

NEW INDIA: A RENAISSANCE OF POLITICS, CULTURE AND ECONOMY

Abstract

From being a land of multitudinous civilizations to its rise as a potential superpower, New India has come a long way and has innumerable things to offer. The resurgence of politics, culture and economy has brought a Renaissance in a real sense. Advocating the politics of cooperative federalism, inclusivity and representative government on the twin foundations of social justice and equality, India has outdone itself in the past few years. Culturally, on the other hand the world has witnessed the rise of India as a "Vishwa Guru" bringing yoga, Ayurveda and Vedantic wisdom to the forefront along with emerging as the hub of knowledge and innovation. This kind of holistic political and cultural renaissance is also interrelated to India on the course of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy in the coming decades. The bold policy decisions of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi with regard to India's friendship with countries of West Asia, Japan, Africa had also acted as a precursor to various opportunities in fields like trade, investment opportunities, tourism and cultural ties. Thus, the paper would focus upon the interrelationship of politics, culture and economy with the revival of India's culture, democratic governance and economic structure which can be called as Renaissance. This Renaissance with National Democratic Alliance coming to power in 2014 is not only the recounting of memory but also an emergence of a new kind of consciousness with regard to history and of social cultural and political identity, that is arising out of New India.

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I. INTRODUCTION

India being a land of multitudinous civilizations has witnessed a new form of energy in recent years. On the one hand it has assertively voiced its stand and maintained the stature in the international sphere, on the other hand it has also initiated reviving the local industries that had been neglected during the time of globalization. Thus, we can assertively say that we are living in the times of change. Shri Narendra Modi's idea of "New India" is to bring an era of responsive people and responsive government. With a wide range of policies and initiatives that has been brought in recent years, there is an explicit transition in economics and politics of our country and the way it is structured and functions. Along with that it is important to recognise that the world respects those who value their own culture. The country's esteem has risen in the world as a result of its growing economic strength and the efforts towards cultural revival. Thus, there is an overall Renaissance in political, economic and cultural ethos of the country through the values rooted in old understanding of India. These values lie in the foundation of democracy, participation, equality and welfare. The paper would analyze this Renaissance through various policies and flagship programmes along with looking at the philosophy behind leading to the creation of New India.

1. Politics: Resurgence of Democratic Governance and Welfare

- **Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas:** From Representation to Participation India is the largest democracy in the world. While the institution of the democratic nation-state might be new to the country, the democratic tradition itself has strong roots within the Indian historical knowledge traditions. The idea of Loktantr or Prajatantr, which can be crudely translated to people's administrative system or people's polity has been the central theme of many comprehensive texts on governance. While the democratic states in the West are facing a crisis of legitimacy due to the resurgence of nationalism and rise of strong protectionist tendencies, the New Indian democratic state is experiencing a resurgence of indigenous forms of democratic administration which are centered around political participation. This is a crucial juncture in the politico-administrative landscape of a previously colonized state which has proven vital in reinforcing national pride in one's own history, identity and political traditions thereby paving the way for more sophisticated and genuine forms of self-determination.

The most important element in this newly emerging political scenario is the increased focus on political participation as opposed to the earlier emphasis on increasing representation. Representation is an instrument of procedural democracy which serves to ensure the institution of a democracy by the people. However, it delimits and underscores the importance of real-time accessibility of politico-democratic spaces for the larger masses. There is always a temporal and territorial distance between the people with a voice and their considerable criticism in the recent decades from all political quarters due to the rise of nepotism, elitism and ideological polarities which are cementing and solidifying the gap between political opinion and popular voices by lending greater credibility and power to the former while degrading the latter as anarchy.

