

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

December 2021



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 12

Issue 9

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Editor : Ms. Garima Sharma, B-45, Batra Colony, Village Bharatpur, P.O. Kaushal Ganj, Bilaspur Distt. Rampur (U.P)

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 12

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

THE TRUTH ABOUT MODERN POLITY – 5

(CONTINUED FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2021 ISSUE)

4. THE PRESENT CONDITION OF INDIA

B. The Current Scenario

All who have cared to look seriously into the past history of India know how during the last millennium it got subjected to plunder, murder, enslavement and rape of its people and land by the souls hypnotized and fallen under the net of the distorted^[3] Sematic religions. According to some estimates, about 80 to 100 million Hindus perished as a result of persistent wars, unspeakable cruelties, tortures, injustices and mass starvations during the bloody millennium – an unsurpassed historical record of sufferings to which, perhaps, no other people had ever been subjected to.

As we had seen in the earlier section, how after the Independence in 1947, there ensued the rule of Macaulay's children who had virtually no understanding or emotional sympathy for India's great spiritual culture. Their approach, inspite of all their professions to the contrary – uttered only to keep peace with the masses still practicing or clinging to

^[3] It is well known in spiritual and Occult circles that the Life (Vital) Powers – the popular Adversaries of the Divine – have always attempted to falsify – and often most successfully in the absence of a continuous spiritual tradition – the Original Teachings of the Great Spiritual Founders of Religions. As pointed out by Sri Aurobindo in 1936, "...What previous vital descents have done is to falsify the Light that came down as in the history of Christianity where it took possession of the teaching and distorted it and deprived it of any widespread fulfilment." (CWSA 32: 605)

their ancient practices and roots of culture – was basically to copy the West and they began pushing the country in that direction. In charting the course for the economy, the inspiration was drawn from the socialistic and communistic approach of the Eastern Europe, just as the recourse to parliamentary democracy was taken under the inspiration of the liberal Western Europe – especially the English. Most of the laws and the legal and administrative system set up by the English for their purposes was kept intact even after they left. Even the newly drafted constitution of 1950 is in effect, more or less, a copy of the Act of 1935 under which Congress and Muslim League ministries were formed after the elections were held under its provisions. The socialistic approach was abandoned after a standstill of four decades. As we have seen before, during the course of the past seven decades, the political and administrative machinery inherited from the English has grown so extensive, all-pervasive and intricate that it is proving inimical to the health and functioning of the individual and national life. In the following pages an attempt is made to describe the present condition by way of discussing the background and the present form of some of the most serious problems facing the country.

(i) Secularism

a. The Historical Background and Record

The principles of secularism were not in the original Constitution of 1950 but were inserted into it in 1976 during the Emergency by way of the forty second Amendment by the then Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi. The concept of secularism implying no discrimination – favour or disfavour of people simply because of their faith in a particular sect or religion came to be

practised in Europe to prevent any repetition of its history of the large scale persecution and murder of people on religious grounds. For example, the war waged by successive Catholic and Protestant Monarchs on people following a faith different from their own. The bitter memories of these experiences led to the introduction of this principle in European polity.

Although the principle of secularism was inducted into the Constitution of India only in 1976, most liberal leaders like Pundit Nehru had begun to mouth slogans of secularism along with democratic socialism from the very beginning of the nineteen-fifties. These ideas were popular throughout the non-aligned nations of Asia and Africa which resented their colonial masters and looked up to East European socialist and communist states because of their avowed sympathy for all the nations that had or were struggling against the imperialism of the West European countries. Initially, the Congress party of Pundit Nehru brought these ideas to the forefront of the national consciousness and began, increasingly, to pursue them as articles of faith. Pundit Nehru never really felt the need for the appeasement of various groups to stay in power. So overwhelming was the dominance of the INC (Indian National Congress) in the first twenty years after Independence that it faced practically no threat from the opposition – left or right. Besides, the lack of any empathy for India's traditional spiritual Hindu culture kept him in the good graces of the Christians and Muslims. Mrs Indira Gandhi felt the need to go out of her way to appease the minorities and attract the votes of the poor masses through slogans like 'Garibi hatao' and the like, especially after the debacle of 1977 when for the first time the INC lost power at the Centre after an undisputed rule during the first thirty years after Independence. In light of the hopeless/ disruptive division of the Hindus into castes, languages and

ideologies, regional parties sprang up in UP, Bihar, Bengal, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala who went whole hog and outdid the Congress in the appeasement of Muslims and dominant (united) caste groups in these states. This at times led to the end of the uninterrupted rule of the INC in these states and often – for a varying number of years – at the Centre where the INC was forced, even when in power, to seek the help of these regional secular parties and the Left parties which had their strong base in Kerala and West Bengal. The INC, Left and regional secular parties which naturally competed for the votes of the Muslims, began attempts to outdo each other in trying to pose as more secular or a greater lover/supporter of the Muslims. Since the leadership of these parties was mostly Hindu – although in name only – they had to expressly make a show of their secular credentials by visiting and paying respect at Muslim shrines and specially celebrating Muslim festivals and shunning Hindu festivals. They tried their best to be seen as not visiting temples or participating in Hindu festivals.

