



Caucus
THE DISCUSSION
FORUM



COMPASS 2023

CONFERENCE RESEARCH BOOKLET



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Hindu College, University of Delhi

Hindu College is one of the premier academic institutions in the country, having ranked as the #1 Co-ed College in India as per NIRF College Rankings, 2022. It has been ranked as the #1 Arts and Science College and #2 Commerce College across India for three consecutive years as per India Today Rankings from 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Today, Hindu College is at the precipice of its quasiquicentennial anniversary. Formed at the close of the nineteenth century, its first home was a modest building in Kinari Bazar, Chandni Chowk. This was over two decades before the inception of Delhi University. The University of Delhi was founded in 1922. Hindu College, along with St. Stephen's College and Ramjas College were the original triad of colleges affiliated with the University of Delhi. Chandni Chowk, the hitherto site of Hindu College was full of students who were partaking in the Non-Cooperation Movement and towards the end of the decade, "Simon Go Back". The College continued to be a site for anti-colonial resistance, among the staff as well as the students, something which is especially touching given the recency of Aazadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

The College parliament, which was formed in the 1920s continues to produce impressive debaters even now. In 1953, the college shifted to its permanent E-Shaped Building. Its current campus is spread over 25 acres of land. Its recently established Inter-Disciplinary Research Centre is a testament to its dynamism. Over its glorious history, its infrastructure as well as its student societies have stayed abreast with the best in the nation. Its sterling credentials, as well as its perpetual drive for upgrading its already premier status, are a constant source of pride and inspiration.

Caucus - The Discussion Forum

Caucus is the discussion forum and international cell of Hindu College, University of Delhi. We value academic discussions and discourse. It is through these conversations that we can tickle the intellect of our members and invoke opinions from across the spectrum. We make humble efforts towards the development and intellectual growth of our members. Through this process, we are able to produce scholars who are articulate and opinionated. Given the competitive environment of Delhi University, it is our prerogative to stride further ahead and give our members an edge over their fellow companions. It is in this direction that we encourage our members to express their opinions on issues of policy, international relations, and domestic and international developments among others in the form of the written word. Our blog is meant to provide a platform to our members as well as serve the wider prospective audience by providing perspectives on various subjects. We also publish a non-partisan monthly magazine “The Probe” with an ambition to create a platform that promotes writing & reporting among the students and enables them to engage in a learning experience with experts & working professionals.

Caucus was formed in 2007 with the aim to discuss and deliberate. We also provide our members with avenues to grow and explore through the various events that we organise. We organise group discussions on a weekly basis where we discuss current events. Some of our events include the “Hindu Policy Talks”, “International Hindu Model United Nations”, Roundtable discussions with dignitaries, etc. We also encourage our members to indulge in research and provide them with all the necessary support regarding publication.

COMPASS

Compass is an interactive, integrated and innovative conversation series with stalwarts in diverse fields: Journalism, education, economics, health policy, law etc. held by Caucus under the aegis of IQAC. The Annual Speaker Conclave is an initiative of Hindu College's Internal Quality Assurance Cell and is hosted by Caucus-The Discussion Forum.

The first edition of Compass was organized in 2020. It seeks to bring eminent personalities and noted dignitaries together. Caucus annually organises Compass to play its part in proliferating the culture of discussion and discourse in the student community. Previously, we have had the privilege to host the likes of Senior Journalist Mr Shekhar Gupta; Scottish Historian Mr William Dalrymple; Former National Security Advisor of India Amb. Shivshankar Menon; Noted Economist Prof. Arvind Panagariya; Former Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia; Former Assistant Secretary-General at UN Amb. Lakshmi Puri; Former Solicitor General Mr Harish Salve and Retired IAS Ms Shailaja Chandra; Former Chief Scientist at WHO Dr Soumya Swaminathan and many others.

We, at Caucus, have always had our solemn belief in the power of debate and discussion as we fully realize the impact it has on society in general and our annual flagship event is only a concerted effort from our side to materialize the same.

PREFACE

The empiricist Francis Bacon considered the discussion of Doubts to be extremely useful. Discussions and discourse endow us with two main benefits. They prevent us from making errors, while also intensifying our investigations. A wide range of topics will be found in the upcoming sections of this work, their common denominator being our beloved country, India.

The first article of this collection deals with the Father of the Indian Constitution, Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. The article discusses Ambedkar's search for an alternate religion and how he chose Buddhism, ultimately challenging the Upper-Caste Hindu Orthodoxy. The Republic of India is but a constituent of the web of international relations, which is very tumultuous now. The Pandemic as well as the Russia-Ukraine war have greatly altered the paradigm of foreign affairs. India's G-20 presidency brings a unique opportunity to act as a torchbearer for all developing countries. This potential is explored in the second article.

India's rich cultural and historic heritage sites attract millions of visitors from home and abroad every year. The third article discusses the impact of tourism on India's heritage sites and the need for sustainable tourism development. Such solutions entail cooperation between the Government, local communities, and tourists.

While National Security aims to preserve the Idea of India, the quest for egalitarianism is what perpetuates the Idea of India. The metaphor of the "Glass Ceiling" results in a greater focus on female agency in the fourth article, as opposed to just welfare indices. After all, the Ceiling will collapse only with the concerted efforts and agency of enlightened activists.

In today's times, espionage is not just a minor tool but an integral part of warfare. Our spies get little recognition or acknowledgement, yet their work is essential for the safety and well-being of India. The fifth article expounds on these covert heroes. Historically, India has faced threats from both within, as well as beyond its boundaries. The last Article is in some sense an extension of the previous one and deals with the various aspects of India's national security in three major sectors: maritime, space and cyber security. It goes beyond conventional terms by dealing with the growth of people and the economy as a crucial part of national security.

We hope that these essays will be a lucid and edifying read, thereby being a good accompaniment to the speaker sessions.

