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India At 75: Reflections On Society, Polity And Economy In The Post-Independence Era

(Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav)

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Abstract: This paper attempts to analyze the polity, society and economic transformation in post-Independence India along with reformation and improvement in each and every field for providing a better atmosphere in Indian democracy. We know that 15th August 1947 marked the end of colonial rule and the beginning of a new era in the history of India. India is celebrating the 75th Anniversary of independence as “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” all over the country with great pride and enthusiasm but when India became free from the bondage of British rule, the country faced numerous challenges such as the refugee crisis and rehabilitation, widespread poverty and illiteracy, regionalism and communalism, underdeveloped industries and inadequate infrastructure, casteism and untouchability, status of women and gender discrimination, etc. which were the major obstacles for the economic growth and development of newly independent India. So, it was a very difficult task to bind people in a thread of unity and fill them with a feeling of nationalism under one democratic framework for the new leadership. To solve all these problems, the Indian leaders set some goals and formulated inclusive strategies to achieve them. They protected the unity, national integrity and strengthened the foundation of the republic values in the country. Modern India is different from the India of 1947. When India became free, its GDP was mere 2.7 lakh crore which has been increased to \$3.17 trillion in 2021-22, making it the sixth largest economy in the world. Today India is one of the biggest economies and shines as the largest democratic country in the world. Thus, there is no doubt that India has made tremendous progress after independence. India has shown very remarkable changes in political, social, economic and technological fields but Health and the quality of Higher Education is still a cause of major concern. We cannot deny the fact that India is still considered as an underdeveloped country in this Amrit Kaal.

Key-words - independence, struggle, remarkable, movement, tremendous

I. INTRODUCTION

We all know that India completed 75 years of independence on 15th August, 2022 and the country is celebrating the 75th Anniversary of independence as “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” all over the country with great pride and enthusiasm. The Great Amrit Mahotsav was officially started on 12th March, 2021 by our honorable Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi with a flagging off from Sabarmati Ashram of Gujarat (Prime Minister inaugurates Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav from Sabarmati Ashram; flags off Dandi Padyatra, 2021). It was a “Pad Yatra” which is also known as ‘Freedom March’ and started on the completion of 91 years of the historical “Dandi March” of Mahatma Gandhi in 1930 (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, 2021). The Dandi March, also known as the Salt Satyagraha, was a landmark event during the freedom struggle movement of India. To break the salt law, Gandhiji along with his 78 followers started his journey from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi (Gujarat) on 12th March, 1930. On reaching Dandi, Gandhiji broke the salt law by making salt with his own

hands and started the Civil Disobedience Movement across the country. For this symbolic reason, the Great Amrit Mahotsav has been launched from the Sabarmati Ashram like the Dandi March.

The Great Amrit Mahotsav began 75th weeks before the 75th anniversary of independence of India and ended on 15th August, 2023. The 75th anniversary of independence of the country means Freedom Struggle, 75 years of ideas (Ideas@75), 75 years of achievements (Achievements@75), 75 years of actions (Actions@75) and 75 years of resolve (resolve@75), which provide inspiration to move forward to realize the dreams of independent India (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, 2022). It is a festival of the people of India. It also aims at creating a vision for India in 2047 (Government targets Vision India 2047, 2022).

The main purpose of the Great Amrit Mahotsav is to celebrate and commemorate the invaluable contribution of the freedom fighters and patriots, Martyrs and Revolutionaries, National Heroes and Unsung Heroes of motherland and to highlight the significance of the freedom struggle movement through various cultural and educational programs across the country (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, 2021). The heroic stories of freedom fighters and patriots, Heroes and martyrs who participated in the freedom struggle movements of India have to be conveyed to the people. Exhibition will be organized across the country regarding the The First War of Independence of 1857 and the Anti Partition Movement of Bengal, Swadeshi and Boycott Movement, Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, Quit India Movement etc. Along with this, the main sites and places related with the movement and leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Ramprasad Bismil, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandra Sekhar Azad, Rajguru, Sukhdev and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will be shown. Many programs are being organized in every state and union territory of the country as well as in Indian embassies. A significant aim of this Mahotsav is also to uncover and honor those freedom fighters and Heroes, whose names are still hidden somewhere in the pages of history (Commemorating milestones in history, unsung heroes etc., 2021). Under this theme, Bir Birsia Munda Jayanti (Jan Jatiya Gaurav Diwas), declaration of Interim Government of independence by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Martyr's Day and other programs are included (Freedom Struggle, 2021).

