the inclusion of all groups in that development, which breeds resentment and eventually creates a homogenous nationalist culture. However, a nearly identical process that resulted in unequal power distribution and anti-colonial nationalism occurred in the colonial world. Industrialization also helped to delegitimize colonial power in this case.

Curiously, Hegel,^{10,11} a German philosopher, claims that the nation-state is best managed by constitutional government and that it is the result of objective thought. On the other hand, a Marxist like Kautsky¹², contends that there were three components involved in the creation of the nation-state when analysing the nationality issue in Austria. The first is the desire for a local market for the creation of goods by the bourgeoisie; the second is political freedom, such as democracy; and the third is the spread of national culture for the populace. However, Marxists concur that the state is the result of irresolvable class conflicts or contradictions, represents bourgeois power and its interests, and appears to be superior to civil society. Lenin and other Marxists contend, however, that the state is founded on the basis of force. People like Stalin¹³ contend that nation or nationality can take many various forms, including agrarian (like the Vietnamese peasantry), industrial (like the workers in Poland), or even commercial. However, Marxists would contend that the development of the nation-state was equally influenced by colonialism and the following exploitation of the colonised nations, colonial and post-colonial capitalism, the market, merchantile capitalism, etc. In the Indian context, Marxists like Irfan Habib¹⁴. A.R.Desai¹⁵ and others interestingly claimed that the circumstances for nation-state were produced by colonial exploitation through many mechanisms, including rural mercantile capitalism, industrial capitalism, and finance capitalism. Noble Laureate Rabindranth Tagore [14 offered the best critique of nationalism in, arguing that it is always risky to embrace extreme nationalism. But whether this goal of creating a nation-state is finished remained in doubt.

LIBERAL PROJECT

In fact, according to modern liberal research, the Westphalian system is where the nation state first emerged. In that

regard, the modern nation-state might be seen as a product of western liberalism. After thirty years of conflict, this was agreed upon in the Westphalia Peace Treaty of 1648. This is predicated on the ground that every state in the world has sovereign authority over both its own internal affairs and its borders. In other words, principles of non-intervention were promoted in the nation's domestic affairs, and they are also free from any outside intrusion. This peace pact, however, treated all the states equally; there is no distinction between the states. Who benefited from the Westphalian accord is still a matter of debate, though. This really benefited the western world because it made large-scale invasion or intervention within the European continent difficult, but not vis-à-vis the rest of the world. The goal of the conquest of the developing nations was to provide "civilization and modernity."

Scholars, on the other hand, contend that the world system prior to the start of the French Revolution was centred around princes, emperors, monarchs, authoritarian leaders, dictators, etc. It is asserted that the French Revolution established a nation-state, which was truly reflected in the manner it shaped French political and cultural identity and guarded against external intervention. The United States and other countries around the world have repeated this procedure. In actuality, these two revolutions gave rise to the notion of nation-states—an autonomous state ruled in the name of the people, providing equality and constitutionalism, a uniform political culture, and a uniform trajectory of political modernity. This served as the model and foundation for the creation of new nation-states in non-Western regions. The theories of modernity, political culture, political articulations, system theory, etc. were advocated on the basis of this, but regrettably these theories were used as a frame-work to analyse the developing or underdeveloped world without understanding the cultural specificities of the nascent emerging countries. Nation-states that didn't fit into these paradigms were labelled "failed states," "rouge states," and other derogatory terms.

There were also other debates. One debate is that once dynastic or authoritarian nations begin to fall apart, the nation-state process becomes universal and automatic process; this is known as the emulation process. This occurred when the Soviet Union fell apart in the decade beginning in 1980; its satellite nations imitated and changed into different nation-states; Yugoslavia and central Asian nations are the greatest examples. It is suggested that more than thirty democratic, yet national in character, countries emerged during the post-Soviet era.

However, during the era of super power competition and the subsequent cold war, the western world's paradigm of nation-state was severely criticized. It became commonplace for US and USSR forces to interfere in many parts of the world. In actuality, US interference in developing nations is nothing new. It is commonly known that after Chile gained its independence in 1811, it has a history of interfering



in Chile. Third-world nations, including Cuba, Panama, Haiti, Korea, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Angola, and others, were the scene of proxy conflicts or direct military operations. Nation-states have frequently fallen apart due to the whims and fancies of the two big powers.

The two world wars, which devastated a significant number of European governments despite the fact that they had developed into nation-states, were another occurrence that occurred at the same time during this time period. This was sparked by the rise of fascism around the world, including in countries like Italy, Germany, Spain, and Japan. In the guise of racial purity or superiority, ethnicity, global hegemony, etc., it destroyed the various governments. The expansion of nationalist movements, whether in Asia, Africa, or Latin American nations, was another significant occurrence that occurred during this time. After the Second World War, a large number of nations attained independence, but this does not imply that the nation-state enterprise was over.

The concerns and problems that these recently developed nations faced included neo-colonialism, poverty, underdevelopment, backwardness, inequality, widening economic and social disparities, etc. The fall of communist regimes in the European Union and its supporters in other areas of the world, however, was what altered the course of nation-states. This does not mean the US or the unipolar world will no longer interfere in the domestic affairs of nation-states. The US's intervention in Libya, Iraq, and other countries is the clearest example of how it entirely destroyed Arab nation-states. Libya, for instance, is proof of a divided nation state since it has two parliaments and two armies and has become a battleground for many ethnic groups after Gaddafi's death. Yemen is another illustration. Even the Arab Spring, which ironically helped to strengthen the nation-state in the Middle East, had started to work against it. It has sparked a state of religious fanaticism, including the Taliban and the Islamic state. For a while, this extremism also gave rise to nation-states that were extremists, such as Afghanistan, and moderate/parliamentary extremism, of which Turkey is the clearest example.

CLASH BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS AND NATION-STATES

The notion of the Clash of Civilizations,¹⁶ promoted by Samuel P. Huntington in the late 1990s, is what has recently transformed the theory of the nation-state, especially following the fall of the Soviet Union. - Bernad Lewis, a British orientalist, first promoted this notion in a 1957 speech at John Hopkins University. Later, Austrian philosopher Hans Köchler, who thought that the west and Islam had divergent cultural values that could be addressed by conflict, endorsed it.

The central tenet of Huntington's argument is that culture, not nation-states, will ultimately shape global politics. This does not imply that Huntington has given up on the nation-state project. He held that although each civilization is made up of numerous nation-states, they all behave in a civilised way. Huntington examines the nation-waning state's influence in this context. The end of history, the reemergence of old rivalries between nations, the fall of the nation state due to the conflicting pulls of tribalism and globalism, among other things, are just a few of the visions academics have spread about the future of world politics. Herein lies the risk of nation-states becoming less distinct; instead of being varied entities, they become homogenous ones.

Huntington rejects the claim that cultural differences¹⁷ are not the main cause of global conflict but rather ideologies and economic concerns. He contends that while nation states are still the most potent actors in contemporary politics, conflicts will inevitably arise between nations and groups of other civilizations. He held the view that the struggle of the modern era will be between the western world and the Islamic world. Both have a long history of struggle and have different views about problems such as god and man, citizens and the state, rights and obligations, freedom and authority, etc. In addition, he will not identify Confucian thought or Hinduism as potentially leading to a war of civilizations in the near future. However, his recommendations, such as Americanization and checkmating, to lessen the clash of civilizations between the west and the Islamic world Greater effects of multiculturalism include the emergence of "America first" and other anti-immigrant, anti-Islamic, and anti-Latino ideologies. After 9/11, the US began to follow Huntington's idea, and is today recognised as a nation of "liberal fascism."¹⁸⁻²⁰

In opposition to Huntington, former Iranian President Khatami^{21,22} and the UN promoted "Dialogue Among Civilizations"²³ in an effort to save nation-states from impending collapse. In addition, the UN General Assembly designated 2001 as the year of "Dialogue Among Civilizations"^{24,25}, nevertheless, attempts to organise a "Alliance of Civilizations"^{26,27} were unsuccessful. Unfortunately, President Bush adopted Huntington's thesis as part of US foreign policy, waging war on those "who are not with us" and ultimately destroying nation-states like Afghanistan, Libya, and Iraq for all time. US incidentally was castigated as Rogue nation²⁸ aimed at destroying Rogue nations.²⁹

THE END OF THE NATION-STATE

One crucial point that is frequently raised is whether the concept of the nation-state is dying out in light of the rise of various nationalist movements, ethnic and nationalist violence, sectarian violence, and tribal resurgence. In fact, it is asserted that the decline of nation-state's started much earlier than the twenty-first century. It began to weaken



in the 19th century as a result of colonisation, superpower competition, and other factors. The idea of nation-states continuing²⁴ to be political entities is the subject of a second argument. One cannot dispute the fact that the nation-state has been further pushed to the margins of society by the recent wave of globalization³⁰ which is mediated by global capital, multilateral institutions, and cultural industries. This does not portend the end of the nation state. The idea of a borderless state is increasingly becoming a reality, and in the modern era, globalisation has destroyed national boundaries in order to connect with the global economy without any borders³¹. The idea of national geographies has also collapsed, and the world has become interconnected or networking, with every person in every remote region of the globe connected to the global market. People are quickly connecting thanks to cultural industries; it is now possible to show opposition to a global cause from one's local country. A volatile economy is being produced by global capital, which can now move freely from one area to another in a matter of seconds. In addition, it leads to cultural homogeneity, sometimes known as the "McDonaldization" of the economy, including knowledge system³².

Cultural symbols are another sort of capital that is travelling and that no one country can control. At this point, the nation-state is no longer a strong category but is also no longer necessary. This is due to the fact that nation-states are still necessary for globalisation in order to manage global capital, enable the global market, and support global institutions, they are a very weak system and even their sovereignty is comparatively declining. This is the reason nation-states have failed to fulfil their initial commitment to safeguarding people's lives, property, freedom, and liberties. This failure has resulted in a plethora of issues, including an increase in the number of people living in poverty on a global scale, an increase in the number of super-rich people, a sharp rise in the number of suicides and deaths, whether related to farming or not, an increase in the number of development refugees, and an increase in the number of people being uprooted from their home countries and relocated to other parts of the world. In actuality, nation-states have failed to control the flow of information, ideas, international crimes, money circulations, businesses, and boundaries throughout the current globalisation period. Here the nation-state system breaks down.

This raises the question of whether nation-states are no longer relevant in light of the transnational danger posed by various separatist organisations, ethnic groups, and extreme religious movements coexisting with and concurrent with globalisation. Those who assert that they have global citizenship are now making this point as well. It is true that non-state actors are active throughout the world, attempting to further their goals of establishing theocratic or religiously based states. After 9/11, these initiatives were unsuccessful, yet they still continue to further their goals.

Globalization and its particular politics may have rendered many nation-states very weak, but not extinct.

This claim's corollary is that nation-states have devolved into failed political structures. The best examples of a failed nation-state are Lebanon, Afghanistan and Syria. These political systems have been criticised for failing to provide security, distribute resources wisely, consider social equality, or acknowledge the presence of various ethnicities or ethnic groups. Pakistan is the best illustration of a Near Failed Nation-State, which is another category. Although they are few in number, there is no assurance that they won't increase in the near future.

