

BHARAT RATNA: INSPIRING WORKS OF RAJENDRA PRASAD



Indian Institute of Public Administration

**REMEMBERING DR.
RAJENDRA PRASAD JI**

A LEGENDARY LEADER,
HE EPITOMISED COURAGE
AND SCHOLARLY ZEAL. HE
WAS FIRMLY ROOTED IN
INDIA'S CULTURE AND
ALSO HAD A FUTURISTIC
VISION FOR INDIA'S
GROWTH .



Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

BHARAT RATNA: INSPIRING WORKS OF RAJENDRA PRASAD

Editors

**Surendra Nath Tripathi
Saket Bihari**



**Indian Institute of Public Administration
New Delhi**

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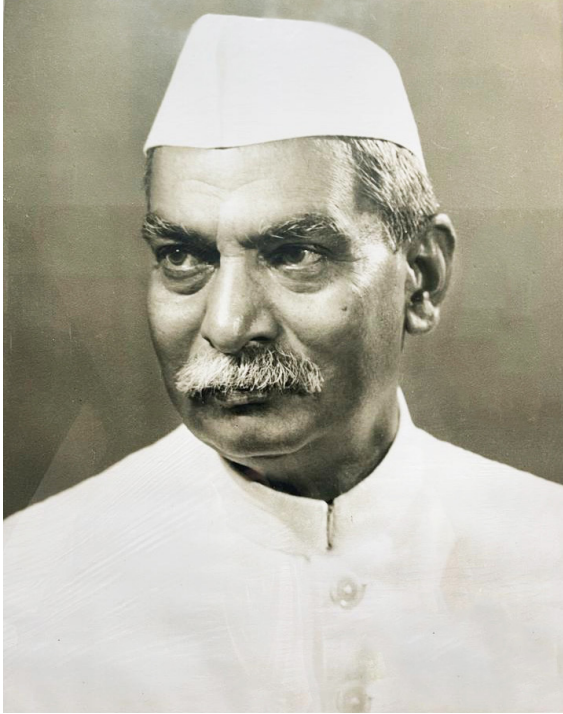
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THIS BUILDING
OF THE
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND THE
INDIAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
WAS OPENED BY
DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD
PRESIDENT OF INDIA
ON
31st JANUARY 1959.

PREFACE

First and foremost, I express my sincere gratitude to the Hon'ble first President of India for opening the building of Indian Institute of Public Administration and Indian School of Public Administration on January 31, 1959, where the book as a tribute to him has been compiled. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable insights and encouragement I received from different sources for bringing out the book on such a towering personality who catalysed the national renaissance and India's struggle for independence.

The book *Bharatratna: Inspiring Works of Rajendra Prasad* is based on the writings of various scholars, administrators and contributors to the book wherein fathomless offerings remain to be highlighted from the works of *Bharat Ratna*. This is an endeavor to relive facets of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's thoughts, values, ideology and nationalistic fervour they generated in the shaping of modern India. The modern changes and challenges rampant in the present-day social order may be addressed by taking into consideration Dr. Prasad's views. His engagement in the different phenomenal events of the freedom struggle provides a rare value of altruism, central to Indian cultural ethos. His dedication and sacrifice in the freedom struggle movement was exemplary under the leadership of Gandhiji and reminds us of a well-knit connection between a saint and a follower. As an impact of his association with Gandhiji, he renounced his pride and even started doing household chores.

As a unanimously nominated President of the Constituent Assembly, he guided the deliberations with rare dignity and distinction. He was elected President of India, even though many established leaders were conservative in providing their support. His optimism was of cutting edge level to the extent that he always stood to the promises made and assignments accepted.

As a lawyer, freedom fighter, first president of independent India and above all a visionary, Dr. Rajendra Prasad's thoughts provide rare attributes to nationalistic aspirations. His stimulating and erudite vision took up the helms of designing the Constitution of the nascent nation by presiding the Constituent Assembly.

Dr. Prasad was always eager to help people who were in duress and distress. He rendered his services for relief work during the disastrous flood of Bengal and Bihar. When the earthquake in Bihar occurred, he set himself up for the task of raising funds and established the Bihar Central Relief Committee. The journey from a student activist to Independent India's first President, is a great saga of his indomitable capacity, his resolution and commitment to the

country. It also reflects the democratic values infused in Indian politics, where a simple student activist became the first President of Independent India due to his interest in serving the nation.

Rajendra Prasad, first president of India, who believed religion in the society is equally important as anything else, wanted to have a uniform civil code whereas Nehru believed minorities should be given additional safeguards. Rajendra Prasad also favoured progress, but not at the cost of core Indian culture and people's beliefs. He was very religious.

The present book is premised on the scholarly contributions from well-known administrators and academics, on various facets of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. I am sure the papers compiled in the book would provide rare opportunities for the readers to consider the nationalistic values that Dr. Prasad upheld. The scholarly papers in the book have also implications for the state, market and society on move. The underlying objective of the book is to present the works of Rajendra Prasad to the readers as it was.

During the completion of the book, IIPA has received immense encouragement, inspiration and insightful suggestions from Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister and Chairman, IIPA. I learned a great deal while selecting, analysing and including various works of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. My sincere thanks and gratitude are due to all the learned contributors in this book, who have generously come forth with their ideas in line with the objectives of the book in the limited time frame, despite their tightly knit schedules.

Dr. Saket Bihari, Associate Professor, IIPA has been the initiator to compile the papers. He took the challenge of placing all the materials together. He also ensured that the book comes in the right size and retains the interest of the readers. He deserves all the appreciation for the work that has led to the fruition of the book.

I am thankful to Shri Amitabh Ranjan, Registrar, IIPA for providing inputs on the various contents of the papers received from the authors. I would like to place on record the communication support extended by Ms. Meghna Mani Chukath and her team for seeing the book through the press. Though every single effort has been taken to keep the facts and figures intact in the light of existing literature sources, my apologies for errors that may have crept in.



Surendra Nath Tripathi
Director General

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INTRODUCTION

SURENDRA NATH TRIPATHI
SAKET BIHARI

One of the key architects of independent India, Babu Rajendra Prasad was an eminent freedom fighter, an acclaimed jurist, an eloquent speaker, a progressive visionary, a statesman and above all a humanist. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was one of the *dasratnas* of Gandhiji alias *Ajat Shatru* who placed service over self. As a repository of trust and confidence of Gandhiji, he inherited all that was best to emancipate India from alien domination. Babu Rajendra Prasad was one of the greatest gentlemen that Indian politics ever witnessed since time immemorial. He was bestowed with angelic qualities with profuse moral practices. He signified all that is in consonance with Indian culture and its great traditions. Dr. Rajendra Prasad worked for over 12 years as the first president of India. Being quality centric in service delivery, he rendered the nation-building that left an indelible impression on our national life and polity. Many of the decisions taken in heydays provide a sound base for instrumental policy decisions. Yet, little light on his vision and mission has been allowed to be in place. He acted as a constitutional head of our country and never failed to warn the government on needed occasions. He rendered ardent advice and composite counselling, beneficial for India to take its growth to new heights. 'His personality radiated spiritualism characterised by simplicity and humility. Served thrice as congress president, he was the president of the Constituent Assembly and the President of India for an unbroken period of twelve years. As the first president of the republic, Dr. Rajendra Prasad symbolised the hopes and aspirations of the people'.¹

The book *Bharatratna: Inspiring Works of Rajendra Prasad* is both a tribute to Dr Prasad, the first President of the Republic of India, and a kaleidoscope of the rich and diverse heritage of 'Indian' cultural practices as Dr Prasad saw it through the eyes of someone with a deep faith in rule of law. The book brings to life his contribution as a true son of *Bharatmata*. It connects seamlessly with anyone interested in the trajectory of India's nation-building, especially the youth. His contributions to the freedom movement are inspirational. Dr

¹Chowdhary, V (ed.) 1987. Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents (Late Jail Singh), Allied Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, p. v.

Prasad's organisational skills and leadership qualities endeared him to the masses and fellow leaders like Gandhi, Nehru and Patel alike. His passion towards ameliorating a lot of the general public and commitment to the ideals of freedom struggle had the means-end balance that has been the hallmark of India's freedom struggle. This jewel of India, son of the soil, the brother of indigo planters was the archetypal Indian leader who so very much identified with those he led, and is to this day remembered as a leader and maker of modern India.

Keeping in view the contributions and sacrifices Dr. Prasad made in making the nation, the introduction of the book has been classified into seven parts, namely 1) Early life, 2) Academic pursuits, 3) Political activism, 4) Constitutionalism, 5) Presidential times, 6) Inspiration and 7) Contributions from authors. All these components reinforce Dr. Prasad as the true hero of India as a republic.

Early Life

'Babu Rajendra Prasad was born on December 3, 1884, a year before the establishment of the Indian National Congress, as the youngest child in the family of three sisters and two sons at Zeradei, Saran, Bihar. His father was Shri Mahadev Sahai and his mother, Kamleshwari Devi. One of his sisters died while yet a child. Bhagwati Devi, the eldest of the family, became a widow early in life and had been living with her ever since. The next sister died without leaving any issues. His brother, Mahendra Prasad was elder than him by eight years. Babu Rajendra Prasad was looked after mostly by his elder uncle, Shri Jagdev Sahai'². 'His ancestors belonged to Amroha, Uttar Pradesh and later settled in Ballia. In course of time, his ancestors came to Zeradei, Saran, Bihar. His grandfather Shri Misri Lal died at an early age, leaving his only son, Mahadev Sahai, his father in the care of Shri Chaudhur Lal, his elder brother'³. Despite his parents having a well-off family, they led a simple, pure and dedicated life. His father used to provide medicinal support to his villagers. As a child, he was always interested in listening to the lessons from Mahabharata and Ramayana by his mother. The situation of his home and village symbolised serenity, peace and inclusiveness. It exerted a fathomless impact on his mind that led him to follow fellow feelings, altruism, purity, sacrifice, humility and simplicity. The life of Dr. Rajendra Prasad was full of dedication to take India to the next level. His great erudition, deep scholarship, and wide knowledge about the status of nation made him unequivocally acceptable.

Though his village did not have the basic facility of primary education, he started learning *Persian* with a *Maulvi*. Later, he completed his schooling in

²Prasad, R. 1957. Rajendra Prasad- Autobiography, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, pp.1-3.

³Ibid. p. 1

Chhapra. After qualifying the entrance test of University of Calcutta, he was admitted there. The performance made by him was considered to be splendid for the first time to a student of Bihar. At the age of 13, he was married to Rajbanshi Devi in 1897 who was approximately 6 months senior to him. Primarily, he did not understand the meaning of marriage but in course of time, he realised its significance. The fact that after 45 years of marriage, when he was practising in Calcutta and subsequently settled down in Patna, he felt a strong emotional association with his wife. But he could not keep her along because he was actively participating in the non-cooperation movement. There was so much preoccupation that left small hour for his personal matters. When he visited Zeradei for the holidays, his wife got an attack of cholera. He became anxious about her health. He could not express his anxiety, as in those days a social hiatus of purdah was in agreement with societal norms. She was suffering from cholera and when Rajendra Babu came to meet her in Zeradei, he felt pathetic. However, his father's treatment cured his wife and he felt relieved thereafter. Later in his life course, in September 1962, his wife Rajavanshi Devi passed away. The demise of his wife made him isolated that led to the deterioration of his health. He was also retired in those days. He completed his term from office and returned to Patna on May 14, 1962. He spent the last few months' retirement life at the Sadaqat Ashram in Patna. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was awarded the "Bharat Ratna", the nation's highest civilian award, in 1962. Babu Rajendra Prasad was suffering from a serious respiratory ailment and as a result, he left for heavenly abode on February 28, 1963, Sadaqat Ashram, Patna. He lived for 78 years. As such, the book 'Bharat Ratna: Inspiring Works of Rajendra Prasad' has been written to pay a sincere tribute to the leader of the nation whose inspiring *weltanschauung* stands as the guiding force to us. His speeches contain incredible insights on religion, science, agriculture, education, social accommodation, distress, disputes, and so on.

Academic Pursuits

The educational training of Babu Rajendra Prasad was started with a local *Maulavi*. Later, he was admitted to a school in Chhapra. While his studies at T K Ghosh Academy, emphasis was given on rote learning, particularly in history subjects. The students were asked to memorise the events and dates. He was never accustomed to retain the stuff in his memory without understanding; and in all the six months, he was in school and he was never able to perform this feat even once. Though rote learning creates undue pressure on pupils, it has its significance in crystalising the accurate information base. However, it should go hand in hand with practical understanding for longer retention.

He used to get up early in the morning and acted on this golden rule. He faced a bad time in school, as the teachers threatened him with demotion, if he failed to memorise. He fell ill and remained in bed until his brother came

and convinced the family members to send him back to Chhapra School. As a result, he was re-admitted to Chhapra School. At Chhapra School, he regained his paradise and became confident in his teachers and started performing better. In those days, in schools, intelligence was assessed based on the analytical power in the vernacular. As a matter of fact, learning should be ensured by conducive comprehension and prioritised in the vernacular. However, he found rote learning, to some extent, important because it led him to recollect vocabulary, idioms and phrases. It enabled him to have a good style of writing that his teachers found very moving.

Babu Rajendra Prasad was multifaceted in learning. While learning Persian, he also learned Sanskrit. Gradually, he developed an acquaintance with his teachers and became fond of '*Swadeshi*'. He appeared at the entrance examination of Presidency College and achieved the first rank. Though he stood first in the examination, he suffered from sickness and got delayed entry to the Presidency College. Moreover, he could not get a hostel room. His brother helped to accommodate in his hostel by laying down an additional cot. He also suffered from health issues while studying. Managing the extreme health conditions, Dr. Prasad came first in all the subjects that he took while clearing the FA examination. After FA, he joined the BA honours programme in English, History and Philosophy. He found that the sole role of education is to provide character building and moral training.

He also subscribed to Dewan Society where *Geeta* and current affairs were taught by bringing its attendants closer to the instructors. His thoughts were stirred by the association with society. On a similar line, he set up a debating society to discuss the current trends in Indian politics, culture and society. He also participated in the college union election and got elected as union secretary for one year. He was also running a monthly magazine that was brought out by the student union. It led to the crystallisation of his ideas in public life. He also followed the proceedings of the Indian National congress avidly. He mobilised the students to join the anti-partition movement of Bengal in 1905 after clearing his FA examination. After taking his BA degree, he joined MA and BL classes in Kolkata. While Indian National Congress was holding its annual session in 1906, he served as a volunteer for different sessions. That was the time when the leftist and rightists approach came into being. The leftists were led by Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and others, the rightists men were Firoz Shah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Surendranath Banerjee and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya stood somewhere in between these two groups. He heard all the discussion with rapt attention, presided by Dadabhai Naoroji who was invited from England.

He also heard the speeches of Sarojini Devi, Pandit Malviya and MA Jinnah for the first time. Later, he was obsessed with the idea of clearing ICS

for which he wanted to go to England. But consequent upon many changes in his life course, particularly the death of his father, he preferred to stay back. Then after passing his MA, he joined as a Professor of English, History and Law at Presidency before moving to Muzaffarpur in 1908. When the financial conditions of Muzaffarpur College started deteriorating, it was decided that he should take up law. Dr. Rajendra Prasad writes, “Thus ended my student days, they appear to belong to a golden age: I had no worries and I had the best of opportunities. I had one great facility: I had a brother who guided me and who inspired me with all the best ideas and ideals that I came to cherish. Sometimes I regret that I had not made the fullest use of this advantage”⁴.

Dr. Prasad was a staunch advocate of education and played an instrumental role in promoting quality and value-based education. His contributions to the field of education have had an indelible impact on our country that made him a revered figure in our exclusive memory. His passion for learning was evident from an early age. He was an exceptional student. He was an avid reader and spent hours studying books on a variety of subjects. Even if he took up some assignments, his interest in education was never exhausted, and he continued to be actively engaged in academic pursuits. In 1917, he established the Bihar National College in Patna, which aimed at providing quality education to the students of Bihar. Prasad’s contributions to the promotion of education in India were numerous and far-reaching. He believed that education was the key to the progress and development of a country, and he worked tirelessly to ensure that education was accessible to all. One of his most significant contributions to the field of education was the establishment of the University of Bihar (now known as Patna University) in 1917.

He was also responsible for the establishment of the ‘Bihar Vidyapeeth’, an educational institution dedicated to the promotion of Indian culture and values. The institution was formed with the combined efforts of Mazharul Haq, Brijkishore Prasad and Rajendra Prasad. Mazharul Haq became the Chancellor, followed by Brijkishore Babu as Vice-Chancellor and Dr. Prasad, as Registrar. It is worth mentioning that his son Mrityunjay had topped the entrance test for Presidency College, Calcutta even though he asked him to forego and join ‘Bihar Vidyapeeth’. The institution aimed to provide education to students in rural areas and was committed to promote Indian culture and the value system. The ‘Bihar Vidyapeeth’ played a significant role in the promotion of education in the region and continued to be a leading educational institution in India. He was a strong advocate for the establishment of universities and colleges in rural areas. He believed that education needs to be prioritised in any national agenda because this serves as a tool for social development and inclusiveness. The concept of quality in education needs to be integrated if the social chasm

⁴Ibid. p. 56.

is to be bridged. Indeed, the development of educational institutions at the local level is a must to make education accessible to all, especially to those living with scarce resources and grim poverty. His spiritual vision on education combines high degree of character and intellectual development, being coterminous with each other.

Political Activism

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a prominent political figure in Indian history and his political activism played a significant role in India's struggle for independence. His political activism began early in his career. He participated in many of the major campaigns of the independence movement and was instrumental in the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement.

The Non-Cooperation Movement was launched in 1920 by Gandhiji as a way of challenging the British Raj. His association with Gandhiji inspired him considerably to make India an independent and inclusive country. The arrival of Gandhiji on the landscape of freedom struggle immensely influenced Dr. Prasad. When Gandhiji came to Champaran to find facts relating to atrocities being perpetrated on farmers relating to the draconian *teenkathiya* system of indigo cultivation, Dr. Prasad joined Gandhiji with full passion for mental attraction. Dr. Prasad was greatly impressed by Gandhiji's dedication, faith, courage and commitment to the cause of the people. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's vowed to ensure freedom for the country. Importantly, his provisional thoughts underwent a seismic transformation with the influence of Gandhiji. Dr. Prasad actively participated in the non-cooperation movement. Over time, he turned into a strong supporter of Gandhiji.

Primarily, he did not know much about Gandhiji and only had a sketchy idea about his leadership skills, portrayed in South Africa. It was Rajkumar Shukla of Champaran who made Dr. Prasad understand the significance of Gandhiji. Raj Kumar Shukla believed in Gandhiji and he could pursue Gandhiji to visit Champaran and see the wretched conditions of indigo cultivators. Dr. Prasad attended the AICC meeting in Kolkata and was sitting next to Gandhiji. However, he never made any effort to converse with him. Dr. Rajendra Prasad writes, "I am by nature shy. I remember that the committee, particularly the president, pressed him to accept the secretary-ship of the congress but he flatly refused. I felt that when so many people made a joint request it was not proper for him to reject it, but I kept silent"⁵. Gandhiji was taken to Dr. Prasad's house in Patna at the instance of Raj Kumar Shukla. At that time, Rajendra Prasad had gone to Jaganathpuri. In the house of Dr. Prasad, only his servant was there and the servant considered him some village client who came to take legal advice

⁵Ibid. p.83.

from Dr. Prasad. When Mazharul Haq heard of his visit, he attempted to take Gandhiji to his house. In the evening Gandhiji left for Muzaffarpur where he stayed with Acharya Kriplani. Later he moved to Motihari and incidentally, Dr. Prasad returned from Jaganthpuri. The moment he heard the arrival of Gandhiji, he left for Motihari thereto. He went to Gorakh Prasad's residence where he found Gandhiji in a simple *kurta*. When Gandhiji commented that he stayed in his house, Dr. Prasad got embarrassed, as during his stay he was not there. Finally, Dr. Prasad provided his legal know-how for the plight of indigo planters of Champaran. Gandhiji appreciated the support of Rajendra Prasad. Thereafter, Rajendra Prasad not only developed a great respect for Gandhiji but also tremendous confidence in the method of his work. By the time the agitation of Champaran ended, he became an ardent devotee and zealous advocate of the Gandhian method.

After the successful completion of the Satyagraha campaign in Champaran, the happenings in Punjab continued to intensify the anger of the people. That province was subjected to all sorts of excuses under the cloak of martial law. People were humiliated and hundreds were sent to jail. The outside world knew little about the courage and commitment of the Punjabi lot. They bore all the tyrannies for the province. The situation prevailing in Punjab made it completely cut off from the rest of the country. The people of Punjab were neither allowed to leave the province nor let others to get in. In a way, the people of Punjab were caged. Due to such draconian restrictions imposed, even normal source of communication like telegrams was suspended. Nevertheless, some news percolated and a wave of anguish and discontent swept. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims participated in all agitations together. An interesting vantage point in the Punjab agitation was that it brought people to the same page. The togetherness was a clear symbolic representation of unity. Together they braved lathi blows, bullets, aerial bombardments, crawled on the ground side by side and drank water from the same wells, leading to the birth of communitarian ideals. The congress was to organise its next meeting in Amritsar in 1920. Due to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Punjab was terrorised to such an extent that a congress session was not possible to be organised. However, a special session of congress was organised in Kolkata where Dr. Prasad participated and expressed lugubrious concerns about British Raj and vowed to attain independence. Later, it was during the historic annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1920 that the exact details of the non-cooperation programme were finally worked out. Though Dr. Prasad could not attend, he could gaze at the entire details that were discussed at Nagpur. Dr. Prasad writes: "four boycotts constituted the main programme: (1) surrendering of titles and distinctions conferred by the government(2) severance of connections with government and government-aided schools and colleges (3) boycott of legislative councils and (4) boycott of courts, that is, avoiding litigation and

giving up legal practice”.⁶ Later, giving up government jobs was also included. On these prescriptions, people were suggested to begin no-tax campaigns. ‘The establishment of national schools, setting up of panchayats to settle disputes, propagation of the use of the spinning wheel, boycott of foreign cloth and propaganda for prohibition also formed part of the movement. The session laid great emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity and non-violence tool to attain freedom. Just after the Nagpur session of Congress, the waverers became staunch supporters of non-cooperation. Gandhiji told the people that if they carried out the programme faithfully, Swaraj would be theirs within a year. People then set out assiduously to implement the programme. The movement was catching the popular imagination in Bihar⁷ as well. Dr. Prasad found the moment most inspiring and became one of the loyalists of Gandhiji.

Civil disobedience was the active, professed refusal of citizens to obey English laws. The civil disobedience movement was a landmark event in the Indian freedom struggle. In many ways, the civil disobedience movement was credited for paving the way for freedom. The movement aimed to boycott British goods and institutions and to engage in acts of civil disobedience to demonstrate opposition to British rule. In 1930, Dr. Rajendra Prasad emerged as one of the key leaders of the Civil Disobedience Movement which aimed to challenge British rule in India through acts of non-violent resistance and civil disobedience. The movement was launched by Gandhiji who led a march to the coastal town of Dandi to protest against the British salt tax. Lord Irwin, the viceroy of India, went to England in 1929 to discuss the Indian situation with the Labour Government which was then in power. On his return, Lord Irwin announced the effect that the declaration of British Policy on India’s dominion status was embedded. He hinted at the possibility of holding a round table conference in England to consider the Indian question. This announcement appeared to be an answer to the Kolkata Congress resolution demanding the conferment of dominion status within a year.

“If the government believed that this declaration would clear the suspicion of the people and recover the situation, their hopes were not to be accomplished. A great controversy raged in the press in which the announcement analysed the threadbare. The liberals appeared to be satisfied with it but the Congress felt that no clear offer was made by the government. It was decided that clarification should be sought from the government. The eve of the Lahore Congress session, held in 1929 made the congress interpretation clearer. The Lahore session of the Congress felt forced to adopt the goal of complete independence and a resolution to the effect was approved. The Congress also directed party units all

⁶Ibid. p.125

⁷Ibid. p.125

over the country to prepare the people for Satyagraha to achieve the objective of complete independence. Having noted the unmistakable signs of awakening everywhere, the Congress was emboldened now to take a stand on Satyagraha. A few days later the working Committee directed the country to observe January 26 as Independence Day, and meetings were to be held all over the country. The national flag was to be hoisted and pledges taken by all to work for the achievement of independence. The congress declaration incorporating the pledge was to be translated into all regional languages so that every Indian might understand it when repeating it. The working committee made it clear that at the meeting only the pledge was to be read word by word and the audience was made to repeat it and no speech was to be made”.⁸

“Dr. Prasad was convalescing after his illness and declared to stir out on January 26. He had several calls to attend meetings but he was able to attend only two. After attending a meeting in his village he was going by car to Siwan when the car broke down. When he thought that he would not be able to make it, a police car hove in sight and the officer was kind enough to offer him a lift which he thankfully accepted. He was in time for the Siwan meeting where the pledge was duly taken. The Independence Day programme was carried out in almost all the towns of India, indicating that the country was now prepared to take a big step toward the attainment of independence. Satyagraha was replete with expectancy in the air. People were anxiously awaiting the signal to launch Satyagraha. Gandhiji was preparing the ground with his writings which injected a new spirit into the people. At Sabarmati Ashram a meeting of the working committee was called to discuss whether the country was prepared for Satyagraha or not. The meeting also aimed at deciding the time and manner within which the Satyagraha was to be launched. Some felt that the country was not yet fully prepared. But Gandhiji and Dr. Prasad were of contrary view and were keen on launching the Sataygraha at an early date. Then the discussion turned to a form and Gandhiji decided to break the salt laws. The breaking of the salt laws initiated an era of hope for which the credit goes to Rajendra Babu”⁹.

Dr. Prasad and Gandhiji were of the view that salt was an essential commodity available easily from seawater or other natural sources and should be freely obtainable by poor people whereas people could neither get it cheap nor in adequate quantity. Like water and air, salt was meant to be available to everyone, but the government banned access to natural sources and levied a

⁸Ibid. p.126

⁹Lok Sabha Secretariat 2014. Constituent Assembly Debates, Book-I, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi.

duty on this very essential item. Gandhiji further argued that the anti-salt law Satyagraha would be easily understood by all. It would also be considered just by the world at large. Gandhiji said, by breaking the salt law, Indians would be able to develop enough strength to accomplish other things done by the British Government.

Dr. Prasad along with many other leaders found it difficult to appreciate the argument proposed by Gandhiji. But, Dr. Prasad could not understand how the government could be expected to do something unless it was compelled to do so. While in the coastal area, people could easily break the salt law by manufacturing salt from the seawater, the same was difficult for the people living in the interior areas. Dr. Prasad thought it was difficult for the people belonging to UP and Bihar to do so. Side by side, the *Noniya* caste people who were poor would also be deprived of their job by breaking the salt law. The problem was that the government enjoyed a monopoly on manufacturing salt. Dr. Prasad thought that the salt law could be broken to those places where salt could be produced. It was equally important to consider that if the salt laws were broken, the *Noniya* caste people had to be galvanised into the Satyagraha movement. The next problem was the basic resources for the *Noniya* caste to survive. Dr. Prasad was futuristic in his approach by employing his vision that breaking the salt laws may have different implications for specific groups and communities.

Thus, Dr. Prasad had doubts about the success of the programme in Bihar. He told Gandhiji about the Chowkidari tax which everyone had to pay and which was the source of popular discontent in hardship. Dr. Prasad was of the view that opposition to the tax would provide a better basis for hesitation. Gandhiji did not agree and posited that let's first break the salt law. Gandhiji averred that with the support of mass mobilisation, the boycott movement would succeed. However, the same was also supported by Dr. Rajendra Prasad as well. Gandhiji decided to leave Sabarmati Ashram on an agreed date and marched to Dandi. Dandi was a seaside village in the Surat district, 150 miles away. Dr. Prasad accompanied by others started on April 6 to cover the distance, to reach Dandi where they would break the salt law. But before launching the Satyagraha, Gandhiji sent a letter to the viceroy through Reynold, an English man living in Sabarmati *Ashram* and giving the details of his campaign. No reply was received thereof. Gandhiji then went ahead with his plans. Before starting his march, he gave strict directions to all congress committees not to launch any campaigns themselves and await his call for Satyagraha. On the day of Gandhiji's departure, there was a large assemblage of enthusiastic people outside the *Ashram*. It looked as if the whole of Ahmedabad had turned out to be a crowded place. Amidst, an enthusiastic scene and great jubilation, Gandhiji left with 80 inmates of Ashram on the long track to Dandi declaring that he would not return to Sabarmati till the *Swaraj* was secured. Meanwhile, the

AICC met in Ahmedabad and formally approved Gandhiji's plan. Dr. Prasad after leaving his lucrative career completely followed Gandhian principle of truth and non-violence including pray, petition and persuasion (PPP).

When the date was awaited, Dr. Prasad was much influenced by the wretched conditions of the people of Bihar and requested Jawaharlal Nehru to visit Bihar to which he readily agreed. Dr. Rajendra Prasad wanted him to visit as many places as possible and to address gathering in the limited time. He arranged for three cars for the party. One volunteer would go ahead of the other two to reach fixed place first. They would create an atmosphere for people to meet by singing national songs. Then Dr. Prasad arrived in the second car and prepared for the meeting when the first car moved ahead to the next meeting place. Dr. Prasad initiative inspired people to be integrated with the central agenda of freedom through non-cooperation and non-violence.

Later when Quit India Movement was launched in 1942 as a way of forcing the British government to grant independence to India, Dr. Prasad became one of the champions to lead the movements. He was deeply committed to the cause of Indian independence and saw the movement as a way of challenging British authority and promoting Indian self-rule. His leadership and dedication to the cause of Indian independence inspired millions of people across the country and his legacy continues to be celebrated today. Dr. Prasad was one of the key leaders of several movements and was arrested along with other prominent political leaders. He was imprisoned for several years and was released in 1945 after India's independence was secured. The political activism of Dr. Rajendra Prasad is marked by gross engagement with altruism, commitment, benevolence and patriotism. A person whose narration of sacrifice needs special attention and could not attain due place due to biased historiography and colonial determinism.

Constitutionalism

Constitutionalism refers to the principles and practices of government that are based on formal provisions and prescriptions. Under constitutionalism, a set of fundamental laws and principles that govern a country contains the structure of government, the rights and duties of citizens and the powers and limitations of government officials. The idea of constitutionalism includes rule of law, separation of power, limitation to the government and protection of individual rights. The rule of law is a basic principle of constitutionalism which states that each individual is subject to the law, including government functionaries. The separation of powers is divided into different levels, such as the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. This principle helps to prevent the concentration of power in any one branch of government and promotes accountability and transparency. Constitutionalism emphasizes the importance of limited government and added governance. Limited government implies that

government power is to be restricted to certain areas and that individuals have the right to be free from government interference in their personal lives. The protection of individual rights is a core principle of constitutionalism, which recognises that individuals have certain inalienable rights, such as the freedom of speech, religion, and association. Protection of Individual Rights is essential for protecting individual rights and freedoms, which are necessary for a free and democratic society.

Dr. Prasad was an excellent mind with legal acumen. He presided over the Constituent Assembly that gave rise to the constitution of our country. At the election of the permanent chairman of the constituent assembly, J B Kriplani proposed the name of Dr. Rajendra Prasad which was seconded by Vallabhabhai Patel. The same was agreed upon by Dr. Prasad. The nomination paper was found valid and in order. In another nomination paper, the name of Dr. Rajendra Prasad was proposed by Shri Harekrushna Mahtab and seconded by Nand Kishore Das. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was impregnated with the spirit of the vihara—the invincibility of gentleness, the gospel of India. Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar said “with his election to the Chairmanship, the Constituent Assembly may be said to have started on its fateful career. Before it accomplishes its full task, it is bound to be confronted by situations and difficulties which will try the capacity even of so uniquely equipped a person as Dr. Rajendra Prasad”.¹⁰

Under the Madras session of Congress, Dr. M A Ansari constituted a committee for drafting the Constitution for India. The constitution envisaged a parliamentary system of government. It contained joint electorates including a formula for the protection of minorities. Under the presidentship of Sardar Patel, the Karachi session of the Congress came up with a resolution on economic policy and fundamental rights. Both economic policy and fundamental rights were passed. When India became a republic in 1950, most of the features were included in the constitution. It shows the vision of Dr. Rajendra Prasad behind bringing all good features to the governing document of our country. The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was organised on December 9, 1946. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who was the food minister in the interim government was elected as its President two days later. Dr. B R Ambedkar was chosen as the chairman of the drafting committee of the Constituent Assembly. The seven key members in drafting the Constitution were: Dr. Ambedkar, Pt. Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, K.M. Munshi, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar and B.N. Rau. Side by side they were also designated as constitutional advisers. Apart from these seven members, S.N. Mukherjee was chosen to act as the chief draftsman. He was really indispensable to Ambedkar in preparing the technical details of the constitution using legal language. Babu Rajendra Prasad was

¹⁰Lok Sabha Secretariat. 2014. Constituent Assembly Debates, Book-I, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi.

nominated to the assembly on the day after the assembly was inaugurated and held it with dignity until the end of its term. Dr. Prasad was tasked to bridge between quarrelsome members and others. He had to bring and settle ideas from all quarters, amicably and peacefully. Dr. Prasad asserted that i) constitution shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice – social, economic and political; equality of status, of opportunity and before the law: freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship; ii) adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas and depressed and other backward classes. By the end of 1948, the critical responsibility of Dr. Prasad was to preside over the Constituent Assembly sessions. For his exemplary role as president of the Constituent Assembly, he was widely appreciated. He could apply the art and science of ensuring consensus while arriving at a conclusion. For his generosity, Dr. Ambedkar paid reverential tributes to Dr. Prasad at the closing session of the Constituent Assembly.

Dr. Prasad was very generous in his praise. Dr. Ambedkar justified his selection. He found Dr. Prasad as a true asset to the Drafting Committee. The significant point that Dr. Prasad expressed and committee members appreciated was considering the multiplicity of social practices and traditions of India. Constitution was also reflecting on the distribution of power and functions between the union and state. The inevitability of the national language was also emphasised to thread the texture of diversity and get out from the colonial hangovers. Dr. Prasad also explained that Constitution was not the perfect document but a clear note of warning. Through constitutionalism, Dr. Prasad was not only wanting to eliminate the draconian system of British governance but also to bring equality, liberty and justice to the people, particularly the villagers, the destitute and weaker sections.

Dr. Prasad believed that only capable and man of character could make the best use of the constitution. If the document does not go into good hands, the constitution alone cannot help the country and its countrymen. It was also posited that after all constitution is a lifeless document. To give it a life, the requirement is to have honesty and people with integrity. Dr. Prasad was really clear to have leaders who can prioritise the interest of the nation over their self-interests. Dr. Rajendra Prasad borrowed his effective ideas, ideologies & thoughts from multiple intellectual traditions accumulated for an inclusive India.

Dr. Prasad's commitment to constitutionalism continued during his tenure as President of India. He worked to uphold the principles of the Constitution and ensure that the government operated within the framework of the law. He also played an important role in promoting national unity and protecting the rights of marginalised communities. 'Although, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was only the presiding officer of the Constituent Assembly, he handled and settled many knotty problems and many a difficult question as an elder statesman, showing great determination and courage of conviction. He conducted the proceedings

of the assembly with great insight, knowledge, wisdom and ready solutions'.¹¹ Indeed, he brought considerable esteem and honour to the post he owned in public life.

Overall, Rajendra Prasad's contributions to the development of constitutionalism in India were significant. His commitment to democratic values and the rule of law helped establish India as a constitutional democracy and provided a foundation for future generations of Indian leaders to build upon.

Presidential Times

Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the first president of India on January 26, 1950. As a President, he acted his role in accordance with the principles of the Indian constitution. He was unbiased and judicious. He travelled around the world to develop smart diplomatic relations with foreign nations. He was elected as the president of India in 1952 & 1957. As such, he served as the president of India w.e.f. 26.01.1950 to 13.05.1962. 'During the first three years of the Presidentship, Rajendra Prasad's visits to former princely states were few and far between. He visited Jodhpur, Gwalior and Mysore only on important reasons of health he had once to stay for a few weeks, visits to other places being purely official were short and matter-of-fact in nature. He stressed the utilisation of the right policies'.¹²

He played a crucial role in shaping the democratic and constitutional values during the provisional heydays of India. As a president, Dr. Prasad had the challenge of integrating over 500 princely states. He earnestly worked on it. He wanted to spread the 'Idea of India' in foreign countries. This led him to make several visits abroad, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Japan, Sri Lanka, USSR and so on. His visits played a key role in strengthening India's foreign relations. The visits also helped promote India's interests and build better diplomatic ties. Dr. Prasad stressed on non-aligned status of India by fostering the stand of being neutral in cold war situations.

The magnificent personality of Dr. Prasad was essentially accommodative. He used to synthesise manifold ideas. A true scholar of Vedic literature, he believed in respecting multiple currents and thoughts that emanated from discussions. He used to harmonise the views of others while respecting the dissenter. He was very particular about the means to be selected to attain a goal. This clearly reflects the imprint of Gandhiji on him. However, he was very loud and clear about his disagreement as well. For instance, he opposed the Hindu Code Bill proposed by Nehruji.

¹¹Chowdhary, V (ed.) 1987. Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents Late Jail Singh, Allied Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, p. xviii.

¹²Handa, R L. 1978. Rajendra Prasad: Twelve Years of triumph and Despair, Streling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, pp. 122-128.

Dr. Prasad worked tirelessly to promote the principles of democracy, secularism, and social justice during his tenure as president of India. Rajendra Prasad wanted to build an India of prosperity and inclusiveness. He ensured during his presidential tenure that constitutional values as guiding principles of our country must be protected and adhered to.

As a president, he kept himself aloof from the party. ‘Though President Prasad had become largely detached from the affairs of the party, the majority groups in the party both at the national and provincial levels were reverently beholden to him for his sterling justice and moral values. Among the leaders at the top who were staunch supporters of Prasad was Azad, another Gandhi Loyalist. It was Azad who played a key role more assertive than even Patel’s in Prasad’s election as interim president’.¹³

Rajendra Babu wanted to have equal visibility of governance footprints in every nook and corner of the country. ‘Dr. Prasad suggested that the existing Residency building in Hyderabad, already in possession of the government, could suitably be furnished to serve the presidential residence in the south. The suggestion was ultimately implemented, and Hyderabad came to have the ‘*Rashtrapati Nilyama*’ where Dr. Prasad annually visited and stayed during the summer months. With his base camp at the ‘*Nilyam*’, he also visited other places in the south such as Madras, Madurai, Kanchipuram, Kanya Kumari, Aurangabad, Ajanta and Ellora caves with his family members. While visiting the places, he was always preoccupied with official works and meeting with local leaders and gentry’.¹⁴

His particularity about history also requires little mention. In fact, the craft of history writing requires full attention to events. He was in favour of writing scientific history. He wrote on December 21, 1951, ‘history is key to the understanding of the social mind of every human grouping. It is, therefore, evident that a scientific history of India tracing the evolution and growth of the Indian mind through all the preceding centuries is one of the greatest desiderata of the country. I hope the Indian History Congress which is engaged in the task of the reconstruction of our history would enthuse our historians to complete this great task as early a date as possible. May I make a suggestion? We have had a successful non-violent revolt in this country. The history of that movement has not yet been written. It would be a most fitting contribution to historical work if the Indian History Congress could undertake this work. It might ask for Government help and support. After some time the original material will become difficult to obtain, and so far as individuals who participated in it and

¹³Murty, BSM. 2018. Dr. Rajendra Prasad: First President of India, South India Press, New Delhi, p. 413.

¹⁴Murty, BSM. 2018. Dr. Rajendra Prasad: First President of India, South India Press, New Delhi, pp. 402-403.

can be regarded as living and walking records of it are concerned, their ranks are getting thinned every day. I would therefore urge congress to see if it can undertake the urgent and necessary work. I wish your congress all success in its fourteenth session meeting at Jaipur on the 28th of this month'.¹⁵ Dr. Prasad took all the possible measures to make India an inspiring nation where seven principles viz. Swaraj, Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Swadesh and Swadharma (7S) would take our nation to new heights.

Inspiration

Dr. Prasad wanted to bring state power to the poor and downtrodden. His intention to include empathy in service delivery was incredible. Dr. Rajendra Babu always wanted to keep constitutional provisions intact with the system of governance. 'It was Dr. Rajendra Prasad who guided the Gandhian constructive programme like spinning and weaving of Khadi clothes, the establishment of a national college, removal of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, and cow-protection scheme. He realised that the successful implementation of the programme was possible only through the well-organised congress. He, therefore, tried successfully to prevent any crack from taking place in the congress organisation'.¹⁶ Dr. Prasad was against the prevailing caste system. He wrote, 'another peculiar feature of the nominations was the consideration of caste. Congress abhorred the idea. It is a matter of shame that in Bihar, the Provincial Congress Committee had to take caste labels into account in certain circumstances because the success of candidates there depended on such considerations'.¹⁷ Dr. Rajendra Prasad was very considerate about the problems of the peasants. He was always interested in discussing their problems with Sahjanand Saraswati and Ram Nandan Mishra. It is important to bring on record that Dr. Rajendra Prasad was so obsessed with Gandhian ideology that he developed an allergy to socialism. He believed that the socialist paradigm would make several parts of the nation. However, he maintained an amicable connection with socialist leaders like Dr. Jay Prakash Narayan and Dr. Ram Monohar Lohia. It shows that he provided space also to those with whom he was not necessarily in agreement. This represents his holistic life practices and comprehensive philosophy.

Dr. Prasad was interested in Gandhiji's constructive programmes like the importance of Khadi and Village industries, the new rural-based education system, adult education, rural sanitation & hygiene, removal of untouchability and upliftment of tribal communities. To Prasad, true freedom implies the

¹⁵Proceedings of the Indian History Congress. 1951. Vol. 14 (1951), p.1, Indian History Congress Press.

¹⁶Kumar, N. 1991. Rajendra Prasad and the Indian Freedom Struggle (1917-1947), Patriot Publishers, New Delhi.

¹⁷Prasad, R. 1957. Rajendra Prasad- Autobiography, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, p.429.

eradication of poverty, illiteracy, disease, socio-economic discrimination, and communal hostilities. 'Education for all', 'health for all', 'service to the needy', and 'assured accountability' were some of the basic tenants of his principles that inspire all individuals. This is the broad context within which the inspiring works of Dr. Rajendra Prasad have been placed in this book.

Contributions from Authors

The underwritten constitutes the bird's eye view of the contributions made. The authors have covered the relevance of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's thoughts in relation to various aspects. The authors have not only collected the relevant information in making their paper factually precise but also interpreted the relevance of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's work in the larger ambit of governance and direction within which India should take strides.

Dr. Amitabh Rajan's paper on "Dr. Rajendra Prasad: A Profile of Ethical Courage" traces the rationale of decisions Dr Rajendra Prasad took as President of the Constituent Assembly (11.12.1946-25.01.1950) and President of India (26.01.1950-13.05.1962). During the period 26.1.1950-13.5.1962, as President of India, the executive power of the Union vested in the incumbent Dr Rajendra Prasad. There were indeed constitutional limitations, but the way he used the administrative discretion can be seen in the clearance of the top appointments, normative functioning of justice in establishment matters and quality of the presidential orders issued with his signature. To the civil servants, his emphasis was on 'national service' which he defined as a combination of honesty and efficiency. What mattered was not just the content of the precise message, but equally the person who resolutely formulated it for concerted action. His public speeches as a President never limited themselves to achievements, they were fair enough to credibly touch upon performance gaps.

Dr. Ravindra Kumar Verma's paper on "The Statesman Dr Rajendra Prasad: Glimpses of his Contributions to the Building of Indian Democracy" identifies the role played by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in building vibrant democracy in India. He finds that the leadership of Dr Rajendra Prasad cannot be categorised simply as a great political leader, rather he was a statesman standing on the frontline along with Mahatma Gandhi, Jay Prakash Narayan, etc. It is a fact that the nature of a polity is determined by the way the leaders create it. Among those leaders, some are political leaders, and some are considered statesmen. Dr Rajendra Prasad was a statesman and one of such leaders who are considered the makers of modern India. He accomplished himself as a lawyer, as a teacher, and later as Principal at L S College, Muzaffarpur. Rajendra Babu was deeply moved by the dedication, conviction and courage that Gandhiji displayed. He decided that he would do everything he could to help the farmers, with his skills as a lawyer and as an enthusiastic volunteer. Later he resorted to simple living. He reduced the number of servants he had to one and sought ways to simplify his

life. He no longer felt shame in sweeping the floor, or washing his utensils, tasks he had all along assumed others would do for him. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was one of the most distinguished among the first generation of statesmen who led India to independence and then played a key role in laying the foundations of a vibrant democratic republic. The extremely important political task of framing India's Constitution was shepherded with great acumen and sagacity of Dr. Prasad. He was deeply respected for his erudition, his consensus-building abilities, his unflinching modesty and good humour.

Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari's paper on "Vision of Dr. Rajendra Prasad on Indian Education" illustrates as to why the quality and comprehensive learning functions as an instrument to meaningful collective action for the betterment of a nation. Dr. Rajendra Prasad believed in an education that could fulfill the economic, political, cultural, civilisational and moral needs of present-day society. His philosophy entails that education must not be cut off from the context of time and space. The role of schools, colleges and universities in curricula development needs to be integrated with our genuine needs, to be more acceptable and enduring. Dr. Rajendra Prasad placed his views extensively in his writings and speeches. He said that due to the narrow and vested interests of British rule, a foreign language i.e. English had been the medium of instruction in schools and universities of India for a very long time. When universities were first established in our country by the British, education was primarily focused on providing knowledge of the English language, literature and law with the aim of enabling educated individuals to find employment in offices or practice law in courts. The medium of instruction in English did not necessarily cater to the Indian purpose. As such, he vouched for Hindi to be considered as the national language.

Dr. Shashi Bhushan Kumar's paper on "Dr. Rajendra Prasad: A Personality par Excellence" includes the features like an eminent freedom fighter, renowned jurist, eloquent Parliamentarian and an able administrator. He writes that Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who enjoyed the trust and confidence of Mahatma Gandhi, was also his ardent follower. An epitome of simplicity and honesty, Dr. Prasad represented all that is best in our culture. As a testimony to his acumen and capability, first, he headed the Constituent Assembly as Chairman and then occupied the highest office of the newborn nation as President consecutively for two terms. Both, as Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, and then as President of India, he played a very important role in shaping the destiny of the nation and left an indelible mark on our national life and polity. Dr. Prasad acquired a good habit of studying and memorising the entire school lessons at home daily since his childhood. It paid dividends and he always stood first in his class. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a literary person. Besides Hindi and his mother tongue, he knew Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian as well as English. To a great extent, Dr. Prasad influenced public opinion through his writings and literary

works. He wrote several books both in English and Hindi besides editing a few newspapers. In the early 1920s, he took up the editing of a Hindi Weekly ‘Desh’ and an English bi-weekly ‘Searchlight’. His History of Champaran Satyagraha was published in 1917 and another book India Divided in 1946. His ‘Atmakatha’ was published in Hindi in 1946 and English in 1957. This autobiography is considered to be a valuable document depicting India’s struggle for freedom.

Dr. R D Mishra’s paper on “Dr Rajendra Prasad: The icon of India” highlights the longest period of tenure Dr. Prasad served as the president of India. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the longest-serving President of India with a tenure of around 12 years in office from 26 January 1950 – 13 May 1962. After practising law for few years, Rajendra Prasad decided to play an active role in India’s freedom movement, which was a hidden desire while perusing education at Calcutta. In 1906 Rajendra Prasad joined as a volunteer in the annual session of the Indian National Congress, at Calcutta, and in 1911 officially joined the Indian National Congress when the annual session was held in Calcutta once again. In 1916, he met Mahatma Gandhi at the Indian National Congress’s Lucknow Session. Gandhiji invited to accompany him on one of his fact-finding missions in Champaran Bihar. Rajendra Prasad was so much so inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s determination, bravery, and conviction that as soon as the Indian National Congress passed the motion of non-cooperation in 1920, he left his lucrative legal profession as well as his duties at the university to support the movement. In response to Gandhi’s call for a boycott of western educational institutions, he told his son, Mrityunjaya Prasad, to drop out of school and enrol in Bihar Vidyapeeth, an institution which he and his colleagues developed on the traditional Indian model of education system. The iconic role played by Dr. Prasad has aptly placed in the paper.