AMBEDKAR AND BUDDHA: FROM YEOLA TO MAHAPARINIRVANA

By Anirudh Mehta

On 5th October 2022, nearly 3,000 people from about 20 Dalit and Bahujan organizations across the country gathered for a meeting addressed by Rajendra Pal Gautam. Mr Gautam was then a sitting Minister in the Arvind Kejriwal government in Delhi. The purpose of this meeting was the mass conversion of Dalits to Buddhism replicating the Ambedkarite moment of the 1950s. The incident sparked a huge controversy after which Mr Gautam resigned to “avoid embarrassment for AAP amidst the ongoing Gujarat elections”. According to him “The renunciation was part of the 22 oaths prescribed by B R Ambedkar for conversion to Buddhism when he did so in 1956”.¹ Such an event poses several questions to Indian society. Why, even after 75 years of independence and multiple safeguards, do Dalits need to resort to leaving the Hindu fold? Why Buddhism and not any other religion? What is the role of Ambedkar in this? Why was conversion needed at all? We try to answer some of these questions.

Ambedkar and Buddha

Dr BR Ambedkar is often credited for being the chief architect of the Indian constitution as the head of the drafting committee. His contribution as an economist and a lawyer has also been noteworthy. But, perhaps the most important and impactful facet of his public life has to be his struggle for Dalit emancipation and his criticism of the discrimination faced by Dalits due to the varna system in the Hindu religion. His criticism of these deplorable practices made him declare in Yeola (in Nashik district) his resolve to renounce Hinduism on 13th October 1935.² He kept his promise by converting to Buddhism on 14th October 1956, exactly 21 years and 1 day after the Yeola declaration. Buddhism had always been a religion that had intrigued Ambedkar, even as a child, as Eleanor Zelliott points out. The religion was founded by Siddhartha Gautama of Kapilvastu (in present-day- Nepal). Although he had an easy life, Gautama was deeply troubled by suffering in their world. He renounced his wealth and spent time as a poor beggar, meditating and travelling but ultimately, remaining unsatisfied, settling on something called “The

¹<https://indianexpress.com/article/political-pulse/rajendra-pal-gautam-aap-minister-quits-rise-of-rajendra-pal-gautam-dalit-leader-8210969/>

² Teltumbde, Anand; The strategy of Conversion to Buddhism intent and Aftermath, The Radical in Ambedkar (2018)

Middle Way.” This idea meant that neither extreme asceticism nor extreme wealth was the path to enlightenment, but rather, a way of life between the two extremes was.

The Critique of Hinduism

The roots of the Ambedkarite critique of Hinduism lay in his personal experiences of discrimination. Some of these instances have been elaborated on in his book "Waiting for a Visa". In the first incident mentioned in the book, a 13-year-old Ambedkar is not given a Tonga ride in Koregaon due to being an "untouchable". On finally finding a Tonga, he is asked to pay double the price for Tonga and asked to ride Tonga himself. In the process, he ends up completing a 3-hour journey in 12 hours. According to Ambedkar "This incident gave me a shock such as I never received before, and it made me think about untouchability which, before this incident happened, was with me a matter of course as it is with many touchable as well as the untouchables".³ The practice of untouchability stemmed from the Varna system and Ambedkar can be considered one of the harshest critics of the Varna system. The Varna system is the description of the hierarchical society with a Brahmanical ideology explained in Manusmriti. It entailed the division of the society into 4 varnas: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra as a method of division of labour. Ambedkar in his undelivered speech "Annihilation of Caste" severely criticizes the system as "not a system of division of labour but a system of division of labourers".⁴ Ambedkar also published a journal titled 'Mukti kon Path (Which Path to Salvation)' where he tried to systematically explain to Hindus why to change their religion.

Scouting Religions

The contemplation of conversion to any other religion had started way before the year declaration. Ambedkar had earlier rejected Buddhism and Arya Samajism as he believed that converting to these religions would not cause any significant impact on the prejudices of people who consider themselves from the "upper varna". According to Ambedkar conversion of Dalits had to be used as leverage to pressurize the Hindus to reform themselves. He wanted to counter Hindu oppression. Initially, Ambedkar gravitated towards Christianity and Islam as he felt that conversion into these religions could hugely upset the status quo and force the upper-caste caste

³ Ambedkar, Bhimrao R. *Waiting for a Visa* (1935-36)

⁴ Ambedkar, Bhimrao R. *Annihilation of Caste* (1936)

Hindu elite to mend their ways. He later eliminated Christianity and began zeroing in on Islam as he believed that Christianity could not escape castes in India. This exfoliation of Islam lasted till 1936 after which Ambedkar started to get Alienated from the religion due to its egalitarian orientation and foreign origin. Ambedkar also contemplated embracing Sikhism but since a section of Sikhs felt that mass conversion of Dalits would "dalitize" Sikhism, Ambedkar had to drop the idea entirely.⁵

Why Buddhism?

Although it was the dominant religion in the subcontinental island nation of Sri Lanka, Buddhism was almost extinct from India, its birthplace. Buddhist population in India was in a fragmented state and predominantly existed in the states of the east and northeast like West Bengal, Assam, Sikkim, Mizoram, and Tripura, and the high Himalayan region of Ladakh. Therefore, converting to Buddhism couldn't have helped Ambedkar achieve his motive of using religious conversion as a method to counter Hindu upper caste dominance. But, Buddhism always appealed to Ambedkar due to its focus on rationality. He believed that Buddhism's emphasis on three principles- wisdom (against superstition and supernaturalism); love and compassion (in relation with others) and complete equality- were unique to the religion. Also, the fact that Buddhism was an indic religion is supposed to have influenced Ambedkar's choice of religion. Ambedkar also played a crucial role in the rejuvenation of Buddhism in India. He propagated a version of the religion known as "Navyana (New Vehicle) Buddhism" to his followers. This depicts Ambedkar's unhappiness with the contemporary state of Buddhism and while this interpretation of Buddhism invited severe criticism from certain orthodox Buddhists, it also played a huge role in the propagation of the Buddhist faith which was facing a near-terminal decline in its native country.