CRISIS OF NATION-STATE

Whether nation-states are experiencing a serious crisis is one relevant question. In reality, a US-based publication called Foreign Affairs contends that not all nation-states are in dire straits. It identifies India and Russia as the two significant nations in the midst of a serious crisis. It is paradoxical that India was castigated as "failed state" during the time of Covid, as the state failed to distribute the resources judiciously. Nonetheless, the way India overcome the crisis, by responding to the interventions of judiciary and media, demystified the stereotypes about India. Military-dominated nations are not experiencing a crisis. It is strange but true that the US economic crisis is not seen as a national catastrophe. The claim is likely that the US nation-state project was finished much earlier, right after the American Revolution. This understanding actually ignores historical events like civil wars, African American and indigenous population assertions, which unmistakably show that the nation-state project was not finished right away after the revolution but rather after numerous wars, conflicts, and the extermination of indigenous populations.

There are still two unanswered questions: first, does nation-state represent a finished construct, and second, will nation-state retaliate successfully?

It may be true that the nation-state project in the US and many other European countries is almost finished, which is very clear from the way the European Continent is taking shape. Other liberal western nations are not included in this, either. In the Quebec region, Canada is in a serious crisis. In some developing nations, the project has reportedly remained unfinished. The project hasn't been finished, as seen by the growing religious division in India, separatist movements, ethnic violence in Pakistan, tribal strife in Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, and Libya, among other things. This demonstrates two trends that are occurring in the modern day. One trend is that the nation-state has remained an incomplete construct or has undergone a rupture. Unfortunately, rather having greater supra-national identities, conflict and expanding ascriptive identities have come to dominate the nation-state.



The final query concerns a potential replacement for this crisis-ridden nation-state. Making little city states is one solution that might be found. Monaco, Singapore, and other mature examples are culturally homogenous, well-managed, and independent while nevertheless remaining sovereign states. These city-states have evolved into "centres of growth, development, commerce, finance, technology, and centres of power as well. They are not, however, militarily strong nations, and they are easily eliminated from the political arena. There are still other options. One of them is to strengthen regionalism or regional integration. The nation-state will resurge as a strong system or as a very weak system, depending on the arguments—crisis-ridden nation-state, outmoded nation-state, demise of the nation-state, death of the nation-state, etc. The paradox of the nation-state in the modern era is this.

REFERENCES

- Gerhard W. The Fading of the Nation State. *Connections*. 2002;1(3):81–92. Available from: https://procon.bg/system/files/01.3.11_gerhard.pdf.
- Roshwald A. The Global Crisis of the Nation-State. *Current History*. 2015;114(768):3–8. Available from: https://relooney.com/NS4053/00_NS4053_250.pdf.
- Rejai M, Enloe CH. Nation-States and State-Nations. *International Studies Quarterly*. 1969;13(2):140–158. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3013942>.
- Thompson W. Imagined Communities: Signs and Symbols, Identities and Nations. In: *Work, Sex and Power: The Forces that Shaped Our History*. Pluto Press. 2015;p. 145–163. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183p6q8.15>.
- Chatterjee P. Anderson's Utopia. *Diacritics*. 1999;29(4):128–134. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1566381>.
- Gerard. Imagining Community. *New Blackfriars*. 2012;93(1047):562–571.
- Hsieh J. China's Nationalities Policy: Its Development and Problems. *Anthropos*. 1986;81:1–20. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40462022>.
- Chaudhuri D. The Debate on China's Existing Nationalities Policy. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 2014;49(40):12–14. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24480814>.
- Hobsbawm EJ. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780, Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1990.
- Avineri S. Hegel and Nationalism. *The Review of Politics*. 1962;24(4):461–484. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1405358>.
- Mead ED. Hegel On the State. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. 1882;16(2).
- Meldolesi L. The Debate on Imperialism Just before Lenin. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 1984;19(42/43):1833–1839. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4373698>.
- Stalin JV. What is a Nation? *Pakistan Forum*. 1972;2(12):4–4.
- Habib I. Nationalism in India: Past and Present. *Social Scientist*. 2017;45(3/4):3–8. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26380341>.
- Desai AR. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 1994;29(48):3002–3002.
- Huntington SP. The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*. 1993;72(3):22–49. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/20045621>.
- Huntington SP. The West Unique, Not Universal. *Foreign Affairs*. 1996;75(6):28–46. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/20047828>.
- Horwitz S. Fascism: Italian, German, and American. *The Independent Review*. 2009;13(3):441–487. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24562126>.
- Berman S. Populism Is Not Fascism: But It Could Be a Harbinger. *Foreign Affairs*. 2016;95(6):39–44. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43948380>.
- Köves M. Fascism in the Age of Global Capitalism. *Social Scientist*. 2004;32(9):36–71. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3518207>.
- Mirbagheri F. Narrowing the Gap or Camouflaging the Divide: An Analysis of Mohammad Khatami's 'Dialogue of Civilisations'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. 2007;34(3):305–316. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20455532>.
- Amuzegar J. Khatami's Legacy: Dashed Hopes. *The Middle East Journal*. 2006;60(1):57–74. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4330216>.
- Hussain N, Abass A. Dialogue Among Civilizations: An Alternative Paradigm of International Relations. *Strategic Studies*. 2001;21(3):105–131. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45242270>.
- Hirsch J. Nation-state, international regulation and the question of democracy. *Review of International Political Economy*. 1995;2(2):267–284. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4177146>.
- Selim MES. Assessing the Dialogues of Civilizations Between the West and Muslim Worlds. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 2009;31(1):49–68. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41858574>.
- Ali B. The Alliance of Civilizations: The Poverty of the Clash/Alliance Dichotomy? *Insight Turkey*. 2009;11(3):95–108. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331103>.
- Santagostino A. Alliance of Civilizations and Solidarity between Civilizations: A Lost Opportunity for the EU. *Insight Turkey*. 2006;8(4):71–81.
- Arnold O. Rogue President, Rogue Nation: Bush and U.S. National Security. *Diplomatic History*. 2005;29(3):433–435. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24915127>.
- Caprioli M, Trumbore PF. Rhetoric versus Reality: Rogue States in Interstate Conflict. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 2005;49(5):770–791. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30045152>.
- Dittgen H. World without Borders? Reflections on the Future of the Nation-State. *Government and Opposition*. 1999;34(2):161–179. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44482821>.
- Greig JM. The End of Geography?: Globalization, Communications, and Culture in the International System. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 2002;46(2):225–268. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3176173>.
- Hartley D. The 'McDonaldization' of Higher Education: food for thought? *Oxford Review of Education*. 1995;21(4):409–423. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1050719>.





Research Article

Inclusion Discourse Amidst Changing Notions of the ‘Idea of India’ Ambedkar’s Legacy and its Relevance Today

Alok Kumar Gupta^{1,*}

¹Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 25.06.2022

Accepted 12.08.2022

Published 19.09.2022

* Corresponding author.

Alok Kumar Gupta

akgalok@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/>

[10.53989/jcp.v1i1.2](https://doi.org/10.53989/jcp.v1i1.2)



ABSTRACT

Atrocities on Dalits have been a permanent phenomenon in Indian social and political context. Only the scale of atrocities varies at different times. Ambedkar worked for it both theoretically as well as practically on the ground. The notions of ‘Idea of India’ have been changing with changing regimes. Yet, none of those ideas could be translated meaningfully to be completely inclusive of all differences at the social level. This paper is an endeavour to enumerate the changing notion of those ideas and explore if they were inclusive at any time in the aftermath of Ambedkar? The paper then highlights the legacy of Ambedkar amidst the growing atrocities on Dalits. Author reiterates towards the end as to how Ambedkar is more relevant today than he may have been during his own days.

Keywords: Dalits; Ambedkar; India; Social Reforms

INTRODUCTION

Changing notions of the ‘Idea of India’ has necessitated increased attempt at making India increasingly inclusive and minimizing exclusion in Indian society. The ‘Idea of India’ has undergone considerable change yet at the core of each such ideas the existing political leadership has ensured policy and legal interventions to make India more and more inclusive and mitigate divisive forces that lead to exclusion. The ‘Idea of India’ has traversed from ‘Nehruvian Socialism’, to ‘India Shining’ to ‘New India’ under the present political dispensation. However, each of these ideas has been inclusive of policies for upliftment of not only the downtrodden of the society but all the sections of the society. The “Ideas of India” have been changing but not the social structure and social stratification. Caste continues to be the defining feature and social infrastructure of politics even

today. Rhetoric never matches reality. Reason being that the crime against the downtrodden, especially the dalits have been on the rise. This has led to the prominence of inclusion debate every now and then within the academics, policy makers, and the media.

The atrocities on Dalits at Una¹ (Gujarat), the institutional murder of Rohit Vemula, and ever growing crimes against Dalits along with the statements against reservations by RSS leaders Mohan Bhagwat and Vaidya, brought once again the issues of Inclusion, Dalit emancipation and cast discrimination on the fore as part of an on-going national debate since independence. Bhima Koregaon incident has quite often been on the boil owing to its politicization and claims and counterclaims. While a group of educated Dalits have started raising their voice against Hindutva worldview, claiming that in Hundutva scheme of things they have no place; on the other a group of Dalit scholars, political leaders



and ideologues have started claiming that a substantial change has been made possible with the rise of Hindutva brigade. Appropriation of Ambedkar's legacy by the present political dispensation is writ large on the horizons of Indian politics; sometimes in an explicit manner like the use of Bhim app etc. Opposition has taken the cudgels against the same, claiming it as misappropriation of Ambedkar's legacy for political vote-bank. Fact remains that these are mere symbolic in approach and a concrete step towards mitigation of atrocities on Dalit are still an unfinished task, which requires to be taken to its logical conclusion. Unfortunately, Dalits continue to be a victim of traditional caste-community and vote-bank politics of political parties of all shades. Once again Dalits are at the cross-road of 'Ambedkar's legacy'; appropriation and misappropriation of Ambedkar's legacy; and so-called onslaught of Hindutva. There could be no denying the fact that the atrocities on Dalits has been on the rise.

This rise is quite heartening in view of the kind of social, political, economic and cultural modernization that post-independence India has experienced. The 'Idea of India' may have undergone changes from Nehruvian socialism to Modi's 'New India' yet each successive governments have vowed both in their manifesto as well as through their policy interventions to mitigate the caste related discrimination and establish an egalitarian society. However, there seems to be a huge gap between the promise and the action initiated towards the task of establishing an inclusive India. The inclusion debate thus need to be deciphered, analysed and understood in context with changing notions of 'Idea of India' with changing political dispensations in India. This paper is an attempt to discuss the different stages of the debate and the way it has guided or misguided the movement for Dalit's emancipation. The paper would also make an endeavour to highlight as to where what has gone wrong and what needs to be done?

The Dalit revolution that was initiated by Ambedkar and taken forward by his followers seems to be searching for a new leadership with a renewed agenda of their social emancipation in real sense of the term. The erstwhile post-Ambedkar Dalit leaders have become a victim of power approach to politics and seem to have betrayed the cause of Dalit's emancipation and annihilation of caste-discrimination in Indian society. Today, Dalit's revolution is rudderless and awaiting the transformation of Ambedkar's teachings into living realities. This backdrop has led to Dalit's assertions with consequent suppression by the upper caste in different parts of country. This paper is also an endeavour to relook into Ambedkar's legacy and its relevance in the backdrop of recent Dalit backlash.