Dr. Avnit Kaur’s paper “Role of Dr. Rajendra Prasad in Indian Nationalist Movement” effectively purports the importance that needs to be given to Dr. Rajendra Prasad for his instrumental role played in the nationalist movement. Prasad was chosen as India’s first president by the Constituent Assembly in 1950, the year the country became a republic. Prasad retired from Congress party politics and established a tradition of independence and non-partisanship for the officeholder. Even though he was only the ceremonial head of state, Prasad supported the expansion of education in India and frequently provided advice to the Nehru administration. Prasad became the only president to hold office for two full terms when he was re-elected in 1957. Prasad held the position for the longest period—roughly 12 years. As his term was finished, he left Congress and established new rules for lawmakers that are still followed. In 1906, Prasad was a key figure in the establishment of the Bihari Students Conference and was its first president. Being a scholar and lawyer, Dr. Prasad was well aware of the opportunities and work that needed to be done in this area to support farmers and advance the Indian economy. He made use of his

expertise by assisting in the establishment of Bihar's agricultural university. The name of the university was changed to Dr. Rajendra Prasad University. The current location of the Central Agricultural University is Pusa, Samastipur, Bihar. He was a trailblazer in creating knowledge centres to assist farmers in becoming aware of the best techniques for their agriculture. Because he was raised in a middle-class family in a small Bihar district, Dr. Prasad could identify with the issues facing farmers. He had lived close to the major wage workers for his entire life and had witnessed the difficulties and advancements in this field and the challenges they faced.

Dr. Nishant Kumar's paper on "Mirror of Indian Democracy: Dr. Rajendra Prasad" seeks to unfold the realities that mattered in bringing life to the nation i.e. drafting of the constitution. The author argues that true sense of democracy requires effective leadership giving space to the citizens in decision-making and also serving them without self-interest. The life and works of Dr. Prasad occupy a significant place in not only shaping the nation but also while taking policy decisions. The paper has attempted to identify some of his works which inspire our country and countrymen.

Dr. Shweta Mittal and Dr. Saket Bihari in their paper "Dr. Rajendra Prasad through his Speeches" explain that the speeches of Dr. Rajendra Prasad is instrumental in understanding his vision. Dr. Prasad was well-connected to the ground-level problems of India and his solutions were not borrowed from the western world but were well-driven from the rich history of the nation. He was visionary because he understood that cooperatives and rural universities will lower the divide between urban and rural India, strengthening the rural economy. He had the foresight to realise that rural cooperatives and universities would help bridge the gap between urban and rural India while also bolstering the rural economy.

The towering personality of Dr. Rajendra Prasad stands distinct in India today. Spiritual Dr. Prasad believed in rebirth. On August 14, 1960, he wrote: "Personally I believe in the survival of the soul after the death of the body as also in the law of Karma and re-birth. But even from a purely materialistic point of view such a belief is helpful. It is helpful in two ways. It enables one to tolerate and suffer, without much pain, all the discomforts, and inconveniences to which life is subject such as bad health, material destitution, and the like. They are supposed to have come in due course as a result of our own deeds in the past. It also rouses and inspires us to good action which ensures not only better conditions in the future but also to overcome such difficulties as we have in the present by throwing upon us the responsibility for all the good and evil which we may have to face in life".¹⁸ On his demise, Late Jaya Prakash Narayan

¹⁸Murty, BSM. 2018. Dr. Rajendra Prasad: First President of India, South India Press, New Delhi, p. 480.

wrote: ‘Rajendra Babu was truly above all party considerations and the matters that exercised his mind while he was holding the august office of president. It is good augury that some of his ideals are today gaining increasing acceptance at the Governmental level’¹⁹. “Self-discipline was innate to his description not for a single moment would he deviate from his commitments, or get distracted from his unwavering devotion to duty, or a passionate devotion to a mission serve his countrymen”.²⁰

PV Rao, commenting on the personality of Dr. Rajendra Prasad said, “If Sardar Patel acquired the determination of Mahatma Gandhi, Nehruji his philosophy, Rajaji his wit and humour, Rajen Babu acquired his simplicity and purity of heart”²¹.

The fathomless intellectual depth and profundity of the contributors emerge as one turns pages through the book. The book “Bharat Ratna: Inspiring Works of Rajendra Prasad” would be of special interest and use to the followers of diplomacy and Public Administration as much as to the general reader, as the book is entertaining, inspirational and even enlightening. The influence of Dr. Rajendra Prasad continues to be the key guiding principle in a people-friendly service delivery system. Indeed, the struggle for the truth can be won through being mild and accommodating, and not by being militant or radical rebels.

¹⁹Handa, R L .1978. Rajendra Prasad: Twelve Years of Triumph and Despair, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, p. ii.

²⁰Ibid, p. 381.

²¹The Hindustan Times, 27.02.1986.

Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD: A PROFILE IN ETHICAL COURAGE

AMITABH RAJAN

The paper focuses on the rationale of the decisions Dr Rajendra Prasad took as President of the Constituent Assembly (11.12.1946-25.01.1950) and President of India (26.01.1950-13.05.1962). The approach employed in the paper is evidence-based that emphasizes the dimensions of ethics and integrity in public life. The tasks assigned to Dr. Prasad necessitated a vision of history, an insight into the inputs for decisions, and, above all, the courage of a role model in assertion. It was also a phase in India's institutional history in which old was dead, but the new was only taking shape. The country was in ferment. Leadership acumen, therefore, was needed to carry stakeholders together with empathetic understanding and ethics of discourse. To what extent the leader met the challenge of life and time?

Rajendra Prasad had the best education available in India and excelled at whatever he studied —M.A. (Calcutta University, 1907) and M.L. (Calcutta University, 1915). Along with education was a movement of struggles for acquiring education—from a remote village to Calcutta's Presidency College, and to Law Faculty thereafter. Details of his academic profile show evidence of razor-sharp intellect, systematic hard work, cross-disciplinary abilities, and presence of mind in assertion. He also took up college-level teaching to avoid giving financial support burden to his family. The burden got substantially eased when he got the *sanad* for practising law. By the time he met Mahatma Gandhi, he was a leading practitioner in the High Court. After meeting Gandhi, he accepted Gandhi as his leader and left everything for India's freedom struggle and Gandhian ideals of personal life. Gandhi had many followers. Rajendra Prasad was one of them. He was, however, a follower since Gandhi's early years in Indian Politics (1917). He went on getting closer to his leader because of similarities in each other's moral universe, methods of ascertaining truth and sophistication in resolving complex and delicate issues. These virtues also generated wider acceptance of Rajendra Prasad as a source of intellect and morality in organized life. He was chosen to be President of the Indian National Congress thrice (October 1934, March 1939 and December 1946) and maintained his public record of high trust and credibility on matters before him.

Achievements get further highlighted when we recall the broadening of the organization's social base during the period, ideological cross-currents, and the need for harmonization during the specific years of Rajendra Prasad's Congress Presidency. These specific years are also historically important.

Freedom Struggle and Decolonisation are tough tasks. The tasks were tougher for India because stakes were high for the imperial power in India. Its governing policy space kept getting anxiously constrictive as the twentieth century started reaching its midpoint. Pride, prejudice and deceit flowed freely to divide and rule India at any cost. Mahatma Gandhi was continuously kept under pressure—on the tables of constitutional discussions and through the parties that hoped to gain from the political benefits of the imperial tactics of divide and rule. Rajendra Prasad, under these circumstances, emerged as an adviser with an unwavering moral conscience, a part of the solution in the national interest, and a dependable person amidst situations of power game-duplicity and uncertain outcomes created.

When Rajendra Prasad was elected to preside over the Constituent Assembly of India, he had with him a life experience of 62 years. These 62 years had been a sacrifice-driven spotless life in which rectitude flowed relentlessly—as a son, as a sibling, as a spouse, as a father, as a student and also as a professional. This ethic of duty-based morality expanded into patriotism during student days in Calcutta but over a span of years. Its peak point was two—meetings with Shri G. K. Gokhale and later with Shri M.K. Gandhi. Evidence of the psychodynamics of this transcendence can be discerned from his narration on the evolution of the self:

“Both of us went to see Gokhale...He said, ‘It is possible that you may do well in the legal profession, amass wealth and lead a life of plenty and luxury. You may live in a big bungalow, keep a carriage, and possess all the paraphernalia which is the hallmark of the rich’..But remember, he intoned, raising his index finger, ‘the country has also a claim on young men. And since you have had a nice record, the claim on you is all the stronger.’ Then, touching a personal note, he observed: ‘I come from a poor family. My people had great hopes that after completing my education I would earn a lot and be able to make all of them happy. When throwing cold water over all their hopes, I dedicated my life to the country’s service, my brother felt so annoyed that for some time, he did not even talk to me... He spoke in this strain for nearly two hours. His words, uttered with soul-deep sincerity, made a deep impression on us...Both of us pondered over his proposal. I could not relish my food and spent sleepless nights. After ten days of serious thought, I decided that I should abide by Gokhale’s wishes and join the society. But I could not muster enough courage to tell my brother. So I wrote a long letter, asking for his approval for my decision, and placing the letter on his bed when he was away, I slipped

out into College Square and sat there waiting... At last, it was considered best to go home and consult my mother, aunt and sister... Deeply moved, mother said nothing. But my sister, who had always been the outspoken member of our family, said: 'By talking of going to England, you made your father miserable. Now by talking to become a recluse at this age, you want to make your brother unhappy.' She then burst into tears and the whole household started weeping. This completely killed whatever enthusiasm I had for the idea.¹" Rajendra Prasad was then a 27-year-old joint-family member and a father of two children.

Rajendra Prasad came under the spell of Gandhi in 1917 (six years after the impactful meeting with Gokhale) when Gandhiji organized Champaran Satyagraha to liberate the peasants from the exploitation of the British Indigo Planters. Gandhi invited Rajendra Prasad and some other advocates to assist him. Young Rajendra Prasad responded with full sincerity, observed his cautious-moral moves towards success, and began to live the life of a true Gandhian—washing his clothes and utensils, traveling in third-class railway compartments, giving up ease and comfort in unison with the suffering masses, and leading through exemplary moral vision and rectitude. It was, in short, an endeavour to de-class oneself and undertake the management of the self to insulate the mind from malice or ill will. With the passage of time, his efforts acquired an effortless behavioural dimension of personality.

Contributions of Dr Rajendra Prasad as President of the Constituent Assembly of India can be assessed under the following eight ethical challenges that lay before the nation then, and in ensuring their coordinated outcomes:

Role-Clarity on Norms and Values

“This Constituent Assembly has come into being with a number of limitations, many of which we will have to bear in mind as we proceed. But, it must also be borne in mind that the Assembly is a sovereign body and is fully competent to conduct its proceedings in the manner it chooses to follow. No outside power can meddle with its proceedings. I also believe that it is competent to break the limitations attached to its birth. It should be our effort to get free of these limitations and frame a constitution which will assure all men and women of this country no matter of what religion, province or shade of opinion... It will be our duty to frame a constitution which will leave no room for complaint from anybody... All that we need is honesty of purpose, firmness of determination, and a desire to understand each other's viewpoints.”²

¹Autobiography (English Translation: Penguin Books India 2010 edition) pp. 62-64.

²Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-1 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 11th December, 1946)].

“In the course of the debates on India in the House of Commons and the House of Lords in December last, certain statements were made detracting from the representative character of this Assembly. Notable among those who spoke in this strain were Mr Churchill and Viscount Simon... Both these gentlemen have held the highest offices of responsibility; and whatever may be their views on current political controversies, they would not, I am sure, like to make statements which are wholly contrary to facts and lead to mischievous inferences.³”

Ethics of Discourse in Functions

“Instead of putting in -the words ‘for the purpose of this Part’ after the word ‘State’, let those words come in the beginning.”

“The point that has been raised by Mr Das deserves consideration and I want the mover to consider it... ‘Subject to jurisdiction’ will not include allegiance. I am not quite sure about it but the lawyers in this House have to help us on that.”

“Even after listening to the learned discourses that have been given to us by eminent lawyers, I confess that I am not yet convinced that the clause, as it is, has been rightly put. I would particularly request lawyers and jurists who are members of this House to give their attention to this clause and to give it something which will be acceptable to all. If they too feel that the clause as it stands should be accepted, I have no doubt that the House will accept their opinion with the respect which is due to them”⁴.

Respect for the Autonomy of Functions

“Our Constitution should be self-contained as far as possible. We should not depend on the interpretation of clauses in other constitutions, as it may lead us to any amount of confusion.”⁵

“Just to avoid longer discussion may I make a suggestion with regard to the procedure that has been followed in connection with this particular resolution? The matter came up before the Steering Committee and the Steering Committee felt that it was necessary to refer it to a very small committee to go into these figures...and after taking into consideration all these figures and such information as was available with regard to the migration of population from one side to the other, the Committee made certain recommendations on the basis of which the resolution has come

³Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-2 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 20th January 1947).

⁴Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-3 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 29th April, 1947).

⁵Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-3 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 29th April 1947)

before the House. The matter has been considered by a Sub-Committee which I had appointed on the recommendation of the Steering Committee. Of course, it is open to the House to accept it or not.⁶”

“Whatever you wish to say please give in writing for I shall have to enquire about it. I will see what it is. Does anyone else wish to speak?⁷”

Fairness in the Distribution of Institutional Power

“I am afraid we cannot take up this question in this house. We are here for the purpose of preparing the Constitution and the question which is raised by the honourable Member really belongs to the legislative side of the house and I would suggest that he might take it up there, or as the Assembly is not sitting, he might take it up with the Government.⁸”

“We have already dealt with nearly three-fourths of the Constitution. There are certain articles and certain Parts which have not yet been dealt with, but with regard to which we are not in a position to take up the discussion. For example, the position of the Indian State in some cases is not quite clear yet. Then there is the question of the distribution of revenues between the Union and the Units. This requires consultation between the Central Government and the provincial governments. We are not in a position to have the Conference immediately for various reasons, one of which is that the Finance Minister has to be away from India for some time in connection with urgent national work. It has therefore become necessary to adjourn discussion of the remaining article of the Constitution for some time.⁹”

“It has been represented that many Members from the States would like to participate in the discussion in connection with these articles relating to the States. I think this is a very reasonable desire on their part, and I am prepared to accommodate them. So, I would not put the whole thing to vote today.¹⁰”

Crafting of Performative Accountabilities within Systems

“No Member is entitled to absent himself in the hope that his vote will not be required. Every Member is expected to be in his place. Mr Biswanath

⁶Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-6 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 27th January 1948).

⁷Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-6 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 27th January 1948).

⁸Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-8 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 27th May 1949).

⁹Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-8 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 15th June 1949).

¹⁰Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-10 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 12th October 1949).

Das was saying that some members were absent in the expectation that the draft would be accepted as it is and therefore I have said that no Member should take anything for granted and it is the duty to be here when the Assembly is sitting.¹¹”

“I notice that about half a dozen Members still want to speak on this. I have noticed that in discussing the articles relating to the Supreme Court and the High Courts there is a tendency to prolong the discussion even where discussion is not required. I would ask Members not to have discussion for discussion’s sake, as I feel in some cases we are having. I think we had better proceed with the voting on this article. Both points of view have been placed before the House.¹²”

“When we are considering the Constitution, we cannot altogether rule out new ideas. Changes are bound to occur from time to time and whenever they do occur, we have to take note of them. Therefore the Chair has reserved to itself the right to allow amendments even at a later stage. If it thinks that an amendment is such that it requires consideration. If there is any complaint from any Member that the time should be allowed to consider any particular amendment, it shall always be considered.¹³”

Permitting Spaces for Sovereign-Will Assertion

“The Constitution will provide rules for its own amendment, and the Constitution will be amended with the rules which will be provided in the Constitution. The clause also, if necessary, may be amended in the same way as any other clause in the Constitution.¹⁴”

“We shall now take up article 296; amendment No. 15. We have got a large number of amendments. Some of the amendments are amendments to the amendment to be made by Drafting Committee. Some are amendments which are to be moved by other Members. Many of them overlap. Therefore, I think Members will themselves exercise a certain amount of discretion in insisting upon amendments which are only overlapping and which are covered by other amendments.... There is no bar on the reopening of the whole question... It can be discussed on its merits.¹⁵”

¹¹Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-8 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 31st May 1949).

¹²Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-8 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 7th June 1949).

¹³Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-8 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 10th June 1949).

¹⁴Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-3 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 29th April 1947).

¹⁵Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-10 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated 14th October 1949).

Building a Protective Mechanism for Rights and Freedoms

“It seems to be a very important question and we should thrash it out. What would happen to a man who is not simply passing through the country but stays in this country, for trade purposes or some other purpose. Personally, I do not like that we should follow the precedent of any other country. We should have our own citizenship and formulate what that citizenship connotes.¹⁶”

“The Special Officer may be called upon to report as to how that has worked. You can go to the Federal Court or to the Supreme Court and get its decision whether a particular article of the Constitution has been broken, but then the officer may also report whether a particular article in the Constitution has been given effect to ... It has a certain value for administration purposes and the Government can take note of that and can deal with it.¹⁷”

“So far as High Courts are concerned, all parties and all people in this country have always held them in high esteem and it is no use casting aspersions on them generally. There may have been individual Judges who may have erred, but we should not cast aspersions on the judiciary as a whole.¹⁸”

Sensitivity on the Unity and Integrity of the Republic of India

“I am inclined to agree that the point raised by Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya is a solid and valid one. The accession of Kashmir was unconditional and what we are concerned with here is the representation of the State in this Assembly. When the plebiscite will take place and what the result of the plebiscite will be, we are not concerned here. We are only concerned with the representation of the State in this House. The method suggested has found favour with the Mover. The honourable Member may move his amendment with regard to the method, but he cannot put down any condition with regard to the status of the Member who will be returned to this House. Those members will sit as any other Members without any condition being attached to their status or tenure. So that part of the amendment is ruled out of order¹⁹.”

“May I just point out that this Constituent Assembly has been charged with the duty of framing a constitution for the country? There is no provision for

¹⁶Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-3 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 29th April 1947).

¹⁷Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-10 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 14th October 1949).

¹⁸Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-10 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 17th October 1949).

¹⁹Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-8 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 27th May 1949).

any referendum and therefore there is no question of a referendum either on the whole or a part of it. So that need not give rise to any controversy, because it will be futile.²⁰

“There is no question of sailing under false colours. The whole substance of the amendment adopted this morning is that the States should be brought in line with the Provinces...The amendment is to put them all together.²¹” Contributions of Dr Rajendra Prasad as President of India (26.1.1950-13.5.1962) should be assessed in terms of the powers and duties assigned to him by the Constitution of India, particularly the following ten.

The Oath

The Constitution of India has Article 60 that mandates Presidents of India to take an oath to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law”. A President, therefore, is duty-bound to not only preserve the Constitution but also to protect and defend it to the best of ability. The constitutional history of India has evidence to show that President Rajendra Prasad was second to none in preserving, protecting and defending the Constitution, and his ability to execute this mandate was outstanding — performatively, conscientiously and in the historical scene. The reasons for this are not difficult to discern. Dr Rajendra Prasad’s achievements lay in his internalized spirit of patriotism, his sharp legal acumen, his behavioural authenticity, his quiet dedication to solve issues, and his utmost endeavour to handle power with ethics. When he took oath on 26th January 1950 as President of the New Republic he had, thus, a stature that far exceeded the expectations of the incumbent. He had just completed the historic task of presiding over the Constituent Assembly of India, and the way he had behaved during the period 11.12.1946-25-1.1950 was a matter of nationwide admiration and pride for Indians.

Administrative Powers

During the period 26.1.1950-13.5.1962, as President of India, the executive power of the Union vested in the incumbent Dr Rajendra Prasad. There were indeed constitutional limitations, but the way he used this administrative discretion can be seen in the clearance of the top appointments, normative functioning of justice in establishment matters and quality of the presidential orders issued with his signature. To the civil servants his emphasis was on ‘national service’ which he defined as “a combination of honesty and efficiency²²”

²⁰Constituent Assembly of India Debates: Volume-9 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 14th September 1949).

²¹Constituent Assembly of India: Volume-10 (Dr Rajendra Prasad: Dated the 13th October 1949).

²²10.10.1950 : Speech delivered at Metcalfe House, Delhi.

What mattered not just the content of the precise message, but equally the person who resolutely formulated it for concerted action. His public speeches as a President never limited themselves to achievements, they were fair enough to credibly touch upon gaps in performance. An example is his broadcast on the third anniversary of India's Independence:

“We may legitimately rejoice over the progress that has been made during the last three years in the political integration of the country, the nationalization of its army, the reorganization of its administration and the establishment of a planning machinery. While we have cause to be satisfied with our progress in forging powerful instruments with which to transform our economic life, our actual record in overcoming economic difficulties and making good the shortages in commodities cannot afford us much satisfaction. Our progress in the economic sphere has been rather slow and small.” He spoke like a guardian. “Our present difficulties are great and pressing, but they need not depress us”, he said.

Judicial Powers

As President of India Rajendra Prasad's message was equally clear and insightful. Addressing the Calcutta Bar Association and the Judges of the Calcutta High Court on 31.10.1950 he expressed himself once and for all:

“All that I can say is that the framers of our Constitution have had one objective before them and that was to make this democratic country where everyone should be free to follow his religion and his profession and to develop his talents as he thought best. In framing this Constitution, we have laid down fundamental rights which, now and then, came up before the courts and gave the judiciary an opportunity to set aside something which the Government, of which I am supposed to be the head, may have done. I can assure you that we do not take this amiss... We must make the judiciary the final arbiter not only between individuals but between the State and individuals and, what is more, between the Legislature and the Government.”

President Rajendra Prasad conscientiously ensured that he kept the assurances he had given. On law and procedure, he himself was an asset to the system, but details show that when the occasion arose he did not shy away from resorting to taking legal advice in a systematic manner.

Structure of Decisions

Under Article 74 of the Constitution of India, the Council of Ministers (with the Prime Minister as its head) has to aid and advise the President. As per the Amendment of Article 74 (42nd Amendment: w.e.f. 3.1.1977) President is legally bound to act as per the advice of the Council of Ministers. However, prior to this, there was no such legal binding. Dr Rajendra Prasad noted this

and commented on this point in his Constituent Assembly of India speech dated the 26th November 1949:

“Then we come to the Ministers. They are of course responsible to the Legislatures and tender advice to the President who is bound to act according to that advice. Although there are no specific provisions, so far as I know, in the Constitution itself making it binding on the President to accept the advice of his Ministers, it is hoped that the convention under which in England the King acts always on the advice of his Ministers will be established in this country also and, the President, not on account of the written word in the Constitution, but as a result of this very healthy convention, will become a Constitutional President in all matters”.

It goes to Dr Rajendra Prasad’s credit that he lived and insightfully practised his words in totality, and did not take undue advantage of the ambiguity in the text. He preferred it to declare his moral vision right at the beginning.

Doctrine of Pleasure

The Doctrine of Pleasure is embodied in India in Article 310(1) of its Constitution, and the President of India has been empowered on matters relating to persons having tenure of office in the Union. Being an authority on law and President of the Constituent Assembly Debates, Dr Rajendra Prasad had full knowledge and exposure to the utility of this Doctrine in the functioning of the administrative systems and its constitutional uniqueness as a variant in India in terms of Part-XIV of the new Constitution (relating to Services and the Union). He knew the comparative law difference between Britain and India on this point and the limitations upon the exercise of power of pleasure under the Indian Constitution. Credit goes to the President of India Dr Rajendra Prasad that he exercised this power with a sense of proportion and never in his long tenure of twelve years worked under favour, pressure or ill will. His approach was to treat justice as the first virtue of institutions and, thus, allow services within the Union to creatively think, express and contribute.

Conduct of Government Business

As per the vision and precept of the Indian Constitution (Article-77), the President of India is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that the Government of India conducts executive action coherently and conscientiously. The ambit of the power given is wide and mechanisms too are provided specifically. Dr Rajendra Prasad’s tenure was instrumental in shaping this constitutional intent with insight and maturity. Whichever measures were taken lasted long, ensured interconnectedness, and channelised administrative power reasonably. On aims and objectives President of the young republic was quite clear:

“It is now time that we render even greater service than in the past... Formerly our Government was more or less a police state; now it is on

the road to becoming a Welfare State...Ministers may change but the civil services remain at their posts to carry out the policy of the Government.²³”

President and the Union Council of Ministers

Dr Rajendra Prasad, India’s first President, came to the view that under the Constitution the President of India had a responsibility towards the nation and the system, and it was not an insignificant one. In a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister, dated 27th August 1950, he expressed with emphasis: “A reference to the Constitution itself shows that there are at least 121 Articles in it apart from the Schedules in which the President is mentioned as having to do something or other”. “There is no doubt”, he added, “that in most of these matters, he has to act according to the advice of the Ministers concerned but I believe the Constitution contemplates that it is open to him to advise Ministers not on matters of detail but generally on matters of policy”. When the Prime Minister asked for prompt assent to Bills, Prasad urged caution: “I hope, you will concede that when I am asked to sign a document, I must satisfy myself and not sign blindly” [Reference: Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents Volume-XIII*, pp. 76-77 (New Delhi, 1987)]. The essence of emphasis here was on system-building in the context of powers prevailing then: There was no factor of ego or ambition in it.

Ordinance Powers

With regard to the ordinance-making power of the President, Dr Rajendra Prasad showed utmost care and caution. Not that he did not sign ordinances during his tenure (1950-62). Details show that he signed them only when, in the wider national interest, there was no option left. The quotient of constitutional morality during his tenure was high on this count. As an experienced moral mind in politics with expertise in law, there was no question of his not knowing the value of legislative law-making, but he equally understood the dynamics unfolding within the nation necessitating executive intervention. His Constituent Assembly Address of 26th November 1949, highlights the task of making the constitutional experience meaningful:

“There is a fissiparous tendency arising out of various elements in our life...It requires men of strong character, men of vision, men who will not sacrifice the interests of the country at large for the sake of agreeing to smaller groups and areas and who will rise over prejudices which are born out of these differences. We can only hope that this country will throw such men in abundance.”

Assent to Legislation and Veto

The powers of the President on these matters are clearly stipulated in

²³Dr Rajendra Prasad: Speech: ‘The Public Servant in Democracy’ (13.8.1956)

the Constitution of India. The intent is to prevent hasty and ill-considered actions by the Legislature. The discretion President has is wide and” the zone of consideration is often quite sensitive. Dr Prasad was conscious of the need to decide only on merit and also work with a sense of history that demanded due cognisance of the will of the governments with robust majorities in legislatures. During his twelve-year tenure as President of India, Dr Prasad kept the level of his credibility high and did nothing about which he was not convinced or anything that could question the credibility of his person or post in the constitutional history of his country. Very efficient and articulate in handling files, Dr Prasad had also the statesman’s guts to stop, ponder, discuss and intervene. By temperament, he had a tranquil mind—a mind that instantaneously rejected arguments based on majoritarian impulses, misplaced compassions or ideological conjectures. It is not difficult to understand him, thus, on the strength of the remarks he recorded on files relating to assent/veto. As regards depth and quality, one can easily get a cognitive sample from his 536-page book, titled *India Divided* (1946), which he wrote like a fair-minded judge of a complex case.

Emergency Powers

As President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad had the knowledge, experience and wisdom to contextualize his emergency powers in the wider nation-building context. He was particularly careful with regard to the imposition of President’s Rule in any State, and the six instances in which he agreed to give consent to go ahead or continue—in Vindhya Pradesh (8.9.1949-13.2.1952), Punjab (20.6.1951-17.4.1952), Patiala and East Punjab States Union (5.3.1953-8.3.54), Andhra (15.12.1954-29.3.1955), Kerala (23.3.1956-5.4.1957 and 31.7.59-22.2.1960) and Odisha (25.2.1961-23.6.1961)—his ‘satisfaction’ had vision and validity. Unnecessary interventions were firmly avoided and it became gradually evident that Dr Prasad was an independent personality who wanted to act only in the public interest. Being a constitutional law expert and a freedom fighter of high standing, he knew that the exercise of Emergency Powers was a litmus test for him and a critical factor that would ascertain his role as a neutral symbol of unity above the daily business of power-holding in history.

THE STATESMAN Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD: GLIMPSES OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUILDING OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

RAVINDRA KUMAR VERMA

INTRODUCTION

Of a few of the leaders in India, known as ‘the good and the great’, Dr. Rajendra Prasad holds a firm position among them. The leadership of Dr. Rajendra Prasad cannot be categorized simply as a great political leader, rather he was a statesman standing on the frontline along with Mahatma Gandhi, Jay Prakash Narayan, etc. It is an established fact that the nature of a polity is determined by the way the leaders create it. In other words, the leaders play roles in the making of a country. Among those leaders, some are political leaders, and some are considered as statesmen. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a statesman and one of such leaders who are considered as the makers of modern India. A question arises here how did he contribute to the making of modern India? The examination of his perceptions about the future of India, parliamentary democracy, parliamentarians, governance, citizens, etc. will provide the answer. With this view in mind, the present paper attempts to underline his statesmanship in visioning a new India.

Political Leader vs. Statesman: Conceptual Considerations

Normally, there is a very thin line of difference between a political leader and a statesman who is also a leader, dealing with the country’s political affairs. A leader is one who has capacity to guide, direct and coordinate the community, he leads and exerts roles to instill courage, confidence, and obedience among them. But a political leader is one who, in addition to these roles and capacities, holds power and influence over both the community and decision-making realm of a polity, In other words, a leader who holds power by virtue of a formal position and influences the decision-making process as well as the community is a political leader (Verma: 2013). On the other hand, it is argued that an experienced politician who holds a respect for making good judgments is taken as a statesman. The meaning in dictionaries depicts that a highly respected and

influential leader who exhibits great ability and devotion to public service is a 'statesman'. But a statesman is more than these definitions. Plato considers a 'statesman' in a different way. He compares a statesman with a herdsman and a weaver. The herdsman is a doctor, matchmaker, breeder and trainer of his herds. He argues that a statesman takes care of society similar to the herdsman takes care of his herds. A statesman is like a weaver who weaves the entire cloth carefully, similarly, the statesman weaves the community and the nation carefully. 'Plato argues that the statesman weaves in a number of ways, and in particular weaves together into one fabric the virtues of courage and moderation, often at odds in a city'. He does it all for the sake of generations not for acquiring power (Blondel:2005). A statesman acts for the better interests of his country, usually with little of his own interests and performs his work well and with dignity. Thus, a statesman is a disinterested promoter of the public good. James Freeman Clarke has rightly said, "The difference between a politician and a statesman is that a politician thinks about the next election while the statesman thinks about the future of the next generation." (<https://www.taggreen.com/politician-vs-statesman/>). Dr. Rajendra Prasad possessed all the qualities of a statesman.

The Statesman in Making

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, son of Mahadev Sahai, was born in Zeradei, Siwan, Bihar on December 3, 1884. A brilliant student Rajendra Prasad stood first in the entrance examination to the University of Calcutta and earned an award of Rs.30 month as a scholarship. He joined the famed Calcutta Presidency College in 1902. His brilliance was marked by an examiner in the following words, "examinee is better than examiner" (Migliani: 2012). He completed his master's in law with Honours and won a Gold Medal in 1915. Subsequently, he completed his Doctorate in Law as well. During his studies in Law, he suffered a feeling of guilt when he refused to join the Servants of India Society at the insistence of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, as he was afraid of its adverse impact on his studies. But he later thought he failed the test of patriotism and lamented, "I was miserable". Then during his education at Calcutta (presently Kolkata), he was engaged in social service with Dawn Society.

He accomplished himself as a lawyer, as a teacher, and later as Principal at L S College, Muzaffarpur. But he had regret for not joining Servant of India Society, later he realized his duty to the nation and responded to the call of Mahatma Gandhi by quitting his job and home responsibilities to join Gandhi's 'Fact Finding Mission' launched in Champaran, Bihar to address the grievances of the peasants.¹ Initially, he was not impressed with Gandhiji's appearance

¹Gandhiji was fighting against the exploitation of Champaran farmers by Nilha Sahebs. In the process he got interviews conducted to note down the grievances of the farmers by volunteers. Rajendra Babu joined the mission and worked hard by visiting farmers. He had to face the wrath of Champaran police who were deputed to keep vigil on volunteers.

or conversation. In time, however, he was deeply moved by the dedication, conviction and courage that Gandhiji displayed. Here was a man alien of the parts, who had made the cause of the people of Champaran his own (Ahmed: 2018). He decided that he would do everything he could to help the farmers, with his skills as a lawyer and as an enthusiastic volunteer. Later he resorted to simple living. He reduced the number of servants he had to one and sought ways to simplify his life. He no longer felt shame in sweeping the floor, or washing his own utensils, tasks he had all along assumed others would do for him (<https://siwan.nic.in/dr-rajendra-prasad/>). For family reasons he returned home and in 1906, he established an organization named Bihar Students' Conference, then it was the first of its kind. This Conference facilitated the rise of leaders like Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Shrikrishna Sinha, etc. in Bihar politics.

Rajendra Babu got associated with Congress in 1906 through his participation as a volunteer in Calcutta session of Congress and finally joined the party in 1911. He attended the Congress session held at Lucknow in 1916 where he met Mahatma Gandhi for the first time. Later he got associated with him in Champaran. Since then he devoted himself to the service of the country and its people. He responded to Gandhiji's another call to boycott Western educational establishments by asking his son, Mrityunjaya Prasad, to drop out of his studies and enrol himself in Bihar Vidyapeeth, an institution he along with his colleagues founded on the traditional Indian model. The school still exists in the building of Sadaqat Ashram in Patna. He developed his deep interest in social service by playing an active role in the relief work of flood-affected people in 1914. Despite being in jail, His serious concern for the earthquake-affected people which occurred on 15th January 1934 was so keen that he entrusted his colleagues like Anugrah Narayan Sinha for relief work for the quake-affected people. After two days, he joined the relief work after being released from jail. He set up Bihar Central Relief Committee on 17 January 1934 and took the task of raising funds to help the people himself. During the 31 May 1935 Quetta earthquake, when he was forbidden to leave the country due to the government's order, he set up Quetta Central Relief Committee in Sindh and Punjab under his own presidentship". In this way, day after day, Rajendra Babu grew with qualities of a statesman. Sidheswar Prasad, a former Professor and Union minister, has written, "he never gave importance to his personal likings and dislikings while taking decisions. He always kept the national interest uppermost and nurtured the dignity of the high office" (LSS: 1990).

His Vision of the Republic of India

The evolution process of a democratic republic can be understood by the perceptions and roles of the founding fathers regarding people's status, allocation of powers, form of government, the legislators and shaping the conditions of future generations. Indian republic began to be gradually shaped since 1919. All the colonial constitutional steps were not in congruence with

the Indian nation and its people till 1946. Later, the founding fathers had to decide on its final shape making a constitution. Two names of the Constituent Assembly Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Ambedkar are worth credited for providing the ideological foundations of our future India. The then President of India Pranab Mukherjee had clearly accredited these two great persons for ‘outstanding parchment, an ideal for a resurgent India’ and said, “the Constituent Assembly, with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as its President and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, held intensive deliberations in the Central Hall of Parliament House for a long period of 2 years, 11 months and 17 days spread over eleven Sessions and gave an outstanding parchment, an ideal for a resurgent India (GoI: 2017). A noted diplomat Shyam Saran opined, “Dr. Rajendra Prasad was one of the most distinguished among the first generation of statesmen who led India to independence and then played a key role in laying the foundations of a vibrant democratic republic. . . The extremely important political task of framing India’s Constitution was shepherded with great acumen and sagacity by Dr. Prasad. He was deeply respected for his erudition, his consensus-building abilities, his unflinching modesty and good humour.”

It is well known that the origin of parliamentary democracy has its roots in the English parliamentary system, in turn, India does also have a British legacy in its parliamentary form of government. But the question is - is it a replica of the British system? The answer is ‘no’. Our founding fathers under the leadership of Dr. Prasad have made it a unique republic by keeping it in congruence with the Indian socio-economic and political culture.

Dr. Prasad had a firm belief in people’s power and wisdom. On the question of whether the illiterate masses would be able to contain the parliamentary democracy, he expressed faith in the Indian populace. He said, “In my opinion, our people possess intelligence and common sense. They also have a culture which the sophisticated people of today may not appreciate, but which is solid. They are not literate and do not possess the mechanical skill of reading and writing. But, I have no doubt in my mind that they are able to take a measure of their own interest and also of the interests of the country at large if things are explained to them. In fact, in some respects, I consider them to be even more intelligent than many a worker in a factory, who loses his individuality and becomes more or less a part of the machine which he has to work.” (CAD: 1949). He envisioned a society which would enable every citizen to fully achieve his individual genius and the potential of his or her personality without regard to caste, creed, or religious persuasion. He was so keen to respect the people of India that soon after he took over the office of the President, he opened the Mughal Garden of the President’s House for the public for about a month, and since then it became a practice.

On the office of the President, Rajendra Babu wished the President should apply wisdom to guide the Council of Ministers in the interest of the Indian

citizens. He was of opinion that the office of the President is also a constitutional and elected entity, hence it is not a puppet in the hands of the elected Executive. He said, “although the President is elected by the same electorate as the Central and State Legislatures, it is as well that his position is that of a Constitutional President” (CAD:1949). He believed in President being aloof from active politics but not aloof of people’s concerns. He found no harm in President being assertive. Rajendra Babu did not fail to discharge his constitutional duties, as President, warning the Government, whenever he found it necessary. For example, he expressed his opposition to the Hindu Code Bill. Earlier in the Constituent Assembly, he had expressed that such an issue should be enacted only after obtaining public opinion. He argued that India has heterogeneous culture and no law would be fruitful if it does not reconcile the concerns of all the sections of the society. He was in favour of the ‘Uniform Civil Code’ for all the citizens of the country.

In the context of the relationship between the Council of Ministers and the President, he wished the President not to be equipped with enough powers to become a dictator under any condition. He said that the ministers were responsible to the legislature (Parliament in case of Centre or state legislatures) and render advice to the President. To quote his own words, “Although there are no specific provisions, so far as I know, in the Constitution itself making it binding on the President to accept the advice of his Ministers, it is hoped that the convention under which in England the King acts always on the advice of his Ministers will be established in this country also and, the president, not so much on account of the written word in the Constitution, but as the result of this very healthy convention, will become a Constitutional President in all matters.”

On the nature of Indian federal character, he believed it only to be of Indian kind. Expressing his views on the label of kind of Indian federalism, he negated the prevalent typology of federal structures in the world. He knew that it was not suitable for India to make a federal system of American type or a unitary system of British type, and said, “Personally, I do not attach any importance to the label which may be attached to it – whether you call it Federal Constitution or Unitary Constitution or by any other name. It makes no difference so long as the Constitution serves our purpose. We are not bound to have a constitution which completely and fully falls in line with known categories of constitutions in the world... Therefore, so far as labelling is concerned, we need not be troubled by it” (CAD:1949). He wished India to be a united country through the entire stretch of its geographical boundary. He wished to keep all the states (princely or provincial) integrated in India, no matter the differences in administration and distribution of power are there. He believed in a strong and united India.

His Vision of Legislature

Rajendra Babu had a firm belief in the supremacy of the popular house

of Indian legislature, however, he believed in the utility of the Upper House also. Almost all the Parliamentary systems in the world have a bi-cameral legislature. In India bicameral legislature carries the British legacy and the Constituent Assembly witnessed strong opposition against the utility of the second chamber (Council of States now known as Rajya Sabha) at the Centre and the states. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was convinced of the necessity of a second chamber in the Indian legislature, however, he was of opinion that states should be left to their choice to have a second chamber or not to have. Hence, he was happy that there was no need for a constitutional amendment to continue with the second chamber or not to have one or even get rid of it. He said, “ Some of the provinces, whose representatives felt that a Second Chamber is required for them, have been provided with a Second Chamber. But there is a provision in the Constitution that if a province does not want such a Second Chamber to continue or if a province which has not got one wants to establish one, the wish has to be expressed through the Legislature by a majority of two-thirds of the Members voting and by a majority of the total number of Members in the Legislative Assembly. So, even while providing some of the States with Second Chambers, we have provided also for their easy removal or their easy establishment by making this kind of amendment of the Constitution, not a Constitutional Amendment, but a matter of ordinary parliamentary legislation.” Nevertheless, Rajendra Babu wished to maintain the supremacy of the popular chamber (Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of states). He clarified that the Constitution lays down the supremacy of the popular chamber in states in matters of financial and money matters, however, in the case of other matters also the supremacy of the popular House has been assured. He further clarified that if a difference arises between the two Chambers, a joint session may be held; but the Constitution provides that the number of Members of the Council of States shall not be more than 50 percent of the Members of the House of the People. Therefore, even in the case of a joint session, the supremacy of the House of the People is maintained. The Upper Chamber therefore can only delay the passage of Bills for a time but cannot prevent it. The President or the Governor, as the case may be, will have to give his assent to any legislation, but that will be only on the advice of his Ministry which is responsible ultimately to the popular House. He opined, “ The Government therefore of the country as a whole, both in the Centre and in the provinces, will rest on the will of the people which will be expressed from day to day through their representatives in the legislatures and, occasionally directly by them at the time of the general elections” (CAD: op.cit.)

His Vision of the Law Makers (Parliamentarians)

Here the question is – what qualities should a lawmaker or legislator have? In the present day, the legislators/parliamentarians are questioned for their behavior, conducive to true democracy. The then President of India

Pranab Mukherjee had advised the lawmakers to be of kind of members of the Constituent Assembly in the following words, “Our modern-day legislators must recognize that the Constitution of India places our Parliament and Assemblies at the centre of governance and conceives them as the primary instrument of good governance and socio-economic change” (GoI:2017). Praising the wisdom of the founding fathers, Mukherjee said, “It is to underline the fact that if prominent legislators of pre-independence days with limited powers, could have done so much, how much more can be done by our MPs, MLAs and MLCs of today... One can only imagine how, 60 years ago, President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the other great patriotic souls of India participated in the first joint session of Parliament, infusing it with the warmth of their personalities, the dignity of the Constitution and hope for the future of Indian democracy.” (Ibid). Sri Mukherjee lamented that now ‘ordinariness’ and ‘mediocracy’ are the characteristics of august legislative Houses.

Rajendra Babu also apprehended the possibility of deterioration in legislators’ behavior and their true intent to serve the nation in the future. He opined that the successful working of democratic institutions requires those who have the willingness to respect the viewpoints of others and a capacity for compromise and accommodation. Many things which cannot be written in a Constitution are done by conventions, which could only be evolved if legislators are of good quality. Dr. Rajendra Prasad wanted to lay down some qualifications for them which, he regretted, could not be done in the Constitution. Rajendra Babu realized that high qualifications are required for those who implement or help in implementing the ‘laws’ but on the other hand, qualifications are not laid down for the ‘lawmakers.’ To him it was anomalous, hence he pleaded some qualities for them in the following words, “A law giver requires intellectual equipment but even more than that capacity to take a balanced view of things to act independently and above all to be true to those fundamental things of life – in one word – to have character. It is not possible to devise any yardstick for measuring the moral qualities of a man and so long as that is not possible, our Constitution will remain defective.” (CAD: op.cit).

Rajendra Babu had also apprehension about the vitiation of the politicians and said, “I cannot say the same thing about the other people who may try to influence them (common people of India)² by slogans and by placing before them beautiful pictures of impracticable programmes. He further lamented, “Nevertheless, I think their sturdy commonsense will enable them to see things in the right perspective. We can, therefore, reasonably hope that we shall have legislatures composed of members who shall have their feet on the ground and who will take a realistic view of things.” As regard to the sensitivity of the

²The words in the in the bracket are that of mine used in order to clarify.

future rulers in the provisions of Directive Principles of State Policy, he said, "Would to God that he would give us the wisdom and the strength to pursue this path despite the difficulties which beset us and the atmosphere which may well choke us. Let us have faith in ourselves and in the teachings of the Master whose portrait hangs over my head and we shall fulfill the hopes and prove true to the best interests of not only our country but of the world at large." He further advocated, "After all, a Constitution like a machine is a lifeless thing. It acquires life because of the men who control it and operate it, and India needs today nothing more than a set of honest men who will have the interest of the country before them." (CAD: op. cit.). He had not lost hope and believed that men of strong character, men of vision and men who would not sacrifice the interests of the country at large for the sake of smaller groups and areas and they would rise over the prejudices. He had hopes that the country would throw up such men in abundance.

Closing the Discussion

Rajendra Babu was the conscious variegated aspect of Indian polity. He wanted governments to be careful in utilization of public money in the proper way. He reminds the independent agencies like the Comptroller and Auditor-General to keep watch over the finances and see to it that no part of the revenues of India or any of the States is used for purposes and on items without due authority and whose duty it will be otherwise to keep our accounts in order. As regards the anti-corruption measures and institutions, he expressed his faith in them and said, "One of the things against which we have to guard is that there should be no room as far as it is humanly possible for jobbery, nepotism and favouritism. I think the provisions which we have introduced into our Constitution will be very helpful in this direction."

He was conscious of the independence of the judiciary. He said, "It is difficult to suggest anything more to make the Supreme Court and the High Courts independent of the influence of the Executive. There is an attempt made in the Constitution to make even the lower judiciary independent of any outside or extraneous influence."

The whole gamut of the above discussions leads us to the conclusion that Dr. Rajendra Prasad had an ideal vision of parliamentary democracy for India and had caught the nerve of the problem. His suggestions and apprehensions were left unheard and uncared by the successive political masters of the Indian political system. As result, the present vitiated politics has emerged. By way of conclusion, the version of a veteran diplomat Shyam Saran (Saran: n.d.) is worth quoting, "However, there was an over-riding vision of a unity which would not suppress, but would transcend diversity to create an enlightened society, based on individual rights and obligations of equal citizens in a plural and secular democracy.

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VISION OF Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD ON INDIAN EDUCATION

SANJEEV KUMAR TIWARI

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Rajendra Prasad is one of the most revered and respected leaders of India who played a significant role in shaping the country's destiny. He was an Indian freedom fighter, lawyer, and statesman who served as the first president of India from 1950 to 1962. He was born on 3 December 1884, in Zeradei, a small village in the present-day district of Siwan, Bihar. Dr. Prasad played a significant role in India's struggle for independence against British rule. He was a prominent member of the Indian National Congress and participated in several non-violent protests and civil disobedience movements. He also became the president of the Indian National Congress twice; in the year 1934 and again in 1939.¹ He was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and believed in the principles of non-violence and Satyagraha. He was known for his commitment to secularism and social justice, and was a key figure in propagating democratic and republican ideals in India.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the President of the Constituent Assembly, which drafted India's Constitution. He assumed the position of President of the Constituent Assembly in 1946 and held it until the adoption of the Constitution in 1950. In his capacity as the Assembly's leader, he played an essential role in directing the discussions and conversations and making certain that the constitution mirrored the people's voices and will. He played a crucial role in shaping the Constitution's provisions on civil liberties, freedom of expression, and the right to life. The Constituent Assembly comprised members from various regions, castes, and communities, making it a challenging task for Dr. Rajendra Prasad to navigate these intricate dynamics. However, he skillfully managed to ensure that the Constitution was comprehensive and reflected India's diverse populace. This was an incredible feat, as it required balancing the diverse needs and demands of various groups, while also guaranteeing that the Constitution would protect the rights and freedoms of every individual in the country. Dr. Prasad's leadership and foresight ensured that India's Constitution

¹Prasad, Dr. Rajendra (2010), Autobiography, Penguin Books India: New Delhi.

would stand the test of time and remain a beacon of democracy and inclusivity for generations to come.

Dr. Prasad was also elected as the first President of India in 1950, a position he held until 1962. His contribution as the first president of India was paramount in shaping the role of the President and its responsibilities. He established the norms of a non-partisan, ceremonial head of state whose duty was to act as a guardian of the Constitution. It was his vision and leadership that created a strong foundation for the presidency, which has remained a symbol of India's democratic values and constitutional principles.

Whether it is as a freedom fighter or as a politician/statesman, Dr. Rajendra Prasad's role as a nation-builder cannot be ignored. He is one of the chief architects of modern India. However, his contributions to the field of education have been equally significant, and this essay highlights his work as an educationist. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a renowned educationist and played a significant role in promoting education in India. He was instrumental in setting up several educational institutions, including the Bihar Vidyapeeth,² which aimed to promote Indian culture and provide quality education to the masses. As an educationist, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a strong advocate for the promotion of education in India. He believed that education was the key to social and economic progress and development of any society and that it was the responsibility of the government to ensure that all citizens had access to quality education. Dr. Rajendra Prasad advocated for the promotion of education for all, including women and the marginalized sections of society. This article delves into his work as an educationist, his philosophy of education, and his vision for the development of the education sector in India. The primary discussion in this essay would center on Dr. Prasad's philosophy of education and how it is immensely beneficial and relevant even after seven decades of its formulation.

Early Life and his Educational Journey

Dr. Prasad was a very bright student. He was an excellent scholar and excelled in his field. In the popular imagination of the people of Bihar, one would invariably stumble upon one or other stories about Dr. Rajendra Prasad; all narrating how brilliant and hardworking he was. There is one very famous story which is told time and again, that Dr. Rajendra Prasad was so brilliant that in a university examination, an examiner once commented on his answer sheet that the "examinee is better than the examiner".