Since competition was cut-throat on this front, by the time of the UPA II government, the impeccable credentials for secularism came to imply a show of dislike for all that pertained to Hindu religion and culture – which was already being shown in poor light in history and literature that was promoted and written with this kind of mentality. It often went to the extent of sympathising – not always openly expressed – with Muslims even if they were known terrorists who attacked Hindu shrines and the country’s national institutions. Sri Tarek Fatah, a free and learned Islamic thinker, has most aptly defined this “Secularism”. According to him India is a country which has a superior culture, yet it is the only country where people are taught to hate their great culture. A great effort is made to educate people to eulogise the attackers

and invaders who came to destroy this culture. And this foolishness is called secularism.

The Hindu population of India has never been really politically organised around the idea or the basis of its culture and religion (Sanatana Dharma) for it had never given itself any name. The people belonging to this land came to be called Hindu by foreigners according to the name of the famous river, Sindhu. This culture gave itself no name because, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, "...it set itself no sectarian limits; it claimed no universal adhesion, asserted no sole infallible dogma, set up no single narrow path or gate of salvation; it was less a creed or cult than a continuously enlarging tradition of the Godward endeavour of the human spirit. An immense many-sided many-staged provision for a spiritual self-building and self-finding, it had some right to speak of itself by the only name it knew, the eternal religion, *sanātana dharma*. It is only if we have a just and right appreciation of this sense and spirit of Indian religion that we can come to an understanding of the true sense and spirit of Indian culture." (CWSA 20: 179)

The secular writers are never tired of pointing out that it was the incapacity of the Hindus to unite that was responsible for their subjection to the yoke of the foreigners during the last millennium. A digression here is necessary to clear a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding that prevails on this issue which is universally cited and accepted as an incontrovertible proof of a basic defect in Indian Culture in the political field, however great it may have been in the field of religion and culture. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "A great deal has been said and written about the inability of Indians to unite, the want of a common patriotism ... Admitting even in their full degree the force of these strictures, – all of them are not altogether true or rightly stated or vitally

applicable to the matter, – they are only symptoms and we have still to seek for the deeper causes.” (CWSA 20: 427-28)

“The whole basis of the Indian mind is its spiritual and inward turn, its propensity to seek the things of the spirit and the inner being first and foremost and to look at all else as secondary, dependent, to be handled and determined in the light of the higher knowledge and as an expression, a preliminary, field or aid or at least a pendent to the deeper spiritual aim, – **a tendency therefore to create whatever it had to create first on the inner plane and afterwards in its other aspects. This mentality and this consequent tendency to create from within outwards being given, it was inevitable that the unity India first created for herself should be the spiritual and cultural oneness.** It could not be, to begin with, a political unification effected by an external rule centralised, imposed or constructed, as was done in Rome or ancient Persia, by a conquering kingdom or the genius of a military and organising people. It cannot, I think, justly be said that this was a mistake or a proof of the unpractical turn of the Indian mind and that the single political body should have been created first and afterwards the spiritual unity could have securely grown up in the vast body of an Indian national empire.

The problem that presented itself at the beginning was that of a huge area containing more than a hundred kingdoms, clans, peoples, tribes, races, in this respect another Greece, but a Greece on an enormous scale, almost as large as modern Europe^[4]. **As**

^[4]Europe has still to achieve political unity – a United States of Europe – and even economic unity is partial. It is a great mistake to single out and blame India on this score. Chinese society faced a similar problem and it was only the levelling steam-roller of Maoism that was able to impose political unity in China.

in Greece a cultural Hellenic unity was necessary to create a fundamental feeling of oneness, here too and much more imperatively a conscious spiritual and cultural unity of all these peoples was the first, the indispensable condition without which no enduring unity could be possible. The instinct of the Indian mind and of its great Rishis and founders of its culture was sound in this matter.

And even if we suppose that an outward imperial unity like that of the Roman world could have been founded among the peoples of early India by military and political means, we must not forget that the Roman unity did not endure, that even the unity of ancient Italy founded by the Roman conquest and organisation did not endure, and it is not likely that a similar attempt in the vast reaches of India without the previous spiritual and cultural basis would have been of an enduring character. It cannot be said either, even if the emphasis on spiritual and cultural unity be pronounced to have been too engrossing or excessive and the insistence on political and external unity too feeble, that the effect of this precedence has been merely disastrous and without any advantage. It is due to this original peculiarity, to this indelible spiritual stamp, to this underlying oneness amidst all diversities that if India is not yet a single organised political nation, she still survives and is still India.” (CWSA 20: 429-30)

“After all the spiritual and cultural is the only enduring unity and it is by a persistent mind and spirit much more than by an enduring physical body and outward organisation that the soul of a people survives. This is a truth the positive Western mind may be unwilling to understand or concede, and yet its proofs are written across the whole story of the ages. The ancient

nations, contemporaries of India, and many younger born than she are dead and only their monuments left behind them. Greece and Egypt exist only on the map and in name, for it is not the soul of Hellas or the deeper nation-soul that built Memphis which we now find at Athens or at Cairo. Rome imposed a political and a purely outward cultural unity on the Mediterranean peoples, but their living spiritual and cultural oneness she could not create, and therefore the east broke away from the west, Africa kept no impress of the Roman interlude, and even the western nations still called Latin could offer no living resistance to barbarian invaders and had to be reborn by the infusion of a foreign vitality to become modern Italy, Spain and France. But India still lives and keeps the continuity of her inner mind and soul and spirit with the India of the ages.