However, the motto of New India is **Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas**. This is not merely a political slogan. Instead, it is a manifesto for a comprehensive change in the democratic processes. Through Sabka Saath Sabka Vikaas, the Indian state has expanded the horizons of democracy to the times and spaces of the masses in order to ensure and promote greater inclusivity. This commitment is starkly visible in the efforts made by the government towards encouraging a more cooperative and collaborative model of federalism which is devoid of the prolonged conflict between centralizing tendencies and demands for decentralization and is instead more pragmatic and operational. The constitution of the NITI Aayog in January, 2015 to replace the Planning Commission was a notable administrative reform which was rooted in an acknowledgement of the changing domestic and international environment which necessitated the need for greater cooperation between states on issues of national development and resolution of domestic conflicts as well as for the preservation of national sovereignty, unity and integrity in the long term. The recent visit of our Prime Minister to Jammu and Kashmir in April 2022 to participate in the celebration for the National Panchayati Raj Day and address Gram Sabhas across the country is just an example among the many.

2. National Integration: Strengthening Unity and Promoting Diversity

- **Article 370:** The repeal of Article 370 and the constitution of Ladakh as a separate Union territory in 2018 are testimony to the fact that the New Indian State is committed to enabling the constituent units of the country with greater voice in national administration as well as national policy-making so that they can determine their own welfare.
- **Digital Governance:** While new and inclusive national policy forums have indeed proved beneficial in bringing regions and subsequently people from various socio-cultural backgrounds together, the role of networking is also important. Two notable developments, namely the proliferation of digital governance and the development of transport links are crucial in this context. The indispensability of the Internet is indisputable in the 21st century. While enhancing people-to-people contact, the Internet has also simultaneously had a transformative impact on the modus operandi of deliberative democracy especially in the context of large democracies like India. The provision of government welfare services through online portals has led to the elimination of the corrupting influence of middlemen and has also made benefit transfers more accessible, equitable and fast-paced. The Cowin Portal and Aarogya Setu App are remarkable examples which made healthcare services instantly and efficiently accessible during the dire times of the Global Coronavirus Pandemic. The weekly audio-visual rendezvous of the Prime Minister with the nation through Mann ki Baat Programmes has proven to be a considerably effective arrangement which has narrowed the gap between the common man residing in remote areas of the country and the apex national leadership.
- **Pan- India Transport network:** The development of transport links has also served to bring people from all walks of life closer to their representatives and to participative political forums. The BJP government has been making persistent efforts towards creating a world class infrastructure in order to make the varied topography

of the country more accessible for both the common man and the welfare state. Various infrastructure development projects such as the Sagarmala Project (for accelerating port-led development), the Bharatmala Project (to link India from west to east), the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link project (for building the country's largest sea bridge) and the Setu Bharatam Project (making national highways free of railway level crossings) among others are underway. At the grassroots level, the government has also made large investments in the construction of link roads in rural areas to provide greater connectivity nearby urban centers. Government initiatives have also served as an impetus for enhancing regional air connectivity, increased safety measures in railways and the development of smart cities for urban transformation. All these developmental efforts have paved the way for a better India with a strong economic base.

- **New Education Policy:** While sophisticated measures towards improving networking across the national time and space are taking shape, the new government is also exploring new policy directions in both the domestic and the international sphere to exploit the additional benefits of enhanced linkage to encourage greater inclusion. At the domestic level, the New Education Policy introduced in 2020 is a comprehensive, wide-themed scheme of academic as well as technical education and training. The policy is aimed towards eliminating the compartmentalization of different educational disciplines as well as the distinction between academic and professional education with a focus on the removal of inherent hierarchies in these boundaries. NEP has also emphasized upon the commitment of the New Indian state towards ensuring greater cultural and national consciousness in order to instill national pride among the citizens which would go a long way in ensuring more participative forms of national politics and administration.
- **Ujjwala Yojana:** While the NEP is centered around inclusive education, the new government has also introduced various policy measures for the welfare of various marginalized groups in the country and especially women. The Ujjwala Yojana was launched by the Prime Minister in 2016 to distribute 50 million LPG connections to women of Below Poverty Line families. While a direct benefit transfer scheme for the online transfer of LPG subsidies directly to people's accounts is already in place, the Ujjwala Yojana is specifically focussed on women of rural households who are still forced to use firewood and other polluting and toxic fuels for cooking on a daily basis.
- **Padma Awards:** A part from inclusive and welfare policy measures, the new government has also broadened the scope of the most prominent honorary rewards arrangement for ordinary citizens namely, the Padma awards. The Padma awards are awarded to ordinary citizens for making exceptional contribution to various fields including the arts, education, industry, literature, science, acting, medicine, social service and public affairs. In the past decades, the Padma awards were almost exclusively awarded to people of a higher social and economic standing which had granted them an elitist character. However, since the BJP government has come into power, the Padma awards have become more inclusive of people from all walks of life with the awardees including social activists, Panchayat heads and tribal handicraft artisans.