He received his early education at home when he was five or six.³ Later, he was sent to Chhapra for studies where he joined the district school in the

²Prasad, Dr. Rajendra

³Prasad, Dr. Rajendra

eighth class.⁴ After completing his school education, he went to Calcutta to pursue higher education. His early life experiences and educational journey as a student shaped his views on his philosophy of education. In particular, his emphasis on the importance of religion, sports and other physical activities, and skill-based curriculum for the overall personality and character development of a student can be directly linked to his own childhood memories and experiences. In his autobiography, Dr. Prasad wrote how his father despite lacking formal and systematic education excelled in his medicinal practices and was widely recognized as a good *vaidya* and *hakim* in his own village as well as in other neighbouring villages.⁵ His father had collected a lot of books on Ayurvedic medicine and Unani systems of medicine, which he would read religiously to enhance his medical knowledge and skill.⁶ It certainly proves a point about skill and practical knowledge being very important for a student to excel in his career. He stressed upon the fact that bookish education serves a very limited purpose in life and hence the educational curriculum should be so designed that it encourages the students to learn practical and vocational skills.

Similarly, his childhood experiences pertaining to religion in the form of religious practices and sacred stories deeply influenced his views regarding the importance of the inclusion of religious texts and teachings in school and university curricula to help students build their moral character. For Dr. Rajendra Prasad, ancient Indian literature and stories were of great importance. He argued that such texts would inspire students to build good character. In his autobiography, he mentions how in his childhood, his mother would recite *bhajans*; sometimes she would tell stories from the Ramayana.⁷ In fact, in the first few chapters of his autobiography, he has repeatedly shown how religion permeated village life. All these had a deep influence on him and helped him in becoming a better person. Later on, when he went to Calcutta to pursue higher education, he joined an organization called ‘The Dawn Society’. The society used to organize weekly lectures on the *Bhagwat Gita* to help students build their character.⁸ In the convocation address at the Gurukul Kangri University in 1950, he said, “Religion is important in molding the life of a student. It is something by which the character is continually affected. The aim of our educational institutions should be to produce men and women with values and principles”.⁹

Dr. Prasad emphasized the importance of physical activities in the

⁴*Ibid*

⁵*Ibid* p. 4-5

⁶*Ibid* p. 4-5

⁷Prasad, Dr. Rajendra, p.5

⁸*Ibid* p.40

⁹Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Gurukul Kangri University at Kangri on March 5, 1950.

form of games and exercises. He argued that for an overall development of personality, students should take part in such activities. Students learn the virtue of cooperation and leadership by participating in games and other forms of physical activity. He, in his autobiography, fondly recalled his childhood days and mentioned that his father was fond of exercise and wrestling; he was a fairly good rider as well.¹⁰ All these had deep imprints on Dr. Rajendra Prasad's mind during his formative years. He himself played games like *Kabaddi* and *Chikka*. He wrote, "Though I was devoted to my studies, I never neglected games".¹¹ When he was sent to Chhapra District School, he started playing football. In his autobiography, he mentioned that he regretted that he could not learn swimming.¹² All these childhood experiences were instrumental in him recognizing the greater value of physical activities for the all-around personality growth of a student. In one of his speeches he once said, "Educational institutions should make a spirited effort to develop the personalities of their students. They should do it not by words of mouth or monotonous sermonizing, but more by encouraging collective activities like sports, games and social work".¹³

Education and Democracy

Dr. Rajendra Prasad believed in an education which could fulfill the economic, political, cultural, civilizational and moral needs of the present society and the newly-born nation that was India. His philosophy of education must not be cut off from the context of the time period he was living in, because his views on education and the role of schools, colleges and universities and what the curriculum should be were shaped by the needs and demands of that period. However, his philosophy is so foresighted that it remains relevant for our society today as well.

As far as the political needs of the country at that time were concerned, India had just become a newly democratic republican nation, after it had achieved independence from the British Empire in 1947 and had developed its own Constitution which was adopted in 1950. In a speech made while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on 28 February 1950, Prasad stressed the importance of an education which could prepare citizens of India to make democracy a success in the country.¹⁴ As India had become a free nation, the people of the country had

¹⁰Prasad, Dr. Rajendra, p.5

¹¹Ibid p.17

¹²Ibid p.5

¹³Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Gurukul Kangri University at Kangri on March 5, 1950.

¹⁴Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on February 28, 1950

greater responsibility as citizens and it was the responsibility of the education system to prepare the citizens for this huge task which was in front of them. Prasad in his speech said that “a constitution by itself cannot achieve much; a certain standard of intelligence, public spirit and devotion to national interests are also necessary. It is the function of educational institutions to create the atmosphere in which these qualities may be developed and to impart to the individuals coming under their influence, the necessary qualifications”.¹⁵ In the convocational address at the Banaras Hindu University in 1950, Dr. Prasad argued that perfect equality, guaranteed by the Indian Constitution to all its citizens without making any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, sex, or economic position, would be of no use if people were not educated and aware enough to take advantage of the equal opportunity.¹⁶ In Dr. Prasad’s words, the Indian Constitution had given education a high place because it had rightly judged the prevalent ignorance and illiteracy of the land and the darkness which had persisted for centuries due to lack of education. He said that our educational institutions should help in dispelling ignorance and illiteracy from our land.¹⁷

Even after seven decades of India becoming a democratic republic, Prasad’s insights and views remain useful and relevant and as prophetic as ever. The Election Commission of India has started celebrating National Voter’s Day on 25 January of each year since 2011 to spread awareness about the voting processes. The day is organized every year to spread awareness among voters regarding their informed participation in the electoral process. The Election Commission acknowledges how people, especially the young ones, do not practice their voting rights which are so essential to run a smooth democracy. In the year 2011 it was observed that the new voters, who had attained the age of 18 years, had less interest in getting enrolled in the electoral rolls; it was as low as 20 to 25 per cent in certain cases.¹⁸ The indifference of young people to participate in democracy exposes the same problem which Dr. Prasad had pinpointed in the education system of his times. The vision of Dr. Rajendra Prasad has not yet been fully achieved; and the educational institutions are still falling short of making people of this country informed citizens who would make democracy a grand success. However, at the same time, their contribution towards the same should also be acknowledged; as India has managed to keep its vibrant democratic traditions alive.

¹⁵Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on February 28, 1950.

¹⁶Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Banaras Hindu University on February 28, 1950.

¹⁷Ibid

¹⁸https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Voters%27_Day, accessed on March 20, 2023.

Critique of the British Education System

In several of his writings and speeches, Dr. Prasad attributed the predicament of the education system in India to British rule. He held the British Empire responsible for the widespread illiteracy and ignorance in the Indian Subcontinent. He said that the British education system was aimed “to produce young men and women, Anglicized in their outlook and mode of life and Indian only in name and color”.¹⁹ The British education system was conceived and the British educational institutions, from schools to universities, were established primarily in the interests of the British Empire. “The English rulers wanted that the educational system should prepare such people who could assist them in administering the country”.²⁰ It was evident that the current educational system was set up with the aim of producing administrators to serve the British Empire; and as a result, the syllabus and courses of study in the universities did not focus sufficiently on the overall development of India.²¹ Dr. Prasad also made scathing remarks on English being widely used as medium of instruction in educational institutes in British India.

On the question of the medium of instruction in education, Dr. Rajendra Prasad put his point of view extensively in his writings and speeches. He said that due to the narrow and vested interests of British rule, a foreign language i.e. English had been the medium of instruction in schools and universities of India for a very long time. When universities were first established in our country by the British, education was primarily focused on providing knowledge of the English language, literature and law with the aim of enabling educated individuals to find employment in offices or practice law in courts. “It was for this reason that in almost all the Indian universities, English was kept as the medium of instruction and English literature as a compulsory subject. It was really an irony that the literature of our own country was an optional subject, while the literature of England was a compulsory subject for us.”²² Dr. Prasad further argued, “Nobody can deny that the result of people being compelled to study them compulsorily, while being permitted to remain ignorant of and indifferent to their own literature, has led to the development of the cramming habit among our students.”²³

¹⁹Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Banaras Hindu University on February 28, 1950.

²⁰Speech Delivered by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in Hindi at the 30th Convocation of the Nagpur University on December 26, 1950.

²¹Ibid

²²Address delivered by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in Hindi at the Twenty-Eighth Convocation of the University of Delhi on December 9, 1950.

²³Address delivered in Hindi by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Twenty-Eighth Convocation of the University of Delhi on December 9, 1950.

Importance of Indian Languages and Emphasis on Hindi

The strain of learning a new language and also learning every other subject through that alien language not only led to the habit of cramming but also sucked all the creative potential of Indian students and acted as a hindrance to their full intellectual development.²⁴ “Because of the medium of instruction being a foreign language, it involved colossal waste of energy and time. It could not lead to that natural development of personality which can be so easily attained through proper education given in one’s own language. Obviously, our students cannot have much time for thinking and mediating when all the while they are busy memorizing the meaning of foreign words.”²⁵ Dr. Prasad underlined that it was universally accepted by all informed authoritative opinions on the subject, that education in order to be effective, complete and economical both as regards time and cost must be given through the language of the people²⁶. The education imparted in the mother tongue would automatically ward off the cramming habit of students, so commonly found in them. More crucially, it would give students desired freedom to achieve their creative and intellectual potential.

Dr. Prasad advocated the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in all educational institutions, at every level from schools to colleges to universities. He said that the goal was to persuade people about the usefulness and potential of Indian languages as a mean of education. To achieve this, Dr. Prasad suggested two practical ways. He said, firstly a vocabulary of scientific terms needed to be created and made widely known in Indian languages; and secondly the educational curriculum and methods in our institutions needed to be modified accordingly.²⁷ Following these two steps would facilitate the teaching and learning of new scientific subjects in Indian native languages. While he did not ignore any other Indian regional languages, he gave greater importance to Hindi to be used as a language of instruction. He argued that since our Constitution recognized Hindi as the state language, it must take the place of English.²⁸ He felt very bad about the present state of Hindi and how people were ignoring and even disgracing Hindi even in those regions which were its own. In one of his speeches, he suggested, “We have to produce scientific, educational and commercial literature in Hindi to reduce our dependency up

²⁴Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Gurukul Kangri University at Kangri on March 5, 1950.

²⁵Prasad, Dr. Rajendra p.112-113.

²⁶Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on February 28, 1950.

²⁷Address delivered by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in Hindi at the 30th Convocation of the Nagpur University on December 26, 1950.

²⁸Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Banaras Hindu University on February 28, 1950.

on English”.²⁹ He said that Hindi had the potential to be used as a medium of instruction in higher education.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad worked extensively throughout his life for the development and propagation of the Hindi language. In his autobiography, he recorded that he was one of the founding members of All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. This organization was welcomed by all the Hindi enthusiasts, writes Dr. Prasad. The first session of the *Sammelan* was organized in Banaras under the leadership of Pandit Malaviya.³⁰ Hindi Sahitya Sammelan played a vital role in the arduous task of propagation of Hindi in south India.³¹ In 1920, Dr. Rajendra Prasad along with some other stalwarts launched a Hindi weekly to place the congress program before the masses.³² They believed that Hindi would be a better medium of communication and would strike a chord in the hearts of the people. Dr. Prasad was entrusted with the responsibility of editing the Hindi weekly.

British Education System and Indian Society

Commenting upon the degenerating effect of the English education system on Indians and Indian society, Dr. Prasad argued that the use of the English language as a medium of instruction has kept the common masses largely away from educational institutions. But in a free India, “a closer integration of educational institutions with the life of the people of this country”³³ is the need of the hour. “This integration implies that the medium of instruction should be the language of the people of this land, that is, Hindi. The teachers and students should make an attempt to use Hindi in as many aspects of their life as they possibly can”.³⁴ The students taught in Hindi are, in no way, inferior to those taught in English.³⁵ This integration also means that it was important that “the notion that English is the medium of attaining power and position should gradually disappear. It should not be treated as the sole badge of respectability and culture”.³⁶ Since English was the language of the ruler for a very long, western educated Indians started taking false pride in having knowledge of the English language and literature. This false pride created disintegration in Indian society; there emerged two classes in Indian society, one who knew the English language and literature and the other who were devoid of it.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Prasad, Dr. Rajendra, p.74.

³¹Prasad, Dr. Rajendra, p.99.

³²Prasad, Dr. Rajendra, p.128.

³³Speech on the occasion of the annual Founder’s Day Celebrations of the Doon School at Dehra Dun on October 22, 1950.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Gurukul Kangri University at Kangri on March 5, 1950.

³⁶Speech on the occasion of the annual Founder’s Day Celebrations of the Doon School at Dehra Dun on October 22, 1950.

Apart from the use of English as a medium of instruction being one factor, Dr. Rajendra Prasad enlists two more prominent factors behind the disintegration of Indian society into two separate camps of educated and so-called illiterate people. These two factors include the curriculum and the subjects taught in the educational institutes of British India; and secondly the modus operandi of such educational institutions which gave students studying there a sense of exclusivity. Commenting upon the public schools in India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad argued that alumni of such institutions “developed a sense of exclusiveness—a superiority complex”.³⁷ He felt that English educational institutions like public schools were designed to maintain the characteristics that the ruling class deemed necessary for maintaining control over the subject classes, thus making such institutions a class institutions.³⁸ What it meant was that there emerged a gap between those educated in such class institutions and those who didn’t.

The curriculum was designed in such a manner that not only it forced Indians to study every other subject in English, but it also made the study of English literature and other classical European languages mandatory. While it certainly served the vested interests of the British Empire, it greatly hampered the interests of Indians. Such a discord in the education system entailed a great cultural loss for the Indian Subcontinent, and people from the subcontinent lost “their self-confidence and their creative power which had enabled Indians for centuries in the past to make valuable and unrivalled contributions in the spheres of science, literature, art and religion”.³⁹ It simultaneously drew a line of distinction between those Indians who had access to English education and those who remained aloof from it. Dr. Prasad commented that due to lack of harmony or connection between the knowledge imparted in universities and the daily life experiences of Indians, they became strangers to their own culture, traditions and rich heritage.⁴⁰ The English education system almost made Indian students to forget their indigenous knowledge system. Those who received an English education became indifferent or even scornful towards those who did not.⁴¹ “There also developed a tendency among them to mock and ridicule such people”.⁴²

The gap between these two camps was further widened by the tendency of the English-educated people to secure a job in the city and change their way of

³⁷Speech on the occasion of the annual Founder’s Day Celebrations of the Doon School at Dehra Dun on October 22, 1950.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Address delivered in Hindi by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Twenty-Eighth Convocation of the University of Delhi on December 9, 1950.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Address delivered in Hindi by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Twenty-Eighth Convocation of the University of Delhi on December 9, 1950.

⁴²Ibid.

living. “The style of the educated class had become expensive and their needs were of such a character as could not be satisfied in villages”.⁴³ These people disliked going back to the village to join the occupation of their forefathers. Dr. Prasad said that they would prefer securing a job in a city office for just few rupees and living their life in discomfort than going back to villages where they could introduce improvements in agriculture and could earn more and spend a healthier life.⁴⁴ These educated people felt a sense of humiliation in holding a plough or otherwise performing any physical labour as they had developed a sense of disrespect towards all other types of work except those which involved the use only of the pen or the tongue.⁴⁵ It created a gulf between rural and urban areas. All the capable and skilled people of the villages began to desert their homes and settle in the cities and our villages became abodes of darkness and illiteracy.⁴⁶ “The existing system drew away from the villages all those who had the benefit of education”.⁴⁷

Remedies Suggested

Dr. Rajendra Prasad suggested several ways to weed out the defects in the education system which were widening the gap between the educated and so-called illiterate Indians. To bridge the gap, he suggested that educated people should use the Hindi language as much as possible. Secondly, the curriculum should include all those books which could give the readers an idea and understanding of the historical traditions, heritage and rich literary past of India, so that the educated Indians no longer remain indifferent to their traditions and culture and also don't look upon them with contempt.⁴⁸ The classical ancient Indian literature reflected the daily life of so-called uneducated Indian and hence making the educated Indians aware of these texts would automatically connect them with the uneducated Indians, therefore bridging the gap between these two camps.⁴⁹ The contempt of educated people towards any sort of physical labour required an address in the opinion of Dr. Prasad, as it also created a chasm between the educated people who largely performed

⁴³Address delivered in Hindi at the 30th Convocation of the Nagpur University on December 26, 1950.

⁴⁴Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on February 28, 1950.

⁴⁵Address delivered in Hindi at the 30th Convocation of the Nagpur University on December 26, 1950.

⁴⁶Address delivered in Hindi at the Twenty-Eighth Convocation of the University of Delhi on December 9, 1950.

⁴⁷Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on February 28, 1950.

⁴⁸Address delivered in Hindi at the Twenty-Eighth Convocation of the University of Delhi on December 9, 1950.

⁴⁹Speech at the Annual Prize Distribution function of Mayo College, Ajmer, on February 13, 1951.

mental labour and the so-called illiterate people who mostly did physical labour. The scheme of basic education proposed by Gandhi was a great tool to nullify the contempt feeling of the educated class towards physical labour; as education in this scheme was to be provided through a craft or industry.⁵⁰ Prasad supported the idea of “Rural University” which was proposed by the University Commission in line with Gandhi’s scheme of basic education to stem the outflow of educated people from villages to towns.⁵¹ Bridging the gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses was important for harnessing the people’s energy to the work of building a democratic society and prosperous agriculture and industry in this country.⁵² It was also essential for a plain reason that, the mutual connection between the masses and the intelligentsia was a basic condition under which education would help bring economic development and overall prosperity to the masses and would not just be limited to the upper sections of society.

Examination-Oriented Vs Learning-Oriented Education

Dr. Rajendra Prasad differentiated between examination-oriented and learning and utility-oriented education systems and lamented over the fact that how examination had dominated the education system.⁵³ The British were only interested in finding suitable Indians who could help them in administering British India by occupying the lower ranks in the administration. It meant that the ultimate purpose for Indian students was to pass the examination so they could secure government jobs. The emphasis on examinations had resulted in teachers and students prioritizing success in exams over the acquisition of real knowledge. The entire edifice of the British education system was examination-oriented. Dr. Rajendra Prasad argued that such a system had neither the cultural nor the practical utility and hence independent India must focus on building an education system which focuses on learning, research and innovation along with ensuring the social, cultural, political, moral and spiritual development of its citizens. Dr. Prasad argued that this attitude of just passing the examinations must change and students should be relieved from the burden of examinations, where they are supposed to merely memorize a huge volume of information so that they could give their attention towards attaining real knowledge.⁵⁴ “Knowledge does not mean facts which are learned by rote for the purpose

⁵⁰Address delivered in Hindi at the 30th Convocation of the Nagpur University on December 26, 1950.

⁵¹Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on February 28, 1950.

⁵²Speech on the occasion of the annual Founder’s Day Celebrations of the Doon School at Dehra Dun on October 22, 1950.

⁵³Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on February 28, 1950.

⁵⁴Ibid.

of answering examination papers. A genuine pursuit of knowledge creates, in the heart of the learner, an undying passion to widen the horizons of his knowledge. This is impossible in educational institutions which aim merely at success in examinations".⁵⁵ India had become a free nation and it needed their students to acquire real knowledge so that they could contribute to society in a positive way. Unfortunately, there had been a peculiar set-up in India for a long, commented Dr. Prasad, under which educated people could only look to a limited class of jobs or a certain professions.⁵⁶

Dr. Prasad believed that it was crucial to change the perspective of educated youth who were mostly interested in pursuing service jobs. Providing employment for every graduate produced by our universities would not be feasible. So apart from changing the perspective of youth, it was equally important that they were provided with such an education which made them self-reliant and skilled, so that they would not need to depend on others. Universities should not solely focus on producing graduates suitable for service jobs, and their primary goal should be to prepare young scholars with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the country's battle against poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy. Although our country has vast potential, it requires well-educated and skilled individuals to utilize its resources.⁵⁷

Universities should become the center of research and innovation, which could equip and inspire its research scholars to work in various research institutes and come up with discoveries and inventions which could make the life of their fellow citizens smoother. In the opinion of Dr. Prasad, "the research scholars in the universities should make themselves and their research useful. If the scholars succeed in making the available knowledge practically applicable to our own conditions, to help our own people to grow and prosper, they would be doing the greatest service."⁵⁸ Prasad stressed the importance of scientific research in the field of agriculture and fuel to make the country's progress faster. "The laboratories have been constructed and fitted with the latest equipment, but a laboratory by itself cannot produce results unless it is manned by human beings with adequate knowledge, enthusiasm for research and interest in the welfare of the country".⁵⁹

⁵⁵Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Gurukul Kangri University at Kangri on March 5, 1950.

⁵⁶Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee session of the Inter-University Board at Banaras, on February 28, 1950.

⁵⁷Convocation Address by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Banaras Hindu University on February 28, 1950.

⁵⁸Address at the Special Convocation of the Mysore University at Crawford Hall, Mysore, on April 10, 1951.

⁵⁹Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad while opening the National Fuel Research Institute at Digwadih in Jharia Coalfields, On April 22, 1950.

Conclusion

Dr. Rajendra Prasad served our country in different capacities. From being a great freedom fighter to a trend-setting president and statesman, he showed his mettle in different domains and contributed immensely in various arenas. However, his contribution to this country as an educationist often goes unnoticed. He was instrumental in the establishment of several educational institutions in the country. His outlook and philosophy of education still seem relevant. Whether his idea of imparting education in the mother tongue, or his idea of giving skill-based education, or that people should become self-reliant and should not just become job-seekers (encouraging entrepreneurial spirit) still resonates with the policy-makers of our times. His philosophy on education impacted the recently adopted National Education Policy 2020, which is still under the process of implementation. The importance of Indian languages, skill enhancement, emphasis on Indian culture and heritage and encouraging entrepreneurship are some of the common features of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's vision of education and the National Education Policy 2020.

Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD: A PERSONALITY PAR EXCELLENCE

SHASHI BHUSHAN KUMAR

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was an eminent freedom fighter, a renowned jurist, an eloquent Parliamentarian, an able administrator and one of the chief architects of modern India. After independence, a galaxy of our leaders have made their contributions in the task of nation-building, but only a few stalwarts had the privilege of participating both in the freedom struggle as well as in the building of modern India. The three significant ones who participated in both were Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Ballabhbhai Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. They actively participated in the Freedom Struggle and when India attained freedom, they realized that their work was not yet finished as there was lot to be done for bringing the nation out of the teething problems, in order to put it on a sound footing of progress, prosperity and stability.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who enjoyed the trust and confidence of Mahatma Gandhi, was also his ardent follower. An epitome of simplicity and honesty, Dr. Prasad represented all that is best in our culture. As a testimony to his acumen and capability, first, he headed the Constituent Assembly as Chairman and then occupied the highest office of the newborn nation as President consecutively for two terms. Both, as Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, and then as President of India, he played a very important role in shaping the destiny of the nation and left an indelible mark on our national life and polity.

Often remembered as the ‘child of destiny’ and affectionately addressed as ‘Rajen Babu’, he was born in a remote village of Bihar, in the district of then Saran, now Siwan – Zeradei on 3 December, 1884, a year before the birth of the Indian National Congress (INC). Long ago his forefathers, who belonged to a Kayastha family, having a scholarly tradition, migrated from Uttar Pradesh (Amroha) and settled in Ballia (UP), subsequently branching off to Gaya and Ziradei in Bihar.¹ The family, after settling in Ziradei lived a simple and rural life but later were made Zamindar of the particular area by the

Prasad, Rajendra (2010), *Autobiography*, Gurgaon: Penguin Books India, p. 1.

English. Notwithstanding this simple background, he got educated to become a Barrister and occupied the highest office of the nation. The nation honoured him by conferring the highest civilian award – Bharat Ratna on him.

Childhood

In spite of being the Zamindar of the area, his parents – Mahadev Sahay and Kamleshwari Devi – led a simple and pure life. Mahadev Sahay, an eminent scholar of Persian and Sanskrit, took great delight in providing free Ayurvedic and Unani medicines to patients who approached him for treatment. His mother – a deeply religious lady – often narrated stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata to Rajen the child.

The environment at home and in his village had a profound impact on the mind of child Rajen that helped him inculcate the finest ideals of fellow feeling, selfless service, purity, sacrifice, humility and simplicity, which got reflected in his private and public life. Later, in his autobiography, he made a mention of all these seemingly insignificant traits which had a significant effect on the young mind and made him the man that he was to become.

I got into the habit of going to bed early and waking up before dawn. During the winter months, when the nights are long, I would wake up rather early and rouse my mother also from sleep. She would then recite some *bhajans*. Sometimes she would tell me stories from the Ramayana. These had a deep influence on me.²

Education

As was prevalent at that time, Dr. Rajendra Prasad started his education at home in Urdu and Persian. A Muslim Teacher *Maulvi* taught him at home. Till the age of eight years, this continued. Besides Urdu and Persian, Dr. Prasad also learned counting, multiplication, tables, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division at the *Maktab* (school). At that time neither the teachers were greedy nor were the students ill-mannered. People held the elders and the teachers in high esteem. Hence his initial education was going on in a very cordial atmosphere.

After that he was sent to a High School in Chapra. It was a new experience for him. At Chapra, Dr. Prasad lived with his brother, Mahendra Prasad. A few days after his arrival at Chapra, he got enrolled in the ‘eighth standard’ in district school, Chapra, which was then the class for beginners. It was here that he got introduced to the Roman and Devnagari alphabets. Now there was no tutor to assist him except his brother. From the very young age he exhibited his brilliance and became the best student of his class. This inculcated self-confidence in him from the very beginning. In the annual examination, he

²*Ibid*, p. 5.

secured a good position obtaining first division with very high marks. As a result, the Headmaster recommended a double promotion for him.

After two years of stay, his elder brother shifted to Patna for further studies. Consequently, Rajendra Prasad also accompanied him, and there he was enrolled in the T.K. Ghosh Academy. Here things were different. Dr. Prasad realized that here he would have to work hard to get ahead of his classmates as he had got a double promotion and had not studied for a year. Since no tutor was engaged for him at Patna, he laboured hard to maintain his position in the class by self-study alone.

A remarkable event of the family life of Dr. Prasad is worth mentioning. He wrote in his autobiography, 'I was perhaps in the fifth standard and was thirteen when my marriage was arranged'.³ He was married to Rajvanshi Devi in 1896. At that point, the age factor was not a consideration for the purpose of marriage. He was blessed with two sons – Mirtunjay Prasad and Dhananjay Prasad.

Dr. Prasad acquired a good habit of studying and memorising the entire school lessons at home daily since his childhood. He continued this practice in Patna also. It had paid dividends and he always stood first in his class. He had hardly studied for two years in T.K. Ghosh Academy when his elder brother, Mahendra Prasad had to leave for Calcutta (Kolkata) after having passed his intermediate examination to join the Medical College but somehow he could not get his admission into the Medical College. Meanwhile, the guardians of Dr. Rajendra Prasad did not consider it proper to leave him alone in Patna. So he left Patna and got his admission to Hathua High School, but he did not find it to his liking and soon shifted to Chapra district school which had a large number of students. His class had three sections and he was admitted to the 'A' section. His class teacher, Rasik Lal Roy, a Bengali, was very much impressed by his intelligence. One day, he told him that if he maintained his performance, he would be the foremost boy and would beat even Ramanugraha, the most brilliant student of the class. Dr. Prasad alluding to it in his autobiography had observed, 'How he could predict this I do not know, but it was to come true in a couple of years'.⁴ When both Dr. Prasad and Ramanugraha appeared in the higher second-class examination, Dr. Prasad stood first and Ramanugraha was ranked second and thus making Rasik Lal Roy's prophecies true.

Of all the teachers in the school, it was Rasik Lal Roy who had made an abiding impression on Dr. Prasad.⁵ When Dr. Prasad was writing the annual examination of the second class, Chapra was in the grip of a plague epidemic.

³*Ibid*, p. 20.

⁴*Ibid*, p. 25.

⁵*Ibid*, p. 26.

Unfortunately, Dr. Prasad fell ill and suffered from a high fever. He could appear only in two papers. When the results were announced, Dr. Prasad stood first in both the subjects in which he appeared. However, his name was struck off the rolls in school and his name was not sent up for the entrance examination but on the basis of his good performance, he was granted permission to appear in the entrance examination. He took the examination in Patna and returned to his village, Ziradei.

When the results came out, the almost whole school had done well in the University examination. Dr. Prasad topped and got a scholarship of Rs. 20 per month and another Rs. 10 for scoring the highest in English. His nearest competitor, Ramanugraha also got a scholarship of Rs. 20. It is worth mentioning here that a scholarship of Rs 20 was provided to the first ten students in the University. At that time the jurisdiction of Calcutta University extended over Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Burma.

Having finished his school education at Chapra district school with laurels, he joined the Presidency College, Calcutta for higher education where he stood first in the University. He remained completely unaffected by the fast life of a Metropolis like Calcutta, despite coming from the simple and unpretentious rural life of Chapra. He always maintained the first position in all the examinations up to Master of Arts (MA). He was very much loved by teachers and students alike. Some well-known scientists like Dr. J.C. Bose (Physics) and Dr. P.C. Roy (Chemistry) were his teachers in the Presidency College. Apart from his brilliant college career, Dr. Prasad also learnt lessons of social service through the 'Dawn Society' founded by Satish Chander Mukherjee, a contemporary of Swami Vivekananda. In order to provide help and guidance to students from his province, he started a 'Bihari Club' at Calcutta in 1906. This led to the formation of 'Bihari Students Conference', the first students conference in India that blazed a new trail. The students trained by this organisation later proved to be the trusted soldiers of the INC.⁶

In the 1906 session of the INC at Calcutta, Dr. Prasad had the unique opportunity to come face to face with the leaders like Aurobindo Ghosh, Pheroza Shah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjee, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Lala Lajpat Rai, which left a great impact on his mind. After taking his MA Degree in English in 1907, he started the preparations for going to London on the advice of his elder brother and some friends for appearing in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination. But the sudden death of his father in March 1908, greatly upset him and he became uncertain about his career. Instead of going to London for appearing in the ICS examination, he chose to join Langat Singh College, Muzaffarpur (Bihar) as Professor in July 1908. Meanwhile, the

⁶Sisodia, Sawai Singh, 'Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Life, Work and Ideology', in *Eminent Parliamentarians Monograph Series*, New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1990, p. 126.

financial position of the college began to deteriorate and Dr. Prasad decided to take up Law Degree, which was also his father's desire. So, after ten months in Muzaffarpur, he returned to Calcutta to appear for the Law examination and as usual, he topped in Bachelor of Law (BL) Degree.

Legal Luminary

After completing his Law studies, Dr. Prasad set upon establishing himself as a legal practitioner in Calcutta High Court in 1911. Very soon, he built up not only a large clientele but also earned the praise and respect of the judges by virtue of his incisive intellect, phenomenal memory and strict adherence to professional ethics. The judges placed great reliance on his legal acumen and logical arguments for they were the culmination of a deep and thorough study of the subject. No wonder, therefore, that by his intelligence and diligence, he met with success in the legal profession too. Once, when he was arguing a case before the eminent jurist and scholar Justice, Sir Ashutosh Mukerjee who was also the Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University, the latter was so much impressed by his style of presentation of the case and forcefulness of arguments that he offered him a faculty position in the Law Department of the University which Dr. Prasad accepted with gratitude.⁷ As a budding lawyer, he continued to play an active role in various literary, cultural and social activities and took a keen interest in All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan.

While practising as a lawyer and simultaneously working as a Professor of Law at Calcutta University, he passed his Master of Law (ML) examination in 1915, again topping the list. In 1916, with the creation of Patna High Court, he shifted his practice to Patna which marked a turning point in the life of Dr. Rajendra Prasad as subsequent incidents of his eventful life revealed.

Contact with Mahatma Gandhi

Dr. Rajendra Prasad came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi in 1917 when Gandhi organised Champaran Satyagraha in Bihar to liberate the peasants from the exploitation of the British indigo planters. The Champaran Satyagraha became the precursor to the great non-violent national struggle that was subsequently launched under the able leadership of Gandhi. The British Government and the indigo planters were obviously unhappy due to the presence of Mahatma Gandhi on the scene. When Gandhiji was on his way to Motihari, the Collector, who seemed to have got information of his plan, served an order of externment on Gandhiji. He refused to leave the district and consequently he was summoned to appear in court. Gandhiji invited Dr. Prasad and some other advocates, to assist him in the cause of peasants. Young Prasad responded to Gandhiji's call and participated in his experiment with Satyagraha. This was

⁷Prasad, Rajendra (2010), *Autobiography*, p. 60.

the first contact between Gandhiji and Dr. Prasad.⁸ The Champaran Satyagraha not only brought him closer to Mahatma Gandhi but also changed the entire course of his life. Dr. Prasad began to live life of a true Gandhian – washing his own clothes and utensils, travelling by third class in trains and giving up every ease and comfort without demur. He continued to lead a simple and humble life even when he occupied the highest office of the Head of the Nation.

The weapon of Satyagraha launched by Gandhiji in Champaran was perfected in Kaira (Gujarat). The peasants of Kaira district too, following the technique of Satyagraha, refused to pay land revenue. If Champaran Satyagraha made Rajendra Prasad believe in Gandhian mode of Satyagraha, the splendid success of Kaira drew him closer to Gandhi and strengthened his belief that the weapon of Satyagraha was the only effective way of protest against exploitation by the foreign rulers. Thus, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the first leading figure from the Eastern provinces to join Gandhiji just as Patel was the first from the Western provinces.

Valiant Freedom Fighter

Much before Dr. Rajendra Prasad arrived in Calcutta to pursue his graduation, his mind and heart were occupied with patriotic and nationalistic ideas, for he had already been initiated into the cult of ‘Swadeshi’ by his elder brother. Inspired by the Gandhian ideology, Dr. Prasad took a plunge into the political struggle with the unflinching aim of freeing the country from the clutches of colonialism.

After the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, Dr. Prasad concurred with Gandhiji that the only weapon to deal with the British Government’s inhuman actions and repressive laws was ‘non-cooperation’. He was the first leader from Bihar to sign and undertake a pledge requiring every satyagrahi to remain non-violent during the protest against the Rowlatt Act which came to be dubbed as the ‘Black Act’. In 1920, as a part of the non-cooperation movement, Gandhiji launched a countrywide Satyagraha which received an overwhelming response from the people. However, the *Chauri Chaura* incident forced Gandhiji to withdraw the movement. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, however, was one among those few of his associates who concurred with Gandhiji’s decision and agreed with his assumption that the country was ‘not yet ripe for a non-violent non-cooperation movement.’⁹ That was perhaps one of the reasons why Gandhiji saw in Dr. Prasad a great deal of himself and assigned him the constructive task of preparing people for the satyagraha.

In 1923, Dr. Prasad actively participated in the Flag Satyagraha at Nagpur. After Seth Jammalal Bajaj was arrested for leading the satyagraha against the

⁸*Ibid*, p. 81.

⁹*Eminent Parliamentarians Monograph Series, New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1990, p. 6.*

punitive order, the movement was carried on by Patel and when his arrest too became imminent, the leadership passed on to Dr. Prasad. It was during this time that Dr. Prasad came into close contact with Patel whose friendship and association he cherished as one of the most pleasant memories of his life.

In 1930, the British Government arrested Dr. Prasad for taking part in the Salt Satyagraha. He was, however, released in 1934 – before the completion of his prison term – as the Government urgently needed his services for rendering help to the victims of the earthquake that had badly hit Bihar. The second-long spell of imprisonment that Dr. Prasad suffered was immediately after the passing of the Quit India Movement Resolution in 1942 when he remained in jail for three years till 1945.

Front-ranking Congressman

Dr. Rajendra Prasad's association with the INC began while he was still pursuing his graduation studies in Calcutta. During the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session held at Calcutta in 1906, Dr. Prasad had the occasion to listen to the inspiring and patriotic speeches of the Congress leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Pandit Malaviya and M.A. Jinnah. However, it was only after the completion of his studies in 1911 that he joined the national organisation that spearheaded the freedom struggle. Even when he was a lawyer and had lucrative practice, he devoted his precious time to the INC. He came into contact with Mahatma Gandhi in 1916 during Champaran Satyagraha.

In 1920, the INC, at its session held in Nagpur, declared Swaraj as its ultimate goal. The party needed an efficient and dedicated band of workers to spread this message throughout the country. Dr. Prasad, a constructive and dedicated worker of the Congress toured the entire length and breadth of Bihar, explained to the people the plans and programmes of Congress and thus established personal rapport with them. His earlier experience of organising conferences during his student days enabled him to successfully make arrangements for thousands of delegates who had thronged Gaya to attend the INC session of 1922. In 1937 when the Congress formed Ministries in the provinces, it was the Parliamentary Board consisting of Dr. Prasad, Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad which ably and effectively provided guidance.

Dr. Prasad joined the INC in 1911 as an ordinary worker and served the organisation in various capacities for more than four decades. From an ordinary worker, he rose to become the President of INC not once but thrice. For the first time he was elected as its President in 1935 in recognition of the skill and ability demonstrated by him in conducting relief operations in the earthquake hit Bihar. He occupied this office again in 1939 following the resignation of Subhash Chandra Bose and for the third time in 1947 following the resignation of Acharya J.B. Kripalani. At that time, he was already the Minister for Food

and Agriculture in the Interim Government and had also been presiding over the Constitution-making body – the Constituent Assembly.

Humane Aspect

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was deeply associated with culture and the people of the country. He used to associate himself with the happiness and sorrows of the people. He was an excellent humanitarian whose heart always went to the poor and the distressed. He earned great popularity as a social worker while serving the flood-affected people of Shahabad district in Bihar and Burdwan district of Bengal in 1914. As Chairman of the Patna Municipal Corporation, he wanted to initiate many programmes aimed at providing better civic facilities to the people but the paucity of funds and opposition to the levy of fresh taxes did not allow him to make much headway with his proposal. Consequently, he resigned after some time.¹⁰

In 1934, a severe earthquake had hit Bihar leaving thousands dead and rendering millions homeless. He was undergoing a long imprisonment following his participation in the Salt Satyagraha in 1930, the British Government realized his selfless and dedicated social work and released Dr. Prasad to enable him to lead the Committee engaged in relief work of the victims of disaster. Dr. Prasad threw himself, heart and soul, into the relief work and was able to collect over Rs 38 lakh in a very short time. The whole nation appreciated and took note of the zeal, sincerity and humanness with which Dr. Prasad organised the relief services. Even the British Government admired his work. Later another earthquake hit Quetta in 1935, again Dr. Prasad was chosen as the President of the Quetta Earthquake Relief Committee in view of his past services.¹¹ Whatever work he took upon himself he did it with total devotion, selflessness and care. In this sense, he was indeed a *Karmayogi*. In praise of his such services, Gandhiji had written:

No other leader has so much influence of his leadership in any province as Rajendra Babu has in his province. He became the confidant of the whole country because of the reputation and trust gained by him for his work and service during the days of earthquake. He is an emissary of peace in Bihar and I hope that through Bihar, he would become an emissary of peace for the whole of India.¹²

Prolific Writer

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a literary personality. Besides Hindi, his mother

¹⁰Prasad, Rajendra (2010), *Autobiography*, p. 204.

¹¹*Eminent Parliamentarians Monograph Series*, New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1990, pp. 9-10.

¹²Sharma, Shanker Dayal, 'Rajendra Babu: The Nation Builder', in *Eminent Parliamentarians Monograph Series*, New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1990, p. 19.

tongue, he knew Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian as well as English. To a great extent, Dr. Prasad influenced public opinion through his writings and literary works. He wrote a number of books both in English and Hindi besides editing a few newspapers. In early 1920s, he took up the editing of a Hindi Weekly 'Desh' and an English bi-weekly 'Searchlight'. His *History of Champaran Satyagrha* was published in 1917 and another book *India Divided* in 1946. His 'Atmakatha' was published in Hindi in 1946 and in English in 1957. This autobiography is considered to be a valuable document depicting India's struggle for freedom. Yet another book *At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi*, containing the teachings and philosophy of his mentor, was published in 1955.

An Efficient Minister

On September 2, 1946 the interim government was formed under the Prime Ministership of Pandit Nehru with 12 Ministers including Dr. Prasad who was made Incharge of the portfolio of Agriculture and Food. When Dr. Prasad assumed the portfolio of Food and Agriculture, the nation was faced with a severe food shortage owing to the British policy of controls, rationing and compulsory procurement. As a Minister, he took several steps to make the country self-sufficient in food, tried to reduce imports and laid greater emphasis on internal procurement. In view of his rural background and active involvement in the cause of peasants, Dr. Prasad knew everything about agricultural operations and practices. He believed that any fresh effort to integrate village life should be based on Gandhian values. A firm believer in the maximisation of agricultural production and amelioration of the lot of peasants, he gave the slogan of 'Grow More Food'. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture under his able and active guidance launched an effective campaign to that end.

President of the Constituent Assembly

On the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission Plan, the elections for Constituent Assembly were conducted in July 1946 and thus the Constituent Assembly was established to frame a Constitution for free India. Dr. Rajendra Prasad who had been elected to it from the Bihar Province, was unanimously elected President of that august body on 11 December, 1946. Felicitating Dr. Prasad on his election as the President of Constituent Assembly, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had observed:

In Dr. Rajendra Prasad, we have one who embodies the spirit of gentleness. He is the soul of goodness; he has great patience and courage, he has suffered... Rajendra Prasad is the suffering servant of India, of the Congress who incarnates the spirit for which the country stands. I only hope that this spirit of amity, concord and harmony which have come down to us from

the image of Siva in the Indus civilisation down to Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad will inspire our efforts.¹³

His stewardship of the Constituent Assembly during its nearly three years' long deliberations, stands out as a shining example of his high qualities. During this period, he guided, controlled and regulated the proceedings with the utmost firmness, infinite patience, incisive intellect and abundant grace. He permitted members to have a free, frank and full discussion on issues before them and won the appreciation of every section of the House for his skill, objectivity and impartiality.

On 26 November, 1949 when the Constitution was finally adopted, Dr. Prasad in his closing remarks as the Presiding Officer of the Constituent Assembly, congratulated the members for accomplishing the stupendous task of finalising the Constitution. About the workability of the Constitution, he observed:

Whatever the Constitution may or may not provide, the welfare of the country will depend upon the way in which the country is administered. That will depend upon the men who administer it... If the people who are elected are capable and men of character and integrity, they would be able to make the best even of a defective Constitution. If they are lacking in these, the Constitution cannot help the country.¹⁴

President of the Republic of India

The most important and memorable event of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's life was when the transfer of power from the British Government to the Government of India was effected through his hands in his capacity as the President of the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Prasad was unanimously elected as the interim President of India on 24 January, 1950, the day of the last session of the Constituent Assembly. He took the oath of office on 26 January 1950. It is indeed a rare honour that the person who presided over the Constituent Assembly was also given the onerous responsibility of defending, protecting and preserving the Constitution. After the proclamation of the Constitution of India on 26 January, 1950 the first presidential election was held in 1952 and Dr. Prasad got elected as the first President of the republic in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Again he was re-elected to this office for the second term in 1957.

Dr. Prasad along with India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru was able to establish many lasting precedents and conventions culminating in a healthy political relationship between the Head of the State and the Head of

¹³*Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. I, 11 December, 1946, p. 36.

¹⁴*Ibid*, p. 993.

the Government. The relations between the President and the Prime Minister during the early years of our republic were guided more by the personal rapport the two leaders had as colleagues and co-workers of the Congress party than by strict constitutional requirements. But the situation changed after the death of Sardar Patel in December, 1950. The personal equation between Pandit Nehru and Dr. Prasad gave a twist to the relationship between the two top offices of the polity which was not strictly in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution.

Dr. Prasad knew fully well that Constitution had conferred on the President a supervisory role also. But he was too gentle and Pandit Nehru was too assertive and tactful to allow a situation to be created which might smack of discord. Dr. Prasad scrutinized all appointments and decisions taken in his name and his opinion obviously used to receive due attention. He was particularly careful with regard to the imposition of President's rule in any State. But towards the close of his second term as President he had developed a feeling that the office of the President was devalued in practice. He, therefore, suggested an examination in depth of the position of the President under the Indian Constitution.¹⁵

Dr. Prasad led a very simple life even as an occupant of the highest office in India and was never affected, though surrounded by the pomp and show of Rashtrapati Bhavan. He used to spin Charkha almost every day. In 1962, he relinquished the office of the President of India which he had adorned for 12 long years and shifted to Sadaquat Asharam in Patna to spend the remaining part of his life in its peaceful and quiet surroundings. On the fateful day of 28 February, 1963 this great son of Bharat Mata left for his heavenly abode, leaving behind nothing but lofty ideas and ideals which this country will always cherish. In recognition of the yeoman's service rendered by this illustrious son of India, he was awarded the nation's highest civilian award *Bharat Ratna* in 1962.

On his passing away, the entire nation – the Parliament, the State Legislatures, the Press, leaders from all walks of life and dignitaries from abroad mourned the sad demise of this colossus who had strode across India's national scene for decades, particularly during the period immediately before, and soon after the attainment of independence. On the occasion of unveiling of the portrait of Dr. Prasad in the Central Hall of Parliament on 5 May, 1964 the then Prime Minister Pandit Nehru recalling his long years of service to the nation and the manner in which he rendered it, had said:

...For many long years he was associated and had worked with Gandhiji. His life was dedicated to service, right from the time Gandhiji started his

¹⁵Madhok, Balraj, 'Dr. Rajendra Prasad: His role as First President of India', in *Eminent Parliamentarians Monograph Series*, New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1990, p. 65.

mission in India to the period when, after Gandhiji's death, he functioned as the President of India...¹⁶

Conclusions

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was an extraordinary student from his early days and never stood second in his academic career, and thus proved his intellectual worth. Along with it he asserted his Bihari identity in all the spheres of life by challenging the intellectual hegemony of Bengalis while studying in Presidency College, Calcutta. He remained committed to Gandhian values and ethics throughout his life. The standard of morality and infinite integrity which he set as the President of the Indian republic became a landmark in the annals of contemporary Indian history with no parallels. He embodied the true spirit of a Saint among politicians. With his simplicity, Dr. Prasad defined the way which is almost impossible to follow in words and spirit. He was an embodiment of the Hindu ideal of 'simple living and high thinking' which was reflected in his personal and civil life. His innate integrity, purity of character, humility and devotion, love for humanity and depth of vision mark him out as a towering personality. He was rightly regarded as Ajatshatru (one who has no enemies). The need of the hour is the restoration of the authority, dignity and prestige of the office of the President of India as visualised by our founding fathers. The nation can remember Dr. Rajendra Prasad best only by imbibing his ideas and ideals because as Plato said, 'Ideas and ideals rule the world and not the man'.¹⁷

¹⁶*The Journal of Parliamentary Information*, Vol. X, 1964, p. 12.

¹⁷Madhok, Balraj, *Ibid*, p. 67.

Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD: THE ICON OF INDIA

RUDRA DEV MISHRA

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the longest-serving President of India with a tenure of around 12 years in office from 26 January 1950 – 13 May 1962. Born on December 3, 1884, in Ziradei, a village of Siwan district, Bihar was affectionately called as Rajen. He was the last child to his parents, with one elder brother and three elder sisters. His father was Mahadev Sahai Srivastava who was a Sanskrit and Persian language scholar having trained in Astrology and Ayurvedic medicine, has daily large nos of customers coming for consultation. and Kamleshwari Devi, his mother, was a religious woman who used to tell her son stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Rajendra Prasad had four siblings, one elder brother Mahendra Prasad and three elder sisters and he was the youngest son of their parents. His mother died when he was a child and he was raised by his older sister Bhagwati Devi. Rajendra Prasad's ancestors were very rich, belonging to Ballia, Uttar Pradesh, from there, they migrated to Bihar. Since Rajendra Prasad grandfather died young, Mahadeva Sahai was brought up by his uncle, Chaudar Lal. Who was an intellectual and with his hard work, rose to eminence as the Dewan of a large estate, named as Hathua Estate. Rajendra Prasad's paternal uncle, Jagadeva Sahai had no children and showered love and affection on him and his siblings. Rajendra Prasad married Rajavanshi Devi in June 1896 at the early age of 12.

Early School and College days

His early education started at the age of five when Maulavi, an accomplished Muslim scholar, enrolled him in the Persian language, Hindi, and arithmetic classes. Then after he was sent to Chhapra District School after finishing his standard elementary education. After that, he and his elder brother, Mahendra Prasad, went to T.K. Ghosh's Academy in Patna to study for two years. Rajendra Prasad appeared at the entrance examination of Calcutta University, in which he stood first and was given a scholarship of Rs. 30 per month. In 1902, Rajendra Prasad enrolled at Presidency College in Calcutta as a science undergraduate and

in March 1904, he passed the F. A. at the University of Calcutta, and in March 1905, he graduated with a first division. Indeed he was an extraordinary student. Later, he decided to concentrate on the study of arts and received a first-division M.A. in Economics from the University of Calcutta in December 1907. Eminent faculty like P.C. Roy and J.C. Bose taught the subjects of Chemistry and Physics respectively to Rajendra Prasad. In the Eden Hindu Hostel, he shared a room with his brother Mahendra Prasad. Those days Rajendra Prasad was highly impressed by personalities like Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh, Rajaram Mohan Roy and Surendra Nath Bannerji who were instrumental in bringing social awakening among the masses. Rajendra Prasad became an active member of The Dawn Society started by name Sathish Chandra Mukerjee for moulding the youngsters and students to support a civic activist aiming towards India's freedom movement. In 1906 at Patna College Rajendra Prasad was instrumental in the founding of the Bihari Students Conference. It was India's first organisation of its kind. Then after Rajendra Prasad decided to pursue a Law course and joined Law Course at Ripon College under Calcutta University. Rajendra Prasad took the Masters of Law examination also from the University of Calcutta's Department of Law in 1915, passed it, and was awarded a gold medal. In 1937, he earned his doctorate in law from Allahabad University.