Invasion and foreign rule, the Greek, the Parthian and the Hun, the robust vigour of Islam, the levelling steam-roller heaviness of the British occupation and the British system, the enormous pressure of the Occident have not been able to drive or crush the ancient soul out of the body her Vedic Rishis made for her.

At every step, under every calamity and attack and domination, she has been able to resist and survive either with an active or a passive resistance. And this she was able to do in her great days by her spiritual solidarity and power of assimilation and reaction, expelling all that would not be absorbed, absorbing all that could not be expelled, and even after the beginning of the decline she was still able to survive by the same force, abated but not slayable, retreating and maintaining for a time her ancient political system in the south, throwing up under the pressure of Islam Rajput and Sikh and Mahratta to defend her ancient self and its

idea, persisting passively where she could not resist actively, condemning to decay each empire that could not answer her riddle or make terms with her, awaiting always the day of her revival. And even now it is a similar phenomenon that we see in process before our eyes. And what shall we say then of the surpassing vitality of the civilisation that could accomplish this miracle and of the wisdom of those who built its foundation not on things external but on the spirit and the inner mind and made a spiritual and cultural oneness the root and stock of her existence and not solely its fragile flower, the eternal basis and not the perishable superstructure?” (CWSA 20: 430-31)

Now to revert to the main theme, during the years of the rise and domination of the INC and its love of secularism and the increasingly perverted form it took, the true spirit of India was not altogether asleep and was throwing up movements and organisations sympathetic – though not fully expressive of its depths and genius – to it and designed to protect it from the acid of movements and organisations aiming to remould India into the image of Western European (secular democratic) and East European (socialistic) social, political and economic structure and thought. The RSS – a cultural and national service and security organisation – was founded in 1925 by Dr. Hedgewar and its political wing, Jana Sangha (renamed BJP in 1981) was founded by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in 1955. These organisations have been branded communal and therefore untouchable by the “secular” parties occupying most of the political bandwidth. Even the BJP did not escape the secular infection and its prominent leaders began to manifest its effects more and more to escape from the political stigma and untouchability. As the dissatisfaction with the Congress and its dictatorial tendencies grew, the opposition to it got organised

and the Jana Sangha got its first chance of a share in political power during the little over two years of the Janata government during 1977-79. It was for the first time in 1998 that the NDA coalition government headed by BJP's Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was formed and ruled for over six years. For all the people who had longed to see a government sympathetic to India's spiritual Hindu culture it was the dream come true. However, the short-sighted political instinct of the BJP leaders made them behave like any other secular party and the Vajpayee government also sought to appease the minorities for their votes without worrying – because of their established Hindu credentials – about a possible Hindu backlash which secular parties had to take account of in their calculations. A good number of people, sympathetic to the Hindu national cause, found that they could no longer take the risk of such a government coming to power again and the NDA was replaced by the UPA, headed by Mrs Sonia Gandhi with the titular Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh. The UPA won for a second time in the 2009 election and felt more secure because of the BJP's poorer performance this time and further when the BJP's Sri Lal Krishna Advani got side lined when he tried to establish his secular credentials by visiting Pakistan and going so far as to brand Sri Jinnah as secular. The secular agenda of the Congress and the Left approached rabid proportions during the last two years of the UPA II government.

Sri Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat during the riots of February 2002 in the state for which he was castigated by the secular media. When the UPA came to power at the Centre in 2004, many enquiry commissions were appointed with a view to somehow, anyhow, implicate Sri Modi of wrongdoing during these riots. All such attempts failed and no fault could be found in Sri Modi's handling of the crisis during which the state

government machinery had genuinely worked hard to minimize the damage. Sri Narendra Modi was re-elected in December 2002, 2007 and 2012 and continued as the CM of Gujarat until he became the Prime Minister after the NDA won an overwhelming majority in the parliamentary elections of 2014 under his leadership.

Under Sri Narendra Modi's leadership the BJP recovered the trust of all the nationalist elements of the country which it had lost during the NDA government under the leadership of Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. After getting a feel for things at the national level of governance, Sri Modi has been busy, primarily, (i) to assert India's independent views and to secure a prominent place for the country in the community of nations – something that, given its contribution to the world in various fields and its size, it deserved all along but never really had except in the first decade after Independence under Pundit Nehru; (ii) to wield together diverse elements – castes and language groups and geographical areas – giving each its due and proper place in the lap of Mother India. This meant a reassertion of the claims of India's traditional/original spiritual culture – the Sanatana Dharma – to play a leading role in the country and the world at large to uplift the present conditions of humanity. During the first seven decades after Independence the country was moving to wholly copy not only the legal, political, economic, educational, institutional set-up which was already in place at the time of Independence in 1947, but also the values and culture of the West in all the spheres of activity and in all walks of life. As pointed out before, this resulted into the pursuit by politicians of a worse form of appeasement of Semitic religious groups and castes for getting votes. It all became so disgustingly acute that, more and more, everything got judged according to a person's

caste or religion with the utmost importance being given to the most organised castes or minority religions. If one was simply a Hindu and religious, it was a great political liability and one ran the risk of being branded communal (reactionary in Pundit Nehru's days) or at least not-secular.