Finally, in the international arena, the New Indian state has reinvented its foreign policy to demand greater voice marked with increased assertiveness for India's needs and interests. While, there is novelty in the foreign policy in the sense of its dynamicity and India's assertiveness with regard to its own interests, a greater consciousness with historical background of foreign policy is also evident. Many observers are of the opinion that India's attempts at reviving lost contact with states in Central Asia (Far East) and with Japan and Africa are a testimony to the resurgence of the Mandala theory postulated by Kautilya in his timeless text Arthashastra. While it is still early to comment on the extent to which this newly regained historical consciousness would be deployed in future foreign policy decisions, it is clear that a considerable change is underway.

3. Culture: Renaissance of Traditions and Rootedness

- **Yoga, Spirituality and Ayurveda:** India is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. It is also home to the world's oldest faith, Sanatan Dharma which has embraced a vibrant composite culture comprising various religions, civilizations and ways of life over a period of more than five millennia. The cultural Renaissance of New India is not merely a resurgence of a historical consciousness of India's historical knowledge traditions. Instead, it is a creative articulation and manifestation of this historical consciousness wherein the Old and the Ancient are taking new forms to cater to the dynamics of a rapidly rising cultural superpower. There are multiple instances of this resurgence of which Yoga, Philosophy and Architecture are prominent. On 22nd June, 2021, on the occasion of the celebration of the 7th international Yoga Day, Prime Minister Modi stated that Yoga has become a ray of hope in the present context when the entire world is fighting against the Pandemic. Yoga is India's gift to the world. The medical, spiritual and psychological benefits of Yoga have been acknowledged widely in the West. Due to concerted efforts of the BJP government, the United Nations announced the celebration of International Yoga Day on 22 June, 2015 after which it has been celebrated annually worldwide. Early thinkers of Indian philosophy dubbed Indian thought as purely spiritual, devoid of any materialist and consequently pragmatic considerations. However, that claim stands irrelevant in the face of present developments when the spirituality of India has provided an effective critique to the growing toxicity of materialist consumption and has also forged and reinvented its own indigenous understandings of a creative and productive materiality.

Apart from Yoga, the resurgence of indigenous healing traditions in the form of Ayurveda (literally, the science of living a long life) have paved the way for an emerging trend of Medical Tourism which would go a long way in enhancing the soft power of the New Indian state while making exceptional contributions to the economy. The resurgence of indigenous knowledge traditions is also a trend with regard to Philosophical knowledge. The new government is making consistent efforts towards the promotion of Sanskrit language which is one of the oldest languages in the world. Vedantic

- **Resurgence of Historical Architecture:** Ram Mandir and Vishwanath Corridor In terms of cultural revivalism, the recent initiatives by the government towards the

renovation and reconstruction of two important Hindu temples are testimony to the resurgence of Indian architectural styles accompanied by modern technical equipment which are underway towards transforming into remarkable architectural wonders. The landscape of the country has been dotted with magnificent temples adorned with incomparable designs, motifs and marvellous creations of indigenous technologies since ancient times. Temples were not merely places of pilgrimage and worship; they were also important cultural centres with vital economic and trade significance. They were also esteemed centres of learning with students from all walks of life and even from foreign countries enrolling themselves into these institutions for sophisticated education and training in Ayurveda, Engineering, Sciences, Mathematics, Sanskrit, Vedic knowledge, Martial Arts et cetera.

