

Indian Independence : Its 75 years Journey in terms of Legislative and Executive Achievements

Dr. Bhagwan Das Ahirwar

Principal

Govt. College, Banda

Abstract -

74 years Journey of our country has brought the revolutionary changes in our national life, abolition of Zamindaries, abolition of Privy purses of erstwhile rulers, Nationalization of Banks and Nuclear test banned treaty were not the ordinary steps. Indeed these were the revolutionary efforts to achieve the national goals laid down in the Preamble of our constitution. Ofcourse, 74 years journey of our country was not undisputable, lots of challenges like poverty, terrorism, separation movement in different parts of country slowed down the growth of India's journey. Movement in the name of caste, religion and other several grounds were arising in the way, but our National will and consensus succeeded to maintain the democratic and secular face of our Republic, without using violence.

Keywords : Eradication of Imperialism, Socialism, Equality and brotherhood, strong nation building.

There is no exaggeration to say that freedom of India is not a result of the struggle of the feudal Lords, Nawabs, Rulers, Zamidars and powerful rich people of the country, but it indeed is the result of struggle and sacrifice of the common man and revolutionary patriots of this country. During the freedom struggle common man of our country was sure about the equal distribution of means of production, wealth and availability of all type of justice. With the golden dream of abolition of all type of exploitation and discrimination, our country liberated in the midnight of 14th August 1947 after the slavery of more than three hundred years. It was the irony of our freedom that at the

time of independence our country was partitioned to in two parts; based on religion. Religion based population transfer germinated the fire of communal violence, which took the life of lakhs of Hindus and Muslims both. This situation broke the law and order, and caused lots of problems simultaneously.

Seventy five years of journey of our Independence inspires us to review the achievements of our country, which have been gained in this period from the sincere political efforts of our constitutional organs viz. Legislative, Executive and the Judiciary. In the beginning period of our nation building, we realise the first step must have been the organisation of constitutional assembly. There is no doubt to say that organization of constitution assembly and passing the objective resolution by it was the 1st step in deciding our national goals. **Commencement of constitution on 26th January 1950 could be described itself a major achievement of the journey of our independence.** Secondly - adoption of our constitution particularly its '**PREAMBLE**' which is called the philosophy of our constitution is the landmark of our national goals - Let us see how the Preamble of our constitution has described our national aims and goals -

We the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, Democratic Republic and to secure all citizen.

JUSTICE - Social, Economic and Political

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.

Equality of status and opportunity and to proote among them all.

FRATERNITY - assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.

IN OUR CONSTITUTE ASSEMBLY, this twenty sixth day of November 1949 do hereby adopt enact and give to ourselves this constitution.¹

The above Preamble was and is a constitutional direction to our state for doing sincere efforts in this regard to achieve these decided goals laid down by our constitutional makers. When we look back in the history of past to find out the efforts done by our governments in this field, we feel proud to say that our popular governments did tremendous efforts across the party line to fulfill the aspirations of our country fellows. These efforts can be analysed in the following manner in terms of the Indian Independence.

As already stated that in such a big country like India, where thousands of disparities of culture, caste and religion etc. along with, so many political and social dissents existed where more than 600 erstwhile states were in existence. Some of them were reluctant to join the Union of India. In such conditions **Universally acceptance of the constitution was a great constitutional achievement.** The major achievements gained during 75 years journey of our Independence could be mentioned as under -

1. Abolition of Zamindari.
2. Community development programme
3. Rapid development launching the 5 year plannings on Soviet based model.
4. Establishment of heavy industries for the Industrialization of country.
5. Expansion of public sector undertaking and setting up their public accountability.
6. Abolition of privy purses of erstwhile state rulers
7. Nationalization of Banks.
8. Victory in 1965, 1971 and 1999 wars with Pakistan.
9. Computerization of country and adoption of scientific approaches
10. Not accepting the international pressure upon signing the NPT and CTBT.
11. Panchayati Raj (Decentralization of powers)
12. 104 constitutional amendments
13. Reducing the age of electorate from 21 to 18.

it would be better to discuss some issues here from the above mentioned points of achievements.