Thus, the Great Mahotsav, "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" is a nationwide initiative by the government of India to celebrate 75 years of independence of progressive India and to remember the glorious history of its people, literature, art, culture and achievements (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, 2021). Its objective is to further encourage the mass movement through collaborative campaigns and spread it to different parts of India and the world. The celebration aims to instill patriotism among citizens especially the youth and the children by revisiting the heroic stories of those warriors and martyrs who are buried and remain unappreciated somewhere in the pages of history. This festival will resonate with new perspectives, new resolutions and emphasizing upon self-reliance (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, 2021).

This paper reflects the ideas and actions, dedication and achievements of the Freedom Fighters and Patriots, Martyrs and Revolutionaries, National Heroes and Unsung Heroes of India who played a crucial role in the freedom struggle movements of India. We all know that the Seventy-fifth (75th) Anniversary of India's independence is being celebrated all over the country as "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav". This Mahotsav is dedicated to the citizens of India and brave soldiers in a retrospective manner.

The history of India has always been rich in the glorious history of Freedom Fighters and Patriots. Their struggles and sacrifices for India's freedom, their indomitable enthusiasm and bravery are not seen properly in any history of the world. Whether it is the Revolution of 1857 or participating in Revolutionary Activities, whether it is Anti-Partition Movement of Bengal or Swadeshi and Boycott Movement, whether it is the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920 or the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, whether it is the Quit India movement of 1942 or to join the army of Azad Hind Fauj, our freedom Fighters and Patriots never retreat to participate. It is the result of their priceless struggles and sacrifices, the Britishers were made bound to liberate India from the clutch of slavery. Today, we are independent citizens of an independent country. As independent citizens, we proudly celebrate this Amrit Mahotsav, remembering our glorious past.

India is a land of multi ethnic communities with cultural, social, political, geographical, religious and linguistic diversity. When colonial rule came to an end on 15th August 1947, the Indian subcontinent was divided into two separate countries – India (with a majority of Hindus) and Pakistan (with a majority of Muslims). So, at the time of independence, there were many big challenges before India. There were two immediate issues India faced after the independence – (i) The framing of the Constitution for newly independent India and (ii) To integrate over 562 Princely States into the Indian Union. Due to partition, communal tension was prevailing in the country and 8 million refugees came to India from Pakistan. They

were leading a helpless life as refugees. The rehabilitation of these refugees was a major challenge. The second challenge was to integrate the 562 small and big princely states into the Indian Union. Reorganization of States on linguistic basis was another important issue after independence. Apart from it, India was largely facing different kinds of challenges and difficulties in the social, political and economic fields. There were a series of problems at the time of independence such as poverty and illiteracy, casteism and untouchability, regionalism and communalism, underdeveloped industries and inadequate infrastructure, dependence on agriculture and low per capita income, unequal distribution of wealth and unemployment, unskilled labour, status of women and gender discrimination, etc., At the time, the Indian economy was mostly agricultural and rural in nature. With almost 85% of the population of the country were living in villages and engaged in agricultural occupations. The condition of India immediately after 1947 was unsettled and unstable. These were a great obstacle in the way of economic growth and development of the country. There was a lot of development that was needed in terms of administration, education, economy, infrastructure and social justice. So, in this country of diversity, it was a very difficult task to bind people in a thread of unity and fill them with a feeling of nationalism among them under one democratic framework for the new leadership.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS IN POST – INDEPENDENCE INDIA

We are celebrating and commemorating 75th years of independence of India as “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”. In its 75th years of independence, India has made several achievements. The struggle and triumph of the last 75 years was clearly visible on each face. 75 years is a long journey. Multiple governments ruled the nation. Numerous policies were introduced to bring about structural changes to the economy. Now, India is the largest democracy in the world. India's first and perhaps most defining achievement after Independence was the adoption of the Constitution which came into force on 26th January, 1950. With this, the Government of India Act 1935 of the British era came to an end and India became a sovereign, socialist and democratic republic country. In India, the constitution is supreme and sovereign. While in the 75th years of Independence, India has made remarkable progress in the field of science, technology, agriculture, literature, sports, etc., it has gained a lot, but it has also lost a lot with the passage of time. In the last 75 years in the midst of its internal problems and challenges, the country has definitely achieved something which is attracting the world.