During the first few years after Independence, the memory of Partition and the atrocities perpetrated against Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan kept the notion of secularism from showing its true distorted form but after Mrs Indira Gandhi came to power in 1966, the perversion began to increase. It progressively deteriorated under Sri Rajiv Gandhi and reached its culmination during the UPA II government. All these years Hindus remained somewhat oblivious of the growing perversion of secularism and no effective organisation of Hindus took place until the 1990s when the agitation for Ram Mandir led to the sacrifice of the Kar-Sevaks in Ayodhya. As a result of this Hindu awakening, Sri A.B.Vajpayee, heading the newly formed NDA, came to power in 1998. Such was the policy pursued by the NDA that the Hindus were glad to see it thrown out and welcomed the UPA government. The conduct of the UPA put tremendous pressure on the Hindus to get together but they could not repose their faith in the BJP given the tendency of some of its top leaders to appease the minorities for political gain. When Sri Narendra Modi was chosen as the Prime Ministerial candidate of the BJP for the 2014 parliamentary election, the Hindu psyche recognised that they may have found a leader who could be trusted to follow a nationalist course and enable the neglected and maligned majority to assert its culture and values and make them count in the forming of the national policies.

During his first tenure, being new to national politics, Sri Modi took his time to feel the ground and then began to change

course. All along, the secular brigade tried their best to discredit the Modi government both within the Parliament – where passage of bills by the Modi government was obstructed – and outside. Pakistan and Pak supported terrorism was buttressed by the opposition denying the authenticity of all strong, effective measures taken by the Modi government against Pakistan. The media and secular intellectuals eagerly joined these efforts and for months before the Parliamentary Elections of 2019, a persistent effort was made to create an impression that the ‘chowkidar chor’ Prime Minister Modi and his government were on their way out to be replaced by the government of a secular alliance.

The Parliamentary elections of 2019 decisively gave Sri Narendra Modi an even more resounding mandate than the previous one in 2014. This gave Sri Modi the opportunity to begin implementing the national agenda of the BJP which it has been promising for a long time. The forming of Congress governments in the states of Rajasthan, MP and Chhattisgarh after the elections at the end of 2018 and the failure of the BJP to form a government in Maharashtra had kept up the hopes of the secular brigade and they have been trying to block Sri Modi’s efforts to fulfil the BJP’s promised national agenda and even to unseat him by inciting minorities and some intellectuals against his government. The persistent violent demonstrations against the Citizenship Amendment Act were a case in point. The passing of the Triple Talak Bill, the abrogation of Article 370 and the Supreme Court’s unanimous verdict on the Ram Mandir had so unnerved the secularists that they went all out to oppose the government after the Parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act. None of the above actions, nor the proposed Uniform Civil Code infringe

in any way on the equal rights or interests of the minorities but only remove some of the special privileges and glaring distortions against the constitutional provisions of the fundamental equality of all Indian citizens. The national psyche has been awakened and is so charged that none of the above actions of the Modi government can be undone by the secularists even if they were to come to power at the Centre in the near future. The country is on its way to assert its identity and to the flowering of its great spiritual culture. During the forthcoming resurgence of India, after a millennium of cruel subjugation to a foreign yoke, Indians will witness a growing spirit of nationalism fed by the increasingly glowing achievements of their country and their countrymen around the world in all fields of endeavour. For the first time, after a very difficult millennium, Indians will have something to take pride in and this true pride and, based on it, the growing spirit of nationalism will tend to dissolve all the problems of our collective life which have become so very acute due to a blind and mechanical following of the western spirit and forms in this field. We all know that the problem had become so critical in the political field that it was threatening the integrity and even the very existence of the country. Love of power, money and progeny had become the common denominator of all the participants in the political arena. Now, with coming of the new Modi government, the flowering of the spirit of true – true, because consecrated to the divine as India has always been – nationalism will increasingly transmute all these lower loves into an all-consuming love for the Motherland.

All this does not mean that India will stop at Nationalism, for, as pointed by Sri Aurobindo during the first decade of the last century when he was the heart and soul of the then Nationalist

spirit, “In India we do not recognise the nation as the highest synthesis to which we can rise. There is a higher synthesis, humanity; beyond that there is a still higher synthesis, this living, suffering, aspiring world of creatures, the synthesis of Buddhism; there is a highest of all, the synthesis of God, and that is the Hindu synthesis, the synthesis of Vedanta. With us today Nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the chance of realising the others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity. ... A man must be strong and free in himself before he can live usefully for others, so must a nation. But that does not justify us in forgetting the ultimate aim of evolution. God in the nation becomes the realisation of the first moment to us because the nation is the chosen means or condition through which we rise to the higher synthesis, God in humanity, God in all creatures, God in Himself and ourself.” (CWSA 8 : 84-85)

At present India has to chart its course out of two opposite attractions that we have been facing since the nineteenth century and still do – the move towards the orthodox religious spirit or the modern materialistic scientific culture of the West. With the new revival of the nationalistic Hindu spirit this struggle, which seemed to have been moving decisively towards the materialism of the West during the last seventy years after Independence, has become animated again. Even though there is practically hardly any risk of India falling into any kind of orthodoxy, whether native (Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist) or semitic (Muslim or Christian) still we cannot completely rule out the possibility. More than a hundred years ago, Swami Vivekananda – seeing behind appearances with his penetrating spiritual gaze – had seen this issue very clearly. He stated,