Colonial interventions in the Medieval and Modern ages led to the decline of Indian architectural styles and knowledge traditions associated with engineering, construction and technologies. However, the initiation of the reconstruction projects of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi are a mark of an emerging Renaissance of Indian Architecture.

The **Ram Mandir** in Ayodhya is not merely a temple. It is a symbol of an ideal form of politics and administration, namely Ram Rajya which has been vividly described in one of the most Ancient Epics of the World, Ramayana, by the great sage Valmiki. He has provided a detailed description of the sophisticated agricultural and irrigation systems of the kingdom, its complex but efficient administrative system with a well-organized bureaucracy, its demographic diversity and the effective and broad-scoped modes of social organization which ensured cooperative and collaborative progress and its flourishing and well-regulated economy. The BJP has always committed itself to a realization of the Ram Rajya in its political goals. In the same breath, the entire project of the reconstruction of the Ram Mandir upholds three supreme ideals of Ram Rajya: inclusion of diversity, encouragement of public enterprise and pride in one's own identity and endeavor. The Ram Mandir would be built in Nagara style of architecture. It is one of the prominent temple construction styles of North India. In this style, there is one shikhara. The Sun Temple at Khajuraho and the Jagannath Temple at Puri are remarkable examples of the Nagara style. The Ram Mandir would stand tall at a whopping 161-feet high and have three storeys. The temple will be designed according to the Vastushastra and Shilpishastra. All the calculations for different temple elements are highly specific.

The construction for the temple is almost entirely funded through people's voluntary contributions and the Shree Ram Janmbhoomi Teerthkshetra Trust has explicitly stated that it would not accept any kind of government contribution for temple construction. While the temple would be built with stones from the Banshi Mountains in Rajasthan, over two lakh bricks with Sri Ram inscribed on each of them, collected by devoted Karsevaks in the 1990s from various parts of the country, would be used in the foundation of the construction of the temple. Once finished, the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya would not only be a source of national pride but would also be a world-class architectural wonder

While the Ram Mandir project is still underway, the reconstruction and renovation project of the **Kashi Vishwanath Temple** in Varanasi is nearing its

completion. Varanasi is one of the oldest cities in the world with a history which goes back to more than 5000 years. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple is an Ancient Temple with a timeless history wherein it was plundered, destroyed and reconstructed many times by many colonizers and Imperialist forces. Also known as the Golden Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, the temple had become almost invisible among overlapping webs of illegal constructions. This had made renovation a gargantuan task. However, the BJP government pursued the project with immeasurable patience. People were convinced and compensated adequately over a period of two years so that the renovation project could be pursued peacefully.

The Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor Project in Varanasi has re-established the connection between the deity within the temple and the river Ganga and is aimed at ensuring easy movement of pilgrims and devotees between the ghats and the temple with special attention being paid to increasing accessibility even for differently abled people. A statement by the PMO has also informed that more than 40 ancient temples which were discovered during the work on the project would be restored.

All of these developments are not isolated moves; rather, they have to be perceived within a continuum of a resurgence of historical consciousness whereby New India is becoming aware of the richness of its own historical heritage and of the sophistication of its indigenous philosophical and knowledge traditions which are reinforcing sentiments of national pride. These are also developments which are occurring within a larger atmosphere of evolving networks of collaborative federalism. Along with evolving policy arrangements and increasing economic integration, cultural ties are being strengthened through cinema, tourism, trade and inclusive education.