Aftermath

On 14th October 1956 Ambedkar with close to half a million people converted to Buddhism. This incident occurred just 2 months before his death and he therefore could not live

⁵ Teltumbde, Anand The strategy of Conversion to Buddhism intent and Aftermath, The Radical in Ambedkar (2018)

to witness the evolution of Navyana Buddhism. This day, to date, remains symbolic in the struggle against the upper caste oppression in Hindu society and continues to fuel dalit aspirations in the country. Post his death the dalit Since, 1956 multiple such mass conversions have taken place, since even after multiple safeguards in place, the emancipation of Dalits seems to be a distant dream. Although, the actual effect these mass conversions have on the religious practices of the converttees is debatable. But as a symbolic gesture, they go in a long way in challenging upper caste dominance. The incident highlighted in the introduction is one such incident that provoked sharp reactions (especially from the right). When will these cease to exist? To that one may ask a counter question: when will caste discrimination cease to exist? The answer to both these questions seems beyond the realm of our knowledge.

NEW DELHI AND DIPLOMACY

By Garvit Garg and Navlika Mehta

The foreign policy of any nation is inextricably linked to its internal politics and governance since both of them depend on each other. History gives various examples, like the foreign policy of independent India was deeply affected by the freedom struggle and the principles of its founding fathers, American foreign policy after the conclusion of the War of 1812 to the Spanish-American War (1898) became isolationist; that is, U.S. leaders saw little reason to get involved in world affairs. Today it is the opposite on account of change in internal politics. The foreign policy of countries evolve with time in response to crust and trough in global geopolitics, change in the leaders and their ideologies, and change in the aspirations and vision of the citizens of the country but more or less the ultimate desire is to wisely make a balance between national interest and diplomatic ties with powers around the global. Very often, countries find it difficult to make a balance between the two and lean towards one side while ignoring the other. To make a choice tends to be difficult

India is found to be standing at the crossroad where she has to make hard choices. In the past few years, Indian foreign policy has been seen to be more assertive on the world stage to ensure the interest of her huge 1.4 billion population or to present the interest of the global south. Whether it be a matter to ensure sovereignty or to ensure global goods, India has raised its voice now and then at multilateral forums. Indian foreign policy has traversed a long road from non-alignment to the contemporary stage of energetic diplomacy. The budding republic of India under the Prime Minister's ship of Jawaharlal Nehru decided to not align with the US-led West or USSR-led East. As a leader of a non-alignment group, India made a significant contribution towards the process of decolonization. India was slowly heading on the path of nation-building. Then came the decades of tension and tussle when India faced security challenges on its borders. Indian diplomacy had to engage with superpowers as it did at Tashkent in 1965. Additionally, it was a time when domestic problems, such as political unrest and economic hardships were extremely acute. Post 1971, the show of India's boldness began with Bangladesh's formation. With the Sino-US rapprochement of 1971, the geopolitical landscape got upended. India's answer to this challenge was the Indo-Soviet Treaty and the adoption of increasingly pro-Soviet

stances on global issues. USSR was a favourable choice due to various reasons like the willingness of the USSR (present-day Russia) to share military equipment, defend Indian interests at the United Nations, etc. In 1974, India conducted her first nuclear test successfully at Pokhran in Rajasthan. With this, India became the world's sixth nuclear power. Later, the dynamics changed again and India was forced to recalibrate its internal and external policies following the collapse of the USSR, a close ally, and the related economic crisis in 1991.

The fall of the USSR created a vacuum and a unipolar world was established. Amidst struggling to cope, India with LPG reforms began her growth story and bid farewell to the 20th century by defeating Pakistan in 1999, securing the trust of the world as a responsible nuclear nation, increasing cooperation with ASEAN countries (under Look East Policy), mending ties with Israel etc. In the 21st century, China emerged as a new superpower with its commendable economic growth posing threat to US hegemony. In these times, India developed the qualities of balancing power. The nuclear agreement between the US and India and improved relations with the rest of the West are examples of this. In addition, India strengthened its connections with Russia and found a common ground with China on trade and climate change. After the global pandemic, the world understands the shortcomings in the global supply chain and the dominance of the People's Republic of China whose short-sighted leadership has an aggressive and expansionist ideology. Therefore, India wants to become Atmanirbhar Bharat. Moreover, the present unrest in the global arena indicates that multi-alignment is the need of the hour.

From the current trajectory of India's foreign policy, it is unambiguous now that India's foreign policy is at crossroads. There are chances of new future scenarios that could evolve, setting up the stage for profound geopolitical developments. There is a broader consensus among the experts that the world has amended into a multipolar order, which stimulates the process of selection of new sets of partners in the international system. Under the present government, India's foreign policy has become more ambitious, focusing on its national interest by leveraging international partnerships to promote its domestic development. The current ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia has substantiated this inference. India diplomatically abstained from voting at the United Nations and refused to join Western sanctions on Russia. It continues to pursue its national interest by purchasing crude oil and defence ammunition from Russia. As

Russia's relations with the West continue at a nadir, India is struggling to maintain its diplomatic tightrope walking. During the strenuous conflict scenario wherein India didn't exercise any particular influence to mould the outcomes, it prioritized evacuating its citizens. However, its stance of abstention at the United Nations involves a deeper geopolitical rationale to ponder over.

India's strategic partnership with the US and its allies like Japan in the Indo-Pacific region has deepened in recent years with growing Chinese influence and assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. With the formation of a Quadrilateral alliance between Japan, Australia, the US and India, Delhi has developed profound military relations with the US. However, it continues to sustain its defence partnership with Russia as a major focal point of its military alertness. India has discretionally stepped up cooperation with Taiwan, which is known for its Semiconductor Industry. In this manner, India is playing an assertive role in countering growing Chinese influence. Apart from this, India played a decisive role during the COVID-19 pandemic through its vaccine Maitri initiative. Even though India was hardly hit by the pandemic, it unhesitatingly sent vaccines to various countries, contributing actively to universal access to vaccination.

