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"My entire life has been sustained by people's blessings. Their blessings have been my greatest source of energy."

Prime Minister
Shri Narendra Modi

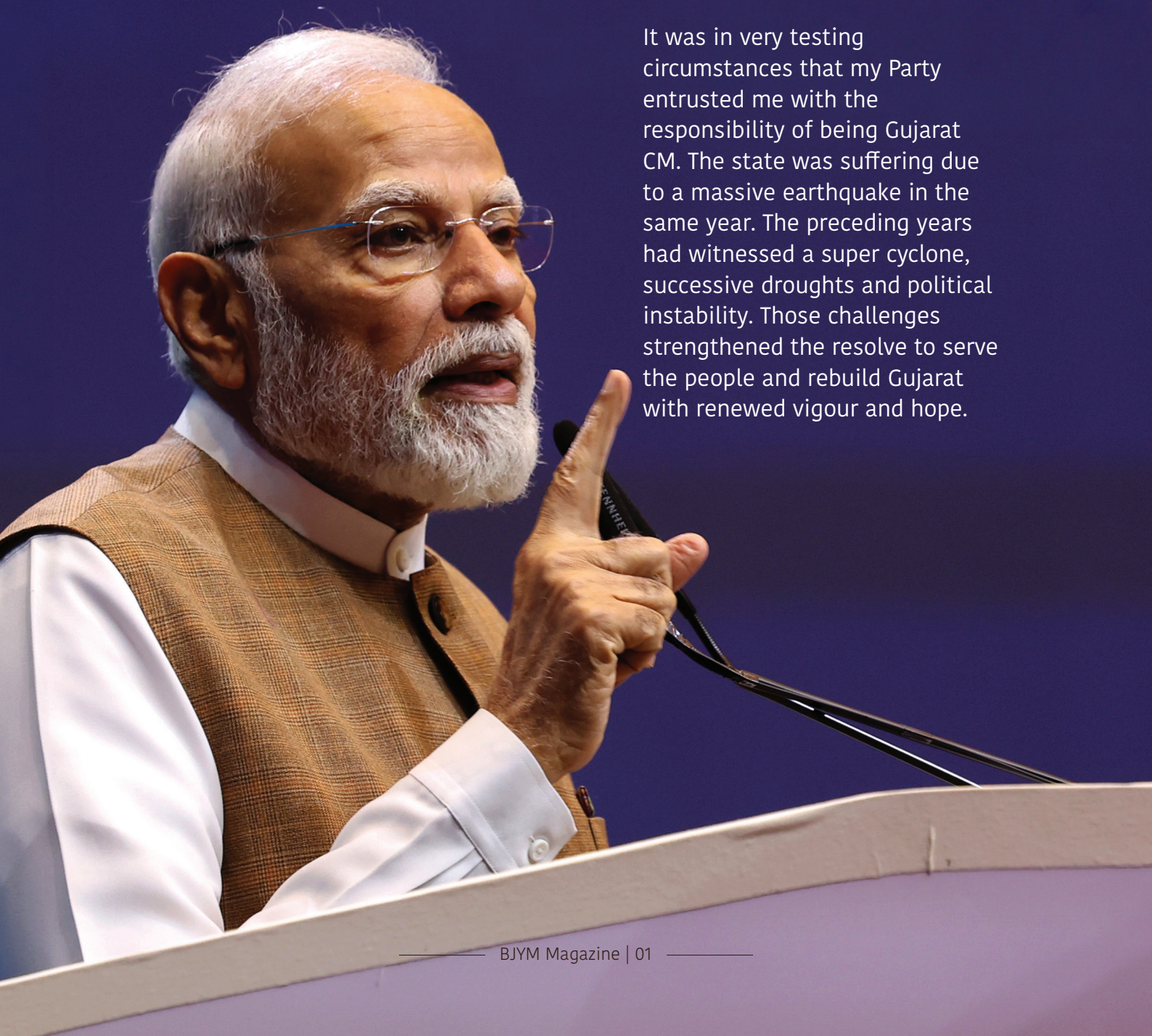


Remarks of the Prime Minister

Shri Narendra Modi

On this day in 2001, I took the oath as Gujarat's Chief Minister for the first time. Thanks to the continuous blessings of my fellow Indians, I am entering my 25th year of serving as the head of a government. My gratitude to the people of India. Through all these years, it has been my constant endeavour to improve the lives of our people and contribute to the progress of this great nation that has nurtured us all.

It was in very testing circumstances that my Party entrusted me with the responsibility of being Gujarat CM. The state was suffering due to a massive earthquake in the same year. The preceding years had witnessed a super cyclone, successive droughts and political instability. Those challenges strengthened the resolve to serve the people and rebuild Gujarat with renewed vigour and hope.



When I took the oath as Chief Minister, I remember my Mother telling me - I do not have much understanding of your work, but I only seek two things. First, you will always work for the poor and second, you will never take a bribe. I also told people that whatever I do will be with the best intent and will be inspired by a vision to serve the very last person in the queue.

These 25 years have been filled with many experiences. Together, we have made remarkable strides. I still recall that when I took over as CM, it was believed that Gujarat could never rise again. Common citizens, including farmers, complained about the lack of power and water. Agriculture was in the doldrums, and industrial growth was stagnant. From there, we all worked collectively to make Gujarat a powerhouse of good governance.