As soon as the constitution came into the force, the first revolutionary step taken by Nehru government was bringing the **Zamindari Abolition Act 1950** before the parliament. This was the first major agrarian reform of the Indian government after the country's independence. After heating arguments from several groups in the parliament and resentment raised among feudal Lords, the parliament passed the bill, soon after it was challenged in Judiciary behind the fundamental right to hold the property. But Nehru government was not weak to accept its defeat, government which was committed to

bring revolutionary changes in the rural economic system of this country had succeeded to bring forth 10th constitutional amendment ignoring the decision of Judiciary. Due to the parliamentary conferment of land right around 30 lakh land tenants and share croppers were able to acquire the ownership rights over a cultivated area of 62 Lakh Acres land throughout the country.²

Launching the Five Years plan -

Five year plans were the formal model of planning adopted by the Indian government after the independence for an effective and balanced utilization of resources. Five year plans were formulated by the Planning Commission of India. The commission was tasked with the responsibility of raising the standard of living of common man of this country through the proper allocation of resources, increasing production and enabling employment opportunities for everyone.

Five year plans were focussed on making India self-reliant, enabled Industrial growth beyond the urban areas and reaching to the interior parts of country.³

First five year plan was focussed on the agriculture and energy, besides the development of the public sector and rapid industrialization. The plan had the target of 2.1 GDP growth for the fiscal year but it ended up recording growth rate of 3.6 percent⁴, whereas the Second Five year plan was focussed on hydroelectric power. Under this plan Projects and steel plants were setup at Bhilai, Raurkela and Durgapur. Coal production was increased and more railway lines were extended in the north-eastern part of the country. The Third five year plan focused on making the economy independent and self-reliant. This five year plan had a target growth rate of 5.6 percent but only 2.6 percent was achieved due to 1965 Indo-Pak war. After 1966 three annual plans were initiated between 1966-1969. The fourth five year plan was introduced in 1969. The history also repeated in 1990-91 and 1991-92. Eighth five year plan was kicked off in 1992. India has a total 12 five year plans, the last one being from 2012-17. In 2015 our present government dissolved the planning commission and replaced it with Niti Aayog. The five year plans were also discontinued.

In 2017, we have completed about five decades of planned economy. Our all plans were oriented towards achieving the special target, like Self-reliance in agriculture.

production, Industrial growth and unemployment.⁵ During the plan period our National Income had increased by 3.5 percent, Agricultural Production 2.7 percent, Industrial production 6.1 percent and the Per Capita consumption increased by 1.1 percent. According to government sources poverty came down to 18.1 percent in 1993-19967. We would have to accept that, inspite doing all efforts in this field we could not succeed in achieving our aims. Poverty and unemployment had always increased day by day. More and more people are feeling frustrated and the number of agitations are increasing every year.

Community Development Programme -

The community development programme was inaugurated on 2nd October 1952 by 1st Prime Minister of India Shri Jawaharlal Nehru from Nagod district of Rajasthan. On this occasion Pandit Nehru said, "This programme is not so much for the material achievements that they would bring about but much more so, because they seem to buildup the community and the individual to make later builder of his own village centre of India in the large sense."⁸ It was the biggest rural reconstruction and development programme under taken by government of India. It was described as the testament of emancipation. The declaration of war against the poverty, illiteracy and disease.

According to professor Shyamacharan Dubey the community development programme has its two aims, 1st - achieving substantial production in agricultural area and considerable progress in the sphere of communication, rural health and education and Second aim of the programme was transforming the socio-economic life of the villages through a process of Integral cultural change.

Thus the programme was the instrument in raising the standards of living of rural people and re-constructing the rural India.

At the time of inauguration of this programme 55 community projects were launched. Later the programme was extended in the wider areas of the country. The ambitious programmes like, Jawahar Rojgar Yojna, Nehru Rojgar Yojna, Indira Awas Yojna has been launched, million crores rupees of budget was allocated but the programme has not yielded the desirable result, because of administrative machinery, which was responsible for its implementation was actually not aware of the realities of

rural India. It is worth to mention here that for a vast country like India with as many as 5,50,000 villages having a hoary history and diversities of caste, race, language, religion, culture and feudal land lordship, a period of five decades is insufficient to bring about any substantial changes.

Nationalization of Bank in 1969 -

The idea to nationalise private sector bank and insurance company was germinated in All India Congress Committee Report 1948. The economic programme committee of the All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C) in its report submitted in 1948, has strongly recommended that Banking and Insurance should be Nationalized as a part of total package for establishing a just social order.⁹ This recommendation was endorsed by AICC at its meeting held in Bombay in 1948 and also at the annual session held in Jaipur in December 1948.