Professional Career

Rajendra Prasad decided to take up legal profession after acquiring his LL.B degree and joined under expert lawyer Khan Bahadur Shamsul Huda, and after three years decided to start private practice of his own. He was always sincere to his clients and give utmost honest opinion and would protect their interests as well. He was not at all money minded, and give his services free of cost, if required. Because of this he shot in to prominence in his early professional carrier. During this time Ashutosh Mukerjee, a Calcutta High court Judge who was also Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, was highly impressed by Advocate Rajendra Prasad, when he heard the argument with deep knowledge on the subject placed by Rajendra Prasad, on behalf of his client. One day Judge Ashutosh Mukerjee, offered Rajendra Prasad a faculty position in the law department of Calcutta University, which Rajendra Prasad readily accepted. The Ashutosh Mukerjee Vice-Chancellor in the past also had offered services to highly learned stalwarts like S.K. Mitra, Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Sir C.V. Raman and S.N. Bose, to head the various departments as professor. Apart from being successful in his legal profession, Rajendra Prasad found enough time to take interest in the Bihari Club. Hindi literature attracted him and he showed keen interest in enriching his knowledge in Hindi classics. His active involvement in the All-India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan further established the fact that his love for the language was irresistible.

Shifting to Bihar from Calcutta

After coming to Bihar, Rajendra Prasad felt the need of one university at Patna, which was a long felt necessity for the higher education of Bihari students, as they had to go to Calcutta for higher education. That time Imperial Council of Education at New Delhi introduced a Bill in support of Patna University. The bill suggested to have the University at a far off place from the central Patna. Rajendra Prasad took up the cause, as this would have created commuting problems to students, therefore organised agitations and protest throughout the state. All the Bihar people along with students supported the cause and the protest were so effective that the central Council of administration made changes in the Bill and finally it was passed that Patna University will be centrally located. After the formation of University, university administration appointed Rajendra Prasad as member in the Senate and syndicate, which Rajendra Prasad accepted. Rajendra Prasad finally decided to practise Law at Bhagalpur, Bihar which was a well-known silk city.

Contribution in Freedom Movement

After practising law for a few years, Rajendra Prasad decided to play an active role in India's freedom movement, which was his hidden desire while perusing education at Calcutta. In 1906 Rajendra Prasad joined as a volunteer the annual session of the Indian National Congress, at Calcutta and in 1911 officially joined the Indian National Congress when the annual session was held in Calcutta once again. In 1916, he met Mahatma Gandhi at the Indian National Congress's Lucknow Session. Mahatma Gandhi invited him to accompany him on one of his fact-finding missions in Champaran Bihar. After Mahatma Gandhi reached Chanparan, Rajendra Prasad had reached to Champaran and joined Gandhi. Politely refusing the command from the police, Gandhi continued to give encouraging talk to the peasants. This further infuriated the British. They gave orders that he should appear in the court the very next day. Rajendra Prasad took Gandhi to his side and told him that if the British decide to arrest him, he would also enter the jail. This frank expression from him was a fillip to Gandhi and fully charged, he appeared in the court the next day.

The pressure from the public was mounting high. The British administration decided to withdraw the case and set Gandhi free. He mingled with the farmers freely and told them that they should be united, following the adage that 'unity is strength.' Further he gave detailed explanation of Satyagraha.

To satisfy the public, the government set up a committee to listen to the planters and find out what exactly their problems and grievances are. This was a sign of initial success to the bold efforts taken by Gandhi. On the top of it, Gandhi himself was made as a member of the committee, making inquiry. When the report was submitted finally by the committee, the government understood

the problems of the planters and enacted a law in favour of them. The above episode made Rajendra Prasad to know Gandhi intimately and also learn the efficacy of Satyagraha

Rajendra Prasad was so much so inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's determination, bravery, and conviction that as soon as the Indian National Congress passed the motion of non-cooperation in 1920, he left his lucrative legal profession as well as his duties at the university to support the movement. In response to Gandhi's call for a boycott of Western educational institutions, he told his son, Mrityunjaya Prasad, to drop out of school and enrol in Bihar Vidyapeeth, an institution which he and his colleagues developed on the traditional Indian model of the education system.

Having gained enough confidence in satyagraha, Rajendra Prasad decided that he should go all out to fight against the British. That was the time, when the first World War had just come to close. The British felt that the powerful leaders of Congress trying to force a massive protest against the government should be silenced. They had no way, other than to resort to a mean strategy. They published Rowlett Committee's Report. This report was prepared with full of prejudice and its recommendation was atrocious. It advocated two Bills. The first Bill mentioned that people could be arrested just on suspicion and the trials could be conducted without the right of appeal. The second Bill indicated that even possessing seditious printed matter could invite punishment with incarceration for two years and also bring in permanent changes in the Criminal Law. All these would tantamount to convert the public as slaves and thereby arrest their raising revolt.

There could not have been more unintelligent action from the British than getting the two Bills passed. There was fire raging in the minds of the public. If for some flimsy reasons, people got imprisoned, the country would get filled with prisons. Many members of the parliament in the centre resigned. The spark of anger got ignited in the minds of the people. There was fierce agitation everywhere. The British was closely watching the reaction from the public. At one stage, they felt that they should adopt severe operations to quell the public wrath. The method they followed in Punjab was horrible and it would stay in the pages of history, as long as humanity exists. It was April 13, 1919. People in multitude had assembled in Amritsar in Punjab state, to protest against the passing of the Bills. A British leader, by name General Dyer was sent to the meeting arena, with a command from higher authorities to disperse the crowd. The moment he gave green signal, both army and police mercilessly fired shots at the crowd. More than thousand people were dead in the operation. This added fuel to the fire and the public became ferocious throughout the country. Forgetting their individual religious faith, Hindus and Muslims, wholeheartedly united and fought for the common cause.

Gandhi advocated the idea that non-cooperation should be the best way of solving the problem. Before starting the operation in full vigour, he wanted to have clear information about the public view and with that intention, he started on All- India tour. He felt that it was impossible for him as a single individual to carry out the entire operation and hence wisely decided to depute strong leaders in different places throughout India. C. Rajagopalachari was nominated for Madras State, Jawaharlal Nehru for Uttar Pradesh, Chitranjan Das for West Bengal, Rajendra Prasad for Bihar State and Sardar Vallabhai Patel for Gujarat State. All of them were gems and Mother India was lucky to have had those great sons.

Enjoying the sobriquet as “Bihar Gandhi”, Rajendra Prasad took the command from the master with all seriousness and launched satyagraha in his state. He knew for certain that basic instructions well explained by him, would educate the masses well on the subject of satyagraha. Unmindful of the physical exhaustion and expenses to be incurred, he travelled throughout the state and met people. He arranged public meetings and spoke vehemently about the misdeeds of the British and explained the ways to combat. There was rousing reception and response to his exhortation. The leader was visibly moved.

Gandhi had made it very clear to all the leaders that while carrying out the operation of satyagraha, they should remain non-violent. Towards this, all the leaders pledged that they would follow the instructions of the leader and gave it in writing.

Prince of Wales visited India in the year 1921. Gandhi was totally against it and gave instructions to the followers to make strong protests. Meetings were convened in several places, condemning the Prince’s visit, which obviously angered the British. More and more volunteers joined the protest. Many were imprisoned.

During those days of intense struggle, Gandhi advised the public to wear khadi clothes and give up those coming from abroad. Following the footsteps of Gandhi closely, Rajendra Prasad popularised the khadi movement. It was a great success.

It was unfortunate that much to the dislike of Gandhi, violence broke out in Chauri Chaura, Uttar Pradesh in 1922. Innocent volunteers engaged in a procession were shocked, when police opened fire. It was a silent procession and hence the crowd got totally upset. They retaliated with increased vigour. Police stations were set fire. When once Gandhi came to know about this incident, he was totally aghast. He called his cadres and told them that civil disobedience movement should be dropped forthwith. Many leaders like Motilal Nehru, Chitranjan Das and Lala Lajpat Rai did not approve of the master’s decision. Gandhi came under sharp criticism and his decision was branded as “Bardoli retreat.” On having discussion with Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad was thoroughly

convinced of his decision, though to start with, he also did not agree with his master.

Mahatma Gandhi & Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were highly impressed with the dedication of Rajendra Prasad in October 1934, and Rajendra Prasad was elected President of the Indian National Congress during the Bombay session and was re-elected in 1939, when Subhash Chandra Bose resigned as president of the Indian National Congress. On August 8, 1942, Congress passed the Quit India Resolution in Bombay, which resulted in the arrest of many Indian leaders, including Rajendra Prasad who was taken into custody and sent to Bankipur Central Jail in Patna's Sadaqat Ashram. He was finally released on June 15, 1945, after nearly three years in jail. On September 2, 1946, he was assigned to the Food and Agriculture Department after the establishment of an Interim Government of 12 nominated ministers led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. On December 11, 1946, he was elected President of the Constituent Assembly. On November 17, 1947, he was again elected Congress President, after J. B. Kripalani resigned. After India achieved Independence on 15th August 1947, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was made President of the Constituent Assembly, with the responsibility of drafting India's Constitution along with Dr B.R. Ambedkar

Imprisonment

On March 12, 1930 Gandhi launched Salt Satyagraha and made march along with several volunteers of Indian National Congress to Dandi seashore in South Gujarat state, to break the salt laws. It was symbolic of fundamental rights of a human being and to indicate the basic requirement of life being available to humanity from Mother Nature, without any tax whatsoever. However, it was unfortunate that many volunteers were arrested, while they were making salt. Rajendra Prasad brought in more and more volunteers. He arranged the salt made for sale, with a view to raise funds and was arrested and jailed for six months. By the beginning of the year 1931, Rajendra Prasad was released from the prison. He was again his usual self and started working hard towards the fulfilment of the wishes of his master. Again after a year, the British had their own reasons to put him behind bars. The imprisonment was again for six months. During at prison, Rajendra Prasad developed some health problem and after release from jail, he was regaining his health but British Govt it was unfortunate that the government gave orders to arrest him again and this time, the term was for fifteen months. His health worsened. Coming to know of his pitiable plight, hundreds of followers agitated and they too got arrested and put in jail.

On August 8, 1942, Congress passed the Quit India Resolution in Bombay, which resulted in the arrest of many Indian leaders, including Rajendra Prasad who was taken into custody and sent to Bankipur Central Jail in Patna's Sadaqat Ashram. He was finally released on June 15, 1945, after nearly three years in jail.

Humanitarian & Social services

Dr Rajendra Prasad's humanitarian services cannot be overlooked. During the great flood of Bengal and Bihar in 1914, he volunteered his services to help with relief efforts. He provided food and clothing to the victims. During January 1934, while he was in jail, the Bihar earthquake struck on January 15, 1934, he took the responsibility of raising funds by forming the Bihar Central Relief Committee and collected Rs 38 Lakh, which was used as providing relief to the victims. During the Quetta earthquake in 1935, he founded the Quetta Central Relief Committee in Punjab, despite British attempts to prevent him from leaving the region.

Apart from his involvement in the freedom struggle and politics, Dr. Prasad was also actively involved in social and cultural activities. He was a strong advocate of Indian culture and traditions and believed in promoting them at every opportunity. He was instrumental in setting up the Kashi Vidyapeeth, a university dedicated to promoting Indian culture and education. Dr. Prasad's contributions to the field of education were significant. He believed that education was the key to the development of a nation and worked tirelessly to promote literacy and education throughout the country. He was a strong advocate of primary education and worked to set up schools in rural areas to ensure that children from all backgrounds had access to education.

Dr. Prasad's contribution to the Indian Constitution was significant. He played a key role in drafting the Constitution and ensured that it reflected the values and aspirations of the Indian people. He was a strong advocate of democracy and believed in the importance of a free and fair electoral process.

He also worked to improve the condition of farmers and was instrumental in setting up the National Agricultural Research Institute.

Dr. Prasad was deeply committed to social justice and equality. He believed in the importance of equal rights and opportunities for all, regardless of caste, creed, or gender. He was a strong advocate of women's rights and worked to promote gender equality throughout his career. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was not only a leader but also a scholar and intellectual. He was proficient in several languages, including Hindi, English, Bengali, Sanskrit, and Urdu. He translated several books into Hindi and wrote extensively on Indian culture and philosophy. His writings reflected his deep understanding of Indian culture and history and his commitment to promoting it.

Dr. Prasad was a deeply religious person and was influenced by the teachings of several spiritual leaders, including Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi. He believed that spirituality was essential for the development of a harmonious and peaceful society and worked to promote spiritual values in his personal and public life.

Dr. Prasad was a staunch believer in democracy and the rule of law. He believed that a free and fair electoral process was essential for the functioning of a democratic society. He worked tirelessly to strengthen India's democratic institutions and ensure that they functioned in the best interests of the people

As President of Indian Republic

Finally, after much awaited period of two and a half years after Independence, on 26 January 1950, Dr Rajendra Prasad was elected the first president of Indian Republic. As President of India, he acted independently of any political party as mandated by the Constitution. As president of India he differed with the opinion of Jawaharlal Nehru on "Hindu Code Bills" who wanted minorities should be given additional safeguards against the Hindu majority, whereas Dr Rajendra Prasad was in the favour of "Uniform Civil Codes". As the first President of India, he worked to strengthen the country's democratic institutions and promote economic growth and development. He was also committed to promoting social justice and equality and worked to improve the condition of the poor and marginalized sections of society

As India's ambassador, he travelled widely to many countries around the world, establishing diplomatic relations with foreign countries at that time when it was essential for the stability of the country. He worked to strengthen India's relationship with its neighbours and played an important role in the establishment of the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955.

Dr. Prasad's tenure as the President of India was marked by his commitment to promoting economic growth and development. He worked to strengthen India's agricultural and industrial sectors and promoted the use of modern technology in agriculture. He was also a strong advocate of women's rights and worked to promote gender equality throughout his career. He was re-elected for two consecutive terms, making him India's first two-term president. During his rule, the Mughal Gardens, now known as "Amrit Udyan" at the Rashtrapati Bhavan were opened to the public for the first time for about a month, and it has since become a major tourist attraction in Delhi and other parts of the world. After serving two consecutive terms as president, on 14 May 1962, he preferred to remain in the Bihar Vidyapeeth campus. Despite his numerous achievements, Dr. Prasad remained humble and grounded. He was always accessible to the people and was known for his kindness and compassion. He remained committed to the cause of social justice and equality throughout his life and worked tirelessly to improve the condition of the poor and marginalized sections of society.

Awards

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was awarded the "Bharat Ratna", the Nation's highest civilian award in 1962.

Dr. Prasad's contributions to India have also been recognized internationally. In 1961, he was awarded the prestigious Lenin Peace Prize for his contributions to world peace and International understanding. He was the first Indian to receive this award.

Dr. Prasad was also awarded several other prestigious honors and awards, including the Padma Vibhushan and the Padma Bhushan. He was also awarded several honorary degrees by universities in India and abroad.

Great Scholar and Prolific Writer

Rajendra Prasad was a great scholar who has written 8-9 books during his lifetime, which are as follows;

- Satyagraha at Champaran in 1922.
- India Divided in 1946.
- Atmakatha an Autobiography of Dr. Rajendra Prasad written during a three-year prison term in Bankipur Jail, in 1946.
- Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar, Some Reminiscences in 1949.
- Some Reminiscences" (1949)
- Babu Ke Kadmon Mein in 1954.
- Babu ke kadam mein in 1954
- Since Independence in 1960.
- Bharatiya Shiksha in 1961

In the recent past Prabhat Prakashan of Delhi, re-printed most of the books of Dr Rajendra Prasad in Hind, like 'Khandit Bharat', 'Gandhi ji ki Dain', 'Bhartiya Shiksha', 'Sahitya Shiksha evam Sanskriti' and 'Asamanjas etc, for which Bihar Chief Minister Mr Nitish Kumar appreciated the publisher. In one of the meetings with the Press, Nitish Kumar lamented that the country and history did not do justice to Dr Rajendra Prasad like other leaders such as Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel etc. He even went on to say that he was shocked to learn that the chapter on Dr Rajendra Prasad was removed from the School books and promised to add a chapter on Rajendra Prasad to the School curriculum.

Institute/Memorial dedicated to Dr Rajendra Prasad

- The Rajendra Memorial Research Institute of Medical Sciences, located in Patna, is one of the premier medical research institutes in the country and is named after him.
- Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University, at Pusa, Samastipur district, Bihar.

- Dr. Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College is a government medical college and hospital located in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh.
- Dr Rajendra Prasad Stadium at Madgaon, Goa
- Rajendra Smriti Sangrahalaya is a small biographical museum and a heritage building located in city of Patna, Bihar,
- Rajendra Setu, Bihar, and many more

Last Journey

Dr. Rajendra Prasad died on February 28, 1963, at the age of 78 in Patna and unfortunately he was not even accorded a state funeral when he died at Sadaqat Ashram, Patna. Dr Rajendra Prasad not only lives in the heart of Indians, but the whole world.

Conclusion

Dr Rajendra Prasad was not only the first President of India but was an icon “Real son of India” as his contribution to the country will never be forgotten because he gave up a lucrative career to work for greater goal-achieving independence for the Motherland. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a visionary leader also who dedicated his life to the service of his country and its people. His contributions to Indian politics, education, and culture will always be remembered as an important part of India’s rich history. His legacy continues to inspire people in India and around the world to work towards a better and more just society.

ROLE OF Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD IN INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

AVNEET KAUR

INTRODUCTION

The first president of independent India was Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He was a well-known figure in the Indian National Movement. He quit practising law to devote himself to the fight for freedom. He was also a scholar, lawyer, and activist for Indian freedom. He was a supporter of Mahatma Gandhi and a native of the Bihar region. Following the 1946 elections, he also served as the central government's Minister of Food and Agriculture. Also, he presided over India's Constituent Assembly.

A prominent contributor to the Independence Movement was Chandra Shekhar Azad. While still a student in Calcutta, Prasad's initial involvement with the Indian National Congress occurred during the 1906 annual session, which was held there. He took part as a volunteer. In 1911, when the annual session was once again held in Calcutta, he formally joined the Indian National Congress. He met Mahatma Gandhi in 1916 during the Indian National Congress' Lucknow Session. He was requested to accompany his volunteers on one of Mahatma Gandhi's fact-finding expeditions to Champaran. He was so inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's commitment, strength, and conviction that he immediately left his profitable legal practice after the Indian National Congress passed the motion of non-cooperation in 1920. During the Bombay session in October 1934, Prasad was chosen to lead the Indian National Congress. After Subhash Chandra Bose resigned in 1939, he once more assumed the presidency. Congress passed the "Quit India Resolution" on August 8, 1942, in Bombay, which resulted in the detention of numerous Indian leaders.

Prasad was chosen as India's first president by the Constituent Assembly in 1950, the year the country became a republic. Prasad retired from Congress party politics and established a tradition of independence and non-partisanship for the officeholder. Even though he was only the ceremonial head of state, Prasad supported the expansion of education in India and frequently provided advice to the Nehru administration. Prasad became the only president to hold office for two full terms when he was re-elected in 1957. Prasad held the position

for the longest period of time—roughly 12 years. As his term was finished, he left Congress and established new rules for lawmakers that are still followed. In 1906, Prasad was a key figure in the establishment of the Bihari Students Conference and was its first president.

Early Life

In the Siwan district of Bihar, close to Chhapra, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was born into the large joint family of Mahadev Sahay. His mother Kamleshwari Devi was a devout woman, and his father Mahadev Sahay was a scholar of Persian and Sanskrit. Rajendra Prasad's parents sent him to a Maulavi when he was five years old to learn Persian before moving on to Hindi and Maths. Rajendra Prasad was enrolled in the Chhapra District School after completing his traditional basic education. Rajendra Prasad married Rajavanshi Devi at the age of 12. He afterwards continued his education at R.K. Ghosh's Academy in Patna alongside his older brother Mahendra Prasad. He was eight years younger than Mahendra. He won a scholarship worth Rs. 30 per month after placing first in the University of Calcutta admission exam. Rajendra Prasad enrolled in the Presidency College in 1902.

Initially, he studied science, and J.C. Bose and Prafulla Chandra Roy served as some of his professors. Subsequently, he chose to turn his attention to the arts. In the Eden Hindu Hostel, Prasad shared a room with his brother. There is still a plaque honouring his stay in that room. In 1908, Dr. Rajendra Prasad played a key role in the establishment of the Bihari Students' Conference. In all of India, it was the first organisation of its sort. The action generated all of Bihar's political leadership in the 1920s.

Rajendra Prasad completed the Masters in Law examination in 1915 and received a Gold medal. After that, he finished his doctoral studies in law. Rajendra Prasad used to practice law and pursue his education at Bhagalpur, Bihar, where he eventually became a well-known and respected person in the entire area. Rajendra Prasad joined the Bihar and Orissa High Court in 1916. Because of Rajendra Prasad's intelligence and integrity, the judges frequently requested him to name a precedent against himself when his opponent failed to do so. Rajavanshi Devi, the spouse of Rajendra Prasad, passed away in September 1962. The incident contributed to the decline in his health, and on February 28, 1963, Dr. Prasad passed away after a brief illness that had lasted roughly six months. The final few months of Rajendra Prasad's life were spent in retirement at the Sadaqat Ashram in Patna. The highest civilian honour in the country, the "Bharat Ratna," was given to Rajendra Prasad.

History of Colonial Rule

India came under company rule in the year 1858 which was also known as the British Raj. The East India Company ruled India until the year 1947 when

the country got independence from the British rulers. Before this Indian states were ruled by the Maharajas and were popularly known as the princely states. Different states had different rules made by their leader and that was one of the main reasons which helped the Britishers to rule over India so easily. British East India Company was under Queen Victoria who was then called the empress of India. Post-independence the country was divided into two sovereign states called the Republic of India and the Dominion of Pakistan. Pakistan had two parts, which were East and West Pakistan. East Pakistan later got separated and was called Bangladesh and West Pakistan became Pakistan.

The British rule had brought a huge change in India with respect to culture, ideology and infrastructure. British had brought some good changes in the Indian infrastructure and introduced the country to the latest available technologies. This was the period when a self-sufficient country got exposure to the western world. Under British Raj, many schools and colleges were built and the English language was taught in educational institutions. The company was preparing the people of the country to match their requirements and to be able to interact with the British rulers. The advances brought in the field of education, technology and policies were some of the welcoming changes in the history of India which surely laid the path for today's success and development.

After the revolt of 1857, the company rule was implemented in India and the control was given to the Queen of England. The company closely managed the country and since then the resentment started building up and then it became a dream for every Indian to see their country free from British rule. The struggle started in the 1850s when the Indian National Congress party was formed and the leaders started building the plan for an independent India. Here is the list of major movements that happened during this period which finally led to the freedom of India from British rule (Prasad, 1990)

- (a) **Founding of the Indian National Congress:** Between 1860 and 1890, a new group of educated people who questioned British East India Company policies began to emerge. In order to examine and debate the effects of British rule on India, 70 men rose during this time and founded the Indian National Congress. They discovered that the tax dollars paid by Indians support the lifestyle of British civil workers by paying their salaries. They accused the firm of stealing money from India. With this exposure, the resentment had already begun to develop.
- (b) **Swadeshi movement:** Beginning in the 20th century, there was an increase in conflict between Muslim-majority countries. Bengal province was then divided, into Hindu-dominated west Bengal and Hindu-dominated east Bengal. With the division of Bengal, a boycott of imported commodities and the Mahatma Gandhi-led Swadeshi campaign.

Dr. Prasad rose to prominence as a young congressman during the Bihar district of Champaran's Satyagraha campaign. The local farmers were compelled to cultivate indigo on a piece of their land and sell the crop to the British at a discount. In order to address the terrible conditions of the peasants at the time, Mahatma Gandhi appointed Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He gave up practising law to work for the Bihar peasants, where he eventually became an insightful leader.

- (c) **Non-cooperation Movement:** In 1920, Mahatma Gandhi launched the anti-British rule non-cooperation movement because the government was unwilling to give in. He urged Indians to refuse any purchases of British goods and return whatever honours and positions they had received from the corporation. Dr. Prasad was crucial to the success of this movement because of his persistent pressure on the firm to devise a strategy and free the nation from colonial domination.
- (d) **Round table conference and Government of India Act:** In the 1930s, the Indian National Congress party desired Purna Swaraj, and Dr. Prasad permitted this movement. Non-round table meeting and Government of India Act. The party had discussions on achieving complete independence from the British Raj.
- (e) **The Quit India Movement** was launched in 1942 and called for the immediate evacuation of British troops from our country. It was led by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Leaders of the Indian National Congress persisted in their boycott of the British monarchy, which increased pressure on the firm and ultimately resulted in their resignation. In the 1930s, the Indian National Congress party demanded for Purna Swaraj and Dr. Prasad let this movement. Discussions happened in the party to completely gain the freedom of the country from British Raj.

Post-Independence Developments

India was emancipated from the British Raj, Indian leaders played a critical role in determining the direction of the nation. The entire country was anticipating them. Being a scholar and lawyer, Dr. Prasad was well aware of the opportunities and work that needed to be done in this area to support farmers and advance the Indian economy. He made use of his expertise by assisting in the establishment of Bihar's agricultural university. The name of the university was changed to Dr. Rajendra Prasad University. The current location of the Central Agricultural University is in Pusa, Samastipur, Bihar. He was a trailblazer in creating knowledge centres to assist farmers in becoming aware of the best techniques for their agriculture. Because he was raised in a middle-class family in a small Bihar district, Dr. Prasad could identify with the issues facing farmers. He had lived in close proximity to the major wage

workers of Indian society for his entire life and had witnessed the difficulties and advancements in this field. (Prasad, 1990)

He was aware of the potential for progress and the means by which that objective might be accomplished. He was aware of the pervasive issues in the agriculture industry and wanted to work there to help farmers become more productive farmers in order to improve their lot in life. He was a knowledgeable and well-educated member of our nation's society who had exposure to both modern and traditional society.

He desired a balance between the two. He held the view that the only constant changes and that Indians should adapt the working methods to the passing of time. Then, with the intention of producing educated people to work in the agricultural industry, he made significant contributions to agriculture through this university. His efforts eventually paid off when graduates in agriculture began working in this industry and gradually brought about development in this field. Mr. Prasad understood the value of education and that illiteracy is mostly to blame for the majority of the barriers that exist in the agriculture industry. He thought that raising awareness of agriculture would encourage systematic growth in the industry and eventually provide farmers more authority to expand their operations. He also requested the tertiary sector's assistance to improve the current position of farmers and to establish long-term beneficial services like banking and knowledge centres (Prasad, 1990). His long-term goals for the farmers were long-term, and he preferred working at the source to simply making policies without thoroughly addressing the fundamental issues that the nation's farmers face today.

In addition to working on the growth of the primary sector, he had the vision to advance the tertiary sector as well, enabling both of these sectors to cooperate and generate jobs for one another. His long-term strategies were successful in resolving the drought and flood crises, which the farmers had previously faced with great difficulty. His institutes and centres were constantly working to advance the agriculture industry and support farmers as they develop gradually but steadily. Although the effects of this long-term planning are still being seen, further changes in this direction are now required. But, Dr. Prasad's first work laid the groundwork for progress and created a revolutionary path for any further work that is done in this field in the future.

President of the Congress (1934-35)

Among these four names, Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Prasad remained the serious contenders for the post. Rajagopalachari was no doubt a senior leader and he also had to his credit a number of achievements. He had been, along with Rajendra Prasad and others, in close association with Gandhiji ever since 1922 as a no-changer, and was also their most effective spokesperson. His

contributions in the field of Khadi and of prohibition in south India had also been tremendous. He had also been the acting President of the Congress in 1932, when Sardar Patel, then President, was put behind bars. However, he had later developed into a constitutionalist and his sympathies for them had been more than obvious. This appears to be the reason why Gandhiji did not desire him to lead the Congress in 1934 and rather found Rajendra Prasad more suitable for the post of Congress President at this juncture. "I see nothing wrong", wrote Gandhiji to Mathuradas Trikumje on 10 July 1934, "in Rajaji's standing on the same platform with Bhulabhai. But it is best that, even though doing all this, he should not join the Board or enter the Assembly (Gandhi, 1974).

Rajendra Prasad, after his release from prison, demonstrated his remarkable ability to skillfully organise and manage the relief work in Bihar in the aftermath of the terrible and devastating earthquake of Bihar. "Unaided by any adventitious forces or fortuitous circumstances", wrote Sachidanand Sinha in an article, "he has been able to raise ... a sum of over twenty-eight lakhs of rupees for the Bihar relief, nearly half of the amount raised in response to the call of the Viceroy of India, with all his great influence, vast resources and tremendous prestige." He further added that "this crowning achievement alone would entitle Rajendra Prasad to a place in the front rank of the great Indians who, in the twentieth century have served Mother India with a devotion worthy of appreciation and admiration (Choudhary, 1984)

It appears, therefore, that Gandhiji's decision to bring Rajendra Prasad as the Congress President in 1934 was influenced by a variety of factors. No doubt his antipathies towards the politics of the constitutionalists as well as the socialists were responsible for this but more important was his desire to have a person at the helm of affairs of the Congress who represented his ideals and had deep convictions in his methods of struggle. Writing about Rajendra Prasad to Vallabh bhai Patel in September 1934, he makes it very clear: "Nor by retiring at this critical juncture am I less true to Babu Rajendra Prasad who will in all probability be the President of the forthcoming Congress, who unlike Jawaharlal shares most of my ideals and whose sacrifice for the nation, judged whether in quality or quantity is not to be excelled (Gandhi, 1934).

Thus it is apparent that Rajendra Prasad accepted the Presidentship of the Congress at the insistence of Gandhiji and the demands of the objective conditions prevailing at that time. The regular election could have been carried out, as per the constitution of the Congress, only by the Reception Committee which was scheduled to meet in Bombay on 29 September. But the necessity of regular meetings was shelved off in the given objective conditions and a special Reception Committee meeting, held in Jinnah hall under the presidency of K.F. Nariman, and unanimously elected him the President of the ensuing session of the Congress in 1934 (Jafferbhoy, 1934) proposed his name and Nagindas Master seconded the proposal.

Role in the Nationalist Movement

Due to his effectiveness, devotion to service, intellectual brilliance, truthfulness, and sincerity by entering public life as a Gandhi associate in the Champaran movement, Dr. Prasad became a symbol of nationalism. With the assistance and backing of Sardar Patel, the revolutionary leader of the Indian liberation struggle held the highest offices of President of the Congress, President of the Constituent Assembly, and first President of the Republic of India for twelve years. Dr. Prasad entered politics with tact and delicacy. He participated as a volunteer in the Calcutta meeting of the Indian National Congress in 1906 and formally joined the organisation in 1911. He afterwards received a selection to join the AICC. In 1917, Mahatma Gandhi visited Champaran to support the peasants in their revolt against the British government's forced indigo planting. Gandhi requested that Dr. Prasad visit the area to look into the claims made by both the British and the locals. Dr. Prasad was initially skeptical but was ultimately deeply touched by Gandhi's outlook, dedication, and philosophy. As Gandhi began the "Champaran Satyagraha," Dr. Prasad pledged his unwavering support for the movement (Kumari, 2020).

Dr. Prasad decided to devote his life to the cause of independence when Gandhi announced the beginning of the Non-cooperation movement in 1920, giving up his lucrative legal career in the process. He was in-charge of the anti-cooperation programmes in Bihar. While touring the state to support the movement, he held public events and gave inspiring speeches. He made an effort to raise money to keep the movement going. He asked people to stay away from government-run establishments like offices and colleges.

Dr. Prasad asked his son Mrityunjaya Prasad to drop out of the University and enrol at the Bihar Vidyapeeth in order to support Gandhi's plea to refrain from attending educational institutions supported by the British. He founded Patna's National College in 1921. He advocated for people to reject imported goods and promoted Swadeshi values. When Gandhi announced the beginning of the Non-cooperation movement in 1920, Dr. Prasad gave up his lucrative law practice and dedicated himself to the cause of independence. He oversaw the anti-cooperation programmes in Bihar. He made a round-the-state appearance in support of the proposal, hosting public events and giving stirring remarks.

He began soliciting money to ensure that the movement would continue. His strongest proposal was to boycott government institutions, including offices and colleges. Dr. Prasad gave his son Mrityunjaya Prasad the advice to drop out of the University and enrol at Bihar Vidyapeeth in order to support Gandhi's call for people to refrain from attending educational institutions supported by the British (Kumari,2020). He established the National College in Patna in 1921. He urged people to support the Swadeshi movement.

In order for nationalist India to demonstrate its enthusiasm, Rajendra Prasad

was elected as the president of the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress in October 1934. Subhash Chandra Bose was elected president a second time following his resignation from the post in 1939. He was elected to the All India Congress Party's presidency a third time in 1947 after J. B. Kripalani's resignation. He actively engaged in the Gandhian movement's 1942 "Quit India" campaign. He oversaw rallies and demonstrations in Bihar (Patna in particular). As a result of the huge independence movements, the British administration started making mass arrests of all influential Congress leaders (Kumari, 2020). In Patna's Sadaqat Ashram, Dr. Prasad was apprehended and detained in Bankipur.

Like many of his contemporaries, Dr. Rajendra Prasad acknowledged that Mahatma Gandhi had a profound influence on his political conscience. Gandhi's dedication to the cause of the people deeply affected him. Meetings with the Mahatma caused him to reconsider his views on untouchability. After him, Dr. Prasad embraced a straightforward and ascetic lifestyle. He was ready to part with luxury items like money and servants. He let go of his ego and pride and even started helping out around the house by sweeping, washing and cooking.

In 1946, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was chosen to lead the interim Jawaharlal Nehru government as its Minister of Food and Agriculture. On December 11 of the same year, he was swiftly elected President of the Constituent Assembly. From 1946 to 1949, he presided over the Constituent Assembly and participated in the drafting of the Indian Constitution. The Republic of India was founded on January 26, 1950, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was chosen to serve as the nation's first President. Tragically, his sister Bhagwati Devi passed suddenly on the evening of January 25, 1950, the day before India's Republic Day. After returning from the parade ground, he began the cremation.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was selected as the Food and Agriculture Minister in the interim Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946. Soon he was elected President of the Constituent Assembly on December 11, the same year. He presided over the Constituent Assembly from 1946 to 1949 and helped frame the Constitution of India. On January 26, 1950, the Republic of India came into existence and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected to be the first-ever President of the country. Unfortunately, on the night of 25 January 1950, a day before the Republic Day of India, his sister Bhagwati Devi passed away. He set about the cremation but only after his return from the parade ground.

He dutifully followed the Constitution while serving as president of India, acting without regard to any political party. As India's ambassador, he made numerous trips around the globe to foster diplomatic ties with other countries. He is still the first President of India to have been re-elected for two terms in a row, in 1952 and 1957. Dr. Prasad was constantly willing to assist those who were in need. He offered his services as a volunteer for the 1914 Bengal

and Bihar flood relief efforts. He personally provided clothing and food to the afflicted. Rajendra Prasad was incarcerated on January 15, 1934, when the Bihar earthquake struck. Two days later, he was freed. On January 17, he committed himself to the mission of obtaining money and established the Bihar Central Relief Committee. He handled the collection of more than Rs 38 Lakhs for relief efforts. Although the Brits forbade him from leaving the country, he established the Quetta Central Relief Committee in Punjab during the 1935 earthquake in Quetta.

He was given the Food and Agriculture department following the formation of the Interim Government on September 2, 1946, which was headed by Jawaharlal Nehru and comprised 12 nominated ministers. On December 11th, 1946, he won the election to lead the Constituent Assembly. (Sruthi, 2017). After J. B. Kripalani submitted his resignation on November 17, 1947, he was elected to his third term as Congress President.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Prasad was chosen as India's first president by the Constituent Assembly in 1950, the year the country became a republic. Prasad retired from Congress party politics and established a tradition of independence and non-partisanship for the officeholder. Even though he was only the ceremonial head of state, Prasad supported the expansion of education in India and frequently provided advice to the Nehru administration. Prasad became the only president to hold office for two full terms when he was re-elected in 1957. Prasad held the position for the longest period of time—roughly 12 years. As his term was finished, he left Congress and established new rules for lawmakers that are still followed. In 1906, Prasad was a key figure in the establishment of the Bihari Students Conference and was its first president. A fantastic illustration of tenacity and perseverance is the fight for Indian independence. The future of an independent nation was defined by the sacrifices made by our political leaders. It paved the way and established the groundwork for a developing nation that is currently competing with other developing nations. Because of our nation's large population and rich cultural diversity, it is even more wonderful to recall the efforts of our political leaders. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's contributions to Indian history have helped to shape the nation's future. His tireless efforts resulted in a significant shift in the course of Indian history and liberated our nation from British domination. He would always be owed gratitude from the nation.

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MIRROR OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY: Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD

NISHANT KUMAR

INTRODUCTION

The paper 'Mirror of Indian Democracy: Dr. Rajendra Prasad' seeks to unfold the realities that mattered in bringing life to the nation i.e. drafting of the constitution. The true sense of democracy requires effective leadership giving space to the citizens in decision-making and also serving them without self-interest. The life and works of Dr. Prasad occupy a significant place in not only shaping the nation but also in taking major policy decisions. The paper has attempted to identify some of his works which still inspire our country and countrymen. The paper also reflects on the quality of leadership Dr. Prasad was bestowed with.

Prelude

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was born in a small village, Jiradei in Siwan district. The village is small and surrounded by agricultural land and natural vegetation. The village is connected by a railway station with a narrow road. It has rightly been said that nothing shapes better than the ecosystem of a place. The grooming of Dr. Prasad was done in the village where he learnt the art of living community life. He gave more importance to the local wisdom in his provisional days of becoming. He was very particular about any work that he took up. His connection with fellow village men and educators was inclusive and amazing. As such, the educational attainment of Dr. Prasad is marked by his incredibly focussed attention and apt sync between himself and the teacher. He was always blessed by his teachers for being punctual. The inspiring lesson that the towering personality sheds is beneficial for the Indian education system, particularly for teachers and taught relationships. His connection with his teachers was always ordained by accepting their commands at every minute level. He always scored the highest marks in examinations that he appeared at.

As an advocate of Patna High Court, Dr. Prasad's grandson Manojeshwar Prasad alias Manoj Babu, who is the son of Narvdeshwar Prasad of Siwan district (Rafipur village, Siwan district) explains: Dr. Rajendra Prasad did not

even eat the grains of my village. He did not even take water. Whenever Dr. Prasad used to go to Rafipur, water was brought from other villages. Dr. Prasad did not even take food and water from his daughter's place. Since Shyama Devi, daughter of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's elder brother Mahendra Prasad, was married to Narvadeshwar Prasad, a resident of Rafipur, and Rajendra Prasad did the *Kanyadaan* of his niece Shyama. It shows that he gave great respect to the local practices of Bihar. In fact, in Bihar there exists a practice where-in after *Kanyadan*, the water and food etc. are not to be consumed by the bride giver (the one who has done *Kanyadan*). It shows that he not only gave importance to 'this worldliness' by giving the bride but also considered 'other worldliness' by not having food and water from the bride's house.

It is incomplete to even imagine how passionate Dr. Rajendra Prasad was towards his soil and birthplace. When Dr. Rajendra Babu was living in the Rashtrapati Bhavan as the President, he always met village people with immense love, empathy and care. The guests, after some conversation with Dr. Prasad, generally forgot the sense of being with the president of India. They considered him as if he were there in the village. His interaction with people was inextricably intermingled with linguistic proximity. As such, he recognised the role of language as a motif to bind the nation and its aspirations in a single thread. He has expressed in one of his speeches: "during the last forty or fifty years Hindi literature has made extraordinary progress. It has made rapid strides in the realms of philosophy, science and literature. I do not claim to be sufficiently acquainted with this ever-growing literature to be able to review its progress. I would be content to draw your attention to certain dangers that threaten the well-being of Hindi. I would also like to suggest certain directions in which the Hindi language and literature should shape their course. The number of Hindi publications—books, newspapers and journals — has been steadily increasing and from the point of view of printing, get-up and layout, many of these publications are attractive. It appears to me that more than any other Indian language, Hindi is spoken by the largest number of people and, therefore, its publications command the widest sale and circulation. With the acceptance of Hindi as India's State language, it may be presumed that the number of Hindi books and journals will continue to increase. As Hindi acquires a footing in non-Hindi-speaking States, its publications will be compared with those in the regional languages. Whether it is a daily newspaper with its racy style or a volume, sober and solemn, it is bound to be compared with its counterpart in the regional language. In any language, great poetry or prose is not created every day, for, greatness is an attribute of a natural inborn genius and not the result of painstaking labour. But besides genius, good writing needs other qualities which, at least, can be acquired. They can be acquired through effort and therefore no one need be discouraged by imagining that his language lacks the touch of genius. Perseverance and hard work would, to a large extent, make up for any efficiency, even if it exists. I would like all lovers of Hindi

to realise their responsibility. While the Constituent Assembly was discussing the language question, several members from non-Hindi-speaking States had declared that they were accepting Hindi as the State language not because it was better developed than all the other languages of India, nor because its literature is richer than that of the other Indian languages, but because Hindi is, compared to the other languages, spoken and understood by a larger number of people. Several members were willing to accept Hindi as the State language and not as the Speech at the presentation of the Abhinandan Granth at Arrah Nagri Pracharini Sabha on March 3, 1950". He further believed 'the recognition of local languages would help benefit the tribal population of our country. To work for tribal welfare and learn from them the lessons of honesty, simplicity and tribal unity, we must not only learn their languages but teach them Hindi so that they may also participate in the service of the nation'. For learning, he believed in the idea that "let noble thoughts come to us from all sources".

Dr. Prasad spoke to his people in Bhojpuri, a language slightly different from Hindi. Dr. Prasad, a man of Bhojpuri soil, maintained grassroots thinking even after occupying the highest position in the nation. Dr. Rajendra Prasad refused to adopt the English tradition and language while sitting in Rashtrapati Bhavan. 'Think global and act local' was infused in his personality. He believed in communicating with people in the local language. He inspired others also to live a simple lifestyle. The fact that 'simple living and high thinking' was embedded in his lifestyle. Dr. Rajendra Babu never wanted the benefit of his position in the progress of his family, relatives and children. He used his office exclusively for the interest of the nation. He did not allow personal interest to conflict with the larger interest of the public. He always prioritised the public interest on the top. It is also said that he asked one of his relatives to resign from civil service because he was not properly adhering to the rules. Dr. Rajendra Babu did not acquire any property by holding political or constitutional office. He donated 75% of his salary to the national defence fund. Dr. Rajendra Babu had two sons. Elder son Mritunjay Prasad retired as Divisional Manager, LIC, Patna. After retirement, Jayaprakash Narayan urged him to contest elections during an emergency, he contested under the Janata Party ticket but stayed away from politics, second son Dhananjay cultivated agricultural land in Chhapra and settled down. Dr. Rajendra Prasad had eleven granddaughters and two grandsons. The eldest granddaughter, Ms. Usha Prasad stays in Gorakhpur, the second and fourth lived in Lucknow, the third stays in Kolkata, the fifth stays in Jamshedpur, the sixth lived in Noida, the seventh lives in Patna, the eighth lived in Sindri, ninth lived in Ranchi, tenth in Hazaribagh and eleventh in Australia. Out of his two grandsons, one lives in Jamshedpur and the other in Patna. All are away from the glare of publicity and live simple lives. It implies that without any deposit and thinking about the security of the family members he continued to serve the nation selflessly.

Dr. Rajendra Babu was a lawyer in Patna around 1910, he could have earned a lot of money if he wanted, but he devoted his life to the freedom struggle. The legal practice was all set to bring huge money for him. But he was not lured by money and opted out of the legal profession for joining hands with Gandhiji. After completing his term as president, he spent the last days of his life in Patna Sadaqat Ashram, where there was neither proper treatment nor other facilities. Dr. Rajendra Babu was a patriot rich in dutifulness in both practical and theoretical terms. His saga was really deep, unflinching and grounded.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad's dress and costumes were quite simple. Seeing him, it could not be felt that he was such a talented and extraordinary man. His empathy for the farming class was plausibly distinct. During conferring the degree of Doctor of Law on Babu Dr. Rajendra Prasad by Allahabad University, it was said that he set an example of simple and selfless service to the nation. The great Vibhuti, Sarojini Naidu wrote about Dr. Rajendra Babu and that his extraordinary genius, the unique sweetness of his nature, the magnanimity of his character and the quality of supreme sacrifice perhaps endeared him more widely and personally than all our leaders. Rajvanshi Devi, the wife of Dr. Rajendra Babu, died in September 1962, soon after his retirement. A month before her death, Rajvanshi Devi wrote in a letter addressed to her husband - I feel my end is near, the end of the power to do something, the end of all existence, Ram!

An Inclusive Activist

Dr. Rajendra Babu entered the freedom movement as a lawyer. While sending a fact-finding party to Champaran, Gandhiji requested them to accompany his volunteers. Seeing Gandhiji's dutifulness, honesty, integrity and feeling towards the country, Dr. Rajendra Babu got impressed. To give his full time to the freedom movement in general and Gandhiji in particular, he resigned from the post of Senator of Calcutta University in 1928. When Mahatma Gandhi campaigned for native institutions, Rajendra Babu removed the nomination of his brilliant son Mahendra Prasad from Calcutta University and enrolled him in Bihar Vidyapeeth, an institution set by Dr. Prasad. In the context of indigenous acceptance of Dr. Rajendra Babu and the boycott of foreign organisations, several articles were published in magazines like Search Light and Desh. He also continued to work for financial help to the magazines, publishing news in the national interest. Dr. Rajendra Babu was a true patriot and humanist. For example - Rajendra Babu was ready for public service in the flood tragedy of Bihar and Bengal in 1914. Rajendra Babu was in jail at the time of the earthquake in 1934, but as soon as he was released from jail, he raised money for the earthquake victims. It is prudent to mention that Rajendra Babu collected more donations than the amount raised by the Viceroy. During the earthquakes of Sindh and Quetta, Rajendra Babu helped a lot by visiting relief camps. He took all efforts to provide relief to the victims of the earthquake, also by asking the public for support.

In 1934, he was elected President of the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress and was re-elected in 1939 when Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose resigned from the post. When the country became independent, Rajendra Babu became the first President and did not allow his political background to affect the dignity of the post. He maintained the high credibility and dutifulness of the post. Rajendra Babu took a tough stand while passing the Hindu Act, and his style of functioning became an example for the coming presidential term. He was never silent in getting his concerns registered with the intended people.

His sister Bhagwati Devi died just a day before the constitution came into force, yet he attended her sister's funeral only after completing the constitutional formalities. To him, work was worship. For the betterment of the nation, he worked by lips and bounds. On many occasions, he vehemently gave his constitutional advice that help take effective decisions. After serving for 12 years as president of India, he took retirement in 1962. After retirement, he did not take even a single additional day to retain his house in Delhi. The Government of India awarded him the highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna.

Teaching Vocation

Rajendra Babu was also an excellent teacher. Before studying law, he graduated from Economics and was also a Professor and Principal at Langat Singh College, Muzaffarpur. He worked as a teacher of economics at CT College. His teaching was amazing and students liked him. He used to prepare notes before going to a class so that the scope of discussion could be fixed. During and before the class, he used to interact with students in the simplest language. Though he was particular about the usage of words, he encouraged them to come out of their silos and discuss the subject matter in detail with him. He also provided additional time for students for knowing the advanced issues of the subject. Dr. Prasad believed in amicable sync between teachers and the taught that he practised in his educational heydays. Dr. Ashok Jahnavi Prasad, the oldest great-grandson of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, says, based on the interaction with his students: 'Dr. Prasad used to conduct the classes to the extent that every student received his messages well. He believed in employing interaction as a technique in learning. Dr. Prasad did not leave the class until class discussions were complete. It took long hours of his engagement'. It shows his commitment and dedication to teaching were incredibly astounding. Such teaching strategies can also be adopted by schools, colleges, universities and teachers in other settings. The teaching method of Prasad is even relevant today.

It is also reported that Dr. Prasad did not receive the space in the intellectual writings he deserved. Chairman of Rajendra Museum, Manoj Kumar told that in the year 2007, a box of Rajendra Babu was lying, which was taken out for display. But his Bharat Ratna certificate was damaged, and his signature was erased, again a duplicate was issued by the Government of India, which has

his signature which has been put up for display. Vijay Prakash, associated with Bihar Vidyapeeth, says that everything related to Dr. Rajendra Babu's daily routine has been kept in the same room in the same style as if he were living here even today. It is good to know such protections for his belongings because it would add to our cultural heritage. It would also provide a lesson to our youth that disciplined life has no match.