Social Reforms—Pre-independence to post-independence

Structural changes of society have been one of the most important agenda since pre-independence days in India. Indian society has produced a host of social reformers since the days of B. R. Ambedkar or even before him, who devoted their life and resources for reforms like abolition of sati, child marriage, female infanticide, imparting education to women, emphasis on widow remarriage, use of swadeshi, and removing of untouchability etc. Some of these social anomalies or age-old traditional practices stands abolished because of lack of any logic behind the same; and some are gradually on the verge of extinction owing to social, political and economic modernizations of our polity. Atrocities on Dalits (downtrodden castes) have been an equally rampant anomaly in Indian society. Reformers and governments since pre-independence days have been endeavouring to mitigate it. Policy interventions and legal protections have been made both by Central and State governments in the aftermath of independence. Academicians have analysed the forces of exclusion and subsequently emphasised for making the Indian society and polity increasingly inclusive. However, the different parts of country have been a witness to atrocities on Dalits and caste-based discrimination in spite of tremendous efforts at its mitigation. Therefore, frequent eruptions of the problem of atrocities on Dalits have been raising many pertinent questions about the education system, policy interventions, and implementation of legal provisions to this effect enlivening the 'inclusion debate' every now and then. It makes it imperative to explore the teaching and preaching of our leaders like Ambedkar, Gandhi, Phule, Jagjeevan Ram, and Kanshi Ram to name but a few. A number of cases of such atrocities have been observed even under the present political dispensation at the centre, especially when its leaders are all out to appropriate the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar. Therefore, as stated above author makes an endeavour to re-look at the role of Ambedkar towards upliftment of Dalits in India and what has gone wrong with it?

Increasing Incidence of Crimes against Dalits

Despite the passage of the Anti-Untouchability Act of 1955 and the major Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989, crimes against Dalits are still a major social problem, and Caste-based discrimination is widespread in different parts of the country. According to 2011 census, the total population of Dalits or the Scheduled Castes (SCs) is 16.6% of total population of India and that of Scheduled Tribes (STs) is 8.6%. Together it comprises about 25 percent of the total population of India. Indian government has constituted many laws and policies to help the Dalit population; yet atrocities and injustices are quite common all over the



country. India has been experiencing and increasingly growing wary of Dalit backlash. The age-old social issue keeps coming again and again on the fore.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for Crimes in the country in 2015 reveals that the year 2015 saw a staggering 45,003 cases of crimes against individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes, which works out to a crime rate of 22.3 per 100,000 persons. Crimes against individuals belonging to Scheduled Tribes were 10,914, which amounts to 10.5 per 100,000.² According to the same source Rajasthan saw the highest rate of Crime against SCs which was 57.3, followed by Andhra Pradesh 52.3, Bihar 38.9 and Madhya Pradesh 36.9 per 100,000. There has been anomaly and sudden increase in crimes against people belonging to SCs in Gujarat and Chhattisgarh. Gujarat and Chhattisgarh have reported the highest crime rate of 163.30% (6,655 cases) and 91.90% (3,008 cases) respectively against members of SC community during the last year.³ According to yet another source, though couple of years old; every day, four Dalit and adivasi women are raped while eleven Dalits and adivasis are beaten up in the country. Further, every week, 13 Dalits and adivasis are murdered, five Dalits and adivasi homes are set on fire and six Dalits and adivasis are kidnapped.⁴ By 2020 the fact states that “A schedule caste person faced crime every 10 minutes in India, cumulating to a total of 50,291 cases registered in 2020, which is an increase of 9.4% from the pervious year”, as per NCRB report.⁵ Thus, one may explore the rising cases of atrocities against Dalits in yearly reports of NCRB.

Some Recent Instances of Atrocities

Here are some instances of atrocities on Dalits in the recent past which has brought the issue of Dalit backlash on the fore, though it is not an exhaustive list; rather an indicative list. A Hindu caste person hacked to death a Dalit woman after her brother married and eloped with his daughter, in Tirunelveli, on March 14, 2016. A 30-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly raped and brutally murdered in Thiruvananthapuram on May 2, 2016. Another 22-year-old Dalit boy was killed in Tirupur (Tamil Nadu) allegedly for marrying a woman from the politically and socially dominant Thevar community, Kausalya on March 13, 2016. Around 100 children left a school in Kolar in Karnataka, refusing to eat the food dished out by a Dalit cook on March 13, 2015. Dalit house in Haryana's Ballabgarh was set afire, 2 kids burnt to death on October 21, 2015. A 90-year-old Dalit man died after he was brutally attacked with an axe and set on fire for trying to enter a temple at Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh on October 5, 2015. A Dalit student was thrashed by his teacher in Jodhpur for touching the mid-day meal plates on October 4, 2015. 17-year-old Dalit girl in Rajasthan's Bikaner district was raped and murdered by her PT teacher in college in March 2015.⁶ In August 2015, a Jat Khap panchayat in Haryana ordered the rape of two Dalit sisters because their brother had love

affair with a Jat girl.⁷ These are some isolated instances that took place in 2015-16. The important part of the saga is that such instances of atrocities on Dalits are happening almost every year. In June 2012, Mohan Paswan, a Dalit resident in the Parhuti village, Bihar, was lynched when he disobeyed a local thug by using a hand pump during the heat wave. Even today in Dholaria Shashan village in Rajasthan, Dalit people are scrutinised before entering the village. They are not allowed to wear shoes and headgear while passing any upper-caste area.⁸ Again these may be only indicative list of instances.

Newspapers and magazines often carry news of discrimination against Dalits in different parts of the country. Even today Dalit children are made to sit separately for the mid-day meal in many schools across India. Also in some places students belonging to Hindu caste refuse to eat the food cooked by the 'lower caste' people. In some districts of Madhya Pradesh, Dalit children are reportedly served food from a distance. Such caste biases in school are not only depriving children of education but also filling their minds with pessimism about society at a very tender age.⁹ Data from the House listing and Housing Census 2011 highlight the continued injustice done to Dalits through the demeaning practice of manual scavenging. These workers collect human excreta with their brooms and tinsplate and carry it for disposal. This work division continues based upon the traditional Hindu social order, which assigns to the Dalits the dirty, menial and baser jobs. A depressing fact as revealed in the 2011 census data on households is that an estimated 8 lakh people are traditionally engaged in manual removal of night soil—a great embarrassment to the State governments that are still in denial mode.¹⁰ Crimes are being committed against Dalits almost in every nook and corner of the country.

Steps Taken by Government

The Government of India uses a system of reservations, similar to affirmative action programs in the United States, an endeavour to ameliorate the social and economic disparities resulting from the caste system. This system of reservation facilitates government-mandated numerical quotas in government employment and education programs. There are no reservation for Dalits in military and private sector. According to one school of thought on reservation, the system has only been partially successful in empowering Dalits, because they often discriminate against each other. As for example, in North India, a subgroup of Dalits known as the Jatevs has become very successful in the leather industry. This group of Dalits would never help other Dalit groups in the area, such as Bhangi, because they consider them lower. Therefore, due to many strata within each caste, the reservation system has created a 'creamy layer' of successful people within the Dalit community. Such groups within the Dalits, have focused more on solidifying their own positions



rather than helping to empower other Dalits.

According, to another school of thought existing legislations have to a large degree been successful in protecting Dalit rights. However, they further reiterate that India still has tremendous work to do to end discrimination. They advocate that this could be done through policy interventions towards increasing Dalit access to primary education. This is important because a vast majority of Dalits are denied upward socio-economic mobility due to lack of access to education, land, and capital. This school opines that the true basis of discrimination is economic in nature rather than caste-based, as the haves discriminate against the have-nots and use the caste system to perpetuate differences between economic groups.

Third school of thought advocates that globalization and economic liberalization have actually hurt Dalit prospects for progress and social mobility. This is because liberalization has the tendency to shift more of the economy from the public to the private sector, where hiring managers are almost exclusively from high castes and constantly discriminate against Dalits, denying them the opportunities guaranteed by reservations. Rapidly expanding private sector is under no compulsion to provide jobs to Dalits, while the public sector will have fewer jobs to offer. Such basis of caste-based discrimination is going to continue for next 50 to 100 years in India.

When the reports of incidents that certain persons or groups have taken law into their own hands in the name of protecting cows and have committed crimes appears, the Government of India and the relevant ministries were awoken. Union Home ministry issued an advisory in August 2016, asking states to have zero tolerance for self-proclaimed 'cow protection' vigilante groups. The advisory addressed a deep-rooted social prejudice that Dalits, above all, have routinely and historically been subjected to, when it urged states to protect subaltern groups and minorities from unscrupulous 'gau-rakshaks' and their ringmasters who use an emotive issue to achieve their criminal and political ends.¹¹

The present government gave tickets to many Dalit communities like Khatiks and Dhobis, for whom present Prime Minister Narendra Modi became a symbol of aspiration. According to newspaper reports the 'Hindukaran' of Dalits is proceeding at a rapid pace in rural areas. In the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013 Dalits participated in the attacks on Muslims, and in 2014 BJP got 24% of Dalit vote while BSP got 14%. A big chunk of the BSP vote shifted to BJP in 2014. Dalits are thus torn between the desire to declare their unique identity or to be accepted into the temples of Hinduism from where they were barred for centuries.¹² Same has been the story of Dalit political leaders as they get torn between seizing immediate power for office and the long term strategy and commitment to Dalit upliftment. A section of the Dalit class has tasted power and is unwilling

to accept any secondary status. They are largely middle class professionals belonging to Dalit community and have developed an inordinate sense of pride in their icons like Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram, Mayawati to name but a few. The young among Dalits want social justice and a modern equal opportunity. They are now craving for economic opportunities and modern education. Therefore, offer of mere sanscritization will not help social emancipation of Dalits.

Legacy of Ambedkar

On January 31, 1920, Bhimrao Ambedkar started a fortnightly newspaper, the Mooknayak (Leader of the Dumb), with the help of Shahu Mahraj of Kolhapur, a sympathiser of the cause for the upliftment of the depressed classes. The Maharaja also convened many meetings and conferences of the 'untouchables' which was addressed by Ambedkar. In July 1924, Ambedkar founded the 'Bahishkrut Hitkaraini Sabha', to fight the evil of untouchability. The Sabha started free school for the young and the old and ran reading rooms and libraries. Ambedkar took the grievances of the untouchables to court, seeking justice and equality. Soon he became a father figure to the poor and downtrodden and was respectfully called Babasaheb.¹³ Manusmriti, the age-old code of the Hindus that gave rise to the caste system, was ceremoniously burnt under the leadership of Ambedkar and he demanded in its place a new smriti, a law code that is devoid of all social stratification. Ambedkar was sceptical of the Congress's commitment to safeguard the rights of the depressed classes and he pressed for a separate electorate for the depressed classes. He also supported the British Simon Commission that was to look into setting up responsible Government in India in 1929, when Congress was against it. When a separate electorate (communal award) was announced for the depressed classes, Gandhiji went on a 'fast unto death' against this decision. Ambedkar too went for a counter fast when he was being pressurised to succumb to the psychological pressure of Gandhiji and others. Consequently, on September 24, 1932 Poona Pact was signed and the demand for separate electorate was replaced with special concessions like 'reserved seats' in the regional legislative assemblies and the Central Council of States, a practice that is continuing even today in a modified form. Poona Pact was a compromise which was regretted later by Ambedkar. Ambedkar also worked at local levels to eliminate many of the practices which were derogatory and exploitative of the Dalits like abolition of khoti system of land tenure in the Konkan region; the Mahar watan system of working for the government as slaves; etc.