This year, India holds the G20 presidency. This is an unprecedented opportunity for India to carry forward its ideas. The Theme of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” guides India's neighbourhood first policy and Vaccine Maitri initiative, which prioritizes human values over a narrow nationalism. There is immense scope and opportunity with enough potential for steering up international coordination towards economic stability and prosperity which is an overarching goal of G20. India, during its current presidency, has this golden opportunity to demonstrate its economic potential with 43 heads of delegation, which is the largest ever in G20. This time what is special about G20 is that the G20 troika comprises all developing countries which will give a voice to the ideas and aspirations of these countries. India has also proclaimed itself as the "Voice of the Global South", stressing the crucial role of powerful developing countries.

Similarly, India's stance at international climate forums like the Conference of Parties has been primarily focused on the principle of differentiated responsibilities and advocating for technology transfer from developed to developing countries for the reduction of carbon emissions. The Democratic Republic of India is in the phase of massive economic growth and

development. In this “Amrit Kaal” it is high time to ensure stable growth through peaceful, constant and amicable relations with its global partners.

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THE GLOBAL DESTINATION

By Pranshu Sharma and Rajnish Prasad Sah Kanu

India is a land of diverse cultures and traditions, and its heritage sites are a testament to its rich history. From the Royal splendour of Rajasthan's forts and palaces to the magnificence of the Taj Mahal, spanning the broad spectrum up to the ancient ruins of Hampi, India's rich cultural and historic heritage sites attract millions of visitors from home and abroad every year.

However, the increasing number of tourists far outrun the timeline needed to upgrade the inadequate infrastructure up to par. This has put immense pressure on these sites, and the areas around them. In this article, we will explore the impact of tourism on India's heritage sites and the need for sustainable tourism development. We will also discuss the challenges of balancing preservation and tourism and present successful examples of sustainable tourism development in India.

It is not only a source of pride for the nation but also a significant contributor to its economy. According to the Ministry of Tourism, India received over 10 million foreign tourists in 2019, generating revenue of \$28.59 billion.¹ However, the increasing number of tourists has put immense pressure on these sites, leading to overcrowding, pollution, and degradation of the monuments. The unregulated growth of tourism has also led to the commercialization of these sites, with vendors encroaching on the premises, selling souvenirs, and creating a nuisance. The impact of tourism on heritage sites goes beyond the physical damage caused by visitors. It also has a significant impact on the local communities living around these sites. The influx of tourists has led to an increase in the cost of living, making it difficult for locals to afford necessities. Additionally, the growth of tourism has led to the displacement of local communities, as their ancestral lands are acquired for the development of tourism infrastructure.

Despite the challenges posed by tourism, India's heritage sites continue to attract visitors from across the globe. However, it is essential to find a balance between tourism and preservation to ensure that these sites are protected for future generations.

The Need for Sustainable Tourism Development

¹ *Annual Report Tourism 2019-20, Indian Ministry of Tourism*

Sustainable tourism development is essential for India as it can help to create employment opportunities, boost the economy, and promote conservation efforts. It can also help to promote responsible tourism practices, such as reducing waste, conserving water, and supporting local communities. Sustainable tourism aims to minimize the negative impact of tourism on the environment, local communities, and cultural heritage while maximizing the economic benefits of tourism. It is a way to ensure that tourism is a positive force for the development of the nation while preserving its natural and cultural heritage. However, achieving sustainable tourism development is easier said than done. It requires a collective effort from the government, the tourism industry, and local communities. It also requires a long-term vision and commitment to balancing preservation and development.

Balancing Preservation and Tourism: Challenges and Solutions

Balancing preservation and tourism is a complex issue that requires careful consideration. On the one hand, tourism is essential for the economic development of the nation. On the other hand, it can harm the environment, local communities, and cultural heritage. The challenge is to find a balance between the two, ensuring that tourism is sustainable and does not cause harm to heritage sites. One solution to this challenge is to limit the number of tourists visiting the heritage sites. This can be done by implementing a ticketing system, restricting the number of visitors per day, or limiting the number of tour operators. This will help to reduce the pressure on the sites and ensure that they are preserved for future generations. Another solution is to develop alternative tourism products that promote sustainable tourism. This includes promoting eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and rural tourism. These alternative products can help to diversify the tourism industry and reduce the pressure on popular heritage sites. The government can also play a crucial role in balancing preservation and tourism. It can implement policies and regulations to ensure that tourism is sustainable and does not harm heritage sites. The government can also provide incentives for tourism operators and local communities to adopt sustainable practices.

India has several examples of successful sustainable tourism development. One such example is the Khonoma Village in Nagaland. The village has developed a community-based tourism model that promotes sustainable tourism while preserving its cultural and natural

heritage. The village has also banned hunting and logging, promoting conservation efforts. Another example is the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan. The sanctuary has developed ecotourism programs that promote conservation efforts while providing employment opportunities for the local community. The sanctuary also runs a successful homestay program that allows tourists to experience the local culture and traditions. The Hampi World Heritage Site in Karnataka is also an excellent example of sustainable tourism development. The site has implemented a ticketing system that limits the number of visitors per day, ensuring that the site is not overcrowded. The site has also developed alternative tourism products, such as cycling tours and cultural programs, to promote sustainable tourism.

The Role of local communities in Preserving India's Heritage

Local communities play a crucial role in preserving India's heritage sites. They are the custodians of the cultural heritage and have a deep connection to the sites. Therefore, it is essential to involve them in the preservation efforts. The government can work with local communities to develop tourism products that promote sustainable tourism while preserving the local culture and traditions. The government can also provide training and capacity-building programs to help the local communities develop tourism-related skills. Additionally, the government can involve local communities in the decision-making process related to tourism development. This will ensure that the development is sustainable and considers the local community's needs.

Government Initiatives for Heritage Preservation and Sustainable Tourism

The government has taken several initiatives to promote heritage preservation and sustainable tourism. The Ministry of Tourism has launched several schemes, such as the Swadesh Darshan Scheme and the PRASAD Scheme, to develop tourism infrastructure around heritage sites. The schemes aim to promote sustainable tourism by developing infrastructure that is eco-friendly and promotes the local culture and traditions. The government has also launched the Adopt a Heritage Scheme, which allows private companies, public sector undertakings, and individuals to adopt heritage sites and promote conservation efforts. The scheme aims to involve the private sector in heritage preservation and promote sustainable tourism.