India's economy was very weak and underdeveloped at the time of independence. In March 1950, the government formed a Planning Commission under the chairmanship of Prime Minister of India by a resolution to estimate the needs of the country's physical capital and human resources. To make the country self-sufficient, the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru chose the model of mixed economy. Keeping this in mind, on December 8, 1951, the first five years plan was presented in the Parliament focused on agricultural development. This laid the groundwork for the Green Revolution, which later transformed India into a self-sufficient nation in food production.

Today's India is vastly different from the India of 1947. In the 75th years of independence, Indian structure was improved and developed drastically and revolutionarily. The country has experienced an increase in Per Capita Income. When India became free from the slavery of the British colonial rule, its GDP was mere 2.7 Lakh crore which was 3% of the GDP of the World. In 1947 India had a population of 340 million with a literacy rate of just 12%, today it has a population of nearly 1.4 billion and a literacy rate of 74.04%. The average life expectancy has also risen from 32 years to 70 years in 2022. India has also made tremendous progress in the field of science and technology. Aryabhata, India's first space satellite, was launched in 1975. In 1986 Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian to go into space. Today, through the 'Make-in-India' initiative, India is capable of producing the best indigenous, technology – based launch vehicles. India launched 10 satellites into orbit with PSLV-C9 in 2008, setting a new world record. It has expanded its power generation capacity from 1362 MW in 1947 to 395600 MW starting around 2022.

Though India has shown remarkable and commendable progress in terms of polity and economy, science and technology, society and environment, the quality of higher education and public health is still a cause of major concern for the country. Analysing the different landscapes of India, we find that we have come a long way in our journey, but still there is a lot to be done if we want to make India a 'Global Superpower' and 'Vishwa Guru'.

III. Role of Freedom Fighters in India's Struggle for Independence

The freedom struggle movement of India has been one of the most significant and inspiring chapters in Indian history. It is a glorious history of Indian history. There is a great and valuable contribution of countless freedom fighters and patriots, martyrs and revolutionaries in the freedom struggle movement of India. Their struggle, courage, sacrifice and dedication can never be forgotten (Freedom Fighters of India, 2023).

Today, we are celebrating 75 years of the anniversary of independence of India as "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav". But the freedom that we have has not come easily. Rather, millions of freedom fighters and patriots did not care about their lives for the freedom of India and dedicated their lives for the sake of the motherland. We got freedom but for this we had to make so many sacrifices, had to be hanged, had to take bullets on the chest, only then we got freedom. For this freedom, there is a violent and terrible history of rebellions, struggles and movements by thousands of warriors and freedom fighters (The Role of Freedom Fighters, 2019). It will not be wrong to say that our freedom fighters sacrificed their lives for their motherland and the life we are enjoying today in independent India is the result of the supreme sacrifices of all freedom fighters (Freedom Fighters of India, 2023).

For almost 200 years from 1757 A.D. to 1947 A.D. India was under the bondage of British colonial rule. During this period, those who were once traders became rulers and the people of India became subjects in their own land. The British government ruled our country for more than 200 years (Saurabh Chandra, 2015). It is true that the time period of 200 years is a long time period. But our freedom fighters from all parts of India also fought continuously for the freedom of the country against British rule. They were confronted with many pains and struggles for the freedom of the country. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Assam to Gujarat, thousands of men and women fought together against the atrocities of the British government. The warriors and braver suffered inhuman and harsh tortures of the British government, even the brave sons of the motherland didn't hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the country. All the freedom fighters of India fought, struggled and often gave their lives to free India from British control (The Role of the Freedom Fighters, 2019). Thus, India's freedom struggle is a synthesis of many regional and national movements and struggles. It is the fact that all the freedom fighters had not followed the same path against British rule. Whether it was a path of violence or non-violence, the objective was the same – "to free India from the slavery of British rule" (Nilesh Kodang, 2021). Thus, it was a synthesis of multiple regional and national struggles.