4. Economy: Integration and Interconnectedness

1. Historical Financial Decisions: Demonetisation and GST

- **Demonetisation:** Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi took the boldest decision in the financial history of independent India through the policy of demonetisation in 2016. It ceased the usage of 500 and 1,000 banknotes of the Gandhi Series as legal tender in India after 9 November 2016. It also aimed at India being a cashless society in the coming times. The biggest advantage that has been seen is large sums of unaccounted money can now be flowed into the banking sector and can be simultaneously tracked. Thus the black money which was earlier used for illegal activities like terrorism, gambling, funding and inflating the price of major assets like real estate and gold has decreased up to a large extent.
- **Goods and services Tax (GST):** The biggest reform in the economy with the greatest impact to public finance, a medium against tax evasion has been brought in the form of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). It has benefitted all the stakeholders viz, government, industry and citizens and has lowered the cost of goods and services apart from improving India's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business Index and increasing the GDP by 1.5% to 2%,. Apart from rejuvenating and boosting the economy and making our products globally competitive, it has also made India a

common national market with uniform tax rates and procedures through removal of economic barriers. Thus, this major initiative has paved the way for an overall integrated economy at the national level that never happened before.

2. JAM: The power of Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile and Digital India: JAM Trinity in India has proved to be a game changer at the time of pandemic and has overall revolutionized the Indian economy. Below are the arguments which emphasize the resurgence of the Indian economy through new ways and technologies that have helped millions and have set the record for years to come.

- **JAN DHAN:** Large part of population with no banking facilities can never lead India to achieve a robust economy and higher growth. Even after seventy years of independence large part of population didn't have any avenue for savings or an opportunity for institutional credit. The launch of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana addressing this fundamental issue succeeded in opening 19.72 crore bank accounts in the first year itself. Apart from that 16.8 crore Rupay cards have been issued along with deposits worth Rs 28699.65 crores. These achievements had led this policy initiative being recorded in Guinness World Record for opening most number of bank accounts in a week numbers being 1,80,96,130. This policy has not only radically transformed the future of millions of Indians but has also played a major role in reducing corruption.
- **AADHAR:** With the motto to empower the residents of India with a unique identity and a digital platform to authenticate anywhere and anytime the scheme has become one of the most popular and biggest biometrics identification schemes in the world. The uniqueness is important to destroy all duplicates and fake identities and is crucial for acting as an identifier for various Government welfare activities. This is done through Aadhar's feature of distinctiveness, financial address with e-KYC and validation. More than 129.04 crore Aadhaar have been generated till 31 March 2021 and the number is growing up steadily on daily basis

There have been immense benefits to people as the scheme has now covered almost the entire nation along with the focus on enrolling women, children, divyangjan, poor and marginalized sections of the society. Apart from that the scheme has brought a substantial decrease in societal cost, cost of administration along with reducing corruption. Also, Aadhar had been made relevant in the line of thought that India is a democratic country and furnishing information that is personal should be a choice and not merely by force.

- **MOBILE:** One prominent gadget that has connected Indians all across the country is mobile phones. During the global pandemic, the United Payment Interface along with Cowin application and Arogya Setu Applications helped millions of Indians in vaccination and acted as a citizen-administration interface.

For the purpose of Digital Inclusion, **Natural Language Translation Mission** under Digital India aims not only to harness Natural Language Processing and AI to overcome language barrier but also aims for speech to speech translation in all Indian languages in the coming years. This will help in language technology solutions and

services involving industry and startups along with stimulating massive public participation. Since there is a Bahu Bhashiya Indian around every corner of the country, these emerging tools and technologies to progressively increase large scale translation in multiple languages of India would not only create a sense of oneness but also a Digital revolution around every corner of the country.

- **Digital India :** According to a report titled ‘Contribution of Smartphones to Digital Governance in India’, by India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) and the KPMG India, use of mobile applications in public services, offered by the central and the state governments, would be effective in increasing the efficiency of administrative processes by almost 80 per cent. It also emphasized that the processing time of government services would reduce upto a large extent through rolling of mobile applications. The report has also referred to efficiency of online processes, water connection, like land use change,, passport issuance in paperless government offices.