In order to achieve the national goal of Democratic Socialism, The Imperial Bank of India was already nationalized in 1955 and was re-named as State Bank of India. Similarly the insurance sector was nationalized in 1956 by setting up the Life Insurance corporation of India (LIC).

In 1965 the war with Pakistan and failure of monsoon and drought over-burdened the exchequer. As a result the public finance sealed the fate of IIIrd five year plan and the same was put on hold. At the congress working committee meeting held in the second week of May 1967, economic issue came up for serious discussion, many members wanted to know exactly what was the party goal of Democratic socialism and how it could be achieved.¹⁰ In this discussion Bank Nationalization became the focal issue. Many senior members like Y.B. Chavan, Jagjivan Ram, K. Kamraj were in view for immediate implementation of social control over the Bank. Although finance minister Shri Morarji Desai pleaded for cautious approach. He tried to find middle of the road solution and came up with the idea of Social Control over the Banks under Banking Laws Amendment Act 1968.

In the same year, GDP Growth rate became negative, inflation came in double digits and foreign exchange was too declined. These economic conditions led the government to devalue the Rupee from 4.76 per U.S. dollar to Rs. 7.50 per U.S. dollar.

a part from such devaluation export duties were levied on dozen commodities. Indian banks were not willing to provide credit to agriculture sector, they were distributing the loans to Industrialists only, where as some private banks were also operated by them. The share in agriculture credit was 2 percent in 1951 and remained unchanged till 1967 whereas the share in industrial sector was increased from 34 percent to 64.3 percent in the same period. Prime minister Smt. Indira Gandhi also needed a serious instrument to reposition herself as a radical reformer.

These conditions led to the nationalization of these 14 private Banks. Indira Gandhi raised the issue of nationalization of Bank on 12 July 1969 leading to the resignation of Finance minister Morarji Bhai Desai on July 16, 1969. She took over the finance ministry portfolio. I.G. Patel, Chief Economic advisor of the government was asked to make the legislature in mere 24 hours¹¹, which he did along with RBI governor L.K. Jha on July 17th 1969 in RBI Guest House. I.G. Patel managed to convince the Prime minister for nationalization of only major banks whose capital was 50 crore and above. Mr. D.N. Ghosh wrote in his book 'No Regret' that - "He along with Mr. P.N. Haksar and Mr. Bakshi Chairperson (IFCI) spent the eventful night on July 17 preparing the legislation.¹² Further he also wrote that it was crucial to come up with the Banking Legislation by July 19. The Banking companies acquisition and transfer of undertaking Act 1969 laid down the conditions for nationalization of 14 big banks. Subsequently 06 big banks were also nationalized in 1980.

Abolition of Privy Purse -

At the time of independence 553 princely states were ruling by 48 percent of territory of undivided India and 28 percent of its population. Mr. Sardar Patel persuaded these princes to sign the 'Instrument of Accession'. In return for surrendering their powers to government of India they were promised to get tax free amount for their personal maintenance. Such promises were granted guarantee under Article 291 and 362 of our constitution.

The demand for the abolition of these Privy purse was continued after the independence. As already stated that Smt. Indira Gandhi was believed to bring the radical socialism, whereas these were against the principle of equality and reflecting the

feudal character of society. Hence a bill to abolish these privy purse was passed by the parliament as 26 constitutional amendment 1971, to finally abolish these privileges. It was argued that these privy purses were against the concept of equal rights to all citizens and to reduce the government revenue deficit.

Not signing the NPT/CTBT and declaring as the nuclear power -

By the end of world war II, United States of America had prepared the nuclear bomb. This monopoly of America was challenged when USSR successfully tested its 1st Nuclear bomb, in May 1951 and in November 1951. USSR also tested its Hydrogen power capacity. Subsequently Britain, France and China also jumped themselves in this nuclear race.