“There are two great obstacles on our path in India, the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern European civilisation. Of these two, I vote for the old orthodoxy, and not for the Europeanised system; for the old orthodox man may be ignorant, he may be crude, but he is a man, he has a faith, he has strength, he stands on his own feet; while the Europeanised man has no backbone, he is a mass of heterogeneous ideas picked up at random from every source – and these ideas are unassimilated, undigested, unharmonised. He does not stand on his own feet, and his head is turning round and round. Where is the motive power of his work? – in a few patronizing pats from the English people. His schemes of reforms, his vehement vituperations against the evils of certain social customs, have, as the mainspring, some European patronage. Why are some of our customs called evils? Because the Europeans say so. That is about the reason he gives. I would not submit to that. Stand and die in your own strength, if there is any sin in the world, it is weakness; avoid all weakness, for weakness is sin, weakness is death. These unbalanced creatures are not yet formed into distinct personalities; what are we to call them – men, women, or animals? While those old orthodox people were staunch and were men. There are still some excellent examples, and the one I want to present before you now is your Raja of Ramnad. Here you have a man than whom there is no more zealous a Hindu throughout the length and breadth of this land; here you have a prince than whom there is no prince in this land better informed in all affairs, both oriental and occidental, who takes from every nation whatever he can that is good. “Learn good knowledge with all devotion from the lowest caste. Learn the way to freedom, even if it comes from a Pariah, by serving him. If a

woman is a jewel, take her in marriage even if she comes from a low family of the lowest caste.” Such is the law laid down by our great and peerless legislator, the divine Manu. This is true. Stand on your own feet, and assimilate what you can; learn from every nation, take what is of use to you. But remember that as Hindus everything else must be subordinated to our own national ideals. Each man has a mission in life, which is the result of all his infinite past Karma. Each of you was born with a splendid heritage, which is the whole of the infinite past life of your glorious nation. Millions of your ancestors are watching, as it were, every action of yours, so be alert. And what is the mission with which every Hindu child is born? Have you not read the proud declaration of Manu regarding the Brahmin where he says that the birth of the Brahmin is “for the protection of the treasury of religion”? I should say that that is the mission not only of the Brahmin, but of every child, whether boy or girl, who is born in this blessed land “for the protection of the treasury of religion”. And every other problem in life must be subordinated to that one principal theme. That is also the law of harmony in music. There may be a nation whose theme of life is political supremacy; religion and everything else must become subordinate to that one great theme of its life. But here is another nation whose great theme of life is spirituality and renunciation, whose one watchword is that this world is all vanity and a delusion of three days, and everything else, whether science or knowledge, enjoyment or powers, wealth, name, or fame, must be subordinated to that one theme. The secret of a true Hindu’s character lies in the subordination of his knowledge of European sciences and learning, of his wealth, position, and name, to that one principal theme which is inborn in every Hindu child – the spirituality

and purity of the race. Therefore between these two, the case of the orthodox man who has the whole of that life-spring of the race, spirituality, and the other man whose hands are full of Western imitation jewels but has no hold on the life-giving principle, spirituality – of these, I do not doubt that every one here will agree that we should choose the first, the orthodox, because there is some hope in him – he has the national theme, something to hold to; so he will live, but the other will die. Just as in the case of individuals, if the principle of life is undisturbed, if the principal function of that individual life is present, any injuries received as regards other functions are not serious, do not kill the individual, so, as long as this principal function of our life is not disturbed, nothing can destroy our nation. But mark you, if you give up that spirituality, leaving it aside to go after the materialising civilisation of the West, the result will be that in three generations you will be an extinct race; because the backbone of the nation will be broken, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built will be undermined, and the result will be annihilation all round.” (CWSV 3: 153-54) “... the way out is that first and foremost we must keep a firm hold on spirituality – that inestimable gift handed down to us by our ancient forefathers. Did you ever hear of a country where the greatest kings tried to trace their descent not to kings, not to robber-barons living in old castles who plundered poor travellers, but to semi-naked sages who lived in the forest? Did you ever hear of such a land? This is the land. In other countries great priests try to trace their descent to some king, but here the greatest kings would trace their descent to some ancient priest. Therefore, whether you believe in spirituality or not, for the sake of the national life, you have to get a hold on spirituality and keep to it. Then stretch the

other hand out and gain all you can from other races, but everything must be subordinated to that one ideal of life; and out of that a wonderful, glorious, future India will come – I am sure it is coming – a greater India than ever was. Sages will spring up greater than all the ancient sages; and your ancestors will not only be satisfied, but I am sure, they will be proud from their positions in other worlds to look down upon their descendants, so glorious, and so great.