There were innumerable freedom fighters for India. The Great revolutionaries of India like Mangal Pandey, Ramprasad Bismil, Asfaq Ullah Khan, Chandrasekhar Azad, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Khudiram Bose, Jatin Das, Prafulla Chaki, Binoy-Badal-Dinesh, Surya Sen etc. not only showed their courage, bravery and valour against the British government but also forced them to leave India (The Role of Freedom Fighters, 2019). On the other hand, the leaders like Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Firoz Shah Mehta, Madan Mohan Malviya, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Chittarajnan Das, Motilal Nehru, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose etc. led nationwide agitation and movements against the colonial policies of the British government and demanded self-rule. The contribution of women in the Indian freedom struggle movement also cannot be denied. Their contribution is equally noteworthy. Women like Maharani Laxmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Smt. Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Sucheta Kriplani, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, Kasturba Gandhi, Basanti Devi, Kalpana Dutta, Pritilata Weddar, Aruna Asaf Ali, Matangini Hazra etc. actively participated in protests, revolts and underground revolutionary activities. (Gurjeet Kaur, 2022). Whether it was the First War of Independence (1857), the Anti Partition Movement of Bengal in 1905 or Swadeshi and Boycott Movement, the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920), the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930), the Quit India Movement (1942), the Naval Mutiny (1946), leaders, lawyers, students, farmers, workers and even women had also actively engaged in the freedom struggle. Because of these great freedom fighters, leaders and revolutionaries, we are able to taste freedom. Their collective efforts made the freedom of India a reality. Thus, Freedom is a precious gift of our freedom fighters (Freedom a Precious Gift of Our Freedom Fighters! MSCL Celebrates this 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', 2021).

Today, we all Indians proudly narrate the heroic saga of the struggle and agitation fought by the great freedom fighters, revolutionaries and true brave sons of the motherland for the freedom of the country. Their life-story instills a sense of patriotism and nationalism into the minds of millions of people. The most important impact that the freedom fighters left on the people of the society is that they inspired others to understand their rights and stand against the people in power (The Influence Left by the Freedom Fighters, 2023). This is the main purpose of celebrating 75 years of the anniversary of independence as "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, 2021).

IV. Conclusion

Based on the above description, it can be said that India inherited numerous economic, social and political issues at the time of independence. To solve all these problems, the Indian leaders set some goals and made strategies to achieve them. The India leaders adopted a mixed economy model for national development. While there have been notable successes in the last few years but those successes are not complete and enough. One of the key reasons is the misutilization of development funds by intermediaries and certain government officials. Capitalists and industrialists are getting complete control over the economy. To ensure balanced and sustainable growth, it is necessary for the government to improve the administrative structure as well. Policies should be implemented strictly and misuse of public funds should be stopped. Only then proper development of the country would be able to grow. There is no denying fact that after India gained independence, her citizens made significant contributions to the economy and technological advancements. Indians are known for their hard work, dedication and resilience to face any obstacle that comes their way. It is pretty evident that Indians have excellence in almost all fields even in the army, Indian men and women have shown their true worthy role which is truly a marvel.

We can proudly say that India has really made significant and remarkable progress in every aspect of the field since independence. We reached the Moon and sent satellites to Mars also setting a world record. It is true that we are independent citizens of an independent country and we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of independence as 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', but we can't deny the fact that there is still social and economic inequality and caste discrimination in the country. The quality of higher education and health issues are still a major challenge of the country. We are living in the largest democratic country but whether it is applicable all over the country. We can find the best example at the time of election where common and innocent people are killed in the name of election of democracy. At the time of independence, there was communal tension, violence and hatred in the country. It is very sad to say that these hatred and violence are increasing rapidly nowadays. If we want to make India 'Global Superpower' and 'Vishwa Guru' we have to overcome these challenges.

It would not be wrong to say that our freedom fighters sacrificed their lives for freedom and because of these people we are enjoying living in an independent country today. We will never forget the sacrifice of all freedom fighters. Every citizen of India will always be indebted to those freedom fighters and brave sons of the motherland for their sacrifice and struggle. We cannot give anything in return to these great personalities but at least we can give them respect and honor by creating a peaceful environment in the country. It is true that India is free from the bondage of British rule but it is also a bitter truth that evils like corruption, unemployment, dishonesty, starvation, hatred etc. have made it hostage. To get rid of it, we have to fight and have to bring a revolution again. For this, the youth power of our country will have to wake up once again. When our country will get rid of all these evils, only then we will be independent in the true sense and the purpose of celebrating "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" will be fulfilled.

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