Thus the competition in the field of nuclear arms began. Amidst the tough competition of nuclear weapons. Three nuclear power viz. USSR, USA and Britain signed the Nuclear Test Banned Treaty on 5th August 1963 at Moscow and accepted it on 10th October 1963. Similarly, on 1st July 1968 the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into existence, when all nuclear power of the world signed the treaty including 50 other countries. The objective of the treaty was to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology to promote cooperation in peaceful usage of nuclear energy for achieving the aim of disarmament.¹¹ India did not signed this treaty because it was differentiating between nuclear powers and countries not having nuclear capacity.¹² It was disallowing the later to gain such nuclear capacity. India was facing big challenge from the neighbouring nuclear power like China. Hence, India wanted to remain open his option about nuclear testing.

The treaty was expiring on 1995. Therefore, an international conference was called by the UNO in this regard in 1996. About 178 countries of the world attended such conference. NPT was replaced by CTBT (Comprehensive Test Banned Treaty) and opened for signature to the entire world. Amongst the international pressure India again refused to sign the CTBT on the ground that treaty was discriminative among nuclear and non-nuclear countries. India wanted to see nuclear free world in real sense, meaning nuclear powers to destroy their nuclear weapons in a specific manner and time.

The importance of not signing the NPT was absolutely proved, when in the leadership of Late Smt. Indira Gandhi India carried out its 1st nuclear test in Pokhran of Rajasthan for peaceful purposes such as generating and using the energy for Agriculture, Irrigation and other developmental purposes. Similarly, not signing CTBT also became very significant when in the leadership of Late. Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, India carried out five nuclear tests in the same place of 1971 nuclear test. While carrying such tests Indian leadership was mentally prepared about its international reactions, Atal Bihari Vajpayee government did not bother about these international pressures. Government successfully accepted the challenges of downfalling the National economy due to strict economic sanctions imposed by international community.

Victory over Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and 1999 Kargil War -

In 1962 sudden attack by China was unexpected because India had signed the Panchsheel Agreement with China in 1954. Nehru did tremendous international efforts to ensure the permanent seat to China in UN Security Council. Even before independence All India Congress Party passed the resolution in favour of China during 1931 China-Japan War. Therefore being a friendly country China was never expected to attack India. Our country was busy in its re-construction process and was not prepared for such type of attack. Due to ignoring the security intelligence alerts and having Nehru's much confidence over China, India got defeated. The defeat from China gave us lesson and India paid full attention towards its border security. In 1965 we recieved partial victory from Pakistan war but in 1971 war, India succeeded to divide its enemy and creating our favourable country- Bangladesh. There is no doubt to say that these wars created us panic in the field of economy. Our economy was effected badly. GDP growth became negative and inflation came in two digits, foreign exchange was declined. Even Indian economy was forced to put his 3rd five year plan on hold.

Reducing the age of voting from 21 to 18 Years -

Knowing the public opinion and aspiration in general our parliament has passed the 61st Constitutional Amendment bill in 1988. In this amendment, article 326 of our constitution, which required the minimum age of Electorate for the election of Lok Sabha and State assembly has reduced the age of electorate from age of 21 years to 18 years.

This amendment provided to youth an opportunity to give vent to their feelings and became a part of political process.

We feel proud to mention here that our constitution has never been the barrier in the 74 years progressive journey of our country. Its flexibility always remained helpful for achieving our national goals. Consequently our parliament has succeeded to make about 104 constitutional amendments as and when needed. 73rd and 74th amendment may be described as land mark in the history of Indian democracy, through which Democratic decentralization of political powers by establishing the Panchayati Raj became possible. Panchayati Raj was the dream of our Mahatma Gandhi to bring the brightness and happiness in rural India, but how it has yielded? It is better to mention no comments here.

Thus, we have no doubt to say that 74 years Journey of our country has brought the revolutionary changes in our national life. Abolition of Zamindaries,

Abolition of Privy purses of earstwhile rulers, Nationalization of Banks and Nuclear test banned treaty were not the ordinary steps. Indeed these were the revolutionary efforts to achieve the national goals laid down in the Preamble of our constitution. Ofcourse 74 years journey of our country was not undisputable, lots of challenges like poverty, terrorism, separation movement in different parts of country slowed down the growth of India's journey. Movement in the name of caste, religion and other several grounds were arising in the way, but our National will and consensus succeeded to maintain the democratic and secular face of our Republic. Although socialism, which is an integral part of our constitutional philosophy has not suited to our political leaders, particularly after 1991. They converted the country's economy into the liberalization and globalization. This is the such capitalist concept which is not ignoring only the welfare of poors but depriving them from their resources of lifehood and pushing them into the hail of poverty and darkness.

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