Responsible tourism practices for visitors

Visitors also have a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism and preserving India's heritage. Visitors need to adopt responsible tourism practices, such as reducing waste, conserving water, and supporting local communities. Visitors can also promote sustainable tourism by choosing eco-friendly accommodations and transportation options. Visitors can also opt for local guides and tour operators who promote sustainable tourism and support the local community.

The way forward for preserving India's heritage while promoting Sustainable Tourism

In conclusion, India's heritage sites are a significant contributor to its economy and a source of pride for the nation. However, the increasing number of tourists and inadequate infrastructure have put immense pressure on these sites, threatening their preservation. Sustainable tourism development is the key to preserving India's heritage while promoting tourism. The government, tourism industry, and local communities have a crucial role in achieving sustainable tourism development. By adopting responsible tourism practices and promoting conservation efforts, we can ensure that India's heritage sites are protected for future generations.

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

By Pushkar Pandey

No matter how often one encounters it, the metaphor of a glass ceiling continues to be powerfully vivid and apposite. Its existence conveniently eludes the masses, both the inordinate beneficiaries above it, as well as the victims on the other side. It is important that one doesn't merely break the glass ceiling, but break through it. Glass shatters and its fragments wield the potential to severely injure someone. Herein lies the paradox of glass, it is fragile and prone to breaking, however in its demise lies the propensity to slash and wound. The sacrifices made by people over aeons, the martyrs that have emerged, the unquantifiable blood, sweat, and tears that have been dedicated to one's reformist vision; one is naturally drawn to a feeling of reverence when glancing at the monumental edifice of our progressive antecedents, who transcended lethargy in their quest for a better world. To them, we owe not just our gratitude, but our commitment to further their work.

Sexism often seeks shelter within a gilded layer of faux concern as a pretext for its condescension. While one can't help but be glad that India has ascended from its abject conditions that existed at the time of our independence, we could have done a lot better. Our approach to inequities can be approximately partitioned into two categories. In the first, the aim is to increase welfare indices while in the second, the aim is to facilitate agency. We have made some progress regarding the improvement of basic welfare parameters like the fertility rate, maternal mortality, and infant mortality. The latter two are uncontroversial insofar as the recognition of our inadequacies is concerned. India's population however is often the cause of frequent kerfuffles.

India's total fertility rate (TFR) has declined from 2.2 in 2015-16 to 2.0 in 2019-21.¹ Recent squabbles over the necessity to control our population fail to reckon with this. They are often the product of a communal misconception that certain groups are poised to change the demographic proportion by virtue of their high fertility rate. However, wide inter-regional disparities exist with five states, namely having a TFR over the replacement level of 2.1.² In

¹ Fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5).

² Bihar (2.98), Meghalaya (2.91), Uttar Pradesh (2.35), Jharkhand (2.26) and Manipur (2.17) are the five states, according to the NFHS-5 conducted from 2019-21.

concomitance with a sexist division of labour, an increasing population especially burdens women who are bound to labour within the domain of the home.

India has one of the highest levels of gender inequities in the world.³ This is evident to us, though its extent is not properly comprehended especially by those who live in the ivory towers of the upper strata. Nevertheless, the current dispensation has recently questioned the methodologies used by international organisations. Their approach to critiquing global perception indices isn't germane to the present discussion. However, they did author a subsequent paper that re-examined some of the estimates pertaining to development indices. They revised the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) to 46.2%⁴ from 32.5%⁵. What struck me as a very pertinent point is the fact that in emerging economies, the FLFPR is generally higher than in developed countries.⁶ After all, the 13th ICLS standards⁷ as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) do include domestic duties that are fundamental to subsistence, such as the collection of firewood, vegetables, roots, fruits, etc, as within the ambit of the labour force. The updated estimate drastically increases the FLFPR.

I would also like to point out that the data (regardless of whether it is augmented as per the ICLS standards) indicates a reduction in labour force participation, both in the rural and urban sectors. It may be argued that this is at least partly because there isn't a compulsion for women to work as economic development leads to material improvement. A patriarchal society would rather not let a woman go out and work unless the need to do so was insurmountable. Subsequent development would also mould the cultural realm and therefore the milieu of social relations, leading to an increase in female labour force participation. This implies a U-shaped relationship between economic development and women's labour force participation. While recent research suggests that this is often a rather weak relation, it is one that roughly holds true for India.⁸ I would like to argue that one must take a more holistic approach to economic

³ In 2021, World Economic Forum ranked India at 140 out of 156 countries for which they reported Gender Gap Index

⁴ Re-examining Estimates of India's Development Indicators by International Organisations; EAC-PM Working Paper Series, EAC-PM/WP/14/2023

⁵ https://dge.gov.in/dge/sites/default/files/2022-07/Annual_Report_PLFS_2020-21_0_0.pdf; The lower estimate of 32.5% is as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI)

⁶ FLFPR of Tanzania (78.9%) and Vietnam (69.1%) is way higher than United Kingdom (58.5%) and Japan(53.1%)

⁷ ILO, 1982: Resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment (October 1982). Adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians

⁸ Verick, Sher. (2018). Female labor force participation and development. IZA World of Labor. 10.15185/izawol.87.v2.

development, moving beyond just GDP per Capita, after all, economic development in the typical parochial sense need not imply social progress. In India, it has recently been argued that there is no such relation between economic development and the female labour force participation rate.⁹ This is because, apparently the majority of women do not possess the skills to partake in the activities driving the bulk of the growth, The Service Sector. This clearly points to the fact that growth by itself is not sufficient for increasing women's economic activity. The process of growth is also an important consideration.