Then

The book "Autobiography" referred to Rajendra Babu has a detailed description of Rajendra Babu's childhood education system, religious customs, orthodox system, mutual social routine etc. Many such aspects have been shown, including love and harmony between Hindu-Muslim etc. religions, which are necessary for building society and personality in today's context. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a politician of Indian democracy whose importance will never diminish. His thoughts are the mirror for society and every citizen in today's context. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a realist who was in favour of putting principles into practice. Rajendra Babu believed in performing duty away from cheap popularity. Every public representative active in today's India should take inspiration from Rajendra Babu's working style and thinking. Rajendra Babu was such a person who had no opponents, everyone was convinced of his personality.

It is a matter of student life, when the nomination list for MA was discussed, Rajendra Babu's name was not there on the list. Rajendra Babu could not believe how his name was not there, because Rajendra Babu believed in his studies and hard work. He immediately pointed out a possible mistake in the list. But the principal said not to argue, as he failed. Then Rajendra Babu spoke in stammering words from a very emotional heart. Then the principal's reaction flared up, a fine of five rupees. Rajendra Babu boldly said ten rupees right with an emotional heart. Rajendra Babu kept standing. The Principal got angry and said a fine of twenty-five rupees and Rajendra Babu was standing with an emotional heart full of self-confidence. Just then the head clerk came and signalled Rajendra Babu to sit down and informed the principal about the error in the list. In fact, Rajendra Babu was in first place on the list. The Principal was new and did not know the personality of Rajendra Babu. Rajendra Babu's scholarship was increased from twenty-five rupees to fifty rupees for the next two years. Rajendra Babu topped in graduation too. Rajendra Babu was humble, although he believed that self-confidence had to be built up with determination.

Rajendra Babu was of the view that there is a strong connection between the past and the present. As President, Rajendra Babu travelled to many countries and continued to spread the message of peace, harmony and education. He wanted to establish the identity of India across the globe. He always preached

for the nation with no conflict and received wider acceptance. However, in case of conflict among nations, he preferred not to be a party to that.

It is a matter of the year 1905, after the partition of Bengal, there was a period of social and cultural awareness. Rajendra Babu was remembering those days and said that the atmosphere of those days was full of new life and new aspirations. He was not untouched by the influence. He took membership in the Dawn Society. Dawn Society used to work to bring indigenous culture and social awareness to the students. Rajendra Babu started getting interested in social work. He started working to bring self-reliance among the students and youth. Through Dawn Society, he kept trying to strengthen Indian culture.

After the partition of Bengal, the growth of nationalist thinking among the people was the foundation of the Swadeshi movement. In the same chronology, the non-violent demonstration of the Swadeshi movement and promotion of indigenous goods started. Adoption of indigenous goods, institutions etc. and the work of boycotting foreign institutions and goods started happening loudly. Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Vipin Chandra Pal gave it even more air. Rajendra Babu became a part of this wind. In this sequence, it seemed necessary to mention that Sikh, who met Gandhiji in 1918, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was being held in Indore. The president of the conference was Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Rajendra Babu had also reached Indore to participate in it. Since Rajendra Babu had a good acquaintance with Gandhiji in the farmer's movement of Champaran in the past, he stayed with Gandhiji in Indore and went to Sabarmati Ashram with him after the conference. From there, Gandhiji left for Kheda to participate in the peasant movement, and Rajendra Babu also accompanied him. After the success of Kheda's peasant movement, Gandhiji's health deteriorated and Rajendra Babu could not leave him alone in such a condition. Rajendra Babu had gone to Ahmedabad with Gandhiji, while Rajendra Babu had to come to Patna for some urgent legal work. Gandhiji stayed at the industrialist cum social worker Ambalal Sarabhai's place in Ahmedabad. Even after millions of refusals from well-wishers, Gandhiji went from there to Sabarmati Ashram with a high fever. Rajendra Babu was not there at that time. When Rajendra Babu knew about his return, he also reached Sabarmati Ashram. Rajendra Babu saw that Gandhiji was lying on a mat on the floor. The fever had subsided a bit. He was telling Chhaganlal that he did not like Sara Bhai's huge palace, instead of mine was a poor man's hut. "You guys felt bad because of my stubbornness, please forgive me". Saying this, tears welled up in Gandhiji's eyes. The dilemma in Rajendra Babu's mind also went away and Rajendra Babu continued to follow such learning from Gandhiji till his life.

Making of Constitution

There were 299 members in the assembly who wrote the Indian constitution. Rajendra Babu made the most important contribution to drafting the Indian

constitution. In 1946, Rajendra Babu was appointed the President of the Constituent Assembly. Earlier, Sachchidanand Sinha was working as the temporary president. He presided over the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly on 9 December 1946. Two days later, on 11 December, Rajendra Babu was appointed as the President and HC Mookerjee as the Vice President. Rajendra Babu duly assumed the post of the President of the Constituent Assembly on 14 December. Rajendra Babu performed his role as the President of the Constituent Assembly with determination. At the same time, he also emerged as a true protector of the constitution. Rajendra Babu became the President of India twice and was awarded Bharat Ratna for his outstanding works. Rajendra Babu was the first President who sat on this post twice. His tenure as President was for twelve years. On 26 January 1950, he became the first President of independent India. He remained in this post till 13 May 1962, before that he held the post of Minister of Agriculture on 15 August 1947.

Being from a prosperous family, Rajendra Babu did not have to think much about studies. At the same time, he was so gentle by nature and a brilliant and hardworking student since childhood, even the elders of the house believed in him. Rajendra Babu had a hobby since childhood to go to England and take the civil service exam. But he was afraid that the family members would never let him go so far. For this reason, he secretly made a ticket to go to England on the ship and made other arrangements. Along with this, two suits were also stitched for going to England. But as soon as his father came to know about this, he opposed it. After his father's opposition, he changed his mind and left the idea of going to England. Rajendra Babu was obedient to his elders since childhood, as well as he had both tolerance and sacrifice which proved to be a milestone in his success.

Experiment with Truth

Champan and the suppression of the British during and after the First World War, poverty, unemployment, inflation etc. were at their peak in the country. In such a situation, the Congress session was held in Calcutta in 1917. Rajendra Babu participated in this session. In this session, a lean man was sitting near Rajendra Babu. Since Rajendra Babu had no prior acquaintance with him, he had only heard that this man had returned from Africa protesting apartheid. Little did Rajendra Babu know that the same person would prove to be his guide. Gandhiji started his first campaign in Champaran, where the British forcibly started indigo cultivation in the farmers' fields. He used to benefit a lot from this farming. While the condition of the farmers was very pathetic. These farmers and agricultural labourers were forced to work in the fields. Protesting farmers or labourers were beaten with whips, their houses were broken into etc. When the matter went to the High Court, Rajendra Babu, as a lawyer, fought the case against the British for free. When Gandhiji came

to know about the brutality, he could not believe it and came to Bihar after the Calcutta session and was accompanied by the peasant leaders of Champaran. The farmer leader introduced him to Rajendra Babu. After this Rajendra Babu continued to be with Gandhiji.

After coming in contact with Gandhiji, there was some change in Rajendra Babu's thoughts, now he started looking at the same subject in a new way. It helped redefine his approach. He helped Gandhiji in his social reform work and movement. Rajendra Babu realized that one aspect behind British rule is that our society is divided based on caste, there is discrimination between high and low. Lower caste people were barred from the places of worship, they were kept as such in society. It was as if he belonged to an outside society and the whites took advantage of this discrimination. Rajendra Babu introspected that this discrimination has to be removed from his mind as he was not touched by anyone except Brahmins. But during the Champaran movement, Gandhiji explained to him that when everyone is on the path of one goal and one goal then there should be no discrimination among us.

Overall, Dr. Rajendra Prasad has been a true hero of colonial and post-colonial India. His engagement with the nationalist movement, drafting of the Indian constitution and presidential role are full of association, love and affection for the nation. Such an illuminating and towering personality of Indian heritage deserves tribute every, now and then.

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Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD THROUGH HIS SPEECHES

**SHWETA MITTAL
SAKET BIHARI**

Rajendra Prasad, India's first president, delivered the speech on August 14, 1947, just before the country gained independence. The excerpts from this speech will give us insight into his thought process, his beliefs, and ambitions about the country.

On 14th August 1947, he said 'We must also offer our reverence and devotion to Mahatma Gandhi, who has been our guide for 20 years – the only ray of hope and fervour. He is the essence of our culture and the heart of our life, whose presence has kept us alive even during all the trials and tribulations of history. He dragged us out of the dark pit of despair and troubles and instilled a spirit in our hearts that allowed us to muster the courage and strength to stake claim to independence, our birthright',

He mentioned Gandhiji in his speech, stating unequivocally that he was a firm believer in nonviolence, truth, and tolerance. He also believed that gaining independence from colonialism through a new path based on nonviolence would serve as an inspiration to other countries. He believed Gandhiji left behind a carefully crafted vision of an organically sound, mutually supportive, and respected independent world order.

On 14th August 1947, he also said 'There is no reason for minorities to fear that they will not be treated fairly and justly and will not be protected. They must have faith in the assurance given to them. They should aspire to earn due respect by their loyalty and truthfulness towards the land they inhabit.

We want to assure the minorities in India that they will be treated fairly and justly. No distinction will be made between them and others. Their religion, culture, and language will be preserved. And they will get all the rights and credentials of citizenship. They are also expected to remain loyal to the country in which they live and to the legislation of that country.'

He recognized the importance of India's cultural, religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, and understood that multilingualism is a way of life in India.

He recognized that the coexistence of various cultures, religions, and languages is only possible if they are accepted as a part of the nation. We must be thankful to the ideologies of great leaders like Rajendra Prasad even after the 70 years of independence, most Indians believe that their country has achieved post-independence ideals: where a society of different religions can live and practice freely. India has the world's largest Hindu, Jains, and Sikh populations, as well as one of the world's largest Muslim populations and millions of Christians and Buddhists. With a population of over 1.2 billion people today, India has a diverse cultural heritage and has had a significant impact on the world through Indian religions, practices, philosophy, and local traditions. Great leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad are responsible for it, and they deserve credit.

Speech made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 28th Feb 1950, while inaugurating the silver jubilee session of the inter-university board at Banaras, he said, 'There are a few fundamental questions which have to be answered. Take for example the question of the medium of instruction. Whatever the reasons, we have had, for a fairly long time a foreign language as our medium of instruction. I started my schooling with the English alphabet, and although since then some changes have been made, if it can be said even today that the mother tongue of the child is the medium of instruction. The utmost that can be said is that in the primary stages, the change-over is in the process of being accomplished. When we come to the secondary stage, we find an attempt being made in many places to replace English with Indian languages as the medium of instruction and examination. I cannot however say that it has been achieved. At the university stage, the process has hardly commenced. It is I believe, universally accepted by all informed authoritative opinions on the subject, that education to be effective, complete, and economical both as regards time and cost, must be given through the language of the people.'

The new NEP, approved by the Union Cabinet in 2020 and launched on July 29, 2020, replaced the 34-year-old National Policy on Education framed in 1986, which placed a high value on regional languages. According to the NEP 2020, the medium of instruction must be in the mother tongue or local language wherever possible. This must be done until at least class 5, but preferably until class 8.

AICTE also intends to offer degree courses such as engineering and law in regional languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Bengali, and Telugu. The change was implemented because students from underprivileged backgrounds are often left out or have difficulty following English.

Thus, Dr. Rajendra Prasad anticipated the need for local language as a medium of instruction in 1950, knowing that their mother tongue is the best medium of instruction. He also questioned how teaching in a language that students do not speak could benefit them. In his speech, he emphasised the

importance of using the local language as the medium of instruction even at the secondary and university levels that would surely decrease the knowledge divide between urban and rural areas.

He also said, ‘A young man belonging to a village after passing the matriculation examination, tries to secure a job of a few rupees in a city office, where he would probably have to spend more than he earned, or, at any rate, he would find it difficult to make both ends meet. It is often much better for him to introduce improvements in agriculture practices and to live a healthier life in his village surroundings. But the so-called educated youth of today cannot do that. He cannot, now that he is educated, work like his father in the field. I am often haunted by the question: Is our education really intended to make our people dependent on others? Should it not make them more self-reliant, better equipped to face the struggle of life and their families, but also the country at large? The existing system has succeeded in drawing away from the villages all those who have had the benefit of education. The commission has looked into the problem with much care and anxiety. It has come to the conclusion that the way out of this morass may be found through Rural Universities, as has been done in the Scandinavian countries. I ask you all to consider the proposal’.

He realized that the rural ecosystem could be improved by establishing rural universities in areas where the rural resources such as forests, water, raw materials, and landscapes, among other things, are vast. He also realized that the ecosystem services that can be found in rural areas should be improved sustainably, and that rural areas should be supplied with services for them to receive benefits in exchange for the services they provide. It is only possible if we have rural universities that are committed to their rural communities, has a deep understanding of the rural economy, and go one step further by connecting the rural and urban ecosystems.

Universities located in rural areas are likely aware of the many advantages that rural areas have over urban areas, including the superiority of the natural beauty, the quality of the air and water, the availability of water, and the cost of the rent. Longer walking hours and lower wages are the challenges that people living in rural areas face. These areas also suffer from a lack of public spirit and entertainment options. Universities must create entrepreneurs who reorganize the system between urban and rural areas so that they can lay the groundwork for a more prosperous, cooperative, and liberated human experience in the rural ecosystem. This would also provide a solution to the problem of a lack of opportunities in rural settings, which is a problem that currently exists. He was certain that the rural system could be improved by the establishment of rural universities, and he believed that people could take up agriculture as a profession, during which they would improve upon the conventional methods of agriculture while also elevating the level of output and productivity.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad addressed the students on Feb 28, 1950, on convocation at the Banaras Hindu University, he said, ‘Our constitution gives a high place to the education of the people, and rightly so in a country where the darkness of ignorance has persisted for centuries. It is time that we dispelled ignorance and illiteracy from our land. This great work enhances the responsibilities of an institution like yours. It is for the university men and women to take the torch of knowledge to every village and brighten every home with its light so that our villager imbibes the modern outlook. It is pity that very many of us forget the villages in the glamour of cities. But cities owe their life and prosperity to villages. So, it becomes our honoured duty to pay back our debt to our villages.

The primary purpose of a university is to equip the mind of a young scholar so that he can play his part in the great national battle against our three enemies—poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy.’

He pushed for it to be acknowledged that the interaction between rural and urban areas is essential to the continued social and economic development of rural areas, and he advocated for this recognition. He understood that educated city dwellers can only contribute to the growth of the nation if they share their knowledge and expertise with the rural populace. When the educated class will be ready to serve Indians in the village, then the ecosystem of the village will be strengthened by improved health systems, improved infrastructure, and competent teachers, all of which will aid in the development of rural areas in a sustainable manner.

In his speech at the All- India Cooperative Exhibition in New Delhi on April 2, 1950, he said, ‘It seems to me that limiting the scope of cooperative movement only to a revival of the handicraft industry, would be a mistake. On the contrary, it would be desirable to extend it to agriculture because our agriculture cannot progress without the assistance of the cooperative method. I am certain that if agriculture is given the basis of collective farming, our farmers cannot fail to benefit from it. In our country, the land holdings are very small and the peasants have neither the money nor the time to purchase high-quality seeds to improve their agricultural yield or to otherwise increase their production. Therefore, they continue to use the old plough and the antiquated methods of farming which results in poor harvests. The peasants know and appreciate the methods which, if adopted, would yield a better harvest and increased profits, but these methods are not available to them. However, if these are provided through cooperative societies; they would be able to adopt them. If the peasants are provided with seeds, manure, steel, and implemented by the cooperative societies, I don’t see any reason why they should not be able to improve their lot’.

He was well aware that India will undoubtedly benefit from cooperative development in terms of reducing poverty, raising incomes and improving

the standard of living, as well as empowering individuals and bolstering the relationships that exist between all different kinds of groups. He was confident that cooperatives would not only improve the state of the economy but also usher in a new era of social equity and justice. Because agriculture is such an important part of the economy, the cooperative system ought to be expanded to include all aspects of agricultural support, including credit, production, processing, and marketing. This will help improve the living conditions of small and marginal farmers.

He was certain that the cooperative system would both increase the farmers' income and contribute to the overall growth of the rural community. He believed that this would be a win-win situation. He was aware that the success of a cooperative is determined not only by the quality of the services it provides and the profitability of its business operations but also by the degree to which it is successful in promoting the social and economic well-being of its members, including the more disadvantaged members of society.

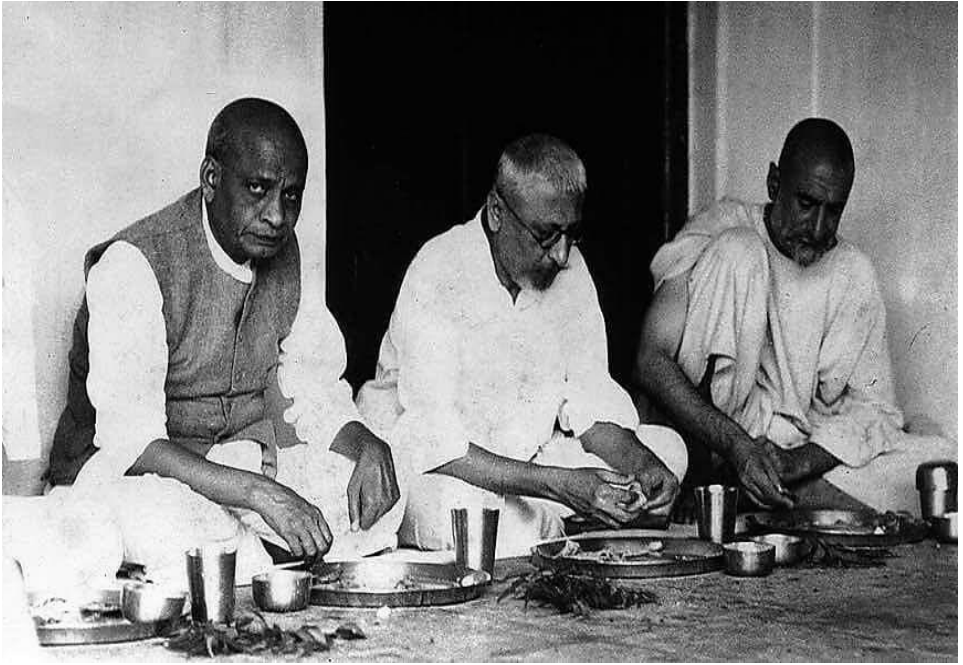
Thus, through his speeches we can understand that he was well-connected to the ground-level problems of India and his solutions were not borrowed from the western world but were well-driven from the rich history of the nation. He was visionary because he understood that cooperatives and rural universities will lower the divide between urban and rural India and also will strengthen the rural economy.

Therefore, we can understand, based on his speeches that he was well-connected to the problems that were occurring on the ground level in India, and the solutions that he proposed did not come from the western world; rather, they were well-driven by the rich history of the nation. He had the foresight to realise that rural cooperatives and universities would help bridge the gap between urban and rural India while also bolstering the rural economy.

PHOTOGRAPHS









SELECTED SPEECHES OF Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD

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THE TASK AHEAD

This is a memorable day in our annals. Let us begin by offering our thanks to the Almighty God who has made it possible for us to see this day; to the Father of the Nation who showed us and the world his infallible method of *Satyagraha* and led us along the path to freedom; and to the countless men and women whose suffering and sacrifice won for us our independence and made possible the establishment of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India.

Today, for the first time in our long and chequered history, we find the whole of this vast land, from Kashmir in the north to Cape Comorin in the south, from Kathiawad and Cutch in the west to Cocanada and Kamrup in the east, brought together under the jurisdiction of one Constitution and one Union which has taken upon itself the responsibility of the welfare of more than 320 million men and women who inhabit it. Its administration will now be carried on by and for its people. This country possesses limitless natural resources and the momentous opportunity to make its vast population, happy and prosperous; and also, to make its contribution to the establishment of peace in the world.

The objective of our Republic is to secure justice, liberty and equality for its citizens and to promote fraternity among the people who inhabit its extensive territories and follow different religions, speak various languages and observe their peculiar customs. We want to live on terms of friendship with all other countries. Our object is to achieve progress for our country in every field. Our future programme includes eradication of disease, poverty and ignorance. We are anxious to rehabilitate and resettle all those displaced persons who have suffered and are still suffering great hardships and privations. Those who are handicapped in any way deserve special help. It is essential that in order to achieve this, we must safeguard the freedom that is ours today. But economic and social freedom are as urgent a demand of the times as political freedom. The present requires of us even greater devotion and sacrifice than the past. I hope and pray that we shall be able to utilise the opportunity that has been given to us. We should dedicate all our material and physical strength to the service of our country and our people. I also hope that the people, while rejoicing on the advent of this auspicious and happy day, will realise their heavy responsibility and re-dedicate themselves to the fulfilment of the great objective for which the Father of the Nation lived, worked and died.

English translation of the President's speech in Hindi on the occasion of the Swearing-in Ceremony in Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, on January 26, 1950.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Your University has a special place among Indian Universities. This is quite appropriate, situated as it is in the holiest of our cities, Banaras, which has all along been a prominent centre of Indian culture and learning. It is in Kashi that the Ganga, descending from Gangotri and meandering through many towns and hamlets of Uttar Pradesh, attains its special significance and sanctity. Indeed, the Ganga around Kashi presents a beautiful sight. It was here on its banks that Saint Tulsidas composed his great Hindi epic, Ramayana, which continues to inspire the daily life of the common man in the North to this day. Many other seers and saints have also realised and sung of Divinity on its banks at Kashi. It is our good luck that Kashi retains its importance and glory as an educational centre even today. Kashi has been, so to say, the nerve centre of our cultural life, where through centuries, seekers of knowledge and wisdom have flocked from far off places within and from outside India. The Hindu, in the simplicity of his faith, deems it a religious duty to have a dip in the Ganga here and pay homage to Lord Vishwanath who, in our mythology, is endowed with the custodianship of this sacred city. And for you, men and women of this University, all these advantages are near at hand.

Your University is rightly famous, not because of its huge dimensions and big buildings, but due to its association with the sacred memory of the late Malaviyaji, whose living embodiment it is. Malaviyaji has left a beautiful legacy of simplicity, purity and one-pointed devotion to *Saraswati*, the goddess of learning. He was prompted in starting this University by the noble desire to bring out such scholars as would be embodiments of Indian culture and win for India her ancient place of honour in the comity of nations. Our British rulers also set up many Universities, but their main idea was to produce young men and women, Anglicised in their outlook and mode of life and Indian only in name and colour. I am afraid, Malaviyaji's laudable objective has not yet been fully achieved. Today, India is a Sovereign Independent Republic with a new Constitution. The framers of our Constitution have shown commendable skill and liberality in seeking solutions of our complicated socio-political problems. For the first time, perhaps, in our history every adult has been given the right to choose our rulers. Our Constitution guarantees perfect equality to all who inhabit this vast land, irrespective of caste, creed, sex or economic position.

Our main aim and desire is to equalise advantage and opportunity, I am sorry to say that the distinction of high and low has taken such deep roots in our society that some of us were rather hesitant in taking this bold step. What is more tragic, these invidious distinctions came to have a religious sanction and sanctity behind them. We have now to make a clean sweep of such superstitions.

Our Constitution gives a high place to education of the people, and rightly so in a country where the darkness of ignorance has persisted for centuries. It is time that we dispelled ignorance and illiteracy from our land. This great work enhances the responsibilities of an institution like yours. It is for the University men and women to take the torch of knowledge to every village and brighten every home with its light, so that our villager imbibes the modern outlook. It is a pity that very many of us forget the villages in the glamour of cities. But cities owe their life and prosperity to villages. So, it becomes our honoured duty to pay back our debt to the villager.

Our Constitution recognises Hindi as the State language. Now that we are free, we have to make an Indian language take the place of English. The language should be such as can acquire common currency with our people in all parts of the country, and also serve the high purpose it is intended for. Our choice fell on Hindi, because it almost fulfilled these conditions. Hindi, as you all know, is the most widely spoken, read and understood language of our country today. But alas, so far, Hindi had been ignored and in a way disgraced even in those regions which are its own.

Our freedom throws on us a heavy responsibility for the manifold development of our national life. We have to make a great leeway in our cultural progress. Our literature, let us admit, needs development. We have to produce scientific, educational and commercial literature in Hindi. So far, we had been depending on English. We cannot do so now. We have to enrich our vocabulary and here, let me humbly suggest, we should not approach this task from a narrow outlook but be broad-minded enough to absorb words and terms even from foreign sources. The hallmark of a living language is that it can assimilate foreign words and give them its own stamp. I am not suggesting that we should borrow so freely that our language gets changed beyond recognition. Here also I remind our young educated friends of their onerous obligation.

So far, for understandable reasons, our educated youth have been attracted mainly towards the services. A change in their outlook is now imperative. Evidently, it is not possible to provide a job for every graduate that our Universities turn out. The aim of a University is not to produce men and women fit for the services only. The primary purpose of a University is to equip the mind of a young scholar so that he can play his part in the great national battle against our three enemies —poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy. Our country is potentially rich, but it needs properly educated and trained men to develop

her resources. This is not the responsibility, solely of the Government. In free India, the task of national development is as much a duty of every citizen as of the Government.

We should remember that we got our freedom, not through military strength, but by the collective sacrifice and efforts of our people. The freedom that has been won by the people has to be maintained and enriched by the people themselves. Our Republic will not flourish unless and until every citizen feels vitally concerned about our freedom, progress and prosperity. 'It matters not who rules us', is an old saying prevalent in India. This represents an outlook most dangerous for the growth of the republican idea amongst our people.

Our educated classes have to play a vital role in expanding and enriching the contents of our freedom. It is they who have to enthuse the masses with the new ideals of free India. Without their active and wholehearted co-operation, our freedom will remain empty and bereft of life.

May this University succeed in materialising the dream of its great founder.

THE ROLE OF THE RED CROSS

I extend a warm welcome to you all, especially the representatives from the States who have undertaken long journeys to attend this meeting. I assure you that it has given me genuine pleasure to be associated with your two great humanitarian organisations and I shall be happy to do whatever I can to help your good cause.

I am delighted to hear that during 1949 the St. John Ambulance Association has made substantial progress in the provision of facilities for instructing people and that the Brigades have recorded an increase, especially in the Cadet Division. I hope that this progress will be maintained and that our young men and women will take an increasing interest in the First Aid and Home Nursing courses so as to enable them to play a useful role in alleviating suffering.

It is gratifying to know that members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade have rendered first aid to thousands of injured people during the year and they may all be justly proud of it. The Indian Red Cross Society's relief work in the State of Jammu and Kashmir deserves special mention as also does their assistance to displaced persons who are starting life anew all over the country. It is good to know that both your organisations are helping the refugees from East Bengal.

The Red Cross family of one hundred million members, attached to sixty-eight national Societies all over the world, constitutes a vital force for the preservation of peace. Several societies have lightened the burden of our relief activities and, despite the pressing demands at home, our Society has been able to extend its helping hand to sister Societies across the seas. I am happy, that, with the friendly co-operation of the Pakistan Society, Red Cross comforts have been regularly provided by our Society to Indian internees at the Attock Fort and by the Pakistan Society to Pakistani internees at Yol. For the valuable work done last year in obtaining various facilities for the internees, including a regular correspondence with their relatives, I must pay a tribute to the distinguished delegates of the International Red Cross—Dr. Marti and Mr. Burckhardt. Dr. Marti is here again assessing the relief needed by the refugees from East Bengal and I trust his endeavours will give much needed comfort to them.

Speech delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance Association on April 20, 1950 at New Delhi.

The Hospital Services Section's care of permanently disabled ex-servicemen in the Red Cross Homes and the provision of amenities and diversional therapy through welfare workers and its work in military hospitals and field medical units is indeed commendable. Also commendable is the aid given by the Society to sick ex-servicemen through its Medical After-Care Fund, as the country owes a deep debt to those who have served in its Defence Forces.

It gives us satisfaction to note the continued development of the Junior Red Cross movement, for we look to it to sow the principles of the Red Cross in the minds of the youth of our country. I am glad that the Maternity and Child Welfare Bureau has maintained satisfactory progress. The importance of the activities of the Bureau, in training personnel to look after the health of mothers and children, cannot be exaggerated in a country where facilities for medical aid are so inadequate.

There is a great need for increasing the strength of nurses so that they can actively supplement the services of the nursing profession in the country. I strongly support Rajkumariji's appeal to our ladies to come forward in large numbers for training in home nursing. This will not only be useful to them in their homes but will also afford opportunities for serving others.

Finally, I congratulate and thank you all for the excellent work done last year and wish you every success in the arduous duties which always face social workers. Your work is full of significance for the future. You will be sustained in your efforts by faith in the aims of the Red Cross and the knowledge that you are a part of an international movement dedicated to the relief of human suffering irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

I would be failing in my duty if, before concluding, I did not make a special mention of the valuable services rendered by the Secretary-General, Sardar Balwant Singh Puri. That the edifice of the Red Cross stands high in India today is due, in no small measure, to the untiring efforts of our Secretary-General who has laboured at building it up from the very foundations.

THE ASOKA PILLAR—ITS SIGNIFICANCE

I am glad to have this opportunity of meeting so many friends here. In the address which you have so kindly presented to me, you have reminded me of those glorious days of struggle when so many of our countrymen lost their lives and so many more suffered and made all kinds of sacrifices. It is a matter of pleasure now, at the end of that struggle, to see so many of you present here in this gathering. By presenting to me the ‘Asoka Pillar’ you have reminded me of the great Emperor who, more than two thousand years ago, laid down and preached the principles which we, in our humble way, tried to follow in our fight for freedom. The struggle was unique in many respects: it was unique in the method it followed and in its achievements. I now hope that the country will take every advantage of the opportunities which lie before it and that in course of time we shall so develop as to be able not only to serve ourselves, but also the whole world. That is the significance of Asoka’s Pillar, the capital of which is now our national emblem. Asoka was the Emperor who tried, in the earlier part of his life, to conquer the world with the help of his sword. He succeeded also, but after the Kalinga War he laid aside his sword and devoted himself to peace—a peace which is remembered even today. The lessons which he taught were inscribed on pillars of stone. These pillars stand to this day in many parts of the country and the lessons inscribed on them are as true in the world of today as they were in the time of Asoka.

We are now passing through a crisis. Let us all hope and pray that a terrible catastrophe will not overtake the world. Let us hope and pray that the spirit of non-violence which inspired Asoka the Great—and let me humbly add which inspired us in our struggle for freedom—will inspire and protect those in whose hands the destinies of the world lie today. Let us also hope that the time will come when we shall be able to declare with strength that we shall settle not only our private differences and disputes through the method of conciliation and negotiation, but also those international disputes and conflicts which lead to war. Unless the world puts faith in this principle and adopts it as its basis of action, it may well be that the progress which advanced countries have made in preparing weapons of destruction, will lead them to disaster. There is only

Speech delivered at a reception given by the members of the Indian National Consolidation and Peace Organisation at New Delhi on August 14, 1950.

one hope of our surviving this catastrophe and I am one of those who believe that the way which Gandhiji lived and the lessons he taught alone can help us in avoiding the catastrophe which threatens the world.

You have, in your address, also referred to many difficulties which our Government has had to face. We value our freedom and we know that it has also brought its own problems which we have to solve. Among these is the one to which you have made special reference, namely, the resettlement of large numbers of people who were forced to leave their hearths and homes and go to distant places for shelter. There are millions of such people and our Government has been doing its best to rehabilitate them. But the problem is so vast and tremendous that it is no wonder that its solution has not met all their expectations. Within the last few months we have had another exodus of a large number of people and this has not yet ceased. The problem has presented itself not only in western but also eastern India. We have therefore to devote all our energies and all our resources to its solution. I am certain that the Government will do its best to rehabilitate the displaced persons, but the people at large and the refugees themselves should render all possible assistance and co-operation to the Government. With our combined efforts, we can legitimately hope that the time will come when we shall have done something of which we may all be proud.

RETURN OF LORD BUDDHA'S RELICS

It is a matter of good fortune for the Indian people that this exhibition of the sacred relics of Lord Buddha and his disciples is being held here, Lord Buddha had shown the path of salvation to the whole world. The religion that he founded even now holds sway over vast areas of the world. There have been great empires and many a great emperor and king. But they have disappeared in the dust as the basis of their power was not moral values but violence and conquest. The empire which Lord Buddha established is one that would remain in the world for ever and would continue to influence the lives of men for all time to come. Even after the passage of 2,500 years, his influence over the people in this country is still alive. Our Government is, in substance, acting upon the basic teachings of Lord Buddha. It is therefore a matter of great luck for us that this sacred treasure which had gone out of our country has returned to us. We have got this opportunity of showing our respect and reverence to the remains of the Lord and his chief disciples. I am conscious of the fact that in this country, where Lord Buddha was born, there are not to be found many persons today who can be termed as his formal followers. But I have no doubt in my mind that the truth he revealed to us and the path that he showed to us has been assimilated by our people in their culture to such an extent that it may be said that every item of his teachings has become a part and parcel of our lives. It is my earnest desire that our relations with the Buddhists of the world should grow deeper and more intimate and that we, together, may be able to move forward in the service of mankind.

Speech delivered while inaugurating the Exhibition of the Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha and his two Chief Disciples at the Maha Bodhi Hall in New Delhi on August 21, 1950.

SCIENCE IN AGRICULTURE

I have visited this Institute more than once when I was associated with the Ministry of Agriculture. But this is the first occasion on which I have come here as the President of our Republic. My interest in your work is genuine because I realise—and I think you should also realise—that India is mainly an agricultural country. More than 80 per cent of the Indian people depend upon agriculture for a living. The industries also depend upon agriculture for their raw materials. Therefore I think that your work in this Institute is really a means of the highest service that you can do for the country. Our duty now is to see that our agriculturists are helped so that they can produce enough food for the entire population. It is really a matter of great regret that an agricultural country like India does not produce enough food. It is now for you to help the country in producing at least as much food as we require. Our population is increasing day by day, but we cannot increase the land. There is undoubtedly some uncultivated land which can be brought under cultivation. Even then it cannot be enough for the increasing population. We have, therefore, to make an effort to produce all the food we require.

The task before us is to find ways and means by which we can increase the yield from our land. Science has succeeded in working wonders in many spheres of life. Our agriculturists know how to increase the yield and I hope that with the help of scientific and technical institutions, especially of your Institution, we shall be able to produce sufficient food in the future. I am sure you will be able to provide our farmers with new and better methods for increased production. There is no reason why more food cannot be produced from the same area of land. I think our yield per acre is less than one-third or one-fourth of that in other countries. At the same time, you have to discover why it is that although our land has been cultivated for centuries, it has retained a certain degree of fertility, whereas in countries like America and Australia where there is scientific cultivation and the land has been cultivated only for the last too or 150 years, there are signs of decreasing fertility. I think that in the process of cultivation we give back to the soil what we take from it—may be by the rotation of crops or by restoring to the soil what it loses in the form of manure. We are consuming millions of tons of petrol and coal, but are not restoring anything to their diminishing stock. We are faced, in agriculture, with

a similar situation, though on a very much smaller scale. By deep ploughing and the use of fertilizers and chemicals, American and Australian farmers have been able to increase the produce but they have not been able to maintain the fertility of the soil. Our cultivators, on the other hand, have been able to maintain this fertility in spite of long years of cultivation.

While going round your laboratory I was told how the rotation and mixing of different crops helps maintain the fertility of the soil. In the villages this is an ordinary practice. Further, the villagers sow more than one crop at a time. When maize is sown, *arhar*, *til*, *urd*, cotton and sometimes *pat* (jute) will be sown together. The maize crop is ready first, then *urd* and *til*, after that *arhar* and finally cotton. Cotton is sown in the period between the latter part of June and the first part of July. *Urd* is ready in September, *arhar* in March, and cotton in June. The sowing is simultaneous and this has the effect of restoring to the soil something of what is taken away by one particular crop. Wheat, barley and gram can be sown together on the same kind of soil. Wheat and gram are ready for harvesting simultaneously. The effect of mixed farming and rotation on the soil and on the yield has to be investigated. If from one acre of land, you can get five maunds of maize, three maunds of *urd*, two maunds of *til* and five maunds of *arhar*, the different crops taken together will mean a good yield. You should examine each little item, on the basis of your experience and scientific knowledge, so that there may be an increase in the yield. It would be better to proceed on lines acceptable to the villager. If you take an entirely new approach, it will take a long time to induce the villagers to adopt it. You should, therefore, approach the problem through the existing methods of cultivation. But this does not mean that other methods are to be ignored. On the other hand, I believe that, when there is a shortage of food, any method which is likely to increase food production should be welcomed. I have suggested this as a layman who has a little experience of cultivation and not as one who can judge from the point of view of scientific knowledge. We cannot depend on other countries for food grains and it is for you to place your knowledge at the disposal of the cultivator.

GANDHIJI AND OUR CONSTITUTION

You have conferred a privilege and an honour on me by asking me to perform this unveiling ceremony. The life of Mahatma Gandhi had become so intermingled with the life of every person in this land that there can hardly be any Indian who was not deeply influenced by him. There have been in this country, as in the world, many great men who served their people devotedly and whose services were remembered by their people for centuries after their passing away. But, it would be difficult to find a parallel in this country or elsewhere in the world to the great life of Gandhiji. He was able, within his life-time, not only to infuse a new life and courage in the hearts that had been deadened by fear but was also able to make them march from the dark depths of slavery to the sunny heights of freedom.

Gandhiji's achievements were not confined to the political sphere alone. His work embraced the entire gamut of social life in this country. In fact, there is no aspect of our life which has not been influenced by him and I hope that our life would continue to be influenced for years to come by his teachings and philosophy.

In view of his intimate relationship with the people, I think it would be unnecessary and useless for me to say anything in detail about his life this evening. I believe, many of you have had the privilege of sitting at his feet while he was living. Others who did not have that good luck must, at least, have had the opportunity of witnessing his great deeds, listening to his inspiring words or reading his stirring articles and enlightening books. It is, therefore, unnecessary to say much about his life.

It was on this day that he was born and I am sure it will remain a memorable day in history for ever. It will greatly edify and enlighten us if we sit down on this auspicious day to contemplate and reflect on his teachings. I would like the members of the Assembly who are present here today and who have given me this privilege of unveiling the portrait of Gandhiji, to remember that their responsibilities which were already heavy and the great expectations which the people had of them have become all the heavier and greater today. It is my

Translation of speech delivered in Hindi on the occasion of the unveiling of a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi at the Punjab Legislative Assembly Chamber on October 2, 1950.

belief that you can learn much about the means by which these responsibilities can be discharged from what Gandhiji had taught us.

I know that the State of Punjab has had to pass through many a trouble and tribulation recently and her difficulties have not come to an end as yet. I have received reports confirming the fact that those who had to pass through the travail of partition faced their troubles with great fortitude and courage. The people of this State have also exhibited great sympathy for these unfortunate people and have helped them to their utmost capacity. I understand that the Government of this State has also, in its own way, successfully striven to bring about order in the chaos that was reigning and has succeeded to such an extent that it can be said to have reached the level of efficiency which the big States possess. I know that it is no easy task to compensate the people for the losses that they had to suffer on account of the partition and it may well be that it is not found possible to compensate them fully at any time even in the future. Even then, every attempt is being made to provide to them as much relief as possible.

In this connection, however, I would like to place before you Gandhiji's view which he often used to reiterate. He used to say that if one wanted really to serve his country and its people, it was essential for him to concentrate on service, that is to say, he should think of service and service alone and not of any other gain or advantage for himself. True service can be performed only when a person is sincerely and single-mindedly devoted to the cause of service itself.

It is a well-known fact that in every country where a democratic government exists, representatives to the legislature are elected by the people. Such representatives should be honest servants of the people and should have no other aim before them except the service of the people. The only way by which you can escape all the troubles and difficulties which have befallen your is to act in the spirit of dedication and service. In the Constitution that we have adopted for our country, it has been provided that every adult citizen shall have the right of voting in the election of representatives. It is our expectation that honest and sincere people would be elected to the legislatures. I also hope that these people would work to promote the interests and welfare of the- people.

There is, however, one matter to which I would like to draw your attention pointedly. The Constitution, as it is today, implies the existence of a party system similar to that of Great Britain. I do hope that our Government would also function as it does in Great Britain. In this connection, I would like to emphasise the fact, which is often forgotten, that parties can be of different types. Factional groups which often develop in our country cannot be termed parties in the right sense of the term. A political party, to my mind, means a group which has got a clear-cut programme of its own—a programme conceived in the interests and for the well-being of the people. There cannot be any objection to the establishment of a party of this kind. There can, of course, be differences

between parties but the growth of selfish factions and groups of the type we find these days is extremely reprehensible.

I would like that when you assemble in this hall to deliberate over the problems that are facing the Punjab State, you should keep your eyes on the portrait of Gandhiji and derive inspiration from it. It had always been the view of Gandhiji that those in power should be true servants of the people. I may here refer to what I used to say before I assumed this office— though it may not appear very nice today—that true servants of the people should always be ready to work in the villages or to go to prison or even assume office as and when directed to do so by Gandhiji. If so desired by him, a true worker would not hesitate even to undertake the job of a *harijan*. They are, in fact, different aspects of public and national service. I believe that the work that a volunteer does when he goes to clean a village, has the same nobility and the same high purpose which characterises the work of those occupying high executive posts. I personally feel that I would have no hesitation in taking up the work of a volunteer in a village if so desired by the country. If we serve the country in this spirit, 'keeping before us the teachings of Gandhiji, I am sure we would be able to serve it much more effectively than otherwise. Truth and non-violence were the basic tenets of Gandhiji's creed and I would urge upon you that you should keep them always in your view. Then alone would you be able to serve the cause for which the people send you here.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

You are all going to take up great responsibilities in your respective spheres. These responsibilities are other than those merely administrative. After all nothing can be achieved by administration alone. What is really wanted from you is national service which is a combination of honesty and efficiency. You will have to do all kinds of work. As a part of your administrative duties, you may be called upon to work like Seva Samiti workers and help in the rehabilitation of homeless refugees. You may have to take charge of areas which may have been badly affected by some natural calamity. You may be called upon to do various other kinds of work. I know people of the old cadre of the Indian Civil Service to whom every sort of work was entrusted. There were among them some Indians also. I remember one Mr. H. C. Dutta, who started his career as a Magistrate and retired as a Chief Commissioner. While in Government service, he wrote many books including Bengali novels of great historical interest and translated portions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. He accomplished all this in the little leisure he could get from his magisterial duties. Another member of the I.C.S., Mr. Vincent Smith, was an expert in Indian languages. His books are used in all the universities, colleges and schools. I am sure all of you must have heard of Mr. Wilson. He put in thirty years of service. Even after his retirement, he continued to take an interest not only in Indian languages but in village dialects also. He has left behind a glossary of words which are of daily use in the villages. Take for example the plough. A plough has several parts, and one does not usually know even the Indian names for all these. But Mr. Wilson has given not only the English names but also the Hindi names of the different little parts. He has collected quite a large number of words in common use among villagers. He did all this in addition to his duties as an administrator responsible to the Government. You should also be able to find time for this kind of work. You must know and understand the people, mix with them and try to know what their difficulties are. Only then will it be possible for you to serve them as well as you are expected to.

When we were in jail they used to give us an “iron bowl” which served all possible purposes. One of our friends had given it the name ‘the civilian’. I think there was a great deal of truth in that. I want you to be civilians in the sense in which the “iron bowl” was—simple, yet capable of performing efficiently

Speech delivered to the members of the Indian Administrative Service at Metcalfe House, Delhi, on October 10, 1950.

as many duties as possible. You must carry this ideal with you. Formerly, of course, there were other functions also which the civil servants were required to do. But, today, your duties as rulers are less important than your duties as servants. You should have sympathy and interest in the people to be able to serve them in the true sense of the term. The real meaning of service is to be helpful to the people. You are, of course, to a certain extent, expected to rule also. But, only if you yourself are disciplined can you enforce discipline on others. Therefore, while expecting discipline from others, you yourself cannot afford to be undisciplined.

Great things are expected from you. It is you civilians who can make India a great country. No government can do much unless the civilians who are its limbs, do their work honestly and efficiently. It is, therefore, necessary that you should act with imagination and vision. Just think of what you can contribute towards shaping the India of tomorrow. Visualise your country as you would like her to be. It is your business to create such an India and if you have imagination and are efficient, you will make India really great. You are, naturally, a sort of symbol for the people. Do not, therefore, think of your prospects only. Leave the fruits of your work to God. While we were fighting against foreign rule, we put great emphasis on the rights we had yet to acquire. But now when we have won our rights, we should think more of our duties. Rights are born of duties. Duties well performed will ensure rights. Therefore, if you work in this spirit, you will give a worthy account of yourself.

People are not quite satisfied with what we have achieved so far. We are in a period of transition and have not been able to achieve many things. Therefore, though complaints are neither unexpected nor unnatural, they have to be removed. There are many complaints of corruption and black-marketing. None of these malpractices is a passive, one-sided affair. Black-marketeers exist because of their customers. There can be no black-marketing if there are no customers. Similarly, an official could not be corrupt and receive bribes without there being people who give them to him. It is unfair to blame one party and leave the other party free. The correct attitude, always, would be to look within and find out whether the fault is in one's own self or not. Generally, people think that they alone are right. There is something wrong in such an attitude.

You should not be influenced by any other consideration except those in the interest of administration and you should brook no interference in the discharge of your duties except from your superiors. You should resist any other interference. Your resistance to interference will give strength to your fellow officers. Whatever be the threat accompanying the interference, you should fearlessly continue to serve the Government loyally and faithfully.

THE ROLE OF HISTORY

We are meeting under the shadow of a great national calamity. One of the architects of our modern history, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, has been taken away from us and a void has been created in our political life, which will remain unfilled. He has left for us practical lessons of sacrifice and an example of indomitable will, unflinching devotion to duty and great powers of organisation and administration.

It gives me great pleasure to accept the invitation so kindly extended to me on behalf of the All-India History Congress. I have no pretensions to scholarship, but I have a genuine interest in history, particularly in the history of my own country which, with all the ups and downs it has seen during the past centuries, can furnish material for constructing what may be called a philosophy of history. It is a fitting thing that you have met in this part of the country which is, geographically speaking, in the centre of India and has played an important part in its history. Not far from where we are meeting today, is situated that world famous village, Sevagram, which was the hub round which the wheel of our freedom movement revolved during the last twelve or thirteen years of its momentous career, which ended with the attainment of complete independence. It will not be out of place, therefore, if in inaugurating this session, I take the liberty of emphasising, what may appear to many to be, the most obvious thing. India needs a true and exhaustive history of its distant and glorious past, no less than of its unique and unprecedented struggle which has succeeded in placing it, once again, on the map of the world.

It is often said that our ancestors and forebears have not left us any authentic history of our country or material from which such history can be reconstructed. We are getting an unending stream of material from archaeological excavations and discoveries, in the form of inscriptions, coins, sculptures, figurines, pottery, beads, etc., found in India, Central Asia, Indonesia, Central America and the Northern part of South America. Apart from such material evidence, there is a vast amount of literature which can throw a flood of light on our past. Not only works of art, but also works on medicine, mathematics, grammar, law, music, and the sciences can yield, if properly studied, matter of great value regarding our life and culture. Of historical documents, there is a considerable number

Inaugural speech at the Nagpur Session of the All-India History Congress held on December 27, 1950.

and more are being discovered from time to time. History books often contain references to a number of works from which the author drew his material, most of which are no longer available. Coming to more recent times, we may mention the Burajis of Assam, the Kulapanjikas of Bengal, the Vansavalis of Mithila, the Khyats of Rajasthan and the Dafters of Maharashtra and a host of other literary works. The memoirs of the Muslim kings and their courtiers, the histories of their wars and conquests, the descriptions and accounts of their administration as also the accounts of the travels in this country left by foreign travellers, are a store-house of information. There is a plethora of material in many European languages, particularly in English, of the period when we had trade and political relations with Europe for the first time. Modern Indian languages, no less than Sanskrit—both Pali and Prakrit—can give us information and throw a flood of light on many an unexplained incident of our history. You are all familiar with these and have, in fact, utilised them to good purpose.

The need has been felt for presenting to our country, not only a connected and correct account of events as they have happened, of the wars and conquests of kings and emperors, their heroic deeds and miserable misrule and the political upheavals; but also how our life has been lived and shaped, how great religious, cultural and literary movements have arisen and influenced hundreds of millions of people and how art and science, industry and commerce have developed and fructified. Efforts are being made to meet this urge. Some years ago the Bharatiya Itihas Parishad planned to bring out a history of India in twenty volumes, which, for various reasons, it was unable to complete. Your Congress has also undertaken a similar task and it is a matter for congratulation that the two schemes have been amalgamated. It is to be hoped that within a reasonable period, we shall have a complete history written by competent authors who will utilise the available material and give us a reliable account of our achievements and failures. If history teaches by example, it will also provide guidance for the future.