Ambedkar also encouraged Dalits to shun Hinduism and adopt a religion that would treat them with equality. He though postponed it on the request of Gandhiji for 15 years. He himself, however, embraced Buddhism a little before his death in 1956. These are some of the action-oriented



interventions of Ambedkar towards emancipation of Dalits from the shackles of upper caste and the system as a whole. What is important is the legacy that he bestowed through his actions and protests. One thing that is sensed in Ambedkar's endeavour is that he understood quite well the dynamics of atrocities on downtrodden classes and exploitation of Dalits. He rightly pointed out that most social anomalies are rooted into the caste system of our society. Therefore, until the caste system is done away with, social reforms would not be successful. He understood well the 3,000 years of social tyranny and tried to look into its eye. It is in this context that Ambedkar becomes more relevant today than any other time, because of the fact that with growing education and social, political and economic modernization of Indian polity, the caste-system has got increasingly entrenched, and most distributions of resources and rewards of the state are organized in accordance with the hierarchical dominance of caste within the system. Therefore, Ambedkar was right when he visualised that atrocities and exploitation of Dalits could be mitigated only when caste-system is dissolved and mitigated.

Ambedkar and the Contemporary Situation

During the days of Ambedkar there was very small Dalit middle class and the Dalits were hardly present as a potential force. Whereas in the present society the middle class is largest overall as well as among Dalits the growth of middle class has been considerable. The socioeconomic conditions of Dalits have shown little success, and they continue to face severe economic and social discrimination.

Secondly, during the days of Ambedkar, the Dalit movement did not have an intellectual base or the backing of a strong organic intellectual class that could wage a successful movement by articulating its demands to be placed upon the system. There were just a few of them who have become an icon for the Dalits today. Owing to subsequent policy interventions and legal protection Dalit community has its own organic intellectuals from both within its own community as well as from other communities in contemporary India. Many of them have become a part of the system and have been able to occupy the highest offices. However, the voice of Dalits seems to have been on the wane and increasingly meek, with growing representation of their community within the system.

Thirdly, Ambedkar questioned and wanted dismantled the Indian regimented village system for which he was vehemently criticised. He projected the real image of the village to the Constituent Assembly when he said, "It is the very negation of republic. If it is a republic, it is a republic of touchable, by the touchable and for the touchable."¹⁴ Today, the Indian villages have experienced a face-lift in the wake of programs like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Jawahar Rojgaar Yojna, Swarn Jayanti Swarojgaar

Gram Yojna, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna, Jan Dhan Yojana, Ayushman Bharat are to name but a few. However, the caste system has got entrenched in villages too and the practices that existed are being continued substantially. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the village as 'tiny republics' of India are an empire of the Hindus over the untouchables; and ironically it seems it is continuing the same even today. Reservations in the different offices of PRIs have constitutionally mandated, yet the discrimination continues.

Fourthly, during the days of Ambedkar Parliamentary Democracy was not adequately consolidated in India and was in its infancy. It was taking shape. Over the years, constitutional morality has been on the wane as adult suffrage and frequent elections are be all and end all of democracy in India. Parliamentary democracy ended in a disaster in Italy, Germany and Russia in the twentieth century because it could not create a government of the people or by the people; it was producing government of the hereditary ruling class. Today, in India though governing class is losing power owing to the reach of subaltern classes and the Dalits in the corridors of powers; yet the complete emancipation of Dalits has not been made possible. Rather the democracy stands degenerated today with over-doses of caste as infrastructure of political process.

Fifthly, during the days of Ambedkar equality, social, economic and political as enshrined in the Preamble of Indian Constitution was a motto and dream of political leaders. Today, it is mere slogan and is used as rhetoric by the Indian political leadership across all political parties. It is used as mere rhetoric, to raise sound and fury signifying nothing. Ambedkar was conscious enough of the fact that in an unequal society, equality of opportunity could lead to further production of inequality because those groups which were already ahead in the social ladder would always have an advantage. This is what has largely happened in India. He therefore, rightly enshrined in the constitution not only 'equality of opportunity' but also 'equality of condition meaning reservations for the Dalits'.

Sixthly, Ambedkar engineered the Constitution and endeavoured to change the composition of the institutions of power with representation of marginalised sections. However, the fact remains that lot is yet to be done to achieve the dreams of Ambedkar as there is still a wide gap, as marginalized sections lag far behind despite their modest mobility, even to the highest offices of the country. Under such circumstances a divided society in terms of caste, religion and class can hardly be a strong nation and would always be struggling in its task of nation-building.

Seventhly, Ambedkar had a strong following when he was finding ways and means to emancipate the Dalits, and continues to have strong ideological followers even today; yet Dalits had to wage a battle to get Ambedkar's writings published in some parts of the country in the contemporary



India. Today, it seems there is Dalit backlash but it does not have an effective leadership of the stature of Ambedkar or even Kanshi Ram. The erstwhile leaders of Dalits have proved to be collaborator in the corridors of political power. Those who championed the cause of social engineering soon degenerated into engineers of political power and started hobnobbing with their rivals.

Eighthly, Ambedkar resigned as Law Minister as a mark of protest when the government failed to pass the Hindu Code Bill ensuring property rights, among other things, for women. Today, after seventy years India is still struggling to give its women their due place in social, political and economic space. Women Reservation Bill continues to be in doldrums. Crimes against women are on the rise in spite of number of stringent legislations. Therefore, the cause and plight of Dalit women continues to be a victim of the same political process even today.

Indian polity has undergone a sea change since the days of Ambedkar in almost all walks of its life. It has made considerable progress as well including in the field of science and technology. It has been able to build a strong international and regional personality of its own through its contributions in global concerns. However, with progress and prosperity India is still failing in its task of nation-building because of ever-deepening social cleavages along caste, religion and region. It is on this precisely that India need to learn from the understanding and advocacy of its forefathers and reformers of yester years.

Ambedkar's Relevance in Contemporary India

Given the social divisions and rampant caste-based discriminations within Indian society, one needs to relook at the advocacy and preaching of Ambedkar. Mere raising the statue of Ambedkar on highest pedestals and appropriation of his legacy by any political combination in Indian context would be not enough and would amount to betrayal with the cause for which he struggled. Therefore, below-mentioned are some such articulations and understanding of Ambedkar that requires due attention and imbibing to contain Dalit backlash in the country and contain the atrocities and exploitation of Dalits in different parts of contemporary India.

First, education is the most positive instrument of change. It has the potentials to engineer human nature. Discrimination against Dalits is a mental malady and it requires a mental medicine. Therefore, education is the mental medicine that can provide accurate and long-lasting cure to this mental malady. Probably, that is why, Ambedkar throughout his life advised Dalits to get educated before agitating for their rights. Hence, the vision of Ambedkar is strongly relevant today. Education though has been made a fundamental right; but its implementation is poor. Lesser said about the implementation of Article 21(A) of the Constitution is better in today's context. Therefore, it is of

utmost importance that both Dalits and upper castes must be provided with education. Education is relevant for Dalits so that they can understand their rights and could subsequently demand and struggle for the same once they stand genuinely educated, not merely literate. It is relevant for upper caste or to put it more precisely for the non-Dalits to make them aware about the fact of being a human being and equality among them, so that they refrain from discriminating against Dalits. Most experts believe the key to ending discrimination is a comprehensive education campaign starting at the primary level to teach acceptance of Dalits, a topic which is completely absent from India's public school system.

Second, Ambedkar said, in India, a man is not a scavenger because of his work. He is a scavenger because of his birth irrespective of the question whether he does scavenging or not.¹⁵ The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act in 1993 has provision of punishment, including fine, for employing scavengers or constructing dry toilets. However, manual scavengers are continued to be employed to this day by municipalities, the Railways and defence establishments. Therefore, such caste-based division of works requires to be addressed. Present government adopted programs like "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" and "Har Ghar Sauchalaya" in an aggressive manner. Its implementation seems to be a success story according to government sources. In Indian context such success reports are refuted once the ruling party is out of power. Therefore, one needs to be really cautious to believe such reports. The fact remains that such aggressive policy and its whole-hearted implementation is the need of the hour and it must be taken to its logical conclusion. All such works requires to be identified where Dalits are forced to work for because of their caste identity. Technologically advanced India must adopt mechanisation of its sanitation and employ individuals in accordance with their skill and qualification even for the menial jobs rather than on the basis of caste.

Thirdly, technology can play a considerable role. There are certain works related to sanitation and processing process in industries of all sorts. Such works are often expected to be executed by people belonging to Dalit community. Today, there are tremendous developments in the field of technology. Developed countries are handling such works through technological interventions. India too could adopt such technology in those work-areas which are Dalit-oriented with a pragmatic approach. Slowly and gradually the increasing use of technology and mechanization will emancipate Dalits and attract people from other caste blurring the societal division in accordance with job-role.

CONCLUSION

Ambedkar is more relevant today than he may have been during his own time. Political parties are competing to appropriate and misappropriate his legacy. This has led to adoption of his ideas only symbolically and theoretically to



achieve political mileage, but not in practice. This becomes evident from the fact that Ambedkar is being dishonoured and insulted in the very constituency of Prime Minister of India, i.e. Varanasi. According to newspaper reports, PM adopted a village Jayapur in Varanasi district where he erected a giant statue of Ambedkar in the Harijan quarter. Yet the paint on the statue is peeling badly, the solar lamp that illuminates it, is out of battery. This reveals the hollowness of the appropriation of iconic personality of Ambedkar by political leaders and parties. This establishes the commitment, faith and trust of leaders in the ideas and advocacy of such icons; and what they mean when they try to appropriate their legacy. Their concern is only the Dalit vote bank and not the cumbersome task of Dalit empowerment and upliftment.

There is no doubt that a small segment of Dalit population has been able to enter into the elite club of the country at different levels. Jeans clad Dalit millennial are rightly pointing out that their forefathers had brooms in their hand, but they have a smart phone or a laptop. This shows that there is change within a significant number of Dalits and their families, which now constitutes elites within the Dalit community and they need to take the cudgels of Dalit emancipation. They need to act as an organic intellectual in Gramscian sense to articulate the need, aspiration and demands of their brethren and take it to its logical conclusion. They must understand, they have achieved, what they are today, owing to the struggle waged by Ambedkar, at one point of time; now is the time they must work for the fulfilment of the dream of Ambedkar.

What India needs today is the annihilation of the caste system and not social reforms or educating people about humanity or human rights. Ambedkar was quite clear in his conviction that the caste institutions affected Dalits differently; hence he wanted to end the caste system itself. It is in accordance with this conviction that Ambedkar becomes more relevant today than he was during his days. The reason being that during the past seventy years of India's independence, the caste system has got further entrenched and has developed as social infrastructure of politics as Rajni Kothari advocated in his magnum opus *Caste in India*. The standard suggestions like questioning the sanctity of Hindu sacred texts, institutionalizing inter-caste marriages and inter-dining, and dismantling the hereditary priesthood; were existing then and are being advocated even today. However, such suggestions have not delivered substantially as it has addressed the problem to an extent yet a lot more requires to be done even today. Ambedkar saw that democracy would ensure equality, liberty, fraternity, prosperity and happiness to common man. Therefore, he emphasized that social and economic democracies are *sine quo non* for a successful political democracy. Therefore, India requires coming out of the clutches of crony capitalism else the economic democracy would continue to be a dream

with consequent social consequences.