Countries must strive to ensure that not just the public sector, but also the private sector helps create a more welcoming environment. One of the most common explanations of the Nordic Gender Paradox is that the wage gap and limited proportion of women in the upper echelons of the private sector are because they tend to work in the public sector. The public sector pays less, as well as leaves a smaller proportion of talented women in the private sector. What is perplexing though is that trends suggest that welfare states, which tend to be gender-egalitarian, exhibit more pronounced gender differences in terms of occupational makeup.¹⁰ While some argue that this is due to intrinsic gender differences, such a bio-deterministic approach is immensely problematic. Can we attribute this, even if partly, to the fact that R&D in the Nordic Countries is dominated by the private sector?¹¹ Even if the state attempts to create a more egalitarian public sector, social inertia will persist in the private sector. India being a third-world country slightly differs. As per a report released by Foundit, from February 2022 to 2023, there was a 35% increase in the demand for female employees in white-collar jobs. While this increase was primarily because women who dropped out of work during the pandemic rejoined the workforce, at least part of the increase can be attributed to attempts by workplaces to be more inclusive to women. The private sector in this era of globalisation often leads the social landscape of third-world countries like India.

Women are tremendously immobile due to patriarchal control over their freedom to venture out, explicitly in the form of blatant restrictions, implicit in the form of their burdensome household responsibilities rendering them unable to venture out even in the absence of any

⁹ Lahoti, Rahul and Swaminathan, Hema, Economic Development and Female Labor Force Participation in India (June 28, 2013). IIM Bangalore Research Paper No. 414, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2284073> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2284073>

¹⁰ Gijsbert Stoet, David C. Geary. The Gender-Equality Paradox in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education.

¹¹ <https://www.nifu.no/en/statistics-indicators/nordic-rd-statistics/nordic-rd-statistics/#:~:text=The%20Nordic%20countries%20invested%20a,and%20all%20countries%20displayed%20growth.>

external prescriptions.¹² This is extremely worrying as far as their agency is considered. Inclusion in the truest sense entails social acceptability apropos exerting one's agency. Moving towards a gender-inclusive society is often justified with respect to the broader benefits it will confer to society, such as articulated by Christopher Hitchens when he said, "The cure for poverty has a name, in fact: it's called the empowerment of women." I would like to reaffirm that irrespective of its broader positives, our egalitarian endeavours ought to be based on the recognition of the universal right to be able to pursue our aspirations. It is inadequate for this right to be restricted merely to the notion of negative liberty, wherein we remove external restraints, whether they emerge from the state, or from society. One must recognise the need to imbue people with the capability to exercise positive liberty. There is a great deal of lethargy intrinsic to the process of social transformation. Only concerted and conscientious efforts can enable us to overcome the injustices that abound in the present.

The Late Kamla Bhasin, a doyenne of Indian feminists¹³ fought the sex-based division of labour by writing nursery rhymes that talked about working moms, stay-at-home dads, and girls who confidently play sports traditionally considered the domain of boys. Nursery rhymes are a central part of one's initial exposure to literature, thereby being a prime target for those who wish to actualise their vision for society.¹⁴ Tremendous progress is still a desideratum in this domain. Insipid efforts brook tremendous resistance. The glass ceiling will exist till overestimate its strength. One must move beyond the superficial correlation between economic progress and social progress. States with an Anti-Female Bias range from rich ones, fast developing ones, as well as impoverished ones, cutting across per capita income levels. One final example to drive home this point is to illustrate an astonishing counter-example to Amartya Sen's observation that Southern and Eastern States are generally more gender-egalitarian than Northern and Western States.¹⁵ Among women aged 20-24 in the state of West Bengal, 41 % of them had been married

¹² Goel, Rahul. (2022). Gender gap in mobility outside home in urban India.

¹³ Kamla Bhasin rightly apologised for her rejection of intersectional feminism, wherein she suggested that trans rights and Dalit rights fall outside the ambit of feminism. The foundation of any progressive praxis ought to be the attempt to build solidarity among marginalised groups. The modality of stratification diverges across different contexts, therefore inordinate focus on biological sex as opposed to the gender spectrum and caste, is being highly parochial.

¹⁴ English Nursery Rhymes are often targeted in India by those with atavistic tendencies, who would rather kids learn Sanskrit shlokas. An alternate way to establish a stranglehold over society is to target the education system and thereby the textbooks. The National Steering Committee on Textbook Evaluation in its meetings in January 1993 and October 1994 concluded that the textbooks used by the Saraswati Shishu Mandirs and released by the Vidya Bharati publication were blatantly communal.

¹⁵ The Essay "Women and Men", based on the "Sunanda Bhandare Memorial Lecture, titled "The Nature and Consequences of Gender Inequality" by Prof. Amartya Sen

by the time they had turned 18 as of 2019.¹⁶ Unless a more widespread and radical (though constitutional) approach is taken to overturning the dominant mode of gender organisation, our travails will persist.

¹⁶ Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation 2019

ESPIONAGE: A PILLAR IN NATIONAL SECURITY

By Pradyumna Rout and Lokesh Chaudhary

Espionage is not just a tool but has become an integral part of warfare itself, especially in the contemporary world. Popular culture has been enamoured with spies since the second half of the twentieth century. In India, some departments were tasked with spying and assassination. The idea was created for realpolitik purposes with no moral revulsion attached to it. In Indic civilisation, the earliest records of spies come from the prehistoric period when knowledge was passed on to generations through oral methods. Rig Veda which is one of the four-part of the Vedas contains many references to spies, even enunciating on their features such as wisdom and courage.

India's foreign relations provenance was quite bitter due to enmity with its closest neighbour Pakistan which went to war with India soon after independence. All this led to the building of suspicion in both countries and none missed the chance to defame the other. With the birth of Communist China in the year 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong, India had not only one but two neighbouring powers that couldn't be left ignored. Although the relations with China began on a friendly note, soon many misunderstandings and clashes, including the Tibet issue prominently, led to the degradation of relations between the two countries and these events concluded in the War of 1962.