This naturally brings me to the question of what a good history should be. History has been looked upon in different ways by different people at different times. The most common view of history is that it is a record of the past and that its main concern is to disinter facts and figures from the graveyard of time. This is obviously a most inadequate appreciation of history. If it is the study of philosophy, i.e. teaching by precedent, a mere record of the past would not be able to do that for the simple reason that the man of the present would find his problems more complex than of those of the past. Such a concept of history, therefore, seems to me to derogate from its value to man. This fact was recognised as early as the period of Polybius, the great Greek historian who, writing in the 2nd century B.C., observed, “If you take from history all explanations of cause, principle and motive, and of the adaptation of the means to the end, what is left is a mere panorama without being instructive,

and though it may please for the moment, it has no abiding value". History as a mere chronicle of events is not adequate. It would be even less adequate if it is only an account of kings and nobles—their follies and foibles, their wars and their conquests—taking no account of the common man and of the great religious, linguistic, cultural and artistic movements, which have convulsed humanity from time to time. I will quote Polybius once again. Writing about the Punic war, he said, "I record these things in the hope of benefiting my readers. There are two roads to reformation: one through misfortunes of one's own, the other through those of others; the former is the most unmistakable, the latter the less harmful... It is this which forces us to consider that the knowledge gained from such a study of true history is the best of all education for practical life. For, it is history and history alone which without involving us in actual danger would mature our judgment and prepare us to take right views, whatever may be the crises or the fortune of affairs". The Roman view of history was not any different from that of the Greeks. Cicero has well stated the principle of historiography in the following words: "The first law in writing history" says he, "is that the historian must not dare to say anything that is false, and the next that he must dare to tell the truth. Also, that there must be no suspicion of partiality and animosity. The superstructure depends on facts and style". The great Roman historian Livy believed that the great events in human life are determined by fate. Referring to the rise of Rome, he said, "In my opinion the origin of so great a city and the establishment of an empire, next in power to that of the gods, was due to fate". He included "the supernatural as an intrinsic part of the human story, specially in the handling of crises when by miracle or portent the gods reveal themselves . . . and when gods are not on the scene, they are just behind it". The subjects to which Livy drew the attention of his readers were the life and morals of the community, the men and the qualities by which through domestic policy and foreign war, dominion was won and extended. Speaking of the past he says "You see in the clear light of historical truth examples of every possible type. From these you may select for yourself and for your country what to imitate and what ... to avoid". History has thus been looked upon, not only as a mere lifeless chronicle but as giving us an insight into the genesis and the development of human societies and their institutions.

As against the concept of fate, we have the concept of environmental and hereditary determinism. All these lay exclusive emphasis on one aspect or another of human life and experience and put all that has happened as proceeding from that particular aspect. It can hardly be denied that man is very largely influenced by his environment, by the operation, action and interaction of material objects with which he comes into contact, and also by the biological laws according to which his own organism is the result partly, if not exclusively, of the simple organisms of his ancestors. But this concept of determinism whether it is by fate, environment or by heredity, reduces all

human phenomena to a position in which they are supposed to be the result of the operation of only one or some of those forces and denies any kind of influence of the human personality itself. This is running in the face of facts. True history must be found in a reconciliation and synthesis of these and various other forces and factors which operate on and through human beings. Kautilya in his *Arthashastra* has mentioned, as sources of history, *Purana* (myths and legends), *Itivritta* (events), *Akhyayika* (tales), *Udaharan* (biographical quotations), *Dharma-shastra* (cultural life), and *Arthashastra* (material life). These, according to him, constitute history. He has thus introduced the cultural and material factors as essential constituents of the historical concept. This view is not only comprehensive, but extremely original in that it defines a concept of history which is ultra-modern and is comparable with the latest views and theories of history propounded by western scholars. His singular merit is that he thought of a synthesis of what later came to be two rival philosophies of history, namely, the idealist and metaphysical, which have been at conflict to establish their exclusive claims during a century or more. In writing history, particularly of our country, we must recognise that the influence of material factors on man's destiny which was ignored earlier is, at least, as important a factor as human personality and its superphysical motives. A synthesis of both factors is necessary for the progress of history and a correct interpretation of its laws.

Indian historians of the present generation have not only the responsibility, but also the opportunity of interpreting history correctly. Many of them have seen great events with their own eyes, the like of which perhaps, were never before seen by any other historian. During my short sojourn in Europe between the two World Wars, I was struck by one thing which has remained fresh in my memory. Wherever I went I saw memorials of warriors, conquerors, and wars. It is strange that there are no such memorials in this country, at any rate, in any appreciable numbers, except those relating to the period of our history connected with Europe. Our great architectural monuments of the Hindu and Buddhist periods are mostly religious in character and execution. Similarly, the great architectural monuments of the Muslim period are also either religious or semi-religious except for a number of forts, here and there, which are indicative of the accidents of a period of conflict and turmoil, but there is no apotheosization of warriors as we see in Europe. Our history naturally, therefore, has to take note of the significant fact that it is not a matter of surprise that this country should have seen, within the last thirty years or so, the emergence of a new technique of struggle for freedom, the emergence of the programme of non-violence and its actual implementation. I am not aware if any historian of note has, in his own writings, given to this new technique its due importance. My feeling is that this history is yet to be written. Strange as it may seem, the material which can enable the historian to reconstruct what I consider the most glorious chapter

not only of our history but of the history of the world, has not been collected and preserved as it ought to be. It is, instead, gradually but, nonetheless, surely being destroyed. Those who have been engaged in this struggle have neither had the training nor the time and opportunity to keep a record of the day-to-day happenings much less of the inner thoughts and motives which influenced them. Whatever is available is spread over such a vast area and in so many diverse forms and languages that it would require people specially trained to sift the grain from the chaff.

The other day, I paid a visit to Simla where I saw admirable work being done under the guidance of your Secretary, Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad, on the preparation of a history of the part played by India in the last great war. Not only are many able people engaged in studying and sifting the material which has been made available, but the writing of the history, in an interesting and instructive form, has made considerable progress. The Government is spending a considerable amount on this enterprise. We know that modern warfare does not leave anything to chance and while some are engaged in the actual fighting, others keep accurate records, not only in words but also in pictures, of what is happening. There is not much danger of this material being irretrievably lost. It is not true only of the present, but for a fairly long time, great importance has been given to the history of wars, by Governments and specially by the military authorities, to enable soldiers to learn the strategy of warfare and there is no doubt that these histories have proved to be of great value to them. Cannot a history, written with understanding and sympathy, of the events as they occurred from day to day in our non-violent struggle, be of equal value to us as well as to others in the future? It was an experiment, as Mahatma Gandhi would have called it, but it proved to be successful. Who knows that the world will not some day accept the principles and adopt the strategy which Mahatma Gandhi taught and applied and with the help of which, we won our freedom? To one who believes in the efficacy of that principle and who has faith in its strength and universality, this history is of tremendous value, not only for this country, but for the whole world. May I ask this Congress of historians to consider this work of equal, if not greater importance, than the history of the distant past or even of the recent World War? Those who participated in the struggle have done their work. Many of them who could have given valuable information from their personal knowledge, but have not recorded it, are one after another passing away. Within a short time, the historian who has nearly witnessed the events and more so the historians who will come later, will have to depend more and more on accounts which were actually published from time to time in various forms like newspapers, brochures, reports and so forth. The living material is fast disappearing and if anyone is interested in it, he has to be vigilant and to take up the work without delay so that future generations may not say that great deeds were done but not recorded by historians and that

their lessons were lost. I hope no one here will retort that it is not only for the historians but also for the Government which comprises men who have taken part in the struggle and have thus been instrumental in making history, to provide the information and means to have it recorded. I can only say that even if the Government, with its other preoccupations, is unable to do so and fails in its duty, it is no justification for others to do the same. I believe, however, that something is being attempted under Government auspices and can only express the hope that it will be done in a way worthy of the great events since non-violence has victories more glorious than war.

EDUCATION TO BUILD CHARACTER

I have noted from your report that the Agra College is the oldest in Northern India and that it was founded under a pious and charitable endowment. Any work that is undertaken in a spirit of piety and righteousness is bound to succeed. It is the sincerity and high purpose of Pandit Gangadhar Sastry which has flowered into this big institution from which innumerable students have gone out to serve their country. It is really a matter of pride for you to be associated with an institution having such a long and glorious history. I hope that you will continue to be inspired by the high purpose and sincerity with which this institution was originally founded.

I am fully aware of the fact that in the educational system that we have inherited from the past, there is little provision for character building and moral training of students. The result is that even those who are able to make appreciable progress in the development of their mental faculties, are not able to make similar progress in the moral sphere. I do not in the least suggest that the educated people of the present day lack character. What I mean is that if there had been as great a stress on character building as there is on intellectual development, we would have been far ahead of where we are today. A very clear example of the results of pure and high purpose is before you. Mahatma Gandhi sent a wave of awakening in this country, but he did so by and for dedication to the Truth and the Good. He, no doubt, defined his creed in terms of non-violence and truth but, in fact, it rested on what may be termed, a spiritual vision. It was this spiritual vision which diverted us from our self-seeking pursuits to the path of dedicated service and patriotism. I may add that it is on account of this spirituality that we have been able to achieve success in our own life-time and all our countrymen are able to congratulate themselves on being free citizens.

I would now like to draw your attention to the work that lies ahead. Our generation of older men is now about to pass away and one by one its members are departing. The void thus created has to be filled by the students of the present day. I hold that our generation was really fortunate in having been able to participate in the glorious struggle for the freedom of our country. We did our utmost to win freedom and at long last succeeded. But, this freedom would remain hollow and meaningless if the people of this country are not

Translation of speech delivered in Hindi in reply to the address of welcome by the Agra College and the Agra Students' Union on January 29, 1951.

able to derive the maximum advantage and good out of it. To give substance to our freedom is a great task, indeed, and is in no way less important than the winning of freedom was. Formerly, there was only the alien rule that was to be overcome. The problems that face us today, are many and multitudinous in character. The responsibility of tackling all these complicated problems has fallen on the shoulders of Free India. It is now up to you to solve these problems in a way which may enable our people to hold their heads high. I may, therefore, say that our present task is much more difficult than that of the past.

Our country is very backward from the educational point of view and, consequently, we suffer from a serious handicap in all that we undertake. In spite of the labours of the British Government and our own during the last three years after the advent of freedom, I am afraid there are hardly 12 to 15 per cent of the people literate in this country. Another problem to which I would like to draw your attention is the existence of many types of diseases and epidemics in this country. These questions and others have to be tackled and solved.

You might be reading in the newspapers, with some pride, about the effort made by our country to preserve international peace. I hope that ultimately our efforts will succeed. One may well wonder, why the nations of the world have regard and respect for our country in spite of the fact that ours is a poor and economically backward land. In my opinion, it is all due to the fact that we have been trying to follow the path that was laid down for us by Mahatma Gandhi who was almost Divinity incarnate and who had sacrificed himself for our good. If we remain firm and fast to this path and continue to follow in his footsteps, we shall always receive regard and respect. Mahatmaji, in his life-time, insistently denied that he was in any way a supernatural being. He always insisted that he was just like other men and that there was no difference between him and others. Anybody, he said, could be what he was. This is quite true. If one reads his autobiography, one finds that he came across all the difficulties, trials and temptations that befall an ordinary man. He had to face moral perplexities, economic difficulties and, of course, political problems. He solved them all in a selfless spirit. It was because he was able to do so that he became so great and glorious a man. Anyone can reach his stature, if he is possessed of a high purpose, spirit of sacrifice and sincerity.

It is my earnest wish that this institution should produce men of high purpose and noble character who may serve the country in the hour of her difficulties and trials. I hope that this college which has been doing such fine service for so many years and which has produced many great men, would continue to serve our people with increasing success. Complete co-operation between the students and the teachers is essential for achieving good results. I do not think that you have invited me today merely in the hope that my visit would facilitate your getting financial support for converting this college into a University. I do not mean that I have no intention of helping you in the matter

of funds. I would do what I can. But, at the same time, I want to emphasise that you should learn to stand on your own feet. It would indeed be a great thing if you could do so. Such a spirit of self-reliance would enable you to make an effective contribution towards the progress of the country.

I would like to refer also to the constant criticism of the Government. It may well be that some of the criticism may have some substance. That, there are complaints, no one can deny. If, however, the nature of these complaints were to be examined, it would be found in ultimate analysis that they arise because our people do not have the nobility of character which our countrymen used to have in former times. I would certainly like people to criticise the Government freely. At the same time, I would urge that before doing so, they should have a clear understanding of what the term 'government' really signifies. It is the people's own representatives that constitute the Government today. Naturally, if the representatives are good, the government would also be good. If the representatives are not proper persons, the Government also would not be a desirable one. Improper persons can be elected as representatives only by people who are themselves suffering from serious defects. It does not behove those who are themselves lacking in moral character to throw the blame of their own shortcomings on the shoulders of others. I would, therefore, say that if there are any faults today, the responsibility for the same lies on every individual. If, however, the people of this country are sound in character and their representatives alone are shirking their responsibilities, it is for the people themselves to bring them to the right path and to make them fulfil the trust that they have placed in them. I mean that the defect today is in our own character.

Whenever I get an opportunity, I make it plain that our country needs minds of a very high order. Our country had produced talented people even when it was in bondage. It is true that our students have been securing the highest positions in their examination results even in foreign lands and have thus acquired high merit in foreign universities. India does not lack brain power nor is it backward in games and sports. I understand that the Indian hockey team which went on a tour of foreign countries never sustained a defeat anywhere in those countries. Our country has thus made progress and earned a name for itself in these spheres. In the moral sphere, in comparison, we find ourselves lagging behind others and in any case much more backward than our ancestors. We learn from the descriptions left by ancient Greek travellers that the people of this country were not in the habit of locking their doors. Those of us who might have gone to the hills might be knowing that even today there is a similar custom prevalent there. The traders just put a piece of stone on their merchandise when they have to leave it unattended and they find it completely intact when they return. Today, unfortunately we find that black-marketing is rampant and none of us has the least hesitation in taking a larger quantity of rations than what one is strictly entitled to. I do not think that it is legitimate

to say that all this is due to the weaknesses of Government officials. My view is that the producers, the distributors and the consumers alike are at fault. The difficulties from which we are suffering today are the product of our own moral shortcomings. I would, therefore, urge you to develop your moral character side by side with the development of your mind and body so that no one in the world may dare to point the finger of scorn at us. I hope that you would be giving the same earnest attention to this question as you have given to organising these celebrations today or to extending a welcome to me.

THE FARMER'S PROBLEMS

I have been associated with agriculture in many ways. An agriculturist in a small way myself, my interest has grown with years. At the present moment, our country stands in need of agricultural development more than anything else. Being an agricultural country, it is really a matter of shame that we should have to depend upon other countries for our food. It is a challenge not only to the agriculturists of the country, but also to the scientists who are engaged in agricultural research. We should be able to produce what is required for our own food requirements. It is not in foodgrains only that we are deficient. There is scarcity also of fruits, vegetables, milk and milk-products. It is, therefore, necessary that the Agricultural Research Institute should devote itself to research work of a kind which may actually and immediately benefit agriculture. As far as I am able to judge, the kind of research which should be conducted by this Institute and by others under the auspices of the Research Association, is not research of a fundamental character such as we have in laboratories dealing with physics or other sciences. Here, we are essentially concerned with research of a type which can be made immediately available to the people and applicable to the solution of problems which arise in our daily life. It is from that point of view that I look up to the Institute to help the Government and the people in solving the food problem. Of course, fundamental research has its value and undoubtedly research work in this institute will benefit from the latest results of such fundamental research. But, so far as practical problems of everyday agriculture are concerned, we have a right to look to this Institute and to other institutes similarly engaged, for assistance.

There are various problems which confront us, but in solving all these problems, no one who is associated with agriculture in India can ignore one fact. It is, that ours is a country of agriculturists who have small holdings. One must remember that while the number of agriculturists runs into hundreds of millions, their holdings are of such small size that the results of research meant for large-scale farming cannot be of much assistance to ordinary agriculturists. In the first place, the resources of the ordinary agriculturist are very limited and he cannot afford to apply the results of research. In the second place, he cannot, even if he could afford to purchase those things, easily get everything that may be suggested. So, in dealing with these problems, all research workers

have also to bear in mind the fact that we have to deal with a large number of people who do not have much education but who are not, for that reason, any less intelligent. Whether it is research in agricultural engineering or in soil-chemistry or in improvement of plant-breeds or in the prevention and destruction of pests, you have to bear in mind these fundamental limitations.

We hear a great deal about the improvement of agricultural machinery. Undoubtedly, the instruments that are used by our agriculturists are mostly of a primitive type. One of the reasons may be that they have not been able to find anything better. You can be helpful to them only if the improvement is such as can be easily effected by the ordinary farmer. That is to say, if you were to devise a new plough, it must not be a very costly one. Then, it must be light enough to be operated by ordinary bullocks available in the country-side. It must again be suitable for the particular soil where it is used. Therefore, if useful results are to be achieved, our agricultural research has to be conducted not in one place where you have got only one kind of soil, but in many places where you have got different kinds of soil. As you know, the cattle that we have in this country differ in quality from province to province, very largely on account of climatic conditions. A plough which can be easily drawn, say by a pair of bullocks in Hissar cannot be drawn by a pair of bullocks of the Tarai districts of my province—Bihar. You have, similarly, different kinds of ploughs. If you give the plough which is used in Champaran in Bihar to agriculturists in the Punjab, probably much of the bullock-power would be wasted. I am mentioning these little things from the experiences of small agriculturists because I consider that these factors play an important part in research work.

Coming to Soil Chemistry, we have such a variety of soils in this country that you can grow almost anything in some areas and nothing in others. It is, therefore, no use telling agriculturists that they should grow only a certain crop. It must be a crop which is suitable for the particular kind of land. The quality of land also depends very largely on the availability of water for irrigation. Agricultural Engineering and Soil-chemistry are so closely connected that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. A central institute, like the one that we have in Delhi, has in the first instance to co-ordinate all kinds of research work which is being conducted in different parts of the country and on different lines. More than that, it has to set the standard for the various institutes spread all over the country.

There is another aspect of the question which is really no part of research. I wish to draw your attention to the problem of carrying the results of research to the agriculturist who is not an educated person. If, somehow or the other, it can be shown to him that an improved method or seed or an improved instrument will, ultimately, be profitable, he will not be slow to accept that improvement. My own experience is that the agriculturist is a shrewd person. He may not be literate, but he has intelligence enough and he has the background

of experience which enables him to judge for himself. He is not averse to change, but is averse to experimentation at his own expense. If somebody else does the experimentation and proves to his satisfaction that the result is going to be profitable, my own idea is that he will quickly adopt changes that may be suggested. I have found that they have readily accepted new varieties of sugarcane where they have found them to be more profitable. They have also quickly taken to a new strain of wheat where it is of better quality, giving a better yield and bringing in more money. They have also adopted, though to a much smaller extent, better strains of paddy.

I know that a great deal of research-work is being done in this Institute and in others, but I am not sure if the results have been propagated to the same extent among agriculturists. Even where it has been done, I am not aware if farmers have accepted and adopted the results. A different kind of approach is, therefore, necessary and that approach can be through some sort of organisation in close contact with the agriculturist. There may be agricultural associations for particular purposes or particular individual workers who may, by their example, actually show to the agriculturists that new methods are really profitable. I believe the Government can do much by having small farms in special areas and for specific purposes. For instance, in an area where the main crop is sugarcane, a sugarcane-farm is required. I think—without wishing to be unjust to anyone—that demonstration farms are not as useful or helpful as they should be because they are run on lines which are not quite appreciated by the ordinary agriculturists. The officers concerned are, sometimes, not easily accessible, or the methods that they adopt for propagating the results of research are such that they do not always appeal to the agriculturists. Whatever the reason may be, it has to be investigated why these demonstration-farms have not served as model farms from which all the agriculturists could learn and start working on the same lines.

At the present moment, food is the biggest problem before us. It is up to the scientists, the Agriculture Ministry and the farmers to see that our dependence upon foreign imports is removed as soon as possible. There is a great future for this Institute and for agricultural research. Not only will they be doing a great service to the country but they will also advance their own cause if they devote themselves wholeheartedly to research work of a kind which will be immediately helpful to agriculturists. I desire to convey my congratulations in advance to all those who have been trained and are going to be awarded certificates for proficiency in research work. I hope, when they go back to their respective places after their training in the Institute, they will devote themselves to their work with enthusiasm.

EDUCATION IN LEADERSHIP

It is the youth who would succeed to the heritage of history as also to the burdens and responsibilities of the future. The happiness and prosperity of our people would depend very largely on their idealism and enthusiasm, devotion and loyalty. I always find very great pleasure in being with young people. My pleasure increases all the more on an occasion like this when I am able to encourage young boys and girls who have distinguished themselves in different spheres of life by awarding them suitable prizes. I extend my congratulations to them. At the same time, I would like to say to those students who, for any reason, have not been able to secure any prize today to remember that it is not success so much as the firm resolution to succeed that matters in life. If, therefore, they have not been able to win the distinction which their more fortunate brethren have, they should not in any way weaken in their resolve or slacken in their efforts. On the contrary, they should ever continue to strive with undying enthusiasm and inexhaustible faith for achieving the highest success in their lives.

During its long existence, numerous princes have received education at this college; and after qualifying from here have devoted themselves to the service of the country and of Rajasthan. It inspired them with modern ideals and developed in them the secular attitude towards life. It was to a certain extent a result of this education that when in 1947 the Rulers of Rajasthan and other Indian States were faced with the problem of choosing between national unity and their own personal sovereignty, they, of their own accord and with great pleasure, preferred national unity and surrendered their sovereign powers to the Union. Instances of such a political revolution are rare in human history. In my opinion, the Princes derived the strength to take part in this unique revolution from the ideals which this college had continued to plant in the minds of its princely students throughout these many decades.

Conditions have changed. We are engaged today in the establishment of a society in which all citizens would have equal rights and responsibilities and in which all of them would be at once rulers and subjects. I am satisfied to find that those in charge of this institution have realised the significance of the change and have opened its doors to members of every class and section of our society. I am glad that they want the college to serve the citizens of India

in general and of Rajasthan in particular with the same devotion with which it had served the scions of the Ruling Princes. Our country needs large numbers of young men and women having qualities of leadership and great physical and moral strength. I think that institutions like yours would continue to play a very important role in the production of young men of such character and ideology. Public Schools can successfully realise this objective simply because they do not remain satisfied with imparting mere book knowledge to their students, but also try to mould the entire personality of these students so as to make them most suited to collective life. Besides, they carry on this work in a social and cultural atmosphere in which it can be completed with the greatest ease. Throughout their academic career in these institutions, students have to live collectively and so naturally acquire the habit of collective living and endeavour. Moreover, through the influences operating on them, these institutions seek to mould their lives. Students remain completely free and unaffected by distracting influences. Without much difficulty, these institutions are able to develop the personality of the students according to the ideals which these institutions have placed before themselves.

I would like, at the same time, to urge upon the managers of such institutions and the teachers working in them to be particularly vigilant about the type of leadership which they seek to produce and develop among their students. It should be one that is inspired through and through by the ideal of the good of entire humanity and by the passion to serve all human beings. It should not be a leadership which seeks to exploit the time and energy of the less fortunate and capable of their fellow-beings for the promotion of its own selfish interests. The Gurukuls which existed in ancient times, in our country, also had as their objective the development of the capacity for leadership among their students, but the leadership that they sought to develop among their students was such as to inspire each of their students to surrender their ego—like Krishna who devoted himself to the service of men even in the humble capacity of a charioteer in any crisis facing mankind. It is unnecessary for me to emphasise that the responsibility for guiding the common people lies on the educated, particularly those in whose veins flows youthful blood and in whose hearts there is the undying enthusiasm for making the future bright and happy. I, therefore, consider it a duty of these educational institutions to fill the I am satisfied to find that those in charge of this institution have realised the significance of the change and have opened its doors to members of every class and section of our society. I am glad that they want the college to serve the citizens of India in general and of Rajasthan in particular with the same devotion with which it had served the scions of the Ruling Princes. Our country needs large numbers of young men and women having qualities of leadership and great physical and moral strength. I think that institutions like yours would continue to play a very important role in the production of young men of such character and ideology.

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I think I should, at this moment, make it clear that this ideal differs to a certain extent from the ideal of citizenship. Behind the latter, there always remains a feeling that one should, without considering the rights and wrongs of a question or means, strive to promote and preserve the interests of one's own people, even though by doing so one may be causing injury or loss to the interests of other peoples. Such have not been, however, our traditions or the teachings of our ancestors. We did not think, even for a moment, during the course of our struggle for freedom, to injure the national interests of our alien rulers in order to promote our own interests. Our great leader, Mahatma Gandhi, had always placed before us the ideal of not adopting any means for

the realisation of our interests which, from the moral or spiritual point of view, may be in itself an evil. I would, therefore, urge that while it is the duty of every educational institution to awaken the spirit of nationalism in its alumni, it is also its obligation at the same time—and this is much more true of an institution like yours—that it should fill the hearts and minds of its alumni with the great humanitarian ideal. This ideal which teaches man to look upon every individual as an image of God and to take to his bosom everyone of his fellow-beings without any kind of discrimination. Poet Tulsidas has said, “No one knows in what form God may come to one’s door.”

This institution is situated in a region, every bit of which has been made sacred and glorious by our past history and which has had the glory of keeping the head of our country high even during the greatest of political storms and stresses. Naturally, therefore, it is a special obligation of this college to establish within it a healthy atmosphere for the maintenance of that glory, the preservation of that historic tradition and for the flowering of that ideal of collective service. India’s literary heritage can make a great contribution to the creation of such an atmosphere. Our literature is enshrined in the modern Indian languages as also in the two classical languages of India—Sanskrit and Pali. It is extremely rich and its study from the view-point of humanity is as important as the study of the literature of non-Indian languages. Its importance lies not only in the fact that, from the strictly artistic point of view, it is of a very high order, but much more in the fact that it is reflected in the daily life of our so-called uneducated common people. There is no part of India which may be unaware of the great ideal of charity for which Kama and the love of truth for which Harischandra have become bywords. Notwithstanding the numerous diversities which may be existing in our country today, this fundamental unity has always existed. I believe that it is on account of this unity that our people are a nation in spite of the fact that they have had to pass through innumerable political and economic difficulties and disasters. Naturally, it is a duty of our educational institutions to make their young students familiar with this basic and fundamental unity existing within the hearts of our educated as well as uneducated people.

It may well be that literary works in non-Indian languages may be of a higher order in comparison to those that we have in our languages. But, I am sure no one can deny that it is difficult for our common people to love alien literature which cannot help us to have an adequate idea of the forces operating in the inner consciousness of our people. I believe that we can be votaries of progress only if we can carry our people towards the goals of economic and cultural prosperity. We will carry our people with us only if we correctly understand the impulses shaping their lives. We can have this understanding of our people by a thorough knowledge of the literature of our country in which throbs the historic mind of our people. I consider it absolutely necessary that the future leaders of our country should be made to cherish a deep love for our

literature during their academic career. I would therefore like to emphasise the necessity of giving due attention to this matter and of making adequate arrangements for the teaching of our literature in your college.

I have already taken enough time, but, before I conclude, I wish to express my satisfaction for having learnt from your report that your college has been constantly making progress and that its students have been taking active part in serving the people in different spheres of their lives, particularly by taking part in the literacy movement. Even though I may not give you an assurance that, under the existing financial circumstances, my Government would give you any additional financial aid, yet I can say that your efforts to carry on your work with credit and success are duly appreciated. It is my hope that you will ever strive to make this college more useful and popular. It is my prayer to God that He may, in His mercy, give you the strength, the enthusiasm and the wisdom to follow your ideals with success and to enable you for many many years, to continue to serve the youth of India.

THE MISSION OF WOMEN

I believe that the past and present students of this institution are all very fortunate, for, they have had the opportunity of studying in an institution which was established under the inspiration of a high ideal. We are all aware that there are two kinds of educational institutions in our country —those which were established directly or indirectly by the British Raj and those which were established by patriotic people to awaken national sentiment in our country. The British could dispense power, position and pelf. Naturally, institutions working under their control never had any lack of funds or students. People receiving education there had always an expectation and a belief that after qualifying from there they would be able to secure cushy jobs under the State or to establish themselves in highly profitable vocations. The Government also used to grant them financial aid. On the other hand, institutions established by patriotic people had nothing else than knowledge and nationalism to offer to their *alumni*. So, they were always in financial difficulties and the number of students studying there was also small. The very fact that some of these institutions were able to maintain their glorious existence, in spite of shortcomings and difficulties, shows their great value to the country.

This Vidya Pith is one of such institutions. I think that one of the factors responsible for its success is its Principal, Srimati Mahadevi Verma. There are very few institutions which are being controlled and run by such a talented scholar as Mahadevi Ji. Her poems, her essays and her philosophical thoughts are invaluable gems of Hindi literature. To have her as a teacher is no ordinary luck. I hope that all her students would forever feel proud of having had this glorious experience. Their fortune is also enviable for another reason. This Vidya Pith is a point of confluence of the old and the new. Allahabad has been famous for thousands of years as the ‘Sangam’ of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Saraswati. It should be no surprise to find within its bosom, a Vidya Pith which is a ‘Sangam’ of cultures. This Vidya Pith has neither neglected the past nor has it turned a blind eye to the new. It has accepted both the old and the modern and has brought about a beautiful harmony between them. It is through this harmony alone that the world of women in our country can be charged with that creative and constructive energy which is so essential for making the life of our people happy and prosperous.

Often, the impatient advocates of progress forget that the collective power of man is, to a very great extent, the gift of the past. In their impatience, some of them begin to think that the supreme success of a revolution lies only in destroying or neglecting the heritage of the past. There can be no greater error than this. With the heritage of the past, and without wasting their time and energy in needless destruction, they can successfully carry through the revolution they desire. It was with the help of the historic heritage of India that Mahatma Gandhi was able to vitalise and activate the slumbering energy of our people. I concede that the past can have a deadening influence on us, but this can happen only when we remain entirely blind to the dynamic nature of life and, therefore, remain indifferent or contemptuous towards new ideas. To remain untouched and unaffected by new ideas is bound to prove extremely injurious and harmful. Man must continue weaving new patterns into the texture of the culture inherited from the past.

The most important creative activity for mankind is the development of man himself. Since the dawn of history, this has been and still is the task and mission of women. It is they who transmit the heritage of the past to the future generations and it is they who protect this heritage within the realm of family and society. Even when there were no States, no churches and no priests, woman was the protector and the preserver of the social bonds and traditions. If the past, the present and the future were not linked by her tender body into an organic whole, there would have been neither any civilization nor any history. It is, therefore, all the more necessary for our women to realise their great role in social life.

We are today passing through a period of transition. We have to so organise our life that every individual of our country hears the call of his being and fulfils it. There are many people in our country who are not in a position to have any hopes or expectations. We have to bring about a rapid change in these conditions. Our women have a very great part to play in this connection as the mental and physical contact of women with life is much more lasting and comprehensive than that of men. Not for nothing was it said that 'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world'. In the apron strings of woman is hidden the revolutionary energy which can establish paradise on this earth. Whatever kind of government or economic system we may organise, the empire of true happiness and peace would not be established in this world so long as the mental constitution of the succeeding generation is not properly developed during its period of infancy. For this reason, I believe that much more important work has to be done within the sphere of the family than what is done in offices or factories. I do not, in the least, imply that woman should be a prisoner within the four walls of her house or that she should not have any contact with other aspects of life. On the other hand, I believe that complete freedom of woman is necessary for the progress and health of society. Freedom however implies that the best use of freedom is

made in promoting the interests of all human beings. The freedom of our women should lie in their assuming the duty and the right of developing the body, the mind and the character of the next generation. Nature has made woman the nurse of the body and the nurse of the spirit. All those evils in our present-day society which prevent our women from carrying on this noble mission should be totally eradicated. The necessary changes must be introduced in our society in order to provide full opportunities for the unrestricted development of our women. Any kind of discrimination made between man and woman would prove fatal to our society. But, women should also understand and recognise their true mission. It is not very dignified on their part to forget this mission and try to get themselves enrolled into the class of exploiters. Women should assume their role as the ministers of the mind and spirit of men.

It is my belief that this Vidya Pith has been working for the fulfilment of this mission of bringing about a true revolution in human society. For progress towards this goal, it is necessary that this Vidya Pith should include such subjects in its syllabus as would give to its students a clear understanding of the role of woman in the evolution of human civilisation and culture. It should also make provision for such practical training as would enable its students to change the life of the common people of India in a peaceful and creative manner. Women can make the family and communal life of the country a temple of love, co-operation and happiness.

I would like to extend my congratulations to all those students who have passed their examinations in this institution and I wish them all success in their future life.

THREE DIFFICULT YEARS

Ever since I landed in your beautiful city, 24 hours back, I have received such an amount of affection and kindness that I feel overwhelmed. I have been trying to visit the different States in the country and this is the first State in the South which it has been possible for me to visit as President of the Republic of India. I am really happy that I have seen something of this beautiful part of the country.

You are all aware that, within the last three years, we have had such tremendous changes in the country. Those who worked for *Swaraj*, in the years gone by, could hope for nothing better than what we have achieved. It is now for us to maintain the freedom that we have won and to make our people prosperous and happy. Our freedom will have no meaning unless its fruits are enjoyed by every individual that inhabits this vast land and unless every individual feels that he is better in every respect. A great responsibility has been cast upon all and what I want you common men and women of this country to realise is that it is no use leaving things to what is known as the Government. With adult franchise, we now have a system in which every individual has his share in the Government. We can no longer say that the Government is something different from the people at large. Every individual, high and low, must make his or her contribution to the betterment and prosperity of the masses.

We have, during these three years, been passing through rather difficult times. You in the South, who are so far away from the places where we have had such tremendous difficulties, may not fully realise the vastness of the catastrophe. You cannot, perhaps, appreciate the magnitude of the problems which our Government had to face on the very morrow of its existence. Vast masses of uprooted humanity, both in the West and in the East, had to move from their hearth and home, leaving everything behind, in search of a place where they could live with safety and honour. It was not a case of a few people. From the West alone, now known as Western Pakistan, not less than 5 million people, perhaps more than that, came to India. Sometime later, a very large number—not less than 3.5 million—moved from East Bengal to West Bengal. It was not easy to rehabilitate this vast mass of humanity and, although the Government has been doing its best, it is too early yet to say that we have succeeded in our task. The progress in the West has been considerable and so far as the rural population is concerned, it may be said that practically the whole of

the population has now been settled on land. But, they do not all have houses to live in. The towns-people have had greater difficulties to face. The agriculturist, when given land after he had moved from West Punjab to East Punjab, could begin life in his own way, more or less as before. The townsman who was doing some kind of trade or business, however, found greater difficulties in adjusting himself to his new surroundings. Trade and business in West Punjab employed not only the Hindus and Sikhs, but also the Muslims. Many of these enterprising people have managed to start life afresh although with some difficulty. The Government has been giving them all possible help. Thousands and thousands of houses have been built at Government expense for housing them. In growing townships, these people are working and building up houses for themselves. Similar work is being done in West Bengal where also large numbers have moved from East Bengal. The rehabilitation and resettlement of these people has been the greatest of the problems Government has had to face. Perhaps, we are now nearing the end of this problem, although it is still too early to say that we have actually dealt with it completely.

There have been other problems confronting our Government. We have had difficulties over food which you also have been experiencing as much as, if not more than people in other parts. Even before the partition, we used to import large quantities of food grains. It used to come mostly from Burma where they have a surplus of rice. Since the war, difficulties have arisen. Burma is not able to produce as much as she used to do before. A great source of supply was thus very largely cut off. Of course, Burma is now coming up again with larger and larger production, but it has not yet reached its pre-war level. This compelled us to import large quantities of other food grains from different parts of the world. We in the North regret it, but it cannot be helped. Here in the South where you are used to rice, you are being supplied partially with wheat and other grains to which you are not ordinarily accustomed. Unfortunately, that cannot be helped.

This year, Nature has been particularly unkind and we have suffered calamity after calamity which has led to a serious situation in many parts of the country. In the beginning of the last monsoon season, devastating floods followed heavy rains and in many parts the standing crops were completely washed away. We hoped that the next crop, especially rice, would be a bumper crop, but this time the rains failed completely. What we had expected to be a bumper crop, was more or less completely destroyed on account of drought. Then, in Assam, we had one of the severest earthquakes and vast areas were completely devastated. The problem of rehabilitating the suffering people and carrying relief to vast numbers arose in that State. As if that were not enough, we recently had a visitation of locusts and in some parts of the country they have been damaging the wheat crop. The current year has turned out to be one of the most difficult so far as food is concerned. The Government, as I said,

has been trying to meet this difficult situation and a larger quantity of grain than ever before is being imported. We hope that, in course of time, we would be able to control the situation. I desire, however, to impress upon you that the Government cannot save the people from a big calamity. It is the duty of the Government, no doubt, to do the best that it can, but it is really the people who have to face the situation with courage, with foresight, with a spirit of sacrifice and with determination. Wherever I have gone I have told the people that it is, after all, the people themselves who will have to gird up their loins and face the situation. I remember, three or four years ago, when I was Minister-in-charge of Food, we had a rather difficult situation. Reports, particularly from these parts, which reached me, began to give cause for anxiety. I mentioned this matter to Mahatma Gandhi and he said, "Whatever you can do, you should do. But, after all, it is the people who will see themselves through this difficult time. You may rest assured that whatever the suffering they may have to undergo, they will take care of themselves with the help of tapioca and fish that is in abundance there". I was glad when Mahatmaji's expectations did come true. We did not have anything like starvation deaths or anything even approaching that, in the area. So, with the worst situation facing us this year, I feel encouraged when I remember Gandhiji's words. I feel sure that the people will be resourceful enough to pass through the crisis even if the worst comes to the worst. Whatever the situation, it is the people themselves who have to resolve to meet the situation with courage and fortitude.

As you know, we are passing through what I may call an experimental stage in our constitutional development. I call it experimental not because there is anything in the nature of a temporary constitution, but because it is a democratic experiment on a vast and unprecedented scale. I was calculating the cost of the elections that we are going to have towards the end of November or early in December. I found that between 17 and 18 crores of people are there on our electoral rolls and if you printed all the names on one side of a foolscap paper and bound together all these sheets, you would have a volume which would be something like 200 yards wide. That can give you some idea of the tremendous task. We are going to have about 4,000 seats for which elections will have to be held and nearly 2 lakhs of polling stations where men and women of this vast country will be required to register their votes. You can realise what an army of men would be required as polling officers, as clerks, and as policemen to record these votes—something like 8 or 9 lakhs even if you recruit only 4 men for each polling station. All this is going to put the resources of our States to a great strain. When all the votes are cast, we shall know what sort of people our new democracy has chosen to rule over itself. It is difficult, at present, to forecast what is going to be the result of these elections and I can only pray that every individual who has got the right to vote will vote for the good of the country and the people. He must be actuated by only one motive and that is the

prosperity of BHARAT. No one should vote simply for some little interest of his own or of some party to which he belongs. No one while voting will, I hope, be actuated by motives other than those of doing good to the country. If our people fulfill their duty, there is nothing to prevent this country from reaching the height of glory. Although it is an experiment, I feel we shall succeed in it. Undoubtedly, whenever a big change involving vast numbers takes place, many awkward questions arise. There may crop up many difficult questions which may look insoluble, but if we have faith in ourselves, if we have faith in God who has brought us to this stage, there is no reason to apprehend that anything but good will come out of our efforts. I have faith in our people. I say this as a result of experience, as a result of contact with millions of them, which it has been my good fortune to have during the last thirty years of my life. I have found that whenever an appeal has been made to their good sense and their patriotism, they have responded generously. I will mention to you one or two instances. Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, was very keen that there should be communal harmony. After the partition there were serious troubles between Hindus and Muslims, which, at times, alarmed him greatly, and he took rather drastic steps. Towards the end of October or the beginning of November in 1947, there were serious communal riots in my home province of Bihar. The Hindus had been treating the Muslims very badly in many places. Many of their villages had been looted, many people had been killed and their houses burnt. Shortly before, the Hindus had been badly treated by the Muslims in Calcutta and Dacca, and there was a feeling of retaliation. Mahatma Gandhi at that time was going to Bengal for the purpose of bringing about some kind of reconciliation between the Hindus who had suffered and the Muslims who had caused all the suffering. He made an announcement that unless the riots in Bihar ceased immediately, he would go on an indefinite fast and, as a first step towards that, he also announced that from that very day he was reducing his food. I was then in Delhi as a Minister in the Government. I rushed to my province to see how we could best bring sense back to the people. Our Prime Minister was also there at that time. The Government was trying its best to suppress the riots. Police were active and military aid had been called in. But, as soon as this announcement was made by Mahatma Gandhi, it was carried from village to village. You will be surprised, but it is a fact that in less than 24 hours the whole trouble ceased and a kind of interminable quarrel came to an end in the twinkling of an eye. I was moving amongst the people then and I could see, in the vast congregations I was addressing, how this appeal went home and how generously the people responded.

A similar occasion arose soon after the partition. At that time, Mahatma Gandhi was in Calcutta. The Government in Bengal was in the hands of the Congress Party. On account of happenings elsewhere, feelings were roused and seeing that Hindus were now in power, some people were thinking of retaliating

in Bengal. There also, Mahatmaji took the same step and Calcutta became quiet in no time. Sri Rajagopalachari, who was then Governor of Bengal, declared that Mahatma Gandhi had achieved a miracle.

I have mentioned these instances to show how appeals, when made for a just cause, received a generous response from all classes of people. In this country, we need nothing more at the present moment than peace and calm, so that the opportunity which we have now got for shaping our own destinies, may be utilised in the best possible way for the good of our people. As I have said, we have got power, but we have been so very busy with difficult problems that we have not been able to utilise them in the way and for the purpose of our liking. For that purpose, you require nothing more than peace—peace not only with foreign countries but peace within the country itself. I do not mean to suggest that there is anything like rioting or a general disturbance going on in the country. What I want, really, is the kind of peace which arises out of a conviction in the minds of all that they have to live together in the best possible way, so that the country can improve and prosper.

Mahatma Gandhi used to insist upon non-violence. We have so many communities, castes, religions, languages, different ways of life and customs prevailing in this vast country that unless all our people manage to live together in perfect harmony, prosperity cannot be achieved. It is for this reason that he was insisting that there should not only be peace on the surface, but peace at heart and whenever any occasion arose he stressed the need of what he called a change of heart. Distrust is really a kind of weakness while trust is strength. When any individual or any community begins to distrust another individual or another community, whatever he or it may say only betrays its weakness. Our Constitution guarantees equality and security for the smallest community enabling the community to hold its head up. It must be the duty of the majority, however big it may be, to see to it that even the smallest community or the smallest individual does not feel that he is insecure. It is that kind of peace which we require more than anything else. Let me hope and pray that we shall have the courage, whether we belong to the majority or to the minority, to have nothing but fellow-feeling and goodwill towards everyone else in the country.

Not only in India, but in the world at large there is consternation and a feeling of insecurity amongst vast masses of humanity. The effort of our Government has been to ensure that peace is maintained and the area of conflict is not extended. Whether we succeed or not, we must do our best. But, we cannot do our best unless we are sure of our own selves. We cannot ask the world at large to be at peace if we ourselves are not at peace. For the sake of humanity, we have to establish a kind of rule in this country where everyone feels happy and secure and none has any fear or suspicion. That is the great experiment which our democracy is now engaged in and let us all make our individual contribution to the success of this experiment.

LANGUAGE, RELIGION AND SCARCITY

A Northern Indian, when he comes to South India, is faced with the problem of language. Unfortunately, I do not know your language and I have perforce to speak in English which I personally do not like. Hindi has now been adopted by the Constituent Assembly, and it is enacted in the Constitution itself that Hindi is the national language of India. We all hope that within the next fifteen years, everyone in this country having any all-India business will know enough of Hindi to be able to carry on his work and the language itself will be so developed as to become an easy medium of expression.

We have had this problem for a number of years. About thirty-five years ago, Mahatma Gandhi, realising the importance of a national language, directed his attention to the propagation of Hindi in the South. In the North, all the languages are more or less derived from one origin and are allied languages. Therefore, it is not so very difficult for a Hindi-speaking person to understand, for example, Bengali or for a Bengali-speaking person to understand Hindi. But, there is real difference between the languages of the North and the languages of the South, although here too Sanskrit has played a great part and many words are intelligible because they are derived from Sanskrit. The other day, I was listening to some verses which were being recited at one of the meetings. I could understand at least half of the words and I felt that except for the verbal terminations and such like things, the rest was all derived from Sanskrit. That is the great part which Sanskrit has played and when the Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi as the language for all-India purposes, it also laid down that we shall have ordinarily to depend upon Sanskrit for expressing all new ideas for which we do not have words in current Hindi. That is a common factor. With its help, I hope it will be possible not only for a person like me to speak to you in Hindi which will be intelligible to you, but it will be possible for you also to speak in that language so as to be understood by me.

There is no question of imposing the language of the North on the South. As a matter of fact, it is the will of all our people that we should have one common language. We have always felt that no nation can express its soul unless it speaks through its own language. During the struggle for freedom, someone said that

it was impossible to win freedom through the English language. I believe, it is equally necessary for us to realise that it is not possible for us to maintain our freedom through another language. Therefore, whenever I have to address any meeting in the English language, I feel that I am doing something which is rather awkward for me. During the last thirty years or more, I have always spoken at scores of meetings in my own language. I have in a sense lost the art of speaking in English, if I had at all possessed it at any time. Still, when I come to these parts, I have to speak in the English language. I can only hope that all those who do not understand what I am talking now, will excuse me for my inability. They will get, in due course, a translation of my speech through the newspapers which I am told are very well represented at this meeting.

This is by way of introduction, but there is also a very important element of urgency in it and I am anxious that in all our work we should give great importance to the cultivation of a common language for India. The Government will undoubtedly do whatever is necessary in this connection. However, here more than anywhere else, it is necessary that people should try to achieve the purpose through their own independent effort. It has been my privilege, during the last thirty years and more, to be associated with the work of the Hindi Prachar Sabha in the South and it has given me immense pleasure to attend meetings for distributing prizes and certificates. Apart from that, what has amazed me and pleased me equally is that I have seen and given prizes to three generations at one and the same time—father, son and grandson, all learning the Hindi language and getting proficiency certificates. The younger the age, the greater have I found the proficiency. It is really a matter for congratulation that you in the South have taken to this work so seriously and I have reason to hope that this problem will be solved. By the end of the 15 years which the Constitution has given to us, we shall be in a position to conduct all our business through the medium of our own language.

We have a number of problems, but some of them are of a basic nature and which underlie all others. One such problem is that of communal harmony in this country. We have got many religions and communities. Unfortunately, sometimes communal harmony gets disturbed for one reason or another. There would be nothing very peculiar about it if quarrels occur only occasionally, because quarrels do occur even among brothers, husband and wife, and father and son. All such quarrels are soon made up and affection does not suffer. Similarly, even if one community occasionally finds some cause for quarrel with another, that should not lead them to make this quarrel a source of perpetual irritation or to give it anything but a temporary character. Fortunately, your region has a singular history of toleration and I am told that Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Jews have all been living peacefully for centuries. Even a casual visitor like me, while passing along the roads, can see temples, churches and

synagogues side by side and one can understand that this was possible only because there has been tolerance and regard for all the religions.

My belief is—and it is the opinion of all true followers of all religions — that true religion is concerned with belief in a supernatural power. Since that supernatural power is above all and all others are like her children, all human beings must be, more or less, like brothers and sisters to one another. If that is the teaching of all religions, then, in spite of differences in the way in which we worship God, there is no reason why we should not really be brothers. Here in India, our ancestors—the Rishis, of old—realised this and laid down once and for all that the truth is one but the wise reach it by different paths. We want a realisation of this truth not only as a matter of intellectual conviction, but also as a rule of conduct to be followed every moment of our lives. It is impossible for us to rise to any height without a realisation of this truth. If we quarrel amongst ourselves, it is obvious that we cannot make any progress. All the effort that is wasted in suppressing one another can very well be utilised in promoting our common prosperity. This is one of the fundamental problems which this country has been tackling from time immemorial, but its urgency needs to be re-emphasised today when we have freed ourselves from foreign domination and are left to our own resources to shape our destinies.

Another fundamental question which naturally affects all of us is that of our economic set-up. We have, in this country, vast masses of humanity, some of them in extremely poor circumstances, not having enough food, clothing, and shelter. There must be millions and millions of men and women who are in such a condition in this country. On the other hand, we have only a few persons who are in affluent and happy circumstances. What we need is not the suppression of those at the top but the uplifting of those who are at the bottom and I cannot understand the philosophy which aims at levelling down instead of levelling up. What is needed is really the raising of the general standard of living. Sometimes jealousies are roused when a poor man sees his neighbour in happy and affluent circumstances. That is a natural instinct and we have to tolerate it, but we must be prepared to explain that they will be happier if both rose higher still and no attempt was made to pull down the affluent and happy. After all, our per capita income is very low as compared to many other countries of the world. Unless the per capita income is increased, we cannot hope to raise the standard of living of all the people. We may to some extent be able to raise the standard of a few, but if all the present wealth be distributed equally, it would only mean a distribution of poverty. If we had enough wealth to go round and make everybody affluent, an attempt at redistribution would be understandable. Unfortunately, we are not so well off. I am, therefore, anxious that everyone in this country should realise that the primary duty is to increase the distributable fund. What is needed, therefore, is increased production of everything.