India today is strongly in the grip of populist nationalism. This is because, blurring the line between blatant acts of criminality, deep-rooted social prejudice and the emotive issue of cow among Hindus is the modus operandi of parties which sense a huge political opportunity in fanning up the flames. Exploiting Dalit anger is of course a legitimate political ploy but it does little to address the historical, traditional and cultural discrimination that Dalits have faced and are facing today. Mere political clarity, rhetoric, enactment, populist policies or administrative reforms cannot shape a country, given the kind of diversity that Indian society is ridden with. Ambedkar and his vision continue to be relevant even today. He and his works have emerged as an important symbol of Dalit movement, and thus difficult in the recent times. Outstanding tribute to Ambedkar could be not only to continue his efforts of empowering the Scheduled Castes and helping them overcome the vicious cycle of caste and cultural barrier, but also to take the same to its logical conclusion of mitigating caste as a factor in Indian society and polity.

REFERENCES

1. India Government under attack for atrocities against Dalits. . Available from: www.idsn.org/indian-government-attack-atrocities-dalits/.
2. National Crimes Record Bureau Data, 2015: Slight Dip in Rape, Crime Against Women. 1 September 2016. Available from: www.indianexpress.com.
3. Cases of Atrocities on Dalits in the Recent Past. July 21, 2016. Available from: www.news18.com.
4. These Statistics came up during a national meeting convened by the Centre for Dalit Rights (CDR), a Jaipur-based think-tank along with the National Coalition for strengthening the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. See Mahim Pratap Singh, "Untouched by Justice", January 25, 2013. Available from: www.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news.
5. Jyoti D. Crimes against Dalits, tribals increased in Covid pandemic year: NCRB. September 16, 2021. Available from: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/crimes-against-dalits-tribals-increased-in-covid-pandemic-year-ncrb-101631731260293.html>.
6. Ibid., No.3. .
7. Ambedkar's fight to abolish untouchability in India: Why we should know more about it. April 14, 2016. Available from: www.indiatoday.in.
8. Ibid., No.6. .
9. Jain AL. Let's help realise the vision of Ambedkar for Dalits. April 14, 2013.
10. Ambedkar's fight to abolish untouchability in India: Why we should know more about it. April 14, 2016. Uttar Pradesh continues to have the dubious distinction of leading the list with approximately 3.2 lakh people still involved in manually removing human waste. Available from: www.indiatoday.in.
11. Talukdar S. Atrocities on Dalits must be tackled through inclusiveness and enforcement of law, not vote bank politics. August 10, 2016. Available from: www.firstpost.com.
12. Ghose S. UP's Dalits: Hindutva or Ambedkar?. March 01, 2017.
13. Mishra RK. Role of Ambedkar in Upliftment of Dalits in India. . Available from: <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/role-of-ambedkar-in-upliftment-of-dalits-in-india/40281>.
14. As quoted in R.K. Mishra, Ibid., No.13.. .
15. As quoted in Ibid., No.9.. .





Journal of Contemporary Politics

Research Article

Indian Politics @ 75: Issues and Challenges

Rumki Basu^{1,*}

¹Head, Centre for Public Policy and Governance, Institute of Social Science, New Delhi, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 11.07.2022

Accepted 09.08.2022

Published 19.09.2022

* Corresponding author.

Rumki Basu

mailtorumkibas@gmail.com

[https://doi.org/](https://doi.org/10.53989/jcp.v1i1.1)

10.53989/jcp.v1i1.1



ABSTRACT

The India story at 75 is an extraordinarily consequential and researchable one. The single biggest challenge for anyone analyzing Indian politics is that the subject seems like a “Project in Progress”, conveying a sense of a country perennially in a state of transformation. For the study of Indian politics is, in many ways, the study of India’s democracy, understood in the most comprehensive sense. The constitutional foundation and the institutional framework on which India’s politics rests, is to my mind also the bases of democratic politics in India. Indian democracy today remains the unwritten evolving subtext of any discussion on Indian politics. Our transformation from a “soft” state to a “hard” state should make us more confident, compassionate inclusive and humane- qualities that the world’s largest democracy can well afford to stand for and stand by, because these are the qualities that have sustained our democracy in 75 years.

Keywords: India; Politics; Democracy; Institutions; Transformation

INTRODUCTION

The single biggest challenge for anyone analyzing Indian politics is that the subject seems like a “Project in Progress”, conveying a sense of a country perennially in a state of “Transition to Transformation”. While a broad commitment to the institutions of democracy is the lowest common denominator, almost everything else seems up for deeper contestation in scholarly discourses. Let me simply recapitulate some of the major dimensions of these transitions or transformations and how we might think about them. I will lay out, without being exhaustive, some threads that students of Indian politics will have to weave together in the years to come to interpret Indian politics within an academic framework of enquiry.

I sincerely believe that much of the recent popular interest in India’s political institutions and processes is fundamentally an interest in its democracy and it is for

the world to know that we are the world’s largest. For the study of Indian politics is, in many ways, the study of India’s democracy, understood in the most comprehensive sense. The constitutional foundation and the institutional framework on which the architecture of India’s politics rests, is to my mind also the bases of democratic politics in India. The idea of democracy infuses almost everything that is pivotal to the Indian political experience, from its existing institutions and political processes to public policies and ideological contestations. Indian democracy even today remains the unwritten evolving subtext of any discussion on Indian politics, according to Neerja Jayal and Pratap Bhanu Mehta.

In discussions of democracy and authoritarianism, India has in many ways been something of a museum exhibit. It still lacks the prerequisites of most theories of democracy that look at structural variables – such as class structure, extent of ethnic diversity, level of income, and education-to



predict the prospects of a country instituting and remaining a democracy. Even as the longevity and deepening of democracy in India has been remarked upon and admired, it has remained a wonder. The default explanation has been that it is a one-of-a-kind phenomenon, a case of Indian exceptionalism. But its existence gives rise to a whole host of other questions. Why, despite being a democracy, is India's capacity to deliver material well-being to a large number of its citizens often in doubt? Why is its increasingly more representative system not responsive enough to different sections of the population through its public service delivery system? What is the capacity of this democracy to create a sense of national identity without conflicts? What is its capacity to manage social tensions arising out of the process of development? Even as these remain deeply troubling questions, a slide into an outright authoritarian system of governance is not high on the list of possibilities about India, according to even India's worst critics. India does well on most other measures of success that are counted in a procedural democracy: voter turnouts, turnover of incumbents, the empowering of new groups, the maintaining of a core set of liberal freedoms, civilian control over armed forces, and political contestation. Democracy in India is as much of an established fact as its constitutional continuity a matter of amazement to Political Scientists.

How does one think about the Indian democratic experience? Rather than looking for a single theory validating its sustenance, the focus should be to examine the myriad mechanisms by which this democracy has been sustained. These narratives of Indian democracy, rather than simplistically emphasizing one or two variables (a propitious class structure, or cultural norms, for instance) indicate the extent to which a whole host of other factors, from the colonial legacy to the character of India's inherited institutions, from the beliefs of its leaders to the character of social divisions can interact with each other to sustain democratic institutions. These factors are now noteworthy of recognition in scholarly studies.

We should be able to navigate two different perspectives on politics. On the one hand, Indian politics is clearly shaped by the long-term structural features of our society. Social hierarchies, economic potential, and historical legacies influence the nature and character of a political society. These long-range influences impact democracy. For instance, there is very little doubt that deep-seated structures of social and economic inequality have had a profound influence on the way in which Indian democracy has functioned. Indeed, their persistence has been a constant reminder of the fact that democracy does not necessarily lead to economic levelling in society. But there is also little doubt that these hierarchies have been modified and reconfigured on the ground in such a way that scholars have been forced to rethink democratic theories and recontextualize Indian democracy, time & again.

At independence, the project of building a national civic identity, transcending the particularistic identities of caste, tribe, language, religion, and region, was recognized as the most important challenge facing the new nation. The social cleavages and identities of Indian society proved to be resilient in unexpected ways and came to be articulated and reproduced through the very language and processes of democratic politics that were intended to render them redundant. In the constitutional moment of the Indian nation, Jawaharlal Nehru refused to give nationalism a primarily majoritarian definition, giving it a developmental content instead. The markers of cultural identity came to be treated as societal non reversible, therefore non changeable. This project of constructing a nation with an "Idea of India" in the popular imagination subsequently came to be attacked and challenged by, among others, regionalist and secessionist movements, majoritarian politics and the assertions of minorities alleging exclusion and unfair absorption in an assimilative conception of Indian identity.

The contestations over secularism, representation, and social justice have been expressed not only in mainstream party politics, but also through a range of civil society assertions on these and many other issues including development. Some important research questions have surfaced majorly in the public domain: what is the impact of new social movements and of articulated concerns of new pressure groups in recent years? The big question to my mind, continues to be whether and to what extent democracy can be a force for moderating the deep-rooted inequalities existent in our society.

While there has been an enormous expansion, even explosion, in the availability of data, (including online) we should alert researchers to issues of quality and reliability in all types of data-from crime to development spending besides checking on their reliability. Democracy in India is not immune to these processes. We too are deeply embedded in this digital world, and therefore, our democracy is equally vulnerable to manipulation and undermining. In post-election analyses there is speculation that similar strategies of targeting and discourse manipulation are being used in elections today. In addition to the use of these technologies by political players in India, we must also consider the possibility of global players using artificial intelligence and big data tools to interfere with our democracy. It is time to accept that the digital world is today more powerful in determining democratic outcomes than world of print media within which our thinking about democracy is still largely embedded in India.

Most case studies on Indian politics, illustrate the three most clearly identifiable features of Indian democracy, its "resilience", its "fragility" and its working where it "muddles through". Most of the critical studies talk about the deficiencies of Indian democracy, understandably because there is a culture of recurring disillusionment that pervade



the review of its working, a frustration that comes from personal experiences of dealing with the democratic state, from media reports of self-serving political elites, and from the accounts of the turbulent struggles of vulnerable and marginal groups to get economic justice. It also shows the high expectation from democracy that exists not just among scholars but among ordinary people as well.

In the last seven decades, according to Peter Dsouza there have been four distinct sub discourses that have grown within the broader political discourse of Independent India. The first is that of state formation, of building the legal and ethical codes—such as “conflict of interest” issues—required for running a modern state. The second is the discourse of a civic nation, by crafting a national imaginary that Jawaharlal Nehru imagined when he described India as a “palimpsest”, to one today when the nation is seen as primarily the nation of its “majority”. The plural idea of the nation has been challenged by the majoritarian idea of the nation. Here a culturalist nationalist discourse has supplanted a civic nationalist discourse and the debate is an ongoing one. The third sub-discourse is mainly about “development” which contains within it the aspiration for economic growth, for the building up of scientific and technological capability and infrastructure, for self-sufficiency, self-reliance, redistribution of wealth, welfare protection, increasing employment opportunities in the modern economy, and overall, for livelihood security. Here again, the discourse on development in India has changed from a state-centric development to a market-driven one, from redistribution to growth, from autarkic development to linking the Indian economy with the global economy. The fourth sub-discourse is largely about the expansion and deepening of democracy. There is substantial literature on each discourse and, hence, all we wish to note here is:

- the concurring presence in Indian politics of the four sub-discourses and
- the relation between them which is dynamic and changing.