Let us all work hard, my brethren; this is no time for sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there ready waiting. She is only sleeping. Arise and awake and see her seated here on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was – this motherland of ours. The idea of God was nowhere else ever so fully developed as in this motherland of ours, for the same idea of God never existed anywhere else. Perhaps you are astonished at my assertion; but show me any idea of God from any other scripture equal to ours; they have only clan-Gods, the God of the Jews, the God of the Arabs, and of such and such a race, and their God is fighting the Gods of the other races. But the idea of that beneficent, most merciful God, our father, our mother, our friend, the friend of our friends, the soul of our souls, is here and here alone. And may He who is the Shiva of the Shaivites, the Vishnu of the Vaishnavites, the Karma of the Karmis, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jina of the Jains, the Jehovah of the Christians and the Jews, the Allah of the Mohammedans, the Lord of every sect, the Brahman of the Vedantists, He the all-pervading, whose glory has been known only in this land – may He bless us, may He help us, may He give strength unto us, energy unto us, to carry this idea into practice. May that which we have listened to and studied

become food to us, may it become strength in us, may it become energy in us to help each other; may we, the teacher and the taught, not be jealous of each other! Peace, peace, peace, in the name of Hari!” (CWSV 3:153-54)

“Let them talk of India’s regeneration as they like. Let me tell you as one who has been working – at least trying to work – all his life, that there is no regeneration for India until you be spiritual. Not only so, but upon it depends the welfare of the whole world. For I must tell you frankly that the very foundations of Western civilisation have been shaken to their base. The mightiest buildings, if built upon the loose sand foundations of materialism, must come to grief one day, must totter to their destruction some day. The history of the world is our witness. Nation after nation has arisen and based its greatness upon materialism, declaring man was all matter. Ay, in Western language, a man gives up the ghost, but in our language a man gives up his body. The Western man is a body first, and then he has a soul; with us a man is a soul and spirit, and he has a body. Therein lies a world of difference. All such civilisations, therefore, as have been based upon such sand foundations as material comfort and all that, have disappeared one after another, after short lives, from the face of the world; but the civilisation of India and the other nations that have stood at India’s feet to listen and learn, namely, Japan and China, live even to the present day, and there are signs even of revival among them. Their lives are like that of the Phoenix, a thousand times destroyed, but ready to spring up again more glorious. But a materialistic civilisation once dashed down, never can come up again; that building once thrown down is broken into pieces once for all. Therefore have patience and wait, the future is in store for us.

Do not be in a hurry, do not go out to imitate anybody else. This is another great lesson we have to remember; imitation is not civilisation. I may deck myself out in a Raja's dress, but will that make me a Raja? An ass in a lion's skin never makes a lion. Imitation, cowardly imitation, never makes for progress. It is verily the sign of awful degradation in a man. Ay, when a man has begun to hate himself, then the last blow has come. When a man has begun to be ashamed of his ancestors, the end has come. Here am I, one of the least of the Hindu race, yet proud of my race, proud of my ancestors. I am proud to call myself a Hindu, I am proud that I am one of your unworthy servants. I am proud that I am a countryman of yours, you the descendants of the sages, you the descendants of the most glorious Rishis the world ever saw. Therefore have faith in yourselves, be proud of your ancestors, instead of being ashamed of them. And do not imitate, do not imitate!" (CWSV 3: 380-81)

These words of Swami Vivekananda should leave one in no doubt about the vulgarity of the course we have been following in India, especially after Independence. It is right that we tolerate all faiths and beliefs and assert a man's right to chart his chosen course in life so long as he does not refuse the right of others to do the same. Semitic religions have still to learn this kind of tolerance. As long as they maintain a spirit of conversion forced or otherwise, one has to be on one's guard against the tendency and defend oneself by whatever means necessary. India suffered for almost a millennium at the hands of savage and uncivilised hoards largely because of the failure of Indians to rise to the true virile spirit of Sanatana Dharma sticking, instead, tamasicly to the tolerant spirit of Sanatana Dharma even going so far as to be tolerating that which ought not to be tolerated for the good of anyone. Forceful resistance – certainly India was not without

a great deal of it – to such tyranny or intolerance is in line with the true spirit of Sanatana Dharma and brings about the real well-being of all including of the perpetrators of tyranny. To see things clearly is to know that “it is also the divine compassion that smites down the strong tyrant and the confident oppressor, not in wrath and with hatred, – for these are not the high divine qualities, the wrath of God against the sinner, God’s hatred of the wicked are the fables of half-enlightened creeds, as much a fable as the eternal torture of the Hells they have invented, – but, as the old Indian spirituality clearly saw, with as much love and compassion for the strong Titan erring by his strength and slain for his sins as for the sufferer and the oppressed who have to be saved from his violence and injustice.” (CWSA 19: 58-59)

HIGHLIGHTS

WINTER SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

The winter session saw the passage of nine bills in the Parliament. These were as follows:

Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021

The bill will amend sections of the Representation of the People Act of 1950 and 1951.

One of the provisions of the bill seeks to link electoral roll data with the Aadhar number of the voters. In effect, this empowers the Election Commission to seek the Aadhar details of new voters and the requisition of biometric details of existing voters. However, the government has insisted that this linking is voluntary. The bill says that registration to electoral rolls cannot be denied if Aadhaar is not provided due to “sufficient cause”.

However, the catch is that the “cause” which may exempt voters from furnishing Aadhar will be known only when the rules for the same are notified by the Central government after the Bill becomes law.

Unlike other bills, the government brooked no opposition in the passage of this bill.

Those opposing the bill included Congress, TMC, Left parties, DMK, NCP and Samajwadi Party, while those in favour of the bill included BJP, JD(U), YSRCP, AIADMK, BJD and TMC-M.

The latter argued that the bill will help in eradicating

duplicate and fake voters from electoral rolls, since the problem of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants that register as fake voters is a serious problem especially in eastern border states.

The detractors of the bill argued that interlinking Aadhar with electoral rolls may lead to denial of basic voting rights to certain people and may compromise privacy (in the absence of a data protection law) leading to Aadhar being used for voter-profiling.

The Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021

The Bill repeals the three farm laws passed by Parliament in September 2020. These are: (i) the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, (ii) the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, and (iii) the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

The Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020

It was first introduced in Lok Sabha in Monsoon session of 2020. It seeks to provide for the regulation of Assisted Reproductive Technology – technologies which seek to obtain a pregnancy – services in the country. The Bill makes the domain much more tight and well-regulated, provides for legal conditions for operation of ART clinics and stipulates rules for prospective parents as well as legal rights of children.

The Dam Safety Bill, 2019

The Bill provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all specified dams across the country. These

are dams with height more than 15 metres, or height between 10 metres to 15 metres with certain design and structural conditions. It constitutes two national bodies: the National Committee on Dam Safety and the National Dam Safety Authority. It also constitutes two corresponding state bodies. The Bill was passed after much opposition from the state of Tamil Nadu due to the ongoing intra-state water disputes among the southern states, and due to the states challenging the central authority to intervene in state matters on grounds of federalism.

The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021

It seeks to amend the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Act, 1998. The Bill declares six additional National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research as Institutions of National Importance. The Bill provides for a Council to coordinate the activities among the institutes to ensure development of pharmaceutical education and research and maintenance of standards.

The High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021

The Bill seeks to amend the two Acts that regulate the salaries and conditions of service of the judges of High Courts and the Supreme Court. The Bill adds a clarification that a person will be entitled to the additional pension or family pension from the first day of the month in which they complete the minimum age under the concerned age bracket.

The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019

The Bill defines surrogacy as a practice where a woman gives birth to a child for an intending couple with the intention to hand over the child after the birth to the intending couple. The Bill prohibits commercial surrogacy, but allows altruistic surrogacy. It also regulates purposes for which surrogacy is permitted, eligibility criteria of parties concerned and establishes institutions for regulation.

The Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2021

The Bill seeks to amend the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003. The Bill extends the tenure of the Director by up to one year at a time, till the completion of five years from the initial appointment on the recommendation of the Committee.

The Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2021

The Bill seeks to amend the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946. It provides for extension of the tenure of the Director by up to one year at a time, till the completion of five years from the initial date of appointment, upon recommendation of the Appointment Committee.

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021

The Bill amends the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 to correct a drafting error dating back to a 2014 amendment, on a section on penalties.

Besides these bills, an important proposed bill for amendments to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 has been sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee after heated debate. Three changes were proposed viz.,

First, increasing the minimum age of marriage for a women from 18 to 21 years, making the minimum age of marriage same for both men and women.

Second, the bill makes it easier for a “child” to file a petition to declare a child marriage “void”.

Third, and most importantly, the bill sought to introduce a “notwithstanding” clause, thereby ensuring equal application of the bill to all religions, including minorities.

The bill was opposed by minorities – especially Muslims – due to the fact that it entails an amendment to their Personal Laws. It was also opposed by the opposition on the grounds that child marriage is sometimes a compulsion for poor families; thus, unless their economic and educational opportunities are uplifted, such marriages would become criminalized, leading to illicit conduct of such marriages.

The Bill was significant as it, if passed, would set a precursor framework for the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code.

RUSSIA-INDIA RELATIONS

Vladimir Putin’s visit to India in the first week of December underscored the positive balance in India-Russia relations. He was there to attend the 21st Annual India-Russia Summit. In recent times, bilateral relations have often been constrained due to Russia’s balancing act between India and China. Putin’s visit to India has come after his considerable global hiatus.

This is Putin's second visit abroad this year, the first one being the recent meeting with US's President Biden in Geneva.

Significantly, the two sides held the inaugural round of a 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue involving the defense and foreign ministers of India and Russia. India has 2+2 ministerial formats with only the Quad countries – US, Japan and Australia. The Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military-Technical Cooperation also held a meeting during the visit. An extended pact on military cooperation for 10 years from 2021 to 2031 was also signed. Around 28 Memorandums of Understanding were signed, spanning important areas such as cooperation on outer space, defense, and energy security. The summit focused on core issues of common concern, such as terrorism, terrorist financing, illegal drug trade and changing regional situation in Afghanistan

Russia's relationship with India rests on the core bedrock of defence procurement, with around 60 to 70 per cent of India's supplies being from Russia and with India constantly relying on Russia for the regular supply of spare parts for defence equipment. India is also further engaging with Russia on defence, as ahead of the summit, it cleared the long-pending AK 203 Kalashnikov rifles deal worth nearly Rs 5,000 crore for production of over five lakh such rifles by an Indo-Russian joint venture. The two sides also focused on co-production and co-development of military equipment and platforms. India's decision to boldly go ahead with the import of Russian S-400 missile system despite US's sanctions on the same further cemented commitment in the relationship.

Russia's Putin and China's Xi are also the only two leaders with whom PM Modi has held informal summits, reflecting

the importance India places on these countries, despite ongoing conflicts with China. The significance of a strong trilateral relationship between India, Russia and China cannot be emphasized enough, as this relationship forms an alternative bulwark to the West.

POPULATION CONTROL AND FERTILITY

Data from National Family Health Survey (NFHS 2019-21) reveals that India’s Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has, for the first time, fallen below the replacement level. **TFR** refers to the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime. **Replacement level** refers to the level of fertility at which a population replaces itself exactly from one generation to the next. According to the United Nations, below-replacement fertility – lower than 2.1 children per woman – indicates that a generation is not producing enough children to replace itself, eventually leading to a reduction in population.