You know how we are suffering on account of food scarcity. We are trying, by means of controls and rationing, to distribute equally whatever food is available. A few people try to purchase a little more than others in the black-market. That is bound to occur when there is not enough to go round. I have always appealed to our people to increase our food production. Production can be increased considerably, without much effort, if we paid a little attention to it. I was telling another audience this morning that it has been calculated that our food deficiency is only about 10 per cent or so. I do not think it is at all a difficult proposition to produce say n maunds where they are producing 10 maunds today. If we did that, we would be able to get as much as we are getting today without going to foreign countries for our food purchases.

Similarly, we have experienced scarcity of cloth. Here also, it is the same problem. When there is not enough to go round, the only effect of control would be to give a smaller quantity of cloth to each individual. Of course, there may be defects in administration leading to a certain amount of corruption or black-marketing. All that you can expect, under the circumstances, is a smaller quantity for each and plenty for none. Therefore, what the country needs today is an effort by everybody for increased production of everything that we require.

We have attained *Swaraj* and for the last three years or more we have been running our administration according to our own desires and our own ideas. But, I have a feeling that all of us have not realised fully the effect and the importance and significance of independence. One effect must be a kind of elation in the mind of everyone which should express itself in a determined effort to make our lives better in every way. Somehow or the other, we do not find that. There seems to be a kind of feeling prevalent in many places and among many people that it is for the Government to do everything and the people have simply to sit with folded hands. I do not think that is the right attitude to adopt. After all, the Government is nothing but a representative of the people, especially so in a democracy. If it is truly representative, it must represent not only the good points but also the weaknesses of the people. If the weaknesses predominate in the people, they cannot but be reflected in the Government also. If we find that our representatives are not always up to the mark, let us think over the question coolly and see if the weaknesses are not the same that each one of us ourselves possess. It is very easy to throw the blame on others. But, that is really no solution. We must turn the searchlight inwards and see to what extent we ourselves have contributed to anything that has gone wrong. If we are honest we would find that the contribution of each one of us has not been negligible. Once that realisation comes and once we feel that we have to set the house in order, we shall start doing it ourselves. There is a saying in Northern India that before going to light the lamp in the temple, you must light the lamp in your house itself. So, we must first of all light the lamp within ourselves. Simply

thinking of lighting the lamp in the temple, neglecting our own selves, would result in that light also being dim.

We have not as yet fully realised the value of our freedom and are still in that frame of mind when we used to blame the Government for everything and did not search for defects in ourselves. That was perhaps a stage in our political evolution which was unavoidable. But, now that we have attained freedom, we must give up that habit and must feel that it is our own responsibility. The individual is, after all, the foundation of society. Society is nothing but a conglomeration of individuals. Unless each brick in the house is well-laid and is strong, you can never hope the building as a whole to be strong. We have, therefore, to improve the individual. There it is that we find a fundamental difference between two ideologies. There are people who think that it is the group which can keep the individual in order. My own feeling is that the group cannot be very different from the individual and any attempt on the part of the group to keep the individual in order is bound to fail. Certainly the group cannot be of a higher order than the individual. Who in the group is to lay down the rule, who in the group is to point out to the individual what is wrong? There is bound to be conflict, conflict of a perpetual nature. The only way to end conflict is to improve the individual. That is one of the fundamental differences between Mahatma Gandhi's teachings on one side which laid emphasis on the improvement of the individual and all those other teachings in which more emphasis is laid on society. I hope that in this part of the country where education has spread to such an extent, you will see the difference between the two. After all, society cannot be composed of anything else but individuals and it can have neither the rules of conduct nor morality nor ideals which are different from those of the individuals. It cannot enforce something from above on the individual. It has to get its ideologies evolved after individuals. Let us, therefore, try to improve each individual in this country and through each individual to build up an ideal State from every point of view.

Mahatmaji laid stress on non-violence. It is on non-violence alone that an ordered society can be based. There is no use creating violence in the hope that by violence we shall be able to suppress violence. We have a saying in the North that you cannot wash mud with mud. For washing mud, you need pure water. For getting rid of violence, you require something much better than violence. You require non-violence and that is Mahatma Gandhi's teaching. He saw instinctively that in a country like India where we have so many religions and so many languages, unless nonviolence is a basic factor in every-day life, there will be no end to our quarrels or problems. That is true not only of us, but it is true of the whole world. India is a sort of microcosm which represents the microcosm of the world at large. I have therefore emphasised, wherever it has been possible for me to do so, the importance of non-violence in our everyday life, in our dealings with one another and also in our dealings with

other countries. There are, no doubt, circumstances which sometimes force our hands to do something against our better judgment. One can understand that and one may be prepared even to excuse such cases. But, if we knowingly deviate from the path, then it becomes a disease. What we need is a genuine effort to shape our own lives through non-violence. If in spite of that there are deviations, it does not matter because we shall be able, ultimately, to come to the right course. As night follows day, the difficulties which are facing us today will disappear if we fully realise that. If we once realise the full truth, there is no problem which cannot be solved. Therefore, it is essential that we must pay due regard to what Gandhiji said, we must not rest content with uttering his name only, but should gladly follow the path which he laid out for us. I desire to impress upon you, friends, that we cannot do better than walk in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi. There must be a genuine effort to follow that path. Once that is done, the rest becomes easy.

I hope I have not tired you too much and I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

It is a great pleasure to be associated with this function. Several diseases are prevalent throughout the country and the Government has been trying to tackle them one after another. Though we cannot say that we have made very great progress in that direction, yet the best efforts are being made to fight tuberculosis, leprosy and several other diseases. Cancer, however, is a very difficult disease to tackle and our resources have so far been limited. You know, the Government of India have been taking keen interest in the promotion of scientific research. During the last three years or so, we have established laboratories all over the country for research work in different subjects of science and industry. In these laboratories, research of a high order is going on. In Delhi, anti-malaria research is being conducted at the Malaria Institute. Work in connection with cancer has yet to be done, but, I am quite sure it will be taken up very soon. I have no doubt that diseases which are prevalent in this country will be given special attention in future.

India has made contributions to the solution of some difficult medical problems. For example, in the treatment of malaria, cholera and tropical diseases like kalazar, India's contribution has been quite good. You may rest assured that when our people take up cancer, they will be able to make an important contribution. It is good that the Cancer Day is being celebrated all over the world in order to draw the attention of the people to this fell disease and to check its toll of human lives. Apart from being fatal, cancer is a most painful disease and must be tackled in its earlier stages. What is required for the purpose, are well-equipped clinics. I do not know if our ordinary hospitals are in a position to diagnose this disease at an early stage. If not diagnosed at an early stage, it becomes difficult to deal with. Therefore, it is all the more necessary that the urgency of the work is realised and quick action taken.

I hope the celebration of this Day will have the desired effect in this country. The Women's Indian Association has done well to draw the attention of the people to the problem. In doing so, you have added one more service to the many that you have been rendering to the country.

I convey my best wishes to the Association and hope that its efforts would bear fruit.

I am glad that Dr. Khanolkar is here. He occupies a very high position in the work that is going on in connection with this disease. We, in India, are really proud of that and hope his association will enable this country to play a worthy part in the fight against cancer.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

I deem it a great honour to be associated with this function. I am not a man of science at all and am completely ignorant of the processes which you might be pursuing in these laboratories. As a layman, however, I am intensely interested in the results of those processes and experiments.

As you have said, it is not the first time that I have come to this place, but I am here after some years, and find the place completely changed. There have been so many new additions and extensions that if I were to be left alone, I would not be able to find my way. That shows the great improvement and the considerable expansion that has taken place in this institute. You have already added several departments and I believe you are going to add many more. The Government has been taking great interest in scientific research. During the last few years, we have succeeded in establishing about a dozen laboratories, spread all over the country, dealing with different subjects. This one, however, has the honour of being the first to have been established more than 40 years ago. It is a matter for congratulation that the founder of this institute was not the Government but an industrialist whose foresight, patriotism and great enterprise have given to the country not only the big steel works but a number of other factories which have grown under the aegis of the Tatas. The country will do well to remember the great service which Jamshedjee Nusservanji Tata rendered when he laid the foundation-stone of this great institute which is doing such wonderful work.

As I said, being a layman, I am interested only in the results of your work. From what was explained to me during the very short time I have been here, I could gather that you are engaged in work which would prove of immense benefit to the country and perhaps to humanity at large. You are engaged in research work which will enable us to fight certain diseases with drugs, locally prepared at a very much cheaper cost. You are engaged in developing engines which will burn fuel that is easily available even in villages. One of the difficulties which all our agricultural work faces is the scarcity of water. If

Speech at the opening ceremony of the Power Engineering Department and The High Voltage Engineering Laboratory and the foundation-stone-laying ceremony of the Hydraulics Laboratory buildings at Bangalore, on April 10, 1951.

we could provide sufficient water for irrigation, the country's food problem, I believe, could be solved very easily. My own feeling is that there are vast tracts within this country which can be cultivated and where we can grow almost anything if we only had water. I say this from what I have seen in the desert sands of Rajputana. Where water has been provided, the sandy waste has become as green as the most fertile tracts in the country. We have also had experience of those districts, now in Western Punjab, which were at one time more or less in the same condition as Rajputana. Those districts have now become the granary of the Punjab. So, if you can develop some kind of engine which can be run by any fuel that is available in villages, you will have done a great service to agriculture.

You are not, I am told, confining yourselves only to that. You have been experimenting with various kinds of food. Though, I would personally like to have cow's milk, if I can get it, yet if you can give even some substitute for it, that will also be a great achievement. I am pleased to learn that you have succeeded to a considerable extent in producing something which is near to cow's milk, although not as good as cow's milk. But, if you take into account the water that is generally mixed with cow's milk—as we get it these days—your product will be even superior to cow's milk ! These are things in which I, as a layman, am interested.

You are also carrying on experiments and research in connection with engines, aeroplanes and things of that sort. Well, those are things which, as I said, I do not understand. But, when I see your engines giving better performance than the engines which we are getting from elsewhere, I shall appreciate your work. I am sure I shall not have to wait very long before you will be able to satisfy me on that point.

I am supposed to do many things which I do not know and which I do not understand. Every Head of State has to do that, especially, in a democratic government where he has to act on the advice of responsible persons. So, in connection with your work also, I can only hope that the advice I have received has been of the right type and anything that I have done has been for your good. I am sure if there had been anything wrong, you would certainly have complained to me and you would have enabled me to look into the matter. I would invite you always to come up with your complaint if there is anything which you consider to be some wrong done by me as Visitor.

Now, coming generally to the use of scientific knowledge, as I have said, laymen are interested only in the results. Such tremendous progress is being made all the world over that for a country like India, it becomes very difficult to keep pace with it. The other day, we had, what may be called, a phenomenon, although, it was really some sort of aircraft circling over Delhi and everybody's curiosity was aroused, mine included. I thought the best thing to do for me would

be to ask the person who is supposed to be best qualified in such matters. So, I consulted our Air Marshal and I was told that it was an aircraft, that it was flying over India but nobody could say from where it came and where it went. All that could be said was that it was an aircraft. When asked whether it was possible to prevent the visitation of that kind from enemy aircraft, he replied that it was scientifically possible, but that the radar equipment necessary for this purpose would be very costly and India could not afford to have it. That shows the difficulty which India has to face in the progress of science. Other countries also possibly have to face similar difficulties, but they have been in the line for a very much longer time than ourselves.

I remember the days when hardly any science was taught in the colleges. I have read a little science, but any scientist would now tell me that it was practically no science at all. Since then, scientific study has advanced by leaps and bounds in this country. Now, we have laboratories in all our science colleges. Many professors are engaged in research work and some of them have made contributions which are recognised by the world as of very great value. We have made a great advance in that direction. Still, what we need is not only a few top-ranking men, but a general advance in science, and an institution like this can help considerably because it can supply the large number of required technical personnel. We envisage a great development of the electrical equipment industry in this country with the completion of our big multi-purpose river projects. I do not know when it will be possible actually to complete all the schemes which have been taken in hand or which are in contemplation or under investigation. But, there is no doubt that when even some of these come into operation, we shall have a tremendous addition to our power resources. When this becomes available, there can be no doubt that we shall add considerably to the production of the various kinds of things that we need. Therefore, apart from the equipment that we require, we also need a large number of technical personnel to run the various works which we shall be establishing. Institutions like the Indian Institute of Science can do much to supply these personnel. They will have plenty of work and I feel that no one who passes through these institutions will remain unemployed.

Our universities, today, turn out graduates who do not know what to do with their degrees or with their lives. The great merit of these technical institutions will be that those who come out of them will be equipping themselves with something which they can immediately put to use and for which there is already a great demand in this country. I, therefore, even as a layman, feel much interested in all these laboratories and institutions. I do regard it as a great privilege to be associated with these institutions although my association can only be in name. I shall be very pleased now to lay the foundation-stone and also to open the new building.

VIKRAM KIRTI MANDIR

It is a rare privilege to lay the foundation-stone of the Vikram Kirti Mandir to be built in memory of Vikramaditya who has reigned supreme in the hearts of our people as an embodiment of the ideal of kingship. Legends of his fame, like those about Rama and Krishna, have reached the four corners of the country and been retold in the humblest of cottages. Lord Rama and Lord Krishna are worshipped as gods; the memory of Vikramaditya, a mere mortal, has been cherished through the ages with an affection that is impossible to bestow on a god. The legendary tales about him invest him with miraculous and mysterious powers and have found a place in the hearts of both the literate and the illiterate. Collections of stories, such as *Baital Pachisi*, *Tota Maina*, *Singhasan Battisi* became so popular that modified versions of them reached even foreign countries. I do not believe that it is wrong to say that an appreciable portion of the legendary literature of many countries is built around tales connected with Vikramaditya. Indeed, these stories are listened to with as much interest as a recital of the *Ramayana* or *Gita*. More than this, to men of learning, Vikramaditya is known for his generosity, courage, sense of justice and devotion to the welfare of the people. He so completely identified himself with the welfare of his subjects that it is often said of him that he made no distinction between “mine” and “yours”. His generosity was boundless and no one who went to him for help ever came back disappointed. Rightly has the poet said of him: “A mere glance was equal to a thousand pieces of gold; a word, ten thousand; a smile, a hundred thousand; and his pleasure, ten million pieces of gold”. He was even prepared to lay down his life to defend the poor and helpless, and many stories are told of his heroism. His courageous defence of the poor inspired the poet to sing: “Unparalleled in valour, endurance and daring is he”.

It is a pity that historians have not been able to come to any definite conclusions regarding this valiant hero of saga and romance. This is due to the fact that it has not been possible, so far, to collect the data and information necessary to reconstruct the history of this vast and ancient land. Even though the British, till recently our rulers, made praiseworthy efforts to chronicle the history of our country, yet their work remains unfinished. It has not been possible to collect all the relevant historical data, scattered widely in India

Speech at the foundation-stone laying ceremony of the Vikram Kirti Mandir, Ujjain, on May 8, 1951.

and abroad. Besides, invaders destroyed many of our historical books and monuments and, as a result of their vandalism, invaluable historical material was lost. Therefore, the fact that historical material is at all available is more surprising than the paucity of it. It is no wonder then that both the age and the personality of Vikramaditya are still shrouded in mystery.

It is, thus, essential that we solve this and the other puzzles of our history. In order to become the arbiters of our destiny, it is vital that we have a full understanding of our background. While the reins of government were in the hands of foreign rulers, we were, to a large extent, the slaves of their desires and the current of our life was determined, very largely, by their arbitrary decisions. Then our mistakes could not have such far-reaching results as they would have today, when we are the architects of our destiny. Therefore, we need to exercise the greatest possible caution. Whatever the reasons, we have made no cultural or economic progress during the last few centuries. If we wish to safeguard our freedom, we must make up for the time lost. It is, therefore, that we understand the emotional and intellectual elements in our national consciousness, for only then would it be possible for us to make cultural and economic progress.

An understanding of our national consciousness can, however, come only when we have a clear picture of our history before us. To draw such a picture, we must discover and collect historical data, both in India and abroad, with a single-minded purpose. Our Government has, already, made a beginning in this direction and is taking steps to accomplish this task as speedily as possible, but it is also necessary that our scholars should remain vigilant and continue to work for the recovery of such data. I am happy to see that you are alive to this need and that one of the aims of this Kirti Mandir will be to collect and preserve historical material obtained through archaeological excavations or other sources. However, it is a matter for regret that your project cannot be implemented on the scale initially planned owing to financial stringency. It is, indeed, a pity that we do not have the necessary financial resources for work of such great importance. What an irony of fate that the land which knew the unbounding charity and generosity of Vikramaditya should, now, be unable to provide sufficient funds for completing a memorial to him. I do believe that your financial difficulties would, ultimately, be removed. As I have just said, the aim of our history should be to interpret, correctly, that which constitutes our national consciousness, A correct appraisal of the Vikramadityan tradition would provide valuable material for the reformulation of history as some of the earliest known beliefs regarding the duties of the individual in relation to the State have been ascribed to this period.

In spite of my personal interest in history, it is not possible for me to spend any appreciable time in understanding or answering the questions it poses. Nevertheless, from my studies relating to Vikramaditya, it appears to me that on the basis of the available data, it is not possible to say certainly

that the saga of Vikramaditya is mythical and without roots in history. Most historians are agreed that in the first century B.C., the Sakas invaded Avantī and occupied Ujjainī and that, a few years later, they suffered a heavy defeat and had to retreat. However, the identity of the hero, who defeated the Sakas, is not clearly established although the literature of the Jain period refers to Vikramaditya as the victor who liberated Ujjainī from the Sakas. Both the *Katha Sarit Sagar* and the *Brihat Katha Manjari* give evidence to this effect. But, historians suspect that these references are the result of legendary tales about Vikramaditya having been incorporated into literature. Their doubt rests, primarily, on the fact that the period, now known as the Vikrama era, was known, till the end of the 6th century B.C., first as the Kṛit era and later as the Malava era. If this era derived its name from the glories of Vikramaditya, it should, from the very beginning, have been known as the Vikram era. Further, there is no inscription, archaeological evidence, or any reference to Vikramaditya in the *Puranas* and it is hard to believe that such an illustrious king did not find a place even in the *Puranas*. But I consider it unfair, on the basis of this negative evidence, to regard folk-lore and literary allusions as a mere figment of the imagination. It may be conceded no doubt that modern investigators are often able to know much more accurately what happened in the past than people living soon after or very near those events. But, at the same time, I also feel that as far as Vikramaditya is concerned, it was possible several centuries ago to prove that the stories about Vikramaditya were legends, because at that time historical material, later destroyed by the vandalism of invaders, was still available. Vikramaditya was never elevated to the status of a god. Therefore, there could be no reason why doubts about the veracity of the stories relating to him could not be raised. There is scope for much research on this subject.

Speaking of research, I would like to invite the attention of scholars to the fact that, according to the historical records available to us, Ujjainī was a centre for trade with the Middle East. It may therefore be safely guessed that people from Arabia, Egypt, Abyssinia and Persia must have visited this Indian city, quite frequently. It is possible that the ancient literature of these Middle-Eastern countries might contain references to Ujjainī and, possibly, its rulers. I do not know how many of our scholars have examined these literatures from this point of view. Sri Ishwar Datt Shastri, in a thesis based on the research conducted by Gyanendra Dev Sufi refers to *Sairul-Uquol*, a book in the Maktab-Sultania, the State Library in Istanbul, which the present ruler, Sultan Salim commissioned to be written on the basis of an ancient book. Sri Shastri holds that this book contains poetical selections by Arab poets ranging from the pre-Muhammad era to the age of Haroun-el-Rashid and is believed to have been compiled by Abu Amir Abdul Asmai, the court poet of Haroun-el-Rashid. The writer has cited a poem which was composed 125 years before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. The gist of the poem is: “Those born during the reign of King

Vikramaditya are, indeed, fortunate, for he was a king whose bounty, piety and love for his people knew no limit". Even though this extract belongs to the 5th century A.D., yet, if it is historically correct, it does prove that the saga of Vikramaditya was current even in the remote land of Arabia, and I think that if research is conducted in the literature of the Near-East, and the sagas, myths and legends of Central Asia and Indonesia, it is possible that we may come across material which would help us to establish the truth of this matter. Further, we also need to collect more information regarding the *Brihat Katha* of Gunadhya.

In concluding, I would add that it is the duty of us all, particularly the statesmen and administrators of modern India, to emulate the shining example of Vikramaditya and to serve the common man with the same zeal, understanding and self-sacrifice.

THE GREAT MARATHA

It is with pleasure that I am performing the unveiling ceremony of this memorial to a great scion of the Sindhia dynasty—the late Maharaja Madhava Rao Sindhia. The Sindhia dynasty has a place of its own in the history of India. It had the privilege of spreading the power of the Marathas and the glory of becoming its shield in Northern India. Again, along with the Holkars, the Sindhia dynasty was largely responsible for the recovery of the Maratha State from the catastrophic blow it had received in the battle of Panipat and in making it, once again, the great and glorious power it once was. Even though the late Maharaja would have won his place in history by virtue of his being a scion of that dynasty, his talent, ability and the paternal care he showered on his people, have added significance to his position in the history of Madhya Bharat. By this memorial, therefore, you are not so much adding to his glory as you are honouring yourself by acknowledging your association with his memory. It was your duty to express your gratitude to him for what he had done for you and it is but proper that the visible form of your gratitude is this beautiful memorial. But, your duty to the late Maharaja remains unfulfilled until you adopt the ideals which had shaped the course of his life. Even a cursory glance at his life reveals an ideal of service. During his life, all the means of self-indulgence and luxury were available to him. He had unlimited wealth and royal power, youth and personal charm. And though, it is true that even one of them is sufficient for a man to fall and only rare individuals can escape complete moral destruction if all four of these are to be found together, the late Maharaja, even though he had ascended the throne in the prime of his youth, was not tempted by a life of pleasure. On the contrary, he dedicated himself to promoting the welfare of the State. He ruled for 31 years, and during this entire period, he was engaged in the service of his people. He brought about the progress of the State in economic, administrative, cultural and other spheres. By his devotion to duty, he endeared himself both to his people and to the paramount power. I believe that in his life-long devotion to duty, he was inspired by the belief that the supreme consummation of life lies, not in self-gratification, but in disinterested service of the people.

Inspired by this ideal of service, the Maharaja, after assumption of power, considered it his first duty to reorganise the administrative department of the

Speech delivered on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of Maharaja Madhava Rao of Sindhia in Ujjain, on May 9, 1951.

State and to establish an administrative system which may be known for its efficiency and integrity. He worked hard to realise this objective and was able to achieve a considerable measure of success. At the same time, he was far-sighted enough to take steps to ensure that the reforms and the new system which he was introducing in the interests of his subjects, would not encounter any difficulty for want of funds. He, therefore, invested the surplus funds of the State in progressive and profitable enterprises and industries, so that the State may continue to receive high returns from such investments. He also made a provision for building up a fund by keeping in reserve 20 to 25 per cent, of the State revenues annually to help the State to secure necessary money for its schemes of irrigation, education and famine relief. Besides, with the help of these savings, it was possible for him to develop railways and start new factories and industries in the State, without raising additional or new taxation. It was again inspired by the ideal of the welfare and service of his people that he transferred some of his powers to popular representatives and established a legislative council and local bodies, as also, a judiciary separated from the executive. Even though political conditions have now changed, yet the importance of this ideal remains undiminished and though, it should, no doubt, be binding on all of us, it is binding much more on those who were, till yesterday, the rulers and sovereigns of the Indian States. On this occasion, I would like to congratulate the Indian Princes, their relations and successors for the co-operation that they extended voluntarily, to Sardar Patel in the realisation of the goal of Indian political unity. Down the ages, the glaring weakness of India's political life has been that, in spite of its cultural, economic and geographical unity, it was divided into many States which in the event of a national crisis could never offer united resistance against an enemy. If, therefore, this political weakness had persisted even after India had recovered her lost freedom, the danger would have always remained of that freedom being lost again. Sardar Patel, whose life was spent in an incessant struggle for winning back our freedom, was well aware that if numerous sovereign States remained within the bosom of India, it was possible that the Goddess of freedom for whose pleasure he and his countless countrymen had sacrificed so much, would turn her face away, annoyed by our internal jealousies, conflicts and dissensions. It was, therefore, his first objective that India should become one sovereign State into which the Indian States would merge.

To realise an aim like this, statesmen in other ages and countries had to resort to war. It was because of his conviction that this aim could be realised only by force of arms that Bismarck had remarked that the problems of his age could be solved only by the policy of blood and iron. He himself had to wage two important wars to bring about the unity of Germany. The problem of Indian unity from the geographical and, to a certain extent, from the political point of view, was more difficult than that of German unity, but the peaceful

way in which it was solved is unparalleled and unprecedented. Some of the credit for this, no doubt, goes to the Princes, their associates and advisers. It is my belief that they gave a fine example of liberalism and devotion to duty by contributing to the reconstruction of India and they deserve our congratulation and gratitude. At the same time, I would like to tell them that the *Maha Yagna* of the reconstruction of India has not yet been completed. It shall go on as long as such cultural, economic and social conditions have not been established in this land, in which everyone would have the opportunity for self-expression and to make his life rich and fruitful. Naturally, therefore, none of us and, in no circumstances, those who have talent and administrative experience, should withdraw his offering, thinking that enough had been done. The time has not yet arrived for any one of us to examine the price which he or she has paid for it nor is it right for anyone to calculate the sacrifice of leisure, luxuries and convenience for this great task. The danger is that such computations might cause differences, heart-burning and even opposition amongst ourselves. We will not tolerate any kind of obstacle or disturbance in the task in which we are engaged today. We are all aware that, during the last few centuries, we have not made any progress in the field of economics and culture due to foreign domination. Therefore, to preserve our existence and independence, it is absolutely necessary that we do not waste even a single moment in internecine conflict. Thus, it is plain that we will not tolerate any one—be he a commoner, or a man of status—who, in anyway, disturbs or puts an obstacle on the road to our reconstruction. Each one of us has to realise that India must move forward. Providence has so ordained that no mortal may retrace his steps. However attractive the past might seem, man must always look towards the future. It is my hope that everyone in our country, whoever he might be, would recognise the immutability of Destiny, because the conditions that have changed and the systems that have been abolished can never be brought back. An effort to recreate the values of a bygone age would not only be in vain but also invite failure and trouble.

On the other hand, I consider that it is the duty of each one of us to offer all we can to this task of national reconstruction. Princes of the merged Indian States, because of their administrative experience, can render yeomen service. We, at this moment, are in need of able administrators. The role of the State, in the life of the common people, is a growing and expanding one. We, therefore, need experienced and capable people who can help in the various aspects of administration. I believe many of the princes and the scions of the merged Indian States possess this experience. We have always wanted that the country should have the advantage of their experience and ability, and also to provide them opportunity to prove their skill in the administrative system of the Union and the States. But, however extensive the field of our administrative work may be, it is not large enough to provide such an opportunity to each one of the Princes

of the merged States. But, at the same time, it should be remembered that the political field is not the only sphere in which one can express one's self. On the other hand, in the stormy arena of politics, an individual does not always get that opportunity of realising the best in him which he can get in the sphere of cultural or industrial developments. The Princes of these merged States and their relations, have thus, an unlimited scope for using their talents in these latter spheres. As everyone is aware, the supreme need of the moment is to bring our country on level with other modern industrialised countries. It is my belief that the Princes of the merged States with their capital and inherited administrative ability and experience can, to a very great extent, if they devote their energies to the world of economic uplift, serve the country and the nation. They can also work for the promotion of culture in this country. They have leisure, wealth and other necessary facilities. It has been their family tradition to patronise and support cultural activities. It is, therefore, easy for them to become the motive power behind the cultural renaissance of India.

The future is beckoning to them and I hope they will not remain deaf to the call of destiny. Our historic princely tradition demands that they throw themselves into the service of the common people. In our country, a prince was considered to be a paid servant of the people and he was expected to devote himself to their welfare. Numerous Indian princes were faithful to this ideal of public service, and the prince whose memory we are commemorating today, also fully lived up to it. But what was considered proper and adequate public service in the recent past would not be suited to the changed circumstances of the present. Today, we can serve the people only in the manner of Videhraj Janaka who at a time of famine and scarcity, did not hesitate to plough the land with his own hand, because he made no distinction between royalty and commoners. In this age of democracy, the best course for the present descendants of these ancient ruling dynasties would be to work in the steps of the great Janaka. In his own way Maharaja Madhav Rao Sindhia followed this ideal and we can show respect to his memory by making this same ideal our guiding star.

With these words I unveil the statue of the late Maharaja Madhava Rao Sindhia.

SOMNATH—A SYMBOL OF FAITH

According to our shastras, Somnath is one of the twelve *Jyotir lingas*. Naturally, therefore, this temple of Lord Somnath had become the symbol of the wealth, the faith and the culture of India. Its feet were washed by the ocean whilst its dome kissed the Heavens. In its vast quadrangle, innumerable devotees gathered from all the regions and provinces of India to place at the feet of Lord Shankara their boundless devotion and love and their great wealth. In those days, it was the centre of the faith and the wealth of this country. The fame of its unparalleled glory and wealth had spread to distant regions and countries. Unfortunately, during several centuries it had to suffer calamity after calamity. Again and again it was desecrated and demolished. But, while the external symbols of a national faith may be destroyed, nothing can destroy the fountains of that faith. It was for this reason that in spite of having numerous calamities there always remained in the hearts of the Indian people an undying faith and respect for this Temple of Lord Somnath. It ever was their determination to build this temple again every time it was destroyed and they went on doing so time after time.

We hear the hum of a vast crowd of men and women gathered here from all parts of the country at this moment when this historic temple is coming to life again. In my opinion, we are having the good fortune of witnessing this sacred scene simply because of the creative urge and undying faith which dwell in the heart of man just as Brahma, the Creator, dwells on the Lotus of Lord Vishnu. This faith and creative energy are more powerful than all the weapons, all the armies and all the emperors of this world. By rising from its ashes again, this Temple of Somnath is, so to say, proclaiming to the world that no man and no power in the world can destroy that for which people have boundless faith and love in their hearts. We are re-installing the idol today and it is my conviction that it will live as long as it has its place and foundation in the hearts of the people.

On this sacred and historic occasion, it is desirable for all of us to realise the great secret of spiritual faith—that to have a glimpse of God or Truth, it is not necessary for all men to follow one and only one path. On the contrary, if man devotes himself with all love and faith to the service of his fellow human beings and if he dedicates himself to the establishment of the kingdom of love

Speech delivered on the occasion of the installation of the idol of Lord Somnath in the Somnath Temple at Patan, on May 11, 1951.

and beauty on this earth, he would surely be able to realise God whatever may be the manner of his worship. This great truth had been perceived by our ancient seers and they had proclaimed it to mankind. They had consistently declared that though He is one, yet the wise describe Him in many ways and by many names. Similarly, according to the 'Mahabharat' all paths lead to God just as all rivers flow to the ocean. Unfortunately, this great truth of life and faith was not properly grasped by people in many ages which led to very destructive and terrible wars between different countries and peoples. It is plain, therefore, that religious intolerance cannot have any other consequence but to produce bitterness and immorality among men. This is the lesson of history and I would like all my countrymen to grasp it firmly. In our country, particularly, it is very necessary that each one of us should realise that the best course is to act with a sense of respect and equality towards every community and creed. In it lies the welfare of our nation and country and of every one of us. This faith and conviction has impelled India to adopt the policy of secularism and to give an assurance that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of religion. Everyone would be provided equal opportunities. In conformity to this ideal, I have respect and affection for all the faiths. Even though I am a Sanatanist Hindu by faith and daily practice, yet, I believe that every man can reach God by worshipping Him according to the dictates of his own faith. Not only have I respect for all religions and their places of worship but I also go to them to pay my respect whenever possible. Whenever there is an opportunity, I go to the 'durgah' and the 'masjid', the church and the 'gurudwara' with the same feeling of respect with which I go to the temples of my faith. The present celebrations in my view proclaim this very truth. It is very plain today that the policy of religious intolerance has always been and shall ever continue to be a failure.

I would also like you to realise that the restoration of this broken link of history does not and cannot imply that we are making or should make an effort to re-establish in our country the psychological, cultural, social and religious conditions which existed here in the centuries that are past. It is no doubt possible for man to turn back but it is not given to man to return to the moment that has passed away. In the world of time, man has no option but to continue marching forward. Indeed, he may look behind to get some light and guidance for the future but he can never return. Today, our attempt is not to rectify history. Our only aim here is to proclaim anew our attachment to the faith, convictions and to the values on which our religion has rested since immemorial ages. We also proclaim to the world that the great truth of spiritual life teaches that every individual should have full independence and opportunities for rising to the highest glory of life to which his experience and natural talents entitle him. On this sacred occasion, it is the duty of each one of us to take a pledge that just as we have restored this historic temple—a symbol of our ancient faith—so also would we put new life into the Temple of Prosperity of our people.

In the past, our country was the industrial centre of the civilised world. Caravan loads of manufactured goods from this country used to go to distant lands. Gold and silver used to flow into our coffers in exchange for our goods. Our exports were then very large, while imports were very small. Naturally, India of those days had become the home of gold and silver. In my view, the restoration of this Temple of Somnath would not be complete on the day when a fine building would have been constructed on these foundations. It would be complete only when the temple of our prosperity—of which the Temple of Somnath was but an external symbol—has been erected. In other words, the restoration of this temple would be complete only when we raise the level of our culture to such a degree that if a modern Al Biruni sees our country, he would express himself about our culture in the same eloquent terms in which, a thousand years ago, Al Biruni had expressed himself about the India of his day.

This work of restoration had been started by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He played a prominent part in weaving the scattered parts of India into a common whole. An idea had occurred to him that this symbol of the ancient faith of India should be restored to commemorate the restoration of Indian unity. By the grace of God, this dream of Sardar has been fulfilled to a certain extent. But, it would have been realised fully only on the day when prosperity is restored to our people.

THE NAVY IN ANCIENT INDIA

It is with great pleasure, and let me add with pride in the Indian Navy, that I present the President's Colour to you today. Bombay is intimately connected with the maritime and naval history of our country. It is our main naval base and it is only fitting that this ceremony which, as Admiral Parry has just said, marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the Indian Navy, should be performed here.

On this occasion, I would like to remind you of the great responsibilities which history has placed on your shoulders. You belong to a country which was, for more than two thousand years, the mistress of the seas. A complete history of the maritime achievements of our people during that period of glory, has yet to be written. But even from what has already been published, it is clear that the origins of our maritime power go as far back as the Vedic age, if not earlier. The *Rig Veda* contains *mantras* which show that, even at that distant period, our countrymen were using ships with a hundred oars to sail the wide seas. By the seventh century before Christ, our ships used to go in their hundreds from our ancient maritime centres which are not far from here—I mean Bharu Kutch and Suraparak—to Babul, on the one side, and Singhal and Swarnabhoomi, on the other. There are instances, mentioned in *Mahavamsa* and *Raj Valliya*, of as many as seven hundred traders being carried in a single ship. Our maritime fleet continued to be the premier one in the whole world till very recent times and its glory has been recorded in many a place. Marco Polo, the famous Italian traveller of the Middle Ages, saw Indian ships that carried ten small boats on their sides, like the modern life boats, with fall and tackle to lower them into the water or to haul them up over the sides, with 60 cabins below the main deck for berthed passengers, and with as many as 14 watertight compartments separated by stored bulkheads. The Indian ships were the biggest and the stoutest in those days and were reputed for their performance and durability. Naturally, our country had also developed a strong navy at a very early period of her history. As early as the third century B.C., we read of a special naval board under the Imperial Mauryas which was especially responsible for looking after the navy of the empire. Considering that India was the premier maritime nation at that time, it can be safely surmised that the Imperial Navy of the Mauryas must have been a big and powerful navy able to

Speech delivered on the occasion of the Presentation of Colours to the Indian Navy at Bombay, on May 27, 1951.

provide adequate protection to Indian merchants on the high seas. Even after the fall of the Mauryan Empire, the glory of the naval power of India did not decrease. We find that the Satvahanas and the Cholas had mighty navies with which they were able to colonise the Swarna Dwipa and to build a mighty maritime State. This naval glory continued even into the medieval period of our history so much so that India was regarded, in the words of Digby, as the 'Mistress of the Eastern Sea'. Writing in 1811, a Frenchman named F. Baltazar Solvyns remarked in his *Les Hindoues* that 'in ancient times the Indians excelled in the art of constructing vessels and the present Hindus can in this respect still offer models to Europe'. I may add that even the premier naval State of the Western world did not hesitate to 'borrow from the Hindus many improvements to their own shipping'. Thus, even though the Indian navy in its present form may be of recent origin, it has a naval tradition dating back almost to the origins of organised political existence—a tradition which it is the duty of every one of you not only to be fully familiar with, but also to be proud of.

It is not only the ancient past that makes this claim upon you. Even the recent past expects the same of you. Till not so long ago, you were closely associated with the navy of the country which had been the mistress of the seas for the last few centuries. You have had the privilege of receiving training under distinguished captains in that navy. You have also had the good fortune of gaining battle experience in close association with it. You have derived inspiration from the exploits and achievements of the galaxy of its great sea captains. No doubt you are today completely independent and have now to shape your future in response to the logic of circumstances in our free country and in conformity with the interests and ideals of our people and also in harmony with the history and genius of our race. But I am confident that the memory of the association with that great and glorious navy shall ever fill your hearts and inspire you with the resolve to make the Indian Navy great and glorious.

Devotion to ideals and duty would be expected of you at all times, but at the present day, when humanity is standing on the edge of a dangerous precipice, it is all the more necessary that you should be inspired by the ideal of endless devotion to duty. It is of the utmost importance that you should stand steadfastly as the ever-vigilant sentinels of the peace and freedom of this ancient land. We in this country are, and have since immemorial ages been, passionately devoted to peace. Even in the days of our greatest naval glory, we never sought to enslave and exploit other countries and peoples. True to this ancient tradition of our land, we desire all people to be free to develop their internal economy and to promote their national culture according to their own genius. We ardently desire that peace should reign everywhere so that man may devote himself to creative pursuits. It is this tradition of peace and justice that you have to cultivate and maintain. I am quite confident that your splendid training and traditions eminently fit you for the task that lies ahead of you.

The carrying of Colours by the Fighting Services is not a new thing. In fact, from the earliest times Colours have been the most cherished possession of any organised fighting unit, and it has always been a point of honour with them that it should never be surrendered to, or captured by the enemy. The deeds of heroism which have been performed to prevent this from happening are now legends. Today, as ever before, I know that every sailor in our Navy considers it a point of honour and his sacred duty never to permit the flag, under which he serves, to be disgraced in any way.

The Indian White Ensign, flown by our Naval ships, is not normally paraded ashore. I think it is only proper, however, that when ashore, our sailors should be able to carry with pride a flag similar to the one under which they serve, with such distinction, at sea. It is for this purpose therefore that I am today presenting the President's Colour. The Indian Navy has carried the Colours of the Head of the State with great credit since 1935. I am confident in leaving this Colour in your keeping that you will maintain its dignity and build even greater traditions of bravery around it.

CULTURAL UNITY OF INDIA

I express my sincere gratitude for the warm welcome that has been extended to me by Your Exalted Highness, the Government and the people of this State. This spontaneous expression of joy and affection reveals that the same heart beats in the people of this State and those of the rest of India. Indeed, to me, the unity that exists between the people of this State and the men and women of all the other regions of India, however near or distant they may be, is not of yesterday. It has been there for thousands of years. In the course of centuries, ethical and cultural currents have flowed from different corners of this vast country and sent their fertilizing waters to spread all over India. Just as the same stream of life-giving water supplies the sap and moisture to an innumerable variety of crops, and plants, and fruits and flowers, even so, underlying the variegated panorama of customs and costumes, language and culture, there is a common current that gives them life and stability and has given to the diverse regions and peoples of this land a unity which, though "thinner than air, is stronger than steel". This oneness of mind or spirit has, no doubt, found expression in art and architecture, literature and philosophy, social outlook and moral faith. As Your Exalted Highness has just now observed, some of the concrete examples of the artistic expression of that common spirit, are to be found in this State as well. I, indeed, consider it a privilege to go and see them, for are they not as it were a window revealing to us the great heights of achievement to which our people could rise when inspired by the consciousness of a common purpose and creative endeavour? The spirit of India reigns and dwells here, as much as it does in the snow-clad Himalayas or the ocean-washed Kanya Kumari.

I am quite confident that, inspired by this ideal of collective and creative endeavour, Your Exalted Highness and the Government and people of Hyderabad will continue to strive for the fulfilment of the mission which history and freedom have prescribed for us.

It really gives me satisfaction to learn that the State has been forging ahead in this direction and has introduced necessary reforms and has succeeded in the establishment of law and order in the State. But none of us can afford to relax for a moment. If Sardar Patel, to whose great statesmanship Your Exalted Highness has justly paid a tribute, had been with us today, we could have been

Reply to the speech of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad at the banquet in the Jubilee Hall, Hyderabad, on August 30, 1951.

a little care-free, for we could then have entrusted the task of steering the ship of the State to that matchless and dauntless pilot. The best tribute that we can pay him is to carry to fruition the mission of that great architect of Indian unity. His solicitude for the welfare of the people of this State is well-known to you. A word of praise is due for this achievement to the Honourable Chief Minister, Shri M. K. Vellodi and his honourable colleagues, and to His Exalted Highness for extending his co-operation to them.

We have the great task not only of consolidating the federal unity of India, but also of establishing democracy in every constituent State. Within a few months from now, as Your Exalted Highness has observed, the general elections will make a visible and tangible assertion of the will of a sovereign people. I have complete faith in our people and their spirit of tolerance, fairplay and justice. I, therefore, believe that the general elections will usher in an era of stability and progress.

In so far as the Union Government is concerned, it will continue to discharge its constitutional obligations towards every one of the constituent States of our Republic, and I can assure Your Exalted Highness that it would do all that it can, under the Constitution of India, to assist the people of Hyderabad and their Government to forge ahead in all walks of life.

Before I conclude, I should like to thank Your Exalted Highness for the kind sentiments you have expressed about me. It has been my privilege to have the affection of my fellow-citizens in this land. Indeed, it is the consciousness of their love and esteem that gives me the strength to bear the responsibilities they have placed upon me. Need I assure Your Exalted Highness that the pleasant memories of this visit would always be with me?

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

I thank you for the honour that you have done me today and I shall always value it highly, coming as it does from this University, which was not only the first to make one of our spoken languages the medium of instruction, but which had also done pioneering work in getting text-books in that language on all scientific and non-scientific subjects prepared and published. In its own way and within the limitations of the language chosen as the medium of instruction, that work appeared to me to be quite encouraging as I was and have always been keenly interested in this question ever since I began taking active part in public affairs. I am glad to say that today public consciousness has been thoroughly aroused on this subject and it is generally recognised by the intelligentsia and the educationists that, if there is to be no avoidable and unnecessary waste in our educational effort, it is absolutely necessary that education should be imparted in the indigenous tongues. But with all this there is yet some haziness among certain sections of the people about the language policy best calculated to serve the objectives we have in view.

I would like, with your permission, to say a few words about it. I believe that everyone in this country knows—in any case I would like everybody to know—that under the Constitution that the Sovereign People of India have adopted through their Constituent Assembly, it is our duty to establish a democratic society in this country—a society in which every individual and every group would have the fullest possible rights and opportunities to realise all his, her or its potentialities. They would also have equal opportunities with others to shape the policy of the Government in the States and the Union. While thinking of the policy to be adopted with regard to the medium of instruction we must all keep in our mind this mandatory obligation. I need not say that education is a power by itself and that in any case a person bereft of it cannot have any chance of either realising himself to the full or making any effective or worthwhile impression on the policies and actions of the government of his country and region. It is, therefore, plain that the methods and means of education should be such as do not permit any discrimination between one man and another and between one group and another.

It would thus appear that all kinds of education, primary, secondary and university, should be available in its own tongue, to every linguistic group

Speech at the Special Convocation of the Osmania University, Hyderabad (Deccan), on August 30, 1951.

of any appreciable size. It is only then that it would not have to spend more time, money and energy than any other group for acquiring the benefits of education. Any other course of action would put one group at a disadvantage in comparison to the group in whose language its children have to acquire education. This means that education at all stages must be in the language of the region concerned.

I would like to emphasize, however, that this can be feasible only if the linguistic group is of an appreciable size and forms a compact region. It cannot be reasonably demanded by those who are very small in numbers or are scattered in different parts of other linguistic regions. The governments of those linguistic regions must make arrangements for the imparting of education to their children in their own mother-tongue except in the lowest stages. The financial and other implications of accepting such a demand can be easily perceived. In every well-defined linguistic region of India, small numbers of persons speaking other languages are to be found. If separate arrangements have to be made in each school, in each college, and in each university of that region for the teaching of the children of all these different linguistic groups, the cost would be colossal. Moreover, from the political point of view, it is desirable that such scattered remnants of any linguistic group, in any other linguistic region, should identify themselves with the latter group instead of remaining entirely distinct from the latter and thus keeping up a difference which may bring about ill-feeling and misunderstanding between them and the large bulk of the population around them. Much of the complexity of the language question in this country would have been solved if each linguistic group recognised this cold logic of facts—financial and political.

Each regional language has to be developed and its literature enriched so as to enable it to become a fit vehicle and rich store-house of knowledge of all kinds—ancient and modern. It is the duty of the regional government or governments to help and encourage this development. This can be best done by building upon the foundation of the existing form and vocabulary of the language and by embellishing it with whatever can be naturally and easily adopted and adapted from other sister languages. Any puristic attempt to exclude words, idioms, and even grammatical construction on the ground that they were borrowed and did not originally belong to the source from which the language was derived, is bound not only to fail but to result in impoverishing the language instead of enriching it. Besides, we have to conserve our energy to the utmost for devoting it to the urgent task of abolishing poverty and ignorance from our country and can hardly spare any for a wholly unnecessary, if not mischievous purpose like this. I do not see any justification for linguistic purism, for language after all, is but a medium of communication and if a word symbol is well-understood by the people there is no reason why it should be thrown out on the simple ground of its alien origin. Also, the growth of the language

should be in a direction in which it becomes more and more acceptable and intelligible to the vast masses of the linguistic region concerned. Its themes, its style, its vocabulary should be as near as possible to the life and the tongue of the common people. I believe that language, like other institutions of society, would benefit greatly by going to the bosom of the Demos.

Apart from the urgent need of developing and enriching the regional language, there is another question which also demands careful consideration. Ours is a multi-lingual country. We must have a common language that would enable the different linguistic regions to communicate with one another in matters of inter-regional and national life. After full consideration, the Constituent Assembly provided in the Constitution that this language shall be Hindi in the Devanagri script, the form of numerals for official purposes of the Union being the international form of Indian numerals. It was an unanimous agreement and one arrived at after due accommodation of all the relevant interests. I think that there is no reason whatever why anyone in this country should feel that his or his group's interests would be adversely affected by this decision in any way. I do not think that I need say more than that within the educational system of each linguistic region, there should be arrangement for the teaching of the Union language. It is necessary to emphasise this so that those speaking other languages than Hindi may not find themselves at a disadvantage in any respect whatsoever. How and at what stage, instruction in Hindi can be fitted in with the general scheme of education in non-Hindi regions, has to be worked out without delay and steps taken to implement any plan that may be adopted so that, within the time allowed by the Constitution, we may be able to do without the English language for official purposes of the Union. This State has three languages spoken by the people in regions which are more or less marked. It had been making every earnest efforts to develop Urdu, which I consider to be only another style or form of what has been adopted by our Constitution as the language of the Union, though it has its own script and distinctive vocabulary. It has thus the same problem that our multi-lingual country as a whole has to solve. But, this State has had the advantage of having made headway with a language for public purposes which is distinct from the three regional languages. We should conserve and derive what benefit and lessons we can from the experience so gained and I feel that, it may prove of great value as giving us a foundation on which to build. It is the duty and privilege of this University to erect on that foundation an edifice which will redound to its credit and to the great benefit of our land.

I thank you once again for your courtesy and kindness in conferring on me the honorary degree and I wish this University ever increasing success and prosperity.