The Narendra Modi years — as the post 2014 period of Indian history, has redefined the nature of politics in India in three different respects. It has changed the nature of political and electoral competition and altered the way political power is exercised. It has transformed political and social realities on the ground. Each of these elements has, together, altered the nature of the Indian State.

The most revealing statistic that explains the story of the post-2014 years is the number of voters who have reposed their faith in the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). In 2009, 78 million voters backed the party. In 2014, in an election that was fought solely in Modi’s name in the backdrop of anger against the United Progressive alliance and hopes of a better future, over 171 million voters supported the BJP. And in 2019, after five years in office, in an election that was once

again a referendum on the Modi years, at least 220 million voters supported the BJP.

A lasting legacy of the eight years of Modi government has been in expanding the base of the (BJP) beyond its traditional pockets of influence among city dwellers, business communities, and “upper castes”. It is this breadth of support that has made the party the central pole of Indian politics. However, and here is the irony, no single factor, definitely not ideology, has contributed more to the party’s dominance in the last 5 years than the government’s singular focus on welfare delivery. It’s a phenomenon that unfolded almost in a surreptitious mode at first – assessments of the link between welfare and electoral politics only started getting explored after the 2019 general elections – but has come to supplement grassroots political mobilization to the extent that it has now spawned a culture of government benefits with strong political branding.

To be sure, welfare schemes or linking politics to government benefits is neither unique to the National Democratic Alliance nor a new phenomenon. States such as Tamil Nadu and Odisha have an impressive and longstanding record of delivering benefits to their citizens – the former even using the bouquet of services to augment its “Dravidian model” of governance. Indira Gandhi had created the Garibi Hatao slogan to vanquish the old guard of the Congress and establish herself in national politics. But for the first time in a generation, and for the first time on a national scale, the efficiency of welfare delivery is being used by a party to aggressively recruit new constituencies (Dalit and backward classes), co-opt political messages (for the empowerment of lower castes), and forestall criticism of some of its administrative failures (e.g., the handling of the second wave of the pandemic).

The model of this “new welfarism” – as economist Arvind Subramanian calls it – discarded what it saw as old models of “entitlement politics”, instead of recasting citizens into beneficiaries or “labharthis” who have a strong connect with the personal brand of the prime minister. Welfare delivery is a pivot around which the Narendra Modi administration revolves today. It has helped the government weather farm anger (PM Kisan Samman Nidhi), overcome anti-incumbency in some states (Ujjwala and health care) and even re-establish its standing during the Covid crisis (the free ration scheme). It has helped the party’s attempts at expanding its base by reaching out to the poor, creating a new constituency of supporters that are less tied to community and caste allegiances than before, and crafting a new language of political mobilization that opponents have found difficult to encounter by a counter narrative.

However, challenges will remain in Indian politics in the future. With the inevitable rise in aspirations, relative inequalities of a society mobilizing towards prosperity and some opposition leaders now retooling the welfare message for local needs, BJP has its future mandate ready. It is



now focused on providing piped water supply in all homes by 2024, again an indication of how the lack of last-mile government capacity had left India crippled for decades. Whether water can pay the same political dividends for the BJP will shape the story of the next general elections.

Old distinctions between Left and Right are no longer very easy to map either onto class formations, or political parties, or even issues in Indian politics today. Some state governments—such as that in Bihar, with its roots in Lohiate socialism—are surprisingly keen to experiment with cash transfers. Other governments that are prime examples of collusion between capital and state like Tamil Nadu have been very successful at traditional institutions of welfare like PDS and a robust health care model. Similarly, issues of environmental devastation also cut across boundaries of Left and Right. The very nature of policy choices and judgements in contemporary Indian politics do not lend themselves to easy ideological categorization. This is not to say that ideology does not matter. It matters at two levels of politics. First, at the macro level the choice of models of development clearly makes various ideological assumptions. What our pathways to growth, prosperity, and equity should be, will remain contested. But it is not a foregone conclusion which parties or groups will adopt which strategies. The ‘Left-Right’ distinction often runs within major political parties as it runs between them. Often policy responses are shaped by societal circumstances and political opportunities rather than neat ideological templates. But it is clear that no society can avoid a politics of privilege versus a politics of under privilege. No matter how successful an economy is, there will be political tendencies that try and make sense of those who are marginalized or are unable to be a part of the “trickledown” effect to coopt them in an ideological contestation. But it is likely to remain fragmented and beset by cross-cutting cleavages. The big challenge for the Indian state will be to negotiate these diverse forms of contestations. Inequality (in its myriad avatars) and its impacts remains to this day the biggest governance challenge of all times in Indian politics.

In India in the last few decades, as we transit from the “politics of scarcity” to the “politics of prosperity”, we will notice a major paradigm shift in the discourses on democracy and good governance. What stands out is the distinction made between a procedural notion of democracy debated by the constitutional legal functioning of its public institutions and a substantivist notion of democracy where the nation building exercise has been redefined in terms of concrete citizen entitlements and actual access to rights and public goods. Democracies are often slow, deliberative and procedure oriented unable to deliver electoral promises effectively and therefore dubbed as “soft” states. The biggest bane in India today is the phenomenon of differentiated citizen entitlements in different states of India e.g., you might get access to a decent platter of public goods like food, education, health and employment depending on which state

you are residing in. Niti Aayog has a SDG India Index and a Human Development Index of Indian states which has made interstate comparison possible in all development parameters. Today 300 schemes come under the Direct Benefit Transfer. The Central government’s biggest challenge will be to weave together a credible welfare architecture and execute it with efficiency in tandem with states so that it reaches every Indian who needs it most. I say this with great conviction that India and democratic public power must deliver growth with social justice to its citizens if the developing world is to choose the democratic governance model over an authoritarian one like China. Decades ago, former World Bank economist was lauded for his thesis that while India was definitely not a “failing” state, it was a “flailing state”. That is, while its performance was world class by some measures of governance, it underperforms in other respects, notably in public service delivery in sectors like health, education, and sanitation. If India finally delivers on implementation and improves on its public service delivery systems, India can truly demonstrate that only democracies can deliver slow, but steady good governance. Francis Fukuyama, the American political scientist has endorsed the Indian model of governance over China’s precisely on this argument alone.

I would like to end with a few conjectures on why I believe our Constitution remains a stand-alone Constitutional experiment in the entire Global south constituting the developing world. I firmly believe that the future of constitutionalism today depends a good deal on the future of the experiment in the world’s largest democracy. Here are my arguments:

First, India was the first Third world country to experiment with a democratic model of governance knowing full well that it is the best model of governance in theory but the most difficult model in practice. India’s Constitution was the framework through which the world’s largest and one of its most contentious democracies was brought into being. Second, Constitution survived because of its amendability and of the several multi-layered narratives within, which left a lot to the imagination of the courts to interpret and reinterpret. Subsequently, chiefly through the instrumentality of Public Interest Litigation, the Supreme Court emerged as that branch of the state to which citizens could appeal on matters as diverse as the environment and primary school admissions. The Court came to be popularly perceived, especially by the urban middle classes, as the only branch of the state that could be trusted to govern.

Third, the Constitution gave a model of civil military relations which is worthy of emulation in the developing world where military coups were routine phenomena and curbing authoritarian power the biggest political challenge in the public domain. Fourth, the Indian constitution is a part of its national identity, is a norm setter, it is used by both judges and citizens to invoke constitutional value



and has constitutionalized so much of India's life, making it a truly people's constitution. Lastly, the Constitution will survive in future only because of its aspirational character, its ability to bend to generational change and its incessant efforts to incorporate ideological flexibility with governance continuity over several decades and through several societal transitions with innate resilience.

Therefore, I would like to end by saying that the India story at 75 is an extraordinarily consequential and researchable one. The spirit in which I speak is exploratory: there is a need to explore the many different facets of this profound historical phenomenon called India. In many ways I can foresee India moving ahead with decades of great change to overcome the stupendous challenges of our times.

But looking at our last 75-year history of democracy, the knowledge of India's historical legacies, how the democratic state is currently transforming and where it might be headed, will also help us understand why our model of democracy and governance will survive and be a role model for the developing world in the 21st century. India's rise stems from civilizational choices made nearly 200 years ago – To learn, To adapt, To unite. Our transformation from a “soft” state to a “hard” state should make us more confident, compassionate inclusive and humane- qualities that the world's largest democracy can well afford to stand for and stand by, because these are the qualities that have sustained our democracy in 75 years and will sustain us in the years to come.





Research Article

India in World Affairs During the Last 75 Years: A Reflective Commentary

P S Jayaramu^{1,2,*}¹Former Professor of Political Science, Bangalore University, Bengaluru, Karnataka²Former Senior Fellow, ICSSR, New Delhi

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 18.07.2022

Accepted 12.08.2022

Published 19.09.2022

* Corresponding author.

P S Jayaramu

psjayaramu@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/>

10.53989/jcp.v1i1.6



ABSTRACT

This article is a brief summary of the role played by India in World affairs from the times of Jawaharlal Nehru to the present. The section on the Nehru era also covers in nut shell the role played by the Indian National Congress on global issues, showing how it differed from the British Indian interests. The Nehru and Indira eras were marked by a strong commitment to global and third world issues, which declined relatively in the post-Cold War era. It looks like some of it is being rediscovered by the present regime, though a definitive judgement awaits as we are close to the developments as they unfold themselves, despite some of the negative images of India being projected in the international media regarding its handling of some domestic issues.

Keywords: Nonalignment; Anticolonialism; Antiimperialism; national security; nuclear disarmament

INTRODUCTION

Regardless of the fact that 75 years is hardly a long time in a country's history, India is happy to be celebrating its 75th year of independence. Now it is a good reason to consider India's contribution to global affairs. In our effort at understanding India's role in world affairs, we need to bear in mind that the twin goals of Indian foreign policy from the times of Jawaharlal Nehru to the present has been to project India's role for positive and value-oriented changes in world affairs, project its image in the International arena and secure its national security from external challenges. It is against these goals that an attempt is made in the following pages to reflect on India's role in world affairs.

The Nehru era

India involved in world politics before its independence in several ways. Under Mahatma Gandhi's direction, the Indian National Congress (INC), which spearheaded the liberation movement, had a cell specifically dedicated to international relations. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who had extensive experience in international affairs, served as its leader. The INC came up with the idea of a cell because it wanted to demonstrate to the world that its opinions on important international concerns differed from those of imperial Britain, which ruled over us. The INC adopted resolutions condemning the British annexation of Upper Burma and the expansion of their imperial rule over Egypt and other nations.



In February 1927, Nehru spoke passionately against imperialism at the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels, where he also pledged INC's support to the struggle of liberation for countries in Asia and Africa. The INC increased the stakes for Indian independence during the Second World War as a means of expressing its opposition to the conflict. Nehru convened the first conference on Asian Relations while serving as prime minister of the Provisional Government in March and April 1947. He outlined the cornerstones of his foreign policy as being India's rejection of imperialism and colonialism and good neighbour relations. "We stand at the end of an age on the threshold of a new period of history," he said, reiterating India's support for the independence of Asian countries. India's formal declaration of independence on August 15, 1947, prompted Nehru to deliver his famous speech about "our tryst with destiny." India then became more ardent in its pursuit of the independence of the Asian-African countries.