It was in this background that the decision to set up a separate agency to deal with external intelligence was taken against the backdrop of the perceived intelligence failures in the wars of 1962 and 1965. Hitherto, it was the Intelligence Bureau (IB) that looked after both internal and external intelligence but the organisation failed to gauge the military preparation of China and Pakistan in the wars of 1962 and 1965 due to which it came under severe criticism, especially after the debacle against China. This focus on intelligence collection concealed wider problems of assessment and relationship with the policymakers. As per the norms, the Joint Intelligence Committee was supposed to be the apex intelligence assessment body but in reality, the IB produced assessments of its reports which was a violation of the basic norm that the collecting agency should not assess its inputs. These assessments were shared directly with the then-Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and due to this B.N. Mullik, the director of the IB from

1950 to 1964, enjoyed extraordinary access to Nehru and played an important role in shaping his thinking about the threat from China. It led to evident disastrous consequences. Sometime before the 1962 war, IB had picked up intelligence suggesting that the Chinese leadership was contemplating a major attack on India. Mullik passed these inputs to PM Nehru and the then-defence minister VK Krishna Menon, but the IB's assessment also maintained its stance that the Chinese would not go beyond the frontier skirmishes, which obviously was proven wrong. Thus, the RAW came into being in the year 1968 to mainly focus on tackling China and Pakistan. The creation of RAW addressed only one of the main problems thrown up by the two wars which was the need for a dedicated agency that would focus on external intelligence.

The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's external intelligence agency, has an extensive network of spies both within and outside the country to gather intelligence on external political, economic, and military activities. RAW's intelligence is instrumental in guiding India's foreign policy decisions and protecting its national security interests. Its efficiency, code of conduct, and success have received the appraisal of other countries too, which is a matter of pride for the country. Similarly, India's internal intelligence agency, the Intelligence Bureau (IB), relies on a network of spies to gather intelligence on internal threats to national security. The IB's spies gather information on domestic terrorist groups, political organisations, and other threats to the country's stability. The IB's intelligence is critical in guiding government policy decisions and safeguarding internal security.

Their work, however, is not without risk. These shadow warriors operate in a world of secrets and danger, constantly risking their lives and compromising their safety. The stakes are high, and the consequences of failure are dire. Yet, they continue to operate in the shadows, playing a crucial role in keeping India safe and secure. They don't get the recognition they deserve for their work because, in the profession of espionage, recognition is the last thing you would desire. In this age of digital espionage and cyber threats, the work of spies has become more crucial than ever before. They are India's first line of defence against threats that are constantly evolving and changing. From infiltrating foreign intelligence agencies to gathering economic intelligence and tracking domestic threats, spies work tirelessly to keep India's enemies at bay. These shadow warriors may operate in the shadows, but their contributions to national security are immeasurable.

Intelligence Shortcomings

One of the most significant intelligence failures in Indian history has been the failure leading up to the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. The attacks, which were carried out by the Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), resulted in the loss of 166 lives, including foreigners. There were intelligence reports that suggested an imminent attack, but they were not acted upon, and the attackers were able to enter Mumbai by boat undetected. The failure of Indian intelligence agencies to prevent the attack exposed significant shortcomings in their intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities. There also have been cases of Indian spies being captured or exposed while working abroad. In 2016, an Indian spy named Kulbhushan Jadhav was arrested in Pakistan and accused of espionage and terrorism. Jadhav, who was reportedly working for RAW, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court. The incident led to a diplomatic crisis between India and Pakistan, with India denying the allegations and accusing Pakistan of violating international law.

But these failures do not faze the iron will of the RAW and the IB, as they can't afford any slip-ups in this game of intelligence gathering where every opponent is filled with bloodlust and the cost of failure is loss of innocent lives and the national image. They stand back up stronger than ever and achieve the impossible. One such case is the Balakot Strike. In 2019, India conducted a surgical strike against a terrorist camp in Balakot, Pakistan. The successful operation was made possible by intelligence gathered by India's spy network, which helped identify the target and plan the strike. Indian intelligence agencies had been monitoring the activities of the terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), which had claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on an Indian military convoy in Pulwama, Kashmir, just a few weeks earlier. The intelligence agency had identified the location of the terrorist camp in Balakot and provided the information to the Indian Air Force, which conducted the strike successfully. This is one of the few times citizens have got to know about the tiresome and crucial work of our nation's spies as everything needs to be buried, even success stories, to upkeep national security.

In conclusion, India's reliance on espionage and national security is deeply ingrained in its history and national identity. The country faces an array of security challenges ranging from terrorism to cyber threats, and spies play a crucial role in gathering intelligence and providing

critical information to decision-makers. India's intelligence agencies and their spies deserve praise for their dedication, courage, and professionalism in fulfilling their critical roles. They operate in a high-risk environment, often with little recognition or acknowledgement, yet their work is essential to the safety and well-being of India and its people. India's reliance on espionage and national security is a testament to the country's commitment to safeguarding its interests and ensuring its continued growth and success. The country's intelligence agencies and their spies deserve recognition and praise for their contributions to India's national security and economic prosperity.

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EMERGING DIMENSIONS OF INDIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

By Ishaan Banwait and Vagmi Singh

India's national security refers to the measures and policies taken by the government to protect the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and citizens from various internal and external threats. With its vast coastline and strategic location, maritime security is crucial for India's national security. Cybersecurity has become increasingly relevant due to the country's rapid digitization and dependence on technology. India's space program plays a critical role in national security by enabling remote sensing, communication, and navigation capabilities. Ensuring robust security measures in these domains is essential to safeguarding India's national interests and maintaining regional stability. This article aims to build a case for further strengthening maritime, cyber and space security to solidify India's national security in the 21st century.