In India, the national Total Fertility Rate was found to be 2.7 in the NFHS 2005-06 survey and decreased to 2.2 in the NFHS 2015-16 survey. It has now declined to **2.1 in rural areas and 1.6 in urban areas**, as per the latest NFHS survey.

States with TFR above 2	States with TFR below 2	States where TFR equals national average = 2
Bihar – 3 Meghalaya – 2.9 Uttar Pradesh – 2.4	TFR of 1.6 West Bengal Maharashtra	Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan

Jharkhand – 2.3	TFR of 1.7	
Manipur – 2.2	Karnataka	
	Andhra Pradesh	
	Himachal Pradesh	
	Nagaland	
	Tripura	
	TFR of 1.8	
	Kerala	
	Tamil Nadu	
	Telangana	
	Arunachal Pradesh	
	Chhattisgarh	
	Odisha	
	TFR of 1.9	
	Haryana	
	Assam	
	Gujarat	
	Uttarakhand	
	Mizoram	

Separately, a study by a U.S. think-tank, Pew Research, has studied the religion-wise fertility rate from 1992 to 2015. The results are as follows:

Religion	1992	1998	2005	2015
Muslim	4.4	3.6	3.4	2.6
Hindu	3.3	2.8	2.6	2.1
Christian	2.9	2.4	2.3	2
Buddhist	2.9	2.1	2.3	1.7
Sikh	2.4	2.3	1.9	1.6
Jain	2.4	1.9	1.5	1.2

Source: Pew Research Centre

The findings show that fertility rates across all religions have declined. However, the Muslim fertility rate continues to be the highest across all religious groups. In percentage terms, between 1951 and 2011, Muslims grew by 4.4 percentage points to 14.2% of the population, while Hindus declined by 4.3 points to 79.8%.

It is likely that demographic changes will occur further, especially among Muslims, as women become more exposed to education and aware about their rights. Societal factors, such as giving a good education and profession to all children despite economic constraints, also influences people's choice to have less children.

COVID19 PANDEMIC: RISING CASES GLOBALLY

Recent surge of COVID19 pandemic globally has been driven by the ongoing Delta variant and the upsurge of Omicron variant. The data below provides a snapshot of new cases and deaths across major countries.

Country	Active cases	Total cases	Total cases /million of population	Total deaths	Total deaths/million of population	Share of population fully vaccinated against COVID19 (%)
USA	12,939,418	55,252,823	165,476	845,745	2533	61.51
UK	2,327,923	12,748,050	186,324	148,421	2169	70
India	91,361	34,838,804	24,880	481,080	344	42.74
Germany	647,570	7,142,982	84,849	112,512	1,336	70.53
Italy	779,463	5,981,428	99,147	137,247	2275	74.08
Spain	1,148,385	6,294,745	134,555	89,405	1911	80.99
Russia	727,203	10,499,982	71,904	308,860	700	44.89
Israel	22,780	1,380,053	147,979	8,243	884	63.69
France	1,579,476	9,740,600	148,736	123,552	1887	73

The trends clearly show that India has the lowest count of deaths per million of population as well as cases per million of population, out of these major countries. It is also notable that this is despite the fact that India has only 41% of population fully vaccinated.

SAUDI ARABIA’S BAN ON TABLIGHI AND DA’WAH GROUP

Saudi Arabia recently banned the Tablighi and Da’wah or the Al Ahabab Group, terming it a ‘danger to society and one of the gates of terrorism’. It has also declared that affiliation with partisan groups is prohibited in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Indian branch of Tablighi Jamaat criticized Saudi Arabia’s

ban and requested the Kingdom for a review. Tablighi Jamaat is also banned across other countries, including Kazakhstan, Iran, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Tablighi Jamaat originated from India's Mewat in 1927 by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, who coined the slogan "Oh Muslims! Become Muslims". It has its roots in Darul Uloom's Sunni Islamic Deobandi tradition. It is a missionary movement that seeks to reach out to the ordinary Muslims and revive their faith in Islam. It has its roots across nearly 150 countries, and is shaped by Saudi Arabia's traditional Wahhabi style of Islam – one of the most conservative, extremist and intolerant forms of practice. Many of its members have had radical, terrorist and extremist linkages. In India, the movement gained infamy in 2020 in the context of flouting of COVID19 lockdown.

The recent ban by Saudi Arabia is significant as the Kingdom is the heart of the Islamic world. It sets benchmarks for Muslims across the world and influences religion as well as politics. No Muslim country flourishes without being the good graces of the Kingdom. In recent years, under the Crown Prince, Mohammad Bin Salman, the Kingdom has enacted a series of changes geared towards guaranteeing partial women rights as well as restricting the activities of its Muslim clerics. The recent ban comes in the wake of these actions and is a significant setback to Islamic expansionism.

“The future of the earth depends on a change of consciousness.

The only hope for the future is in a change of man’s consciousness and the change is bound to come.

But it is left to men to decide if they will collaborate for this change or if it will have to be enforced upon them by the power of crashing circumstances.

So, wake up and collaborate!

Blessings.”

– The Mother

(Collected Works of The Mother, Vol. 15, p. 60)