India had declared its strong opposition to the "entangling alliances" that developed when the Cold War engulfed the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. As is widely known, the Cold War gave rise to a distinct course for pursuing our foreign policy that became known as nonalignment. In 1955, India participated actively in the Asian relations conference in Bandung, Indonesia, demonstrating its continued support for the many Asian and African countries still engaged in the war for independence from imperial forces. Under the leadership of Marshall Tito, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sukarno, and Nasser, the Asian and African countries' efforts to pursue an independent foreign policy culminated in the first conference of the Nonaligned countries in Belgrade in September 1961, which eventually led to the formation of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), which Peter Willets criticised as the emergence of a "non-military alliance."

Nehru's China policy was marked by the desire to have friendly relationship, which led to the signing of the 'Panchasheel' agreement. His desire to project China in international forums made him impervious to the military challenge from China. In fact, in his perception, Pakistan posed a bigger challenge to India, than China. Under Nehru, India persistently championed nuclear disarmament on a worldwide scale and appealed the nuclear-armed powers to stop their nuclear weapons race. Nehru made India a signatory to the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963, praising it as a modest but important first step toward nuclear disarmament.

The conclusion that can be arrived at regarding Nehru's foreign policy is that his central objective was to project India an important player in international affairs and project India as a key leader in world affairs from the developing world consisting of Asian-African nation. His dominant concerns were the creation of an 'Aea of Peace' and 'Asian Solidarity' and contribute to the effort in taking the world closer to

nuclear disarmament. He failed to perceive the military dimension of the challenge from China and paid a price for it in 1962. He could not prevent Pakistan from joining the US sponsored alliance system in the region. His decision to take the Kashmir issue to the United Nations for a fair solution also ended up in failure as the Western Powers sided with Pakistan. Domestically, however, Nehru laid the foundations for the industrial and scientific development of the country.

The Indira Gandhi era

India's influence in world affairs increased under Indira Gandhi, and this was demonstrated by the way she rejected the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). She refused to allow India to become a signatory to the NPT because of its unjust and discriminatory nature. In order to ensure the country's national security in the wake of the Bangladesh crisis, Mrs. Gandhi took the extraordinary decision of signing the Indo-Soviet Treaty in 1971 to strengthen India's strategic position, all of which helped her to play a significant role in the liberation of Bangladesh. She also took the decision to carry out a peaceful nuclear experiment in 1974 signalling India's capability to become a nuclear weapon state if her national security demanded it.

The anti-imperialist streak in Mrs. Gandhi prompted her to project India's stature internationally by getting the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace resolution passed in the UN General Assembly in 1971. Her desire was to free the Ocean from imperialists rivalries. It is a different situation now, though. She also played a pioneering role in getting the New International Economic Order resolution passed in the UNGA in 1974, highlighting the need for dialogue between the developed North and the developing South to eventually establish an economic order based on equity and justice. Mrs. Gandhi also contributed immensely to the growth of the nonaligned movement and consistently expressed India's support to the Palestinian cause as well as the need for ending the policy of Apartheid in South Africa. The conclusion that can be drawn about the Indira Gandhi period is that she strived hard to play a pro-active role in world affairs. She also made conscious efforts to strengthen India's national security by adopting the policy of keeping the nuclear-option open by carrying out the peaceful nuclear explosion and more so by strengthening our security in the neighbourhood by bringing about the liberation of Bangladesh.

The downfall of Mrs. Gandhi's government in the 1977 Parliamentary elections led to the rise of the Janata Party government under the Prime Ministership of Morarji Desai. The Janata government talked about the need for correcting the pro-Soviet leanings in India's foreign policy and coined the phrase 'genuine non-alignment with its pro-American leanings. Many scholars too started writing about genuine non alignment. But, in reality, both the Janata experiment and the phase of genuine nonalignment were short-lived as Mrs. Indira Gandhi came back to power following



the 1979 Lok Sabha elections and along with her own style of conducting foreign policy. The pro-Soviet leanings returned to the fore, though Indira made conscious efforts to strengthen Indo-US relations.

The Rajiv Gandhi years saw a continuity in India's foreign policy. The key features of his foreign policy were to improve ties with China following his historic visit to Beijing in 1988. He talked of the need for the coming together of the hardware superpower (China) and software super power (India) to rule the world technologically. He was equally interested in strengthening Indo-US ties in the fields of science and technology, while maintaining a continuity in India's special relations with the Soviet Union. His period too saw India playing an activist role in world affairs. He argued India's case for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, the demand for which have been continued by his successors.

Rajiv Gandhi made a proposal in October 1988 to the UN General Assembly outlining his Comprehensive Action Plan for a nuclear weapon-free non-violent world order for a time-bound achievement of nuclear disarmament, which if implemented would rid the world of nuclear weapons by 2008. He said that India is a responsible nuclear power having given the 'No First Use of Nuclear Weapons pledge' to the international community. He also took active interest in the non-aligned movement as part of his initiatives in playing a pro-active role in world affairs.

Rajiv Gandhi's successors did not effect any major changes in foreign policy except that of I. K. Gujral, who as Prime Minister accorded priority to the maintenance of good neighbourly relations on the basis of non-reciprocity, except with reference to Pakistan.

The Post-Cold War era foreign policy

Though Indian governments continued to take up international causes, the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union led to a paradigm shift in India's foreign policy. In the opinion of this writer, with the dawn of the Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) era in world politics, the focus, from the times of P. V. Narasimha Rao, came to be one of integrating India with the global North, in the economic and military-strategic field, rather than accord priority for transformation of the international system, specially from the perspective of the developing South. The trend continued under the UPA and NDA regimes. Continuity in relations with Europe and the rest of the world was focused upon, but India became more inward looking and did not show any meaningful interest in reclaiming the leadership role in the nonaligned movement (NAM) or in the UN system as a champion of the Third World countries and their causes. While Vajpayee made India a nuclear-weapon state resulting in sanctions on India, which were however short-lived. Dr. Manmohan Singh took the step of signing the Nuclear Deal with the United States to get over the pariah-status that India faced in the hands of

the nuclear weapon powers.

The Narendra Modi period

The coming to power of Narendra Modi as head of the BJP-led NDA government in 2014 has revived the quest for India playing an activist role in world affairs. Modi's foreign policy has come to occupy a prominent space in academic discussions, both for and against. For a person who had no experience in parliamentary politics, (having become the Prime Minister after being Chief Minister of Gujarat), Modi introduced a certain novelty in his approach to foreign policy. He took the unusual step of inviting his counterparts from South Asia to his swearing in ceremony in 2014. His intention was to convey that good-neighbourly relations are going to be one of the key goals of his foreign policy. He followed it by an unofficial visit to Pakistan while returning from a foreign tour. As for China, Modi's desire was to aim at an upswing in bilateral relations towards which he strived during his visit to Beijing and return visits by the Chinese President Xi to India. Modi's focus was to build a personal rapport with the Chinese President. Obsessed with his desire to establish a good personal relationship with his Chinese counterpart, Modi failed to gauge the depth of the Chinese challenge, which resulted in Chinese forces killing Indian soldiers in the Galwan valley in eastern Ladakh in June 2020. The Chinese are also in possession of 23 sq.miles of Indian territory and are yet to withdraw from it. Foreign Minister Dr. Jaishankar has often referred to the challenge of achieving 'strategic equilibrium' with China while China is bent on maintaining its strategic superiority. As regards maintaining the country's national security, the post-Galwan situation demonstrates that India continues to face stiff challenges from China. If we add to it the continuing China-Pakistan military-strategic collusion, the severity of the challenges to India's national security are clearly apparent. At the recent G-20 summit, foreign minister Dr. Jaishankar reiterated the need for an early resolution of all outstanding issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. He underlined that India-China relationship is "best served by observing three mutuals-mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interest".

Yet another priority of the Narendra Modi government is that of working towards a strong military-strategic relationship with the United States. His official visits to the US since 2014 and the personal equation he struck with Donald Trump during his first term and presently with the Biden Administration demonstrates it. While the strategic relationship with the United States has pushed India to join the American sponsored QUAD under the leadership of the American President Joe Biden to contain the Chinese influence and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, the Indian leadership has to be careful enough not to get too close to the American designs vis-a-vis China. India's national interests demand that the Chinese challenge has to



be dealt with at our level, and bilaterally, however daunting the task is.

The Modi government is actively pursuing a policy of projecting India's image in its extended neighbourhood. Its 'Act East Policy' has the objective of advancing its trade and economic interests with the Southeast-Asian nations. The relationship with Europe and other regions of the world too have acquired proactive overtones, indicating India's desire to play an active role in world affairs at the regional and global level.

It is however the handling of the ongoing Ukraine crisis/war that has come to highlight the strong sense of realism and national interest that is guiding Modi's foreign policy. India has refused to join the chorus of western condemnation of Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. The leadership is constantly pleading for a diplomatic solution to the tangle, asserting that there will be no winners in this ongoing war. Indian abstentions on the UN resolutions in the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, though has met with the displeasure of the Western nations, is serving India's interests well. India is importing crude oil from Russia at a cheaper rate and has kept up its bilateral channel open with Russia. In a way, the Ukrainian crisis has come handy to India to rediscover the utility of its nonaligned (the word used, however, is neutral) foreign policy. Foreign minister Jaishankar seems to be using the situation to restore the

Nehruvian elan in the conduct of diplomacy. An indication of it came when India opted for a safe position by supporting the BRICs group, without putting itself at odds with the western nations at the recent BRICs summit.

As a continuation of its role in world affairs, the Modi government is taking initiatives to work towards resolving issues associated with climate change. It was gratifying to see Prime Minister Modi calling for concrete action by the developed nations in his address to the US-sponsored virtual summit of 40 global leaders on Climate Change in April. He urged them to come up with specific action plan for an ambitious renewable energy target of 450 Gigawatts by 2030'. Additionally, Modi's appeal to the global community to come forward with initiatives for International Solar Alliance and Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, provides a glimmer of hope for fresh thinking on meeting the climate-related challenges for a better future for the global commons. It is hoped that as part of its role in world affairs, India will continue its fight for an inclusive world order, based on equity and justice and thereby play an influential, if not a militarily powerful, role in world affairs, a term used by the late Prof. Hedley Bull, (a well-known India watcher of Australian origin) in one of his articles on the Nehruvian foreign policy. Time alone will tell whether these goals will be achieved or sacrificed at the altar of personal image building exercises.





Book Review

Pascal Alan Nazareth, *A Ringside Seat to History*, New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 2020

D Jeevan Kumar^{1,*}

¹Honorary Professor, Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University, Gadag, Karnataka, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 06.07.2022

Accepted 18.07.2022

Published 19.09.2022

* Corresponding author.

D Jeevan Kumar

jeeves0607@yahoo.com

<https://doi.org/10.53989/jcp.v1i1.4>



INTRODUCTION

For a book which almost did not get published for its absence of “spicy political narratives and back-stabbings in history and diplomacy”, *A Ringside Seat to History* has received very appreciative and laudatory reviews.