With its main motto being transforming India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy, its launch has proved to bring Indians into one network which has massively helped in various financial transactions and overall growth. United Payment Interface(UPI) has put India far ahead in the world where Indians can transfer the money through QR scan code and various methods at the time when most of the countries are still using traditional methods. In October 2019, UPI had crossed 1 billion transactions and 100 million active users on its platform. Noteworthy point is that nowhere in the world such a facility is available where huge payments and transactions are done through a single platform. To enhance communications, Digital India is also implementing plans to connect 2.5 million Gram Panchayats with high-speed internet, Thus the payment method has revolutionized the Indian economy.

In recent development Meghraj, the Government of India’s own Cloud with Cloud First Policy with 1000+ Applications on NIC cloud, 17,445 virtual servers , empanelment of 13 Private Cloud Service, DigiLocker cloud space for every citizen and 50+ Ministerial & PSU’s applications on Pvt. Cloud has not only helped people to efficiently use the digital technologies for educational and industrial purposes but has also helped in the rise in digital innovation. Recently what is more encouraging for the industries is the installation of optical fiber covering the entire country by 2025, as mentioned in Budget 2022.

3. **Make in India:** Make in India is all about newness since it is based on four pillars of new process, new infrastructure, new sectors and new mindset. The initiative has recognised ease of doing business as the major factor to promote entrepreneurship. Secondly existing infrastructures are strengthened through up gradation in industrial clusters and development in research and innovation. Thus this is supported by a fast paced registration system and upgraded intellectual property rights registration system. Thirdly it has also identified twenty five sectors in manufacturing, service activities and infrastructure and detailed information is being shared through the interactive web portal and professionally developed brochures. Thus, Make in India is an epitome of New India where the government is the facilitator and there is a huge transformation in the way the

government interacts with the industry. The government which earlier did not interfere much with private enterprise has now started investing in public-private partnership that has potential for welfare of large sections of people and brings employment and other opportunities for them.

II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Covid 19 pandemic has largely affected the fiscal system of almost all the countries of the world. In spite of that, Indian economy has managed to maintain its growth and the administration is tackling difficult economic situations. From a street vendor to a big businessman, every citizen of India can easily do payment and transaction sitting in any corner of the world. This was only possible due to the digitized economy which was a gift of Digital India, JAM trinity, BHIM application and other schemes collectively. In recent years various developments in the form of Institutional Infrastructure Investments are being done to accelerate the growth of the economy. Opening of Centers of Excellence in Emerging Technologies like Artificial intelligence, blockchain, drones, analytics, VFX, 3D Robotics etc, are only few among the many. India's most vibrant start up enterprise, Meity's initiative in partnership with state government, industry, academia is supporting 2265 Technology start ups, 371 start-up incubators and 22 centers of excellence. Thus the focus alignment of New India is from Import Substitution to Exports along with Production Linked Incentives. With growing trade and technology India has on the one hand maintained the stature in the international sphere whereas on the other hand it has also initiated reviving the local industries for example Boost given to Cottage, textile industries, that had been neglected during the time of globalisation.

III. CONCLUSION

A society like India where there is a prevalence of multiple cultures, languages, dialects, art forms and ideologies become a battleground when all these do not get equally acknowledged and respected. In the contemporary times, with the global rise of terrorism, poverty and other non-traditional security threats Indian society of rich culture and heritage needs a governance and administration which is based on the ideals of democracy, cooperative federalism, equality and justice. Even though these ideals are ancient and have been followed throughout history but with changing times these ideals have to be incorporated in new ways, forms and techniques. The idea of New India epitomizes the same. It is an old India but with new fervor, energy and zeal in terms of its socio-economic, political and cultural movement. A renaissance took place at a time when freedom fighters fought obscurantism and social evils in the eighteenth century. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to say that a renaissance is indeed taking place now.

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