NALANDA—ANCIENT SEAT OF LEARNING

We have gathered here in Nalanda, the renowned ancient University town, with the noble aim of reviving the ancient glory of Nalanda in the world of knowledge. It is with this object in view that the Government of this State has decided to establish the Magadh Research Institute for the study of Pali and Prakrit and research in Buddhist literature and philosophy. Nalanda is the symbol of the most glorious period of our history, for not only did the quest for knowledge blossom here into its finest shape but also because it bound together, at that time, the various different parts of Asia with links of knowledge. There are no national and racial distinctions in the realm of knowledge and this was true of Nalanda. The message of Nalanda was heard across the mountains and oceans of the Asian mainland and, for nearly six centuries, it continued to be the centre of Asian consciousness. The history of Nalanda dates back to the age of Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavira. According to Jain records, Lord Mahavira met Acharya Mankhila at Nalanda. Lord Mahavira is said to have lived here for fourteen years. According to the *Sutra-Kritanga*, Lepa, a rich citizen of Nalanda, welcomed Lord Buddha with his entire wealth and possessions and became his disciple. According to Lama Taranath, the learned historian of Tibet, Nalanda was the birthplace of Sariputra, whose “samadhi” survived till the reign of Emperor Asoka who enlarged it by installing a temple around it. Though tradition associates Nalanda with Lord Buddha and Emperor Asoka, yet it emerged as a flourishing university sometime in the Gupta Age. Taranath maintains that both Bhikshu Nagarjun and Arya Deva were associated with Nalanda University and says further that Acharya Dingnag visited Nalanda and had a scholarly discussion. In the fourth century A.D., Fa-Hien, a Chinese pilgrim visited Nalanda and the stupa constructed at the spot where Sariputra took birth and died. But, it was not until much later that Nalanda acquired its outstanding position. In the 7th century A.D. when, during the reign of Emperor Harshavardhan, Huan-Tsang came to India, Nalanda was at the height of its glory. Referring to a *Jataka* story Huan-Tsang writes that it derived its name from *Na-alam-Da*, the peace of mind which Lord Buddha failed to achieve in his previous births. However, the gift of knowledge is, by its very nature, so inexhaustible that neither the giver nor the recipient can ever feel totally

satisfied. The gift of money, no doubt, has its limits, but knowledge is free of any limits, and even one solitary individual can, by his sole effort, flood the whole earth by the light of his attainment. The urge, imperceptibly bound with the name of Nalanda, was not valid only for the past, but should also continue to inspire in future the newly established Magadh Research Institute. We should resolve to pursue truth and present the results of our research to humanity, with an open mind.

Nalanda University was born with the help of liberal public charity and donations. It is believed to have been founded originally with an endowment created by 500 traders who purchased land with their money and offered it to Lord Buddha as a gift. By the time of Huan-Tsang's visit, Nalanda had become a full-fledged university and had, at that time, six large Viharas. The 8th century inscription of Yasoverman contains a telling description of Nalanda. The high spires of the Viharas, in a row, seemed to be sky high, and around them were tanks of clear water, in which floated red and yellow lotuses, interspersed by the cool shade of the mango groves. The architecture and the sculptures of the halls containing rich ornamentation and beautiful idols, filled one with wonder. Although there are many *sangharams* in India, but the one at Nalanda is unequalled. At the time of the Chinese traveller It-Sing's visit, there were 300 big rooms and eight halls. The remains discovered by archaeological excavations fully bear out the truth of these descriptions. The teachers and students at Nalanda were made completely free of economic worries. Besides the gifts of land and buildings, the revenue of 100 villages had been set apart, in the form of a Trust, to meet recurring expenditure. This property of the Trust had increased to 200 villages by the time of It-Sing's visit. The three States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal had taken considerable part in the building and financial maintenance of Nalanda University.

Copperplates and statues of the age of Maharaja Dharmapal Deva and Devapal Deva of Bengal have been found at Nalanda in the course of the archaeological excavations. One of these copperplates sheds light on the international relations maintained by Nalanda. We learn from it that Shri Balputra Deva, the Shailendra Emperor of Swarna Dwipa (now a part of Indonesia) had sent his envoy to Devapal Deva, the ruler of Magadha, with a request that he should make a gift of five villages to Nalanda on behalf of the former. According to this copperplate inscription, Balputra, the Emperor of Java, being deeply impressed by the achievement of Nalanda, had a large Vihara constructed here to give visible expression of his devotion to Lord Buddha. This is, but, an example that has survived by sheer chance and which gives us an indelible impression of the glory which Nalanda enjoyed the world over. Indeed, the Nalanda Mahavihariya Arya Bhikshu Sangh was held in great esteem all over Asia. Many clay seals of this Sangh have been found at Nalanda.

At the time of Huan-Tsang's visit, Nalanda had 10,000 students and 1,500 teachers. From this, it is obvious that the teachers could pay individual attention to the education and training of their students. In fact, Nalanda was, then, only a centre of higher education, similar to the institute of post-graduate research which we are now proposing to establish here. Scholars from such distant countries as China, Korea, Tibet, Turkestan and Mongolia came to Nalanda to study and collect Buddhist literature. It had the biggest library in Asia. It was from Nalanda that copies of many manuscripts, through travelling pilgrims, reached China and were translated in Chinese. In a way, Nalanda had blossomed forth as a centre of higher learning, and it was considered a mark of honour to be associated with Nalanda. The citizens ensured the preservation of many a rare volume by getting copies and keeping them here for safe custody. When, in the 12th century, its library was destroyed, many of the manuscripts had, already, found their way to Nepal and Tibet, and many of these manuscripts are still intact there.

Without any reference to one particular religion, 100 lectures were delivered, every day, at Nalanda. Both Brahmanical and Buddhist literature, philosophy, sciences and art formed part of the syllabus of Nalanda University. A majority of the monks used to study the works on *Mahayana* and the other eighteen *Nikayas* of the Buddhist faith, but there also was provision for the study and teaching of the Vedas and allied literature. The liberalism practised by the educational authorities of Nalanda was unique and the seeds of Nalanda's rise and progress lay in the academic attitude which freely exposed itself to the religion and philosophy of all mankind, without any prejudice, whatsoever.

The syllabus of Nalanda University was drawn up with great wisdom, and by following it, students were increasingly successful in their daily life. It had made a study of five subjects compulsory: Grammar, by which one could get an adequate mastery of the language; Logic, which taught the student to judge every issue rationally; Medical Science, a study of which enabled the student to keep himself, as also others, in perfect health; and, lastly, handicrafts. Knowledge of one craft or another was compulsory to make the students financially independent. Besides these four subjects, Religion and Philosophy were studied, depending on one's own special interest. The high ideal which Nalanda had set in the matter of the courses of study deserves our attention and consideration even now. It was this well co-ordinated course of studies which made the knowledge of its students both deeply penetrating and utilitarian in its practical application. Huan-Tsang studied Law, Yoga, Phonetics and Panini's Grammar at the feet of Acharya Shila Bhadra, the Chancellor of the University and after it, for a period of five years, read through many Buddhist works, and was specially interested in the works of *Mahayana*. Similarly, It-Sing, the Chinese traveller, studied books on *Therawad* at Nalanda.

Acharya Shila Bhadra was then considered to be the greatest authority on Yoga. Before him, Dharmapal was famous as the Chancellor of Nalanda. Shila Bhadra, Gyan Chandra, Prabha Mitra, Sthiramati, Gunamati and other learned teachers were contemporaries of Huan-Tsang. Even after he had returned to China, his close contact with his Indian friends continued as before. When he was leaving Nalanda, Acharya Shila Bhadra and other monks requested him to stay on. In reply Huan-Tsang said:—"It is impossible not to have deep affection for this land—the birthplace of Lord Buddha. But my only purpose in coming to this country was to make further research into the religion of the Lord so that I may benefit my fellow brethren. My visit to this place has proved of immense benefit to me, but on my return to China, I intend to benefit others through what I have learnt here, as also to use my knowledge for purposes of translation so that other men may also have for you the same gratitude which I feel towards you."

Even after Huan-Tsang's return to China, correspondence continued between him and Gyan Prabh, the chief disciple of Acharya Shila Bhadra. Of this correspondence, three letters still exist, which reveal that even subsequently, the scholars of Nalanda continued to send copies of Sanskrit works to China. On his return to China, Huan-Tsang spent the rest of his life in translating religious books of India into Chinese and in this, the literature from Nalanda occupied a prominent place. He has written that the Emperor of China himself wrote a preface to these translations and ordered the authorities to propagate these books in every country. The result of these worthy endeavours for which Chinese scholars and Indian scholars worked enthusiastically and unhampered by distances of place and time, was that about 2,000 books which were translated from original Sanskrit into Chinese are still intact in the Chinese *Tripit*, even though the Sanskrit originals are lost. I hope one of the objectives of the Institute we are establishing, today, would be to publish this Chinese literature in its Sanskrit form with Hindi translations. In order to have a extensive library like the Ratna Sagar at Nalanda in Huan-Tsang's time, we would have to draw up a comprehensive plan to collect, on behalf of the Magadh Institute, all the Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit original works, as also, works written on them in other languages; we must also resolve to implement that plan fully. This project can be completed only with the co-operation of the Government and the people.

The scholars of Nalanda carried the torch of knowledge to foreign countries. For instance, Strong Chan Gampo, the Emperor of Tibet, with a view to introducing and popularising Sanskrit script and the knowledge of India in his country, sent a scholar called Thonmi Sambhot, to Nalanda, where he studied Buddhistic and Brahmanical literature under Acharya Deva Vida Sinh. After this, in the 8th century A.D., Acharya Shanti Rakshit, the Chancellor of Nalanda University, went to Tibet in response to an invitation from the Emperor. Acharya Kamal Shila, the chief authority on Tantra Vidya also visited Tibet.

Nalanda scholars learnt the Tibetan language and translated Buddhist and Sanskrit works into it. Thus, they presented an entirely new literature to Tibet and gradually converted its inhabitants to Buddhism. Acharya Shanti Rakshit of Nalanda established, for the first time, in 749 A.D., a Buddhist Vihar in Tibet. It is necessary that the books available in the *Tripitak* literature of Tibet, be translated, once again, into Sanskrit. They would not only shed new light on Indian history and culture, but would also help us to form a complete picture of the contribution made by Nalanda University in the pursuit of knowledge. Further, it is also believed that Korean scholars came to study *Vinaya* and *Abhidharma* at Nalanda. It is quite possible that Korean translations of original Sanskrit works may still be extant in Korea.

Besides being famous for its studies in literature and religion, Nalanda was also a centre of fine arts and influenced the art of Nepal, Tibet, Indonesia and Central Asia. The bronze statues of Nalanda are impressive and beautiful and scholars believe that statues of Buddha found at Kurkihar bear traces of the Nalanda school. It is true that the achievement of Nalanda was born of an all inclusive pursuit of knowledge in which Religion and Philosophy, language and handicrafts had equal importance. We should aim at reviving the educational system of a bygone age and re-establish Nalanda as a centre of art, literature, philosophy, religion and science. Cultural renaissance can come about in the life of nation only when a large number of determined scholars devote a life time to a search after truth. Though the Magadh Research Institute is still very young, but, moulded to the need of the age, it can be expected to develop into the centre we wish it to be.

SANSKRIT LITERATURE— A TREASURE

Nearly ten years ago, Maharajadhiraj Shri Kameshwar Singh had invited me to address the scholars of Bihar in the Shri Mithilesh Mahesh Ramesh Lecture series. On that occasion, I had given expression to my views in two lectures which have since then, been published in book form under the title: ‘Sanskrit Ka Adhyayan’. In these, I had drawn attention to the richness and glory of Sanskrit literature and had briefly surveyed its achievements in the spheres of philology, grammar, alphabet, script and numerals in general and more particularly in the spheres of Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Astronomy, Physics, Medicine and Surgery, Anatomy and Physiology, Metallurgy, Botany, Agriculture and Gardening, Sculpture, Painting, Music, Dancing, etc., etc. In my concluding remarks, I had urged the desirability and necessity of a change in the traditional system of Sanskrit studies as prevalent today. It therefore gives me great pleasure to find that this Institute is being established today for the study of that literature and scientific research into the materials available in it. I believe that the study of Sanskrit literature would be useful for the solution of the problems facing the world today and therefore, our universities should encourage its study. I had confessed in those lectures that even though I was no scholar of Sanskrit, I had come to hold this view on the basis of what I had learnt from the opinions of Sanskrit scholars as expressed in their books. These are that the basic elements of our present-day cultural life are to be found in Sanskrit literature. In this connection, I would like to say a few words today about the characteristic features of Sanskrit literature. Of course, it is not necessary to relate all this to scholars. For those, however, who are ignorant of Sanskrit and who, due to their training in the present educational system, give great weight to whatsoever western scholars and those Indian scholars following in the footsteps of the former, say on any subject, I consider it would be sufficient to give some citations from the authoritative works of such scholars. I also entertain the hope that these educated Indians would duly realise the importance of Sanskrit and would help in bringing about a Sanskrit *renaissance*.

Sanskrit literature, as I have already remarked, is an invaluable treasure-house not only for India, but also for the whole world. Its great age, its extent,

Address on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Sanskrit Research Institute at Darbhanga on November 21, 1951.

its richness of content, its beauty and sweetness of language are all such as to make it not only shed light on the whole history and culture of humanity but also to fill the heart of man with beauty, pleasure and joy and to give him a glimpse of the world of ideals by realising which alone can he make his life fruitful and achieve salvation from the bonds of this world.

It is no exaggeration to say that the history of the cultural evolution of mankind cannot be prepared without the help of Sanskrit literature. There is no other nation in the world which has been able to keep its ancient literature intact as we Indians have been able to do. The very works of the Rishis have come down to us in their entirety and we can see in them a clear picture of the conditions of that age. That picture, no doubt, is very helpful in reconstructing our ancient history today and, I am sure, it will continue to remain useful even in the future.

There is no single scholar in the present-day world who does not believe that in the reconstruction of the ancient history of mankind, Indian literature will play an important role. This is not only due to the fact that Indian literature is the oldest in the world, but also because there was not a single country in the civilised world of antiquity in which its influence had not been felt. Indian literature left its impress on the cultures of countries from China to Ireland, from Scandinavia to Indonesia. It is universally known that more than a thousand years ago, numerous works of Sanskrit had been translated into Chinese and Tibetan and thereafter into Japanese and that Indian literature had become an indistinguishable element of Chinese, Tibetan and Japanese culture. In the islands of Bali, Java, Sumatra and in Cambodia also, Indian literature had an unchallenged sway and it was the main basis of the culture of those countries. What is not so widely known, perhaps, is that the influence of Indian literature was felt in the Middle East and Europe too. Of course, there is not the least doubt about the fact that numerous scholars from India went to the capital of the Abbasi Caliphs and made the people conversant with Indian science and culture; also, that they translated some works of Indian literature into the official language of that Empire. There are enough references to indicate that Indian literature had a deep influence on the ancient culture of the Middle East and Europe and, in so far as their fables and folk tales are concerned, it may be said without any exaggeration that it is more or less another form of the same kind of literature in India. Indian literature, by virtue of its having woven itself into the consciousness of all the nations of the civilised world, has become an indistinguishable element of their culture. And so, for its proper understanding, it is necessary that the original Sanskrit literature should be studied. Referring to this Dr. M. Winternitz, in his "History of Indian Literature" written in German says, "All these facts—the great age, the wide geographical distribution, the extent, the wealth, the aesthetic value and still more the value from the point of view of the history of culture, of Indian literature—would fully suffice to

justify our interest in this great, original and ancient literature”. He observes further on: “though the Indians are not flesh of our flesh, or bone of our bone we may yet discover mind of our mind in the world of Indian thought... “. “If we wish to learn to understand the beginnings of our own culture, if we wish to understand the oldest Indo-European culture, we must go to India, where the oldest literature of an Indo-European people is preserved.” Still further on, he says, “Moreover, the immediate influence which the literature of India has exercised over our own literature, too, should not be underestimated. We shall see that the narrative literature of Europe is dependent on the Indian fable literature in no small degree. It is more specially German literature and German philosophy which, since the beginning of the 19th century, have been greatly influenced by Indian ideas, and it is quite probable that this influence is still on the increase, and that it will be augmented still further in the course of the present century”. This statement of Winternitz, even today, has the same, nay, even greater force than what it had when it was first made. When he had made this observation, the archaeological remains at Mohenjodaro had not been studied. But since the day of their discovery, the age of Indian civilisation has been carried still further into the past and, in my view, the importance of Indian literature—specially the importance of Vedic literature, for the history of our ancient culture has increased still more. Of course, it is needless to point out that for an adequate understanding of the mind of our people and of the forces working on it, the importance of a proper study of Sanskrit literature is very great. There is no single aspect of our national life which is not suffused by the principles and ideals laid down in Sanskrit literature. Not only for understanding the character of human civilisation, not only for understanding the part played by our people in its evolution and for having a clear understanding of our national mind, but also for deriving joy from the appreciation of the highest and best form of art, it is necessary for us and for the world to devote itself to the study of Sanskrit literature. There is no aspect of life, no medium of expression, no form of art in which Sanskrit literature has not achieved perfection. The King and the beggar, the man of the city as of the village, human beings, birds or animals, civilised and uncivilised beings, conscious beings and unconscious elements, soul and God—each and every one of them has been depicted with a delicate touch in Sanskrit literature. There is not a single region of the human heart which has remained hidden to the eye of the Sanskrit poets; not the deepest feelings but have been given the most artistic expression; not a single aspect of nature which is not mirrored there; no single branch or aspect of society which has not been carefully analysed in it and no ideal, passion or evil within its bosom whose exact picture is not to be found here; nor is there any problem relating to the destiny of mankind and concerned with man’s happiness and welfare which has not been carefully discussed and answered in Sanskrit literature. Such a fine description of animal life and analysis of its importance to man and such sympathy for the animal world as is found in Sanskrit literature are rarely to be

found in the literatures of any other people in the world. If Sanskrit literature is for the learned and grown-up, it is also full of interesting material for people of common intelligence and children. There are such fine descriptions of the marvellous world of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Nishachars and of their miraculous powers and thrilling deeds that children, who are easily thrilled by miracles and marvels, find in them inexhaustible material for the satisfaction of their curiosity.

There are aphorisms so full of wisdom as to imprint themselves on the human mind, by hearing and remembering which even ordinary men can become wise. There are such stories in Sanskrit literature, by hearing which even the ignorant can become learned. From the point of view of art, it is highly developed and can be rarely paralleled elsewhere. If the saying that the ocean can be confined in a jar has been realised anywhere, it is in Sanskrit literature. In no other literature is found such perfection in sound-echoing signs as is found in Sanskrit. If one wants to see the subtleness of ideas, mirror-like delineation of character, he can hardly find it elsewhere in such perfection as in Sanskrit.

It can be said that Sanskrit literature is one of the few literatures in which there is such a fine arrangement and use of words. It is no doubt true that Western scholars feel that from the literary point of view these aspects of Sanskrit literature are not very commendable and they even condemn the prolixity of the figures of speech as also the aphoristic character of the Sutras. But one should not forget that their fundamental approach to art is different from ours and that their approach is more or less conditioned by the mechanised civilisation of modern times. So it is quite natural that they do not find much pleasure in these wonderful experiments in word construction, but if one views the whole question without prejudice, it may be said that it is only the study of Sanskrit literature that can give an idea of the great magic there is in words.

Our literature is not only unique in making an amazing use of the Sanskrit language but there is also no literary form in which it has not reached perfection. Prose, Poetry, Drama—in all of them Sanskrit writers have achieved greatness. As Winternitz observes, “Indian literature embraces everything which the world literature comprises in its widest sense: religious and secular, epic, lyric, dramatic and didactic poetry, as well as narrative and scientific prose”. Even before the beginning of the Christian era, great works of literature had been composed in our country. It is true that, so far, the chronology of Sanskrit literature has not been settled on a satisfactory and final basis. But, even then, it is universally admitted that within the period 1500 B.C. and 1000 A.D., Sanskrit literature has been enriched by numerous literary jewels and out of these many unique works had been composed even before the commencement of the Christian eras. Books such as the Upanishads in the sphere of metaphysics, such great works as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in the sphere of epic

poetry and such works as those of Bhasa in the sphere of dramatic poetry had become elements of Sanskrit literature by that time.

This element of greatness in our literature is, to a certain extent, due to the inherent peculiarities of the Sanskrit language itself. Its grammar and vocabulary are of such a character that words can be used with facility and in such a suggestive manner as can rarely be done in other languages, be these ancient or modern. By virtue of its power of compression, a whole world of ideas can be put in a single Sutra. This is not possible to the same extent and will never be so in any other language of the world. Commenting on the works of Bhartrhari, Keith points out the greatness of the Sanskrit language. He says, "The extraordinary power of compression which Sanskrit possesses is seen here at its best; the effect on the mind is that of a perfect whole in which the parts coalesce by inner necessity, and the impression thus created on the mind cannot be reproduced in an analytical speech like English, in which it is necessary to convey the same content, not in a single sentence syntactically merged into a whole, like the idea which it expresses, but in a series of loosely connected predications." Besides the power of compression, Sanskrit words often have a number of meaning and thus in Sanskrit poems such wonderful *double ententes* can be composed as cannot be done in any other language. Commenting on the poem of *Ramapalacharita* of *Sandhyakara Nandin* which the author had written with a view to delineate the character of both Rama and also Raja Rampala, a contemporary king, Keith observes: "The fact, which at first sight appears incredible, is explained without special difficulty by the nature of Sanskrit. Treating each line of verse as a unit, it is possible to break it up very variously into words by grouping together the syllables. Then the meaning of compounds is often vitally affected by the mode in which the relations between the words composing them are conceived, even when the words are understood in the same sense and the compound is analysed into the same terms". Further, and this is of special importance, the Sanskrit lexica allow towards a very large variety of meanings." Thus, by virtue of its principles of 'Sandhi' and 'Samas' and by reason of its many words having a number of meanings, the Sanskrit language possesses such a natural flexibility as permits it to be moulded in accordance with any purpose or form that one desires. Besides this natural characteristic, Sanskrit literature grew in a geographical and racial environment which was heterogeneous and cosmopolitan in character. India is a vast country of varied climates, beautiful natural scenery, multitudinous flora and fauna, animals and birds, wherein numerous communities of different colours and customs are to be found. Naturally, therefore, it is not surprising that the literary artists of India were able to paint all this background in such fine word-pictures. "In India", says M. Williams "literature, like the whole face of nature, is on a gigantic scale. Poetry, born amid the majestic scenery of the Himalayas, and fostered in a climate which inflamed the imaginative

powers, developed itself with oriental luxuriance". But, much more than the geographical and racial environment, it is the basic ideals and assumptions of life held by the Indian people which have played their part in making Sanskrit literature so fine and rich. Since remote ages, it has been the faith of the Indian people that life is not an idle dream nor a tale told by an idiot but that it is a means towards self-realisation. It is true that Indians believed and still believe that lasting happiness or power can be achieved by men only after securing release from the cycle of births and deaths or by a merging of the soul in the Brahman—this is the inherent purpose of worldly life. But, at the same time, it is their faith that the soul is bound by the law of Karma, and that through the power of good deeds, it gradually move towards salvation and that by doing evil it becomes more and more entangled in worldly bonds. This faith led the ancient Indians to divide life into four stages and to place before themselves a four-fold ideal of life. They believed that by discharging the obligations of each stage of life and by devoting one's life to the realisation of the four-fold aim, one's soul can acquire the power of merging itself into the *Brahman*. Even if one found himself unable to practise this *Sadhana* and *Tapa* in one life, he had no reason for despair, for he was bound to take birth after birth so long as he did not achieve salvation. So, it is clear that Indians never had the idea that life could ever—finally and ultimately—be futile and purposeless. Their belief was that every soul was destined to merge in the *Brahman* and so they never considered temporary defeat as defeat for all time to come. In other words, they were incorrigible optimists about the achievement of Salvation or eternal happiness. This optimism was the main foundation of their literature. In the entire field of Sanskrit literature, we do not come across a single tragic drama; not that the hero of a story does not have to go through suffering or that he does not face obstacles and difficulties. He has to suffer all these, but in the long run, these trials and tribulations prove the stepping stones for his complete success and happiness. The heroes in all our famous legends, such as 'Nala Damayanti', 'Harishchandra Saiva' and 'Satyavan Savitri', had to undergo much trouble, but in the long run reached the land of happiness and success. So it is that our literature, instead of being the picture of the fleeting moment, has become the embodiment of the aspirations of our people for the lasting welfare of the individual and of the world.

Our literateurs held the view that literature and art are not merely the means of enjoyment or entertainment for the writer or the reader, but a means for the realisation of the four-fold ideal of life. It has been the traditional belief in our country since ages past that by the mere reading or hearing of our main Epics, a person can achieve salvation. Defining the "Mahakavya", the writers and poets also said that its study was for the realisation of the four-fold aim, namely, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. It is this very idea that echoes again and again in the different branches of Indian literature. It is for this reason that, in

the long run, truth and righteousness are sure to triumph in Indian literature. I believe that, due to this basic ideal, the importance of Sanskrit literature is enhanced still further. The chief objective of a poet's work can only be to show the sublimation and transfiguration of the brute into man, for only in such a delineation lies the spiritual welfare of the poet himself as of mankind. Sanskrit literature is the embodiment of this striving of our poets and literateurs. Another special characteristic of Sanskrit literature is its delineation of the underlying unity of the entire visible universe. It seems to rest on the assumption that among animate and inanimate nature, animate birds and animals and self-conscious man lies a universal, all-embracing single principle and so it is that in the joys and sorrows of the hero, the entire universe takes its share. I believe that it is for this reason that there are such beautiful and sympathetic portrayals of nature, animals and birds in Sanskrit literature as are not found in any other literature of the world, not even in Greek literature. Poets have, on more than one occasion, sent the clouds to carry the message of the hero to the heroine. God and angels, nature and its elemental forces, all participate in making or marring the destiny of the hero or the heroine. The reader, the writer, the listener and the spectator—all get through Sanskrit literature a comprehensive and organic view of the universe. So far as I know, the unity between human life and the universal soul has been represented with such lucidity and clarity only in Sanskrit literature. It is due to these qualities that this literature is still able to keep its head high and to rank as first among the literatures of the world in spite of the many vicissitudes of history through which our country has had to pass.

In this connection, I would like to give one more citation and it is from Max Muller's book "India—What Can it Teach Us?" Prof. Max Muller writes: "If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India."

I have already shown how desirable and important is the study of Sanskrit literature; our Universities should not only include it in the syllabi of its educational institutions but should also afford all possible encouragement to its study. At the same time, however, I consider it necessary to say that those who

devote themselves to the study of Sanskrit should also be required to acquaint themselves compulsorily with the trends of modern life. How the world is moving on today, what its direction is, what wonders have been performed by science as a result of modern research and how deep an impression has been and would continue to be produced on our life, are matters which are not hidden from the gaze of any one. Even if one wants to be indifferent to them and turn a blind eye towards them, one cannot do so. Therefore, Sanskrit scholars should have at least some acquaintance with, if not mastery of, these subjects. This can be easily acquired with the help of Hindi books, though the old-style Pandits look down upon Hindi with some degree of contempt. There should be Sanskrit books on modern subjects for such people. I am not aware how far this has been done or whether any scholar is taking interest in this matter, but I have learnt with great pleasure that some scholars are trying to popularise modern subjects through the medium of the Sanskrit language. In this connection, I may mention, the *Paramarth Darshan* of the late Mahamahopadhyaya Ramavatar Sharma which, I understand, is a beautiful and learned exposition of our modern and ancient philosophy. Similarly, I have seen three poetical works on the life of Mahatma Gandhi and on Gandhism. One is by Pandit Rajaswami Shri Bhagadacharya called: *Bharatiya Parijat* —the second is *Uttar Satyagraha* by Pandita Kshama Rao and the third is *Gandhi Gita* by Shri Srinivas. I also understand that a Sanskrit translation of our Constitution has already been done and arrangements are being made for its publication. These are auspicious signs and they give an indication that there are still scholars of Sanskrit who can place before the learned world the study of modern subjects in that ancient *Devavani*. I hope that alongside the study of Sanskrit, people will revive the flow of Sanskrit literature whose progress has been arrested for the last several centuries, so as to enable the later historians of that literature to record that Sanskrit was not in any way backward in comparison to any other modern language in the propagation of modern knowledge through its medium. I hope that this institution would continue to make progress by leaps and bounds and that it would fulfil the aspirations and aims with which it is being established today.

THE MISSION OF UNIVERSITIES

No one in India today—whatever be his religion, language, race or caste—can claim that India belongs solely to him, for, every different section and group has played an important part in the making of India as it is today and thus, India is but a product of the joint effort of us all. Similarly, our culture is also a product of a common endeavour. Often, we are told of the difference between North and South India. This, in a way, is true, but in spite of this difference both the North and the South are mutually indebted to each other. Similarly, Hindus have contributed to the life of the Muslims just as much as the Muslims have to the life of the Hindus. Whether it be language, music or painting or any other aspect of our common culture, we find that all of them have borrowed a great deal from the different sections of Indian life and that not one of them is either isolated or entirely untouched by the influence of the various facets of life in India. Also, though India has integrated and assimilated different races, languages and cultures, she has not entirely effaced their peculiar individual characteristics. On the contrary, while maintaining differences, we have, to a great extent, contributed to each other. This is why people of different faiths live here harmoniously without any desire to exterminate other sects. I consider this assimilation and the absence of cultural hostility to be the most enduring achievement of our culture. Even a cursory survey of our history brings us to this very conclusion in spite of certain sporadic events which may, superficially, appear to falsify it.

In the wake of our freedom, we have become the arbiters of our own destiny and, in view of our history, we have to mould our lives in the direction of public and personal welfare. It was this that led us to specify clearly in our Constitution that everyone in this country would have complete freedom which would not merely allow them to profess and follow their respective religions, but also give them the right to express their ideas and thoughts without any restraint. Also, our Constitution, based as it is on the principles of equality, fraternity and faith in one another, guarantees personal development for all, irrespective of sex, creed or status, so that through it we can work for peace and amity in India and abroad. We are determined to provide to everyone, opportunities for material betterment specially to those who, for some reason, are handicapped, because we believe that without economic welfare, human

progress is impossible. The Constitutional safeguard of our economic facilities is neither new nor unfamiliar to us. It is but a natural outcome of our history which, matured during thousands of years, now permeates the entire body-politic. I would like you all to give thought to this and realise that when we claim to have established a democratic republic in India we have acknowledged the right of the individual in the government of the country. But the Constitution which makes itself responsible for safeguarding the rights and privileges of every Indian, makes it obligatory on him to do his duty to his country, Government, and fellow-countrymen: to the country and State, he owes the duty of loyalty and allegiance and to his countrymen, the duty of human kinship. If all our countrymen clearly understand both their rights and duties, we would live in peace and security and bring about the progress of India. Those who have the privilege of being educated and understand the truth of this are morally bound to impress this same truth on their countrymen and, thus, prepare them to fulfil their duty to the country.

Aligarh University is at least 75 years old and it was the vision and patriotic fervour of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan which led to its establishment, originally in the shape of a school, on June 1, 1875. Later, in 1921, it was raised to the status of a college and, in 1921, it was granted the status of a University. During these last 75 years, it has become an important centre of education and has acquired a name for itself in India and abroad. It has played a significant part in the history of Muslims in India. And, when we desire all our citizens to live together and progress through human relations, your university can make an effective contribution. Every University is, essentially, a centre of light from which worthy ideas are radiated to every part of the country and, therefore, it should not concern itself merely with the teaching of arts and sciences, but also encourage those whom it teaches to further the cause of the subject they have studied. Our Universities are, already engaged in conducting such studies and it is hoped that their progress would be accelerated. I would like this University to be a centre where people would not only have the opportunity to study every subject but also where original contribution would be made to the different spheres of knowledge. I am aware of the efforts of your Vice-Chancellor and other officers to improve and expand this University and, I am sure, that the Government would give it all possible assistance. The Government has, already, considered the question of increasing its grant and has, given other special grants to open new departments. Also, the Parliament has enacted a new legislation to improve the administration of your university. The Government understands the value of this University to the nation and would, therefore, continue to assist it in the future. But no educational institution can hope to rise to its full stature or win the support of the people, solely with the assistance of the Government; a University, if it hopes to acquire such a status must become an integral part and effective spokesman of the country's economic

and cultural life. To voice the cultural aspirations of India, this and the other Universities must become a beacon of the principle of *Sulah-i-kul*, that is, peace and toleration and spread its rays to every corner of the land and remove completely, the darkness of communal conflict. I feel that in order to prepare a temperament favourable to this principle, it is necessary that our Universities, instead of the external differences should concentrate on teaching the basic unities of our life. It is historically true that notwithstanding the many external differences, the people of every province and faith have, basically, a fundamental unity among themselves. In my view, a great many of the differences that exist among our people are due to one particular truth being referred to in different linguistic terms. If we carry the fundamental elements of our culture to every linguistic group in its own terminology, it is possible, in my opinion, to bridge this psychological gulf to a certain extent. For instance, the Sanskrit word 'Paramatman' denotes the same Reality which 'Khuda' symbolises in Persian and 'Allah' in Arabic, but by the word 'Allah' the devotee of 'Parmatman' does not feel that his God is being called by another name nor does the worshipper of 'Allah' feel that 'Paramatman' is, but another name for the Lord he calls 'Allah.' Poets like Kabir, Jayasi and Rahim tried to remove this psychological difference caused by linguistic terminology. I feel that it is now time that we stop feeling provoked at the mere mention of a word in a different language and begin to understand the deeper symbolism of such words. This would lead us to realise that what we had considered to be contradictory due to a difference of terminology was, in reality, the same thing.

In any case, we have to make the literature in the different languages of the country available to every other language group so that the ideals, hopes and aspirations of one group are made known to people outside it and closer relationship is established between diverse groups. If there is any suspicion between different people, it is, to a certain extent, due to a blind ignorance of the literature of other groups and the thought that it embodies, and this suspicion could have been removed by an increased sense of sympathy. I believe that this University can do a great deal to remove this mutual suspicion and bring people closer to one another. The multi-coloured fabric of our culture is woven out of many a race and generation. The varied experience and wisdom of both scholars and sages is needed to interpret its pattern correctly. Your University can, undoubtedly, make a lasting contribution not only in lending completion to this variegated pattern, but also in interpreting the part played by Islam in its creation.

A HOUSE FOR CHILDREN

This is the first time that I am visiting this institution and I had no previous opportunity of knowing what is being done here. You have rightly observed that formerly we could devote more of our time and energy co-operating with you in constructive work. But you know fully well the reason why these opportunities have become far fewer now-a-days. I would like to assure you that even though we may not be able to share directly in your work, yet we still have the same sympathy with you as we had before. It is our confident hope that the friends who are now engaged in this kind of work would carry it forward. A time will come when we would again have opportunities of directly sharing in their work.

I am reminded of what happened many years ago. Probably, it was two or three years after the non-co-operation movement of 1921. An institution known as Bihar Vidyapith was functioning at the time in Bihar. I had invited Sri Rajagopalachari to participate in a function like this to distribute prizes and give his blessings to the children. He had made an observation which is still fresh in my memory. He said that a great movement had taken place in the year 1920-21 whose effect was felt all over the country and although it had somewhat lost its momentum, they should all remain confident that the movement would again gather great strength at the proper time. He had also observed that such institutions as the Bihar Vidyapith were keeping the flame of that movement alive. He further said that just as numerous lamps may be lighted with one single lamp, so also such institutions could carry on the light of that movement.

I am quite confident that the constructive programme which Gandhiji had laid down for us and in pursuance of which this institution has been working, will enable our people to shape the future of the country according to Gandhiji's desire. I have great interest in institutions engaged in this kind of work and I am always ready to do what little I can for them. I would request those who are engaged in this work not to lose heart in the least and not to consider this work of smaller significance than any other kind of work. You should not care in the least if you do not get publicity in the press or your photographs do not appear in the newspapers. It is my hope that the children who are being trained here would advance the cause of the country when they grow up. I would, therefore,

English translation of speech in Hindi at the prize-distribution ceremony of the Kasturba Balika Ashram at Okhla on December 31, 1951.

like to congratulate these children for their good fortune in being associated with this work of service. The work being done here, I believe, is far greater than what I am able to see at this time. These children who have come from all parts of the country would, I trust, become living centres of work and would by their service bring light to their respective regions. I also hope that as time passes the number of young girls engaged in this kind of work would continue to increase. At no time should there be any flagging of effort in this direction.

You have referred to the paucity of funds. We are all suffering from financial difficulties in our activities. I would like to point out, in this connection, what Mahatma Gandhi always used to say, namely, that sincere workers do not, in the long run, suffer from lack of funds. As your work progresses, you would also get the necessary financial support from the public. You have already had such an experience as is evident from the fact that some gentleman has, of his own accord, made a gift of this land to you. I, therefore, believe that your work would go on expanding.

I do not think I can give any special advice about the work that you are doing at present. It is being guided by persons who have devoted a large part of their lives to such activities and who already have some achievements to their credit. Naturally, I cannot tell you anything with which they are not already acquainted by experience. I must, however, say that in our educational institutions very little attention is paid to the development of character. If the non-official institutions, particularly institutions engaged in constructive work, paid attention to this matter and tried to develop the character of their students they would be doing a great service to the country. It is my hope that you would devote more attention to this aspect of education. I congratulate the children who have been awarded prizes. Others should keep up their efforts and they are sure to succeed.

You have referred to the question of residential accommodation. You have enough land in your possession. My own feeling is that many institutions today suffer from financial stringency because they lavishly spend on the construction of big buildings. If you are, at present, short of funds you should not lay much emphasis on the construction of big buildings here. Gandhiji had placed an example before the country by living in a cottage constructed at a very small cost in Sevagram. When work of great national importance could be carried on by him in that small cottage, I believe that the education of our children can also be carried on in cottages of that type. I am sure, you would feel the want of funds much less if you follow this course. Let me hope that you will give your thoughtful consideration to this aspect.

LINK BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

It was a very happy idea to organise this exhibition in the Capital of India. While in Hyderabad some months ago, I was told by the then Chief Minister that they wanted to have this exhibition here so that people in the Capital and the large number of visitors coming here may get acquainted not only with historical things of interest but also with some modern manufactures of Hyderabad State.

Hyderabad is in the happy position of being a sort of confluence between the north and the south and as such it has derived inspiration from both sides. Great works of art, some specimens of which you will see here, are the Ajanta paintings and the sculptures of the Ellora caves which are world-famous. A large number of similar things are not as well known as they should be. Some of them are the result of the activities of the Hyderabad Archaeological Department.

Apart from these, you will see a large number of specimens of manuscripts which are of rare value and which have been preserved for centuries, but still look as fresh as if they were written only yesterday, using paper and ink which we have forgotten altogether. Going round the exhibition, you will find a fine collection of coins some of which date back to 1000 B.C. You will also see some specimens of fine handicrafts which once flourished but are now languishing due to want of patronage. You will see specimens of *Bidari* and jewellery work and various patterns of beautiful weaving which is an old heritage. This exhibition, therefore, is of great value. The exhibits include ancient works of art as well as modern paintings. If you only go and see them, that will go a great way in encouraging the people of that State.

I do not want to stand between you and the exhibition for long. I only wish we could have more exhibitions from different parts of the country. I would like to have them here not for a fortnight, not even for a month but permanently. There should be some place here in Delhi where exhibits from different parts of the country may be kept so that any visitor who happens to come here may be able to have an idea of the excellent things which are being produced in our country.

Speech at the opening of the Exhibition of Arts, Archaeology and Handicrafts organised by the Hyderabad Government on April 10, 1952 in the Hyderabad Palace, New Delhi.

Many of the handicraftsmen are losing their art because they do not get sufficient patronage. I am sure there are many who would feel impelled to patronise them by purchasing their products only if they go round the exhibition and see the exhibits. I wish all success to the organisers of this exhibition. I am particularly grateful to them for having organised it for the benefit of us who are living in Delhi.

CHRONOLOGY

(1884-1963)

- 1884 Born on December 3, 1884.
- 1896 Married to Raj Bansi Devi.
- 1902 Succeeded in the entrance test of the University of Calcutta and secured first position.
- 1904 Succeeded in qualifying for FA from the University of Calcutta and placed in the top position.
Elected Secretary, Presidency College Union, Calcutta.
- 1906 Obtained a Graduate Degree from the University of Calcutta and got the first position.
Organized Bihari Student Conference in Patna.
- 1907 Obtained Master of Arts in English literature from the University of Calcutta
- 1908 Appointed as Professor in Bhumihar Brahmin College, Muzaffarpur (Now known as L S College, Muzaffarpur) and also acted as Principal-In-Charge.
- 1909 Went to Kolkata to study Law.
While doing Law, taught as Professor at Kolkata City College.
- 1910 Cleared B L Examination
Gopal Krishna Gokhale asked to join the Servants of India Society but could not join due to family problems.
- 1911 Started practicing at Calcutta High Court.
Elected as a member, the All India Congress Committee (AICC).
- 1913 Presided over Munger session of Bihari Student Conference.
- 1914 Rendered social services to catastrophic floods in Bihar and Bengal.
Appointed as Professor in Law College, Calcutta.
- 1915 Obtained first class first in the ML examination.
- 1916 After setting up of High Court in Patna, started practicing law.
Led the protest against Patna University Bill.

Source: The information has been compiled from various authentic sources. One of the major sources being 'Desh Ratna Rajendra Prasad, Sanchhapt Jeevni' (in Hindi) by Tara Sinha, Rajendra Prasad Academy, New Delhi, pp. 59-64.

- 1917-18 Worked under the leadership of Gandhiji in Champaran Satyagraha. Nominated as a member of Patna University Senate.
- 1918 Set up English Daily "Searchlight" in association with Shri Sachinand Sinha and Shri Hasan Imam.
- 1920 Left legal practice and joined the 'Non-cooperation Movement
- 1921 Set up 'Rashtriya Mahavidyalaya' and 'Bihar Vidyapeeth', also played a key role in the functioning of the aforesaid institutions.
- 1923 Rendered services to the relief work of flood-affected people in Shahabad, Patna and Munger.
Elected as Chairman, Patna Municipality.
Elected as president of Akhil Bhartiya Sahitya Sammelan of Kakinada session.
- 1926 Presided over Bihar Prantiya Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Darbhanga.
- 1927 Presided over Sanyukt Prantiya Hindi Sahitaya Sammelan, Kangadi.
- 1928 Visited European countries, represented India in the 'Anti-war' campaign and participated in World Youth Peace Conference.
- 1930 Arrested in Salt Satyagrah on July 5, 1930.
- 1932 Arrested from Sadaqat Ashram, Patna on January 4, 1932.
- 1933 Arrested as executive chairman of Congress on January 6, 1933.
- 1934 On the disastrous earthquake in Bihar (January 15, 1934), after release from jail on January 17, 1934, set up the 'Bihar Central Relief Committee' and worked in providing help to the victims on a large scale.
On October 26, 1934, became President of Congress and presided successfully over the AICC in Bombay.
- 1935 For the victims of the Quetta Earthquake, set up Quetta Central Relief Committee and worked as president.
- 1936 Presided over Akhil Bhartiya Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at the Nagpur conference.
- 1937 Allahabad University honored the Doctor of Law Degree
- 1939 After the resignation of Subhash Chandra Bose from the post of Congress President, on request, he was assigned to be the President.
- 1942 From August 9, 1942 to June 15, 1945, he was arrested for his active role in the 'Quit India Movement'. He was prisoned in Bankipur Jail, Patna.
- 1946 On September 2, 1946, he became Food and Agriculture Minister in the interim Government.
Elected as Permanent President of Constituent Assembly.

- Received D.Litt degree from the University of Dublin in Ireland. Awarded this degree in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field of law and his leadership in the Indian independence movement.
- 1947 In November 1947, after the resignation of Acharya Kriplani, he became the Congress President for the third time.
- 1950 On January 16, 1950, Sagar University honored with a Doctor of Law Degree.
On January 26, 1950, he took the oath of interim President of the Indian Republic.
On February 28, 1950, Benaras Hindu University honored with '*Vidyavachaspati*'
- 1951 On January 26, 1951, Punjab University honored him with a 'Doctor of Letters' degree.
On April 10, 1951, Mysore University honored with a 'Doctor of Law' degree.
- 1952 Became the first President of the Republic of India on May 13, 1952.
- 1956 Harmony (Sadbhavana) Journey to Nepal in October 1956.
- 1957 After the election, took the oath of President on May 13, 1957.
- 1958 Harmony (Sadbhavana) Journey to Japan, Honoured with "Doctor of Budhology" and "Doctor of Literature" by Foreign Universities.
Journey to Indonesia.
Harmony (Sadbhavana) Journey to Malaysia.
- 1959 Visited Cambodia, South Vietnam, North Vietnam and Laos
Visited Sri Lanka and Cyclone University honored 'Doctor of Letters'
- 1960 Harmony (Sadbhavana) Journey to Russia. Moscow University honored a 'Doctorate' degree.
- 1962 On May 13, 1962, completed tenure as President of India.
On May 13, 1962, the newly elected President honored Bharat Ratna for extraordinary contributions to the Indian independence movement and dedicated service to the nation
Arrival at Sadaqat Ashram, Patna on May 14, 1962.
Demise of wife, Smt. Rajvanshi Devi on September 7, 1962.
Delivered inspiring talks to motivate youth and people to protect India from the Chinese attack.
- 1963 On February 28, 1963, demise in Sadaquat Ashram, Patna.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Amitabh Rajan is a retired Indian Administrative Service Officer of the Maharashtra cadre (1979). He was the Home Secretary to the Government of Maharashtra for three years, District Magistrate for five years and served at the highest policy levels in the union ministries of finance, personnel and social justice for several years. He was also Chairman and Managing Director of a national development finance corporation for five years and an Independent Director on the Board of the State Trading Corporation for three years. He is the recipient of several awards, including the Government of India Award for Excellence in the Achievement of MOU Targets from the President of India (2003), the Indian Institute of Public Administration Award for Best Article in Indian Journal of Public Administration from the Vice-President of India (2018), SCOPE Meritorious Award for Best Managed Public Sector Enterprise from the Prime Minister of India (2008) and Institute of Chartered Accountants of India Award for Excellence in financial reporting from the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir (2005).

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Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD: A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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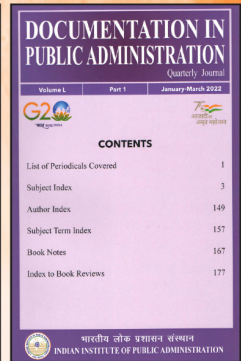
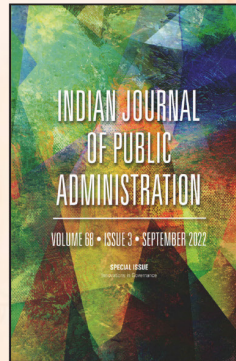
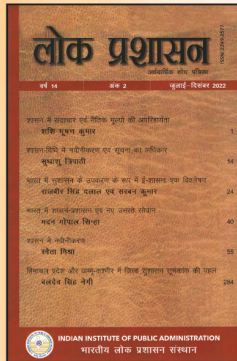
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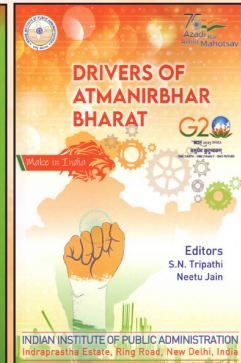
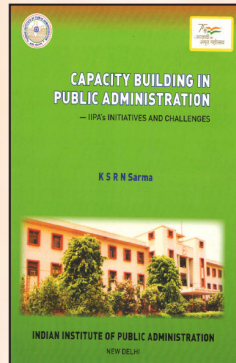
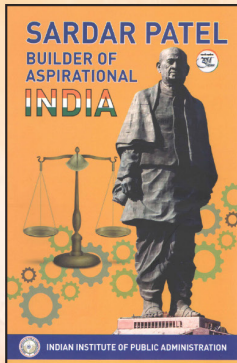
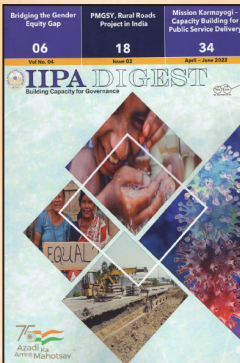


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About the Book

The book *Bharatratna: Inspiring Works of Rajendra Prasad* is both a tribute to Dr. Prasad, the first President of the Republic of India, and a kaleidoscope of the rich and diverse heritage of 'Indian' cultural practices as Dr. Prasad saw it through the eyes of someone with a deep faith in rule of law. The book brings to life his contribution as a true son of Bharatmata. It connects seamlessly with anyone interested in trajectory of India's nation-building, especially the youth. His contributions to the freedom movement is inspirational. Dr. Prasad's organisational skills and leadership qualities endeared him to the masses and fellow leaders like Gandhi, Nehru and Patel alike. His passion for ameliorating the lot of general public, and commitment to the ideals of freedom struggle had the means-end balance that has been the hallmark of India's freedom struggle. This jewel of India, son of soil, the brother of indigo planters was the archetypal Indian leader who so very much identified with those he led, and is to this day remembered as a leader and maker of modern India.


The book navigates through the life and times of Dr. Prasad, and what that has an offer to help India and tap into its rich spiritual, ideological and cultural roots to make India great again. His speeches, writings and the part he played in freedom movement is a lesson, that the present generation needs to draw from.





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