According to Lord Bhikhu Parekh, the book “reveals an honest, self-critical and intrepid person prepared to stand up for principles that define his moral identity.” In the words of Gita Dharampal-Frick, “Ambassador Nazareth’s riveting narrative, extending over eight decades and spanning five continents, presents the reader with a deeply insightful tour d’horizon of tumultuous events in the second half of the twentieth century. Exercising the craft of diplomacy in masterly fashion, he is a ‘man of all seasons’, at home and in the world.”

T. P. Sreenivasan writes: “Ambassador Nazareth modestly calls his autobiographical masterpiece ‘A Ringside Seat to

History’, but his narrative clearly indicates he was not merely a witness to history, but often its maker. He was very much the mover, a summiteer not a Sherpa, and also a soft power warrior. His post-retirement evangelism of Mahatma Gandhi is a continuation of his diplomacy which stressed India’s heritage of non-violence and universal brotherhood.”

In the words of Vivek Katju, “Pascal Alan Nazareth’s autobiography bears testimony to his qualities of head and heart which have enabled him to navigate life’s journey with equanimity, humanism and deep faith. Above all what comes through is his firm commitment to the nation and its traditional culture of inclusivity... Above all Nazareth captures the atmosphere of a diplomat’s life in different assignments in different corners of the world and how opportunities can be positively utilised in the highly competitive field of inter-state relations. This involves imagination and initiative and grinding work, not champagne and caviar as Nazareth shows.”



Gaurav Saini states that the book “captures the author’s humanism, unbending commitment to honest conduct in public service, perceptible ingenuity at problem solving and undying regard for Gandhian ideals...There are many facets to this book, but perhaps the most important one is the author himself. His life and the way he lived it, has lessons for all. It will soothe those who today are dismayed by a slow erosion of Gandhian values from Indian society and India’s foreign policy. It will educate those who wish to one day become a part of the Indian Foreign Service. Finally, it will inspire others who wish to know what it means to serve a nation, without being constrained by myopic views of nationalism.”

As the above reviews point out, Mr. Nazareth’s autobiography contains a plethora of lessons and take-aways for civil servants. In each of his postings in different corners of the world, and in the midst of enormous challenges and daunting situations, the diplomat reveals intrepid qualities of head and heart. As well as that of impeccable integrity. Some of these anecdotes are worth recalling:

A notable highlight of Mr. Nazareth’s tenure as India’s Consul-General in New York was his very unusual instruction to consular section officers that “whenever any person was greatly upset because of a visa or passport delayed or denied, he/she should be sent to me. This had a salutary effect. The upset person was pleasantly surprised to be dealt with by the CG himself and the latter learnt the root cause of his/her problem and could rectify it.” (p.177)

Another notable incident was when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited New York in June 1988 to address the UN General Assembly’s Special Session on Disarmament. Prior to his visit, his Principal Security Officer who was reviewing the security arrangements, took strong objection to the designation of a Sikh officer as the Chief Security Officer of the PM, and wished him to be removed. Mr. Nazareth’s response here is worth quoting: “Please give this to me in

writing. If and when you do so, I will go on leave, for if an able and upright Sikh Deputy Consul-General cannot be trusted, a Christian Consul-General might also be a grave security risk.” (Pp.180-81).

On another occasion, this time as the Indian Ambassador in Egypt, at a conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at Cairo in July-August 1990, Mr. Nazareth was able to prevent Pakistan from bringing up Kashmir as a Human Rights issue. To the Saudi Foreign Minister’s question, “If India has such a strong case on Kashmir, why does it not hold a plebiscite there?”, Mr. Nazareth’s riposte which appeared in the local press was described as ‘a perfectly-timed ballistic strike’: “The Saudi Foreign Minister should practice what he preaches and ensure an election is held in his own country!” (p.187)

The impeccable integrity of this diplomat also needs to be highlighted. Towards the fag end of his career, Mr. Nazareth wished to make changes in his travel itinerary to India from Mexico. Rather than take the approved route via New York and London, he chose a different route to New Delhi and Bangalore. He writes: “I sought and secured prior approval of MEA and paid the additional cost of this itinerary over that of the approved route.” (p.217). I am not sure how many civil servants would have done that!

Mr. Nazareth’s post-retirement years have been devoted to reviving and diffusing Gandhian ideals of *satya*, *ahimsa*, *sarva dharma sama bhava* and *sarvodaya*. The formation of Sarvodaya International Trust, with its Regional Chapters, and his two books on Gandhi, namely, *Gandhi’s Outstanding Leadership* (2006) and *Gandhi: The Soul Force Warrior* (2018) have won national and international acclaim. Mr. Nazareth’s life and mission stand testimony to a famous exhortation of Mahatma Gandhi: “A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.”





Journal of Contemporary Politics

Book Review

Yual Noah Harari, ‘21 Lessons for the 21st Century’

M J Vinod^{1,*}

¹Professor, Department of International Studies, Political Science and History, Christ (deemed-to-be) University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 15.07.2022

Accepted 25.07.2022

Published 21.09.2022

* Corresponding author.

M J Vinod

mjvinod@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/>

[10.53989/jcp.v1i1.5](https://doi.org/10.53989/jcp.v1i1.5)



INTRODUCTION

As one of the best-selling authors, Yuval Harari takes us through a fascinating journey of the major lessons for the 21st century. His earlier books, *Homo Sapiens* and *Homo Deus*, have been global bestsellers and virtually taken him to stardom. The present book under review covers an array of pressing and daunting topics from God and religion to democracy, liberty, equality, justice, education, health, post-truth, nationalism, secularism, immigration, terrorism, technology and climate change. These are big issues of the times. In that sense, Harari’s book ‘**21 Lessons For the 21st Century**’, takes the reader through a journey of mankind from the past to the present and the future. The book on the one hand celebrates human wisdom and on the other worries about human follies. The present review will not cover all the major themes in the book. Rather it will focus on the

challenges that biopolitics and techno politics poses to the liberal order and even the decline of democracies.

The impact of the infotech and biotech revolution impacts on state and society in a variety of ways. Harari opines that artificial intelligence (AI) could erase some of the advantages of a democracy by impacting on the ideals of liberty and equality. The liberal story is also flawed and it does not fully reflect the truth of humanity. Nationalist and religious fanatics pose a serious challenge to the liberal order, along with all that is now happening in the world of biopolitics and techno politics. To quote Harari: “Ancient problems of philosophy are now becoming practical problems of engineering and politics”.

Harari argues in his book that ‘free will’ is not necessarily a reality. This is partly due to the images of illiberal democracies. The world lives in the myth of freedom, since walls and firewalls are back in vogue. Moreover, with



advancing technologies and strategies, governments and corporations will soon get to know us better than ourselves. What worries Harari are the encroachments into our privacy.

Harari argues that though as humans we make our choices, yet they are not necessarily independent choices. To hack a human mind only two support systems are required. One a good understanding of biology and two a good computing mind. Algorithms could decide our likes and dislikes and accordingly decide the type of data that needs to catch our eye, even if it were bereft of credibility. By getting access to our inner thoughts, it will provide a lever for the hackers and the propagandists and manipulators. This could have commercial and electoral implications too. Artificial Intelligence (AI) could adversely impact on the economic power and social value that humans have, which in turn impacts on any government. AI could erase many of the practical advantages of being a democracy. In fact, even biases can be built into the algorithms. Harari worries that technology can even create the possibility of digital dictatorships. As Harari rightly observes “it is tempting to turn to the experts, but how do you know they are not just following the herd?” The problem with ‘groupthink’ and ‘ignorance’ is that it seems to bedevil politicians, intellectuals, civil society activists, bureaucrats, customers, voters and even CEO’s.

In the 20th century the masses revolted against exploitation, whereas now masses fear the possibility of irrelevance. Harari contends that when computer engineers write codes, in reality they shape human lives. This is where ethical codes also become important. Questions that primarily belonged to the Philosophy department are now at the doorstep of the Computer Science departments. The fundamental question raised is ‘how can liberal democracies function in an era when governments and corporations can hack humans? Perhaps we are even entering a phase when we may have to question the fundamental assumptions of liberalism. In this

context, perhaps the time has come to even understand the limitations of a liberal democracy. Though the liberal values are common, they could mean different things in different social, economic, political and cultural contexts.

Life in the 21st century according to the author demands ‘mindfulness’ i.e., the need to get to know ourselves better, and also to see how we could make a difference in the life of the other. He tries to make sense of where we have come from and where we are heading for. As Bill Gates says Harari is such a stimulating writer, that even if one may disagree on some of his arguments, yet one would like to continue reading and thinking.

Harari shews fancy words and phrases and provides us a pragmatist view of the times. He is definitely not a pessimist as some critics and skeptics argue. Some skeptics argue that his books are not ‘Lessons’. All the same, they are eyeopeners, which can be ignored only at one’s peril. That’s precisely why Harari’s books are all bestsellers.

The biotech and infotech revolutions though important, are still in their infancy and perhaps it is too early to suggest that it would make liberalism and liberal values redundant. Data by itself may not be a problem. Rather it is a question what one wants to do with the data. Harari’s arguments cannot be dismissed and needs to be taken a relative sense. As much as technology can be a threat, it has also been a source of citizenship empowerment. However, the challenges that AI poses to democracies and liberal values cannot be dismissed altogether. The fact is that they are already being experienced. Democracies are always under threat because they need a variety of preconditions to make it succeed. These preconditions are always under the scanner. In that sense democracies are more fragile and precarious than at any time earlier. We are constantly in a situation of having to imagine, recreate and rediscover democracy. Harari has tried to make sense of these pressing issues of our times, and there is never a dull moment in his book.



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department was established in July 1973 by Prof. K. H. Cheluva Raju, with the support of Dr. H. Narasimhaiah, the then Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University. Dr. Cheluva Raju served as Professor and Chairman till 1987 and went on to become the Vice-Chancellor of Gulbarga University from 1987-1990. Since then, the department has had qualified faculty members, who have carried forward the legacy and values established by Prof. K. H. Cheluva Raju.

They include Prof. Narayana, Prof. R.L.M. Patil, Prof. M.G. Krishnan, Prof. P. S. Jayaramu, Prof. D. Jeevan Kumar, Prof. Sandeep Shastri, Prof. Meena Deshpande, Prof. M.J. Vinod and Prof. P. Ramanna.

Since its inception, the Department has promoted critical inquiry and exchange of ideas. It strives to remove barriers in higher education and motivate students in realizing their potential through creative spaces. It promotes inter-disciplinary research and tie-ups with civil society and industry, with the intention of facilitating placement of students.

Presently, the department consists of three Professors.

Prof. M. Narasimhamurthy

Prof. Veena Devi

Prof. S. Y. Surendra Kumar

At present there are 120 P.G. Students and 32 Ph.D. scholars (two foreign students) pursuing their studies.

Publisher Information

Department of Political Science

Bangalore University

Mysore Rd, Jnana Bharathi, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560056

Contact email: surendradps@bub.ernet.in

Phone: 080 22961731

Online publishing support contact

Scientific Research Solution Pvt. Ltd.

#208, Treasury Layout, Bogadi, Mysore-570026

Phone: +91-9845883696, Mail: info@sciresol.com

web: www.sciresol.com