Gujarat, a drought-prone state, became a top-performing state in agriculture. The culture of trading expanded into robust industrial and manufacturing capacities. Regular curfews became a thing of the past. Social and physical infrastructure received a boost. It was very satisfying to be able to work with the people to achieve these outcomes.

In 2013, I was given the responsibility of being the Prime Ministerial candidate for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Those days, the nation was witnessing a crisis of trust and governance. The then UPA Government was synonymous with the worst form of corruption, cronyism and policy paralysis. India was seen as a weak link in the global order. But the wisdom of the people of India gave our alliance a thumping majority and also ensured that our Party got an absolute majority, a first after 3 long decades.

Over the last 11 years, we, the people of India, have worked together and achieved many transformations. Our path-breaking efforts have empowered people across India, especially our Nari Shakti, Yuva Shakti, and hardworking Annadatas. Over 25 crore people have been removed from the clutches of poverty. India is seen as a bright spot among major global economies. We are home to one of the largest healthcare and social security schemes in the world. Our farmers are innovating and ensuring that our nation is self-reliant. We have undertaken extensive reforms, and the popular sentiment is to make India Aatmanirbhar across all sectors, reflected in the clarion call of ‘Garv Se Kaho, Yeh Swadeshi Hai.’

I once again thank the people of India for their continuous trust and affection. To serve our beloved nation is the highest honour, a duty that fills me with gratitude and purpose. With the values of our Constitution as my constant guide, I will work even harder in the times to come to realise our collective dream of a Viksit Bharat.

Source: Post on X, October 7 2025

भाजपा राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष **श्री नितिन नबीन** का वक्तव्य

राष्ट्रसेवा और समर्पण के पर्याय, 140 करोड़ देशवासियों के नेतृत्वकर्ता आदरणीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी को जन्मदिन की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ।

'Nation First' के संकल्प के साथ आपकी यह यात्रा सेवा, सुशासन और जन कल्याण की एक प्रेरक गाथा रही है। यह यात्रा किसी एक व्यक्ति की नहीं, बल्कि देशवासियों के उस सामूहिक स्वप्न की भी यात्रा है, जिसे आपने अपने कर्म और साधना से दिशा दी है।

आपके मार्गदर्शन में भारत विकास और आत्मनिर्भरता के नए आयाम गढ़ रहा है तथा विश्व पटल पर अपनी नई पहचान और सामर्थ्य के साथ निरंतर आगे बढ़ रहा है। ईश्वर से प्रार्थना है कि आपको उत्तम स्वास्थ्य, दीर्घायु और निरंतर राष्ट्रसेवा की शक्ति प्रदान करें।

स्रोत: X



Message from the BJYM National President **Shri Hemang Joshi**

When Shri Narendra Modi took the oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat on 7 October 2001, I was a ten-year-old boy studying in school. Like millions of young Gujaratis, I grew up watching the state rebuild itself after the Kutch earthquake. Villages got round-the-clock electricity through Jyotigram. Girls went to school because of Kanya Kelavani. A government that had once seemed distant started to feel close enough to hear us. We did not have the vocabulary for it then, but we were living through a new idea of governance, one where power is held as a trust, and the leader sees himself first as a Sevak.



Twenty-five years later, that idea has grown from Gandhinagar to the entire nation. This special issue of our magazine marks that journey: 25 Years of Seva.

What strikes me most about these twenty-five years is not their length, but their consistency. Offices changed, responsibilities grew, and challenges became global, yet the core commitment stayed the same: governance must reach the last person in the queue. That is why a pucca house, a gas connection, a bank account and a tap at the doorstep matter. They are not just schemes. They are dignity delivered. And that is why India, once written off as one of the "Fragile Five", now speaks to the world with confidence and in its own civilisational voice.

For those of us in the Yuva Morcha, this journey is more than something to admire. It is a model to follow. I began as a student activist at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, without any political background. The fact that a young worker like me can be entrusted with responsibility in this organisation is itself proof of the culture PM Modi has strengthened: an organisation that rewards commitment, not connections. We work with one conviction: the nation is greater than the party, and the party is greater than the individual.

Contributors to this issue come from classrooms, courtrooms, research institutions, and our own ranks. They look at these twenty-five years through many lenses: the decolonisation of the Indian mind, the citizen becoming a partner in development, women's changing opportunities, cooperative federalism, digital inclusion, humanitarian outreach and the revival of our knowledge traditions. I thank each of them for their thoughtful work. Together, their essays show that seva is not only an emotion. It is also a method of governance.

As the party carries the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan to every corner of the country, I urge every BJYM karyakarta to see it as a personal resolve, not a campaign. Donate blood. Join the cleanliness drives. Help people learn about and access the welfare schemes meant for them. Above all, carry into your own work, whatever field you are in, the discipline and dedication this journey has shown us.

India's youth will build the Viksit Bharat of 2047. The foundations have been laid over these twenty-five years. The responsibility of building on them is now ours.

Vande Mataram!

Dr. Hemang Joshi

National President, BJYM &
MP, Lok Sabha, Vadodara

EDITORIAL

On 7 October 2001, Narendra Modi