Maritime Security

Maritime security is the protection of naval vessels both internally and externally. The areas and avenues from which ships and maritime operations need protection include piracy, illegal trafficking of goods and people, terrorism, illegal fishing, robbery and pollution.¹ India is a peninsular country with a coastline of 7516 km, more than 1200 islands and the sixteenth largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the world with an area of 2.3 million square kilometres. As India's maritime territories lay in the Indian Ocean, the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) are of great significance to India's maritime security, with almost all of India's trade passing through the region. Combine this with the fact that the Indian Ocean is rich in natural resources, with forty per cent of the world's offshore oil production taking place in the Indian Ocean basin. Furthermore, fishing in the Indian Ocean accounts for almost 15 per cent of the world's total having risen 13-fold between 1950 and 2010 and the mineral resources are equally important, with nodules containing nickel, cobalt, and iron, and massive sulphide deposits of manganese, copper, iron, zinc, silver, and gold present in sizeable quantities on the sea bed, one can see why India needs to be proactive in maritime security.²

Thus, ensuring that the Indian Ocean lies in safe hands and is in control of India is vital for India's security. One of the major threats in the area is piracy, with some of the world's most

¹ <https://www.mitags.org/security-guide/>

² *World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, 2016.

piracy-infected areas, such as the Straits of Malacca and the Gulf of Aden, located here. International efforts have been made, with India even stationing warships here due to the value of the trade, which occurs in the region. This intervention has helped drown piracy in the area.³ China's presence in the Indian Ocean is also a problem, with the establishment of bases in Gwadar and Hambantota, the former being a deep water port and the latter a shipping centre, posing a threat to India's maritime interests. The Indian Ocean part of China's Strings of Pearls strategy attempts to encircle India. To counter this, India has developed bases in Chabahar in Iran, Duqm in Oman, the Assumption Isles in Seychelles and Sabang in Indonesia as it attempts to cut through China's circulation strategy with bases dispersed throughout the region and establish power projection and reconnaissance capabilities across the Indian Ocean.

Space Security

One of the crucial aspects of India's national security that is gaining importance exponentially is space security. Outer space is indeed emerging as the fourth arena of warfare. India's abstinence from voting on the United Nations resolution to ban debris-creating direct-ascent anti-satellite (DA-ASAT) testing in some way reflects the path that India has chosen. The DA-ASAT test is harmful and threatens the space ecosystem, however, India is keen to improve its space military might as this would help India in mitigating security threats from various external aggressors including China which carried out over 60 space launches in 2022.⁴

The ASAT test conducted by India in 2019 further establishes a new vision for space policy which prioritises space security and the development of space weapons for further strengthening India's capabilities in the security sector.⁵ In February, the Indian Air Force (IAF) released its new doctrine where it envisions transforming itself into an Aerospace Force and taking greater responsibilities and control in the space domain. The Defence Space Agency (DSA) and the Defence Space Research Organisation (DSRO) have been established by the Union Government to look into and enhance military space operations. In 2020, the government also opened the sector to private industries, promoting space startups under Atal Incubation Centres (AIC). The government, therefore, not only aims to focus on military operations in space but also wants to use space decisively to achieve its national developmental goals. Furthermore, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) plays an instrumental role in providing crucial

³ Gokhale, Nitin (2011). "[India Takes Fight to Pirates](#)". *the-diplomat.com*. [The Diplomat](#).

⁴ <https://www.thespacereview.com/article/4536/1>

⁵ <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/15/india-s-asat-test-incomplete-success-pub-78884>

intelligence for military operations through various satellites. Apart from this, its recent launch in space like OceanStat-3, a nanosatellite, would provide researchers vital information for further exploration of the sea, its minerals and flora and fauna. Discoveries such as Lithium reserves found in Ladakh are augmented by such technology.

Furthermore, the policymakers need to formulate a space policy which uses the available resources in an integrated manner to meet developmental and military goals. India should lean towards legally binding agreements and confidence-building measures which serve as levers to mitigate the risks in outer space and help preserve the freedom to use outer space as permitted by international law, however, not at the cost of its national security from external aggressors.

Cyber Security

Cybersecurity is the practice of protecting systems, networks, and programs from digital attacks. These cyberattacks are aimed at assessing, changing, or destroying sensitive information; extorting money from users via ransomware; or interrupting normal business processes.⁶

Due to rapid digitalisation and inadequate measure taken to spread awareness about cyber security, India has been a significant victim of cyber attacks with 68% of internet users in India having faced cybercrime in their lifetime the number of cyber attacks in India has increased by nearly three folds as the data from 2019 (3,94,500) to 2020 (11,58,210) suggests. With the pandemic forcing everything online, people are more vulnerable than ever as private data and classified documents are also stored on the internet, thus, making them susceptible to breaches and cyber-warfare. Thus, cyber-security remains an important avenue for India.

However, India has done well to combat this rising epidemic, with the country ranking 10th for global cybersecurity in 2020, a significant rise from its 2019 position of 47. Some of the initiatives undertaken by the Government include the appointment of Chief Information Security Officers (CISO) for every Government department so that they can help develop the best parties and safeguard the government against cyber attacks. Another is the establishment of the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Center (NCIIPC) which aims to facilitate safe, secure and resilient Information Infrastructure for critical sectors

⁶ https://www.cisco.com/c/en_in/products/security/what-is-cybersecurity.html

and ensure that no harm comes from those computer resources which have the capability to threaten a nation's economy, national security or the welfare of the public.

The government has two important statutes to deal with the issue currently: The Information Technology Act 2021 along with Indian Penal Code. Furthermore, government initiatives related to cyber security like the Indian cyber crime coordination centre, Indian computer emergency response team, Cyber Surakshit Bharat, and Cyber Swachhta Kendra among others are ways to spread awareness among users regarding cybercrimes and regulate cyberspace.⁷

Conclusion

India's national security is threatened by various challenges, such as, but not limited to, maritime security, space security, and cyber security. These challenges are not only limited to external threats but also include internal security concerns. To tackle these challenges efficiently, India must adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach that accounts for all aspects of national security. India should leverage its strengths and capabilities to formulate an effective strategy which ensures its security and maintains its position as a regional and global power. A robust and holistic approach to national security will enable India to address its vulnerabilities and challenges in a proactive manner. By focusing on its strengths, such as its growing economy, strong military, and technological advancements, India can strengthen its position in the region and the world. India must address these challenges effectively to ensure its national security, protect its citizens, and maintain its influence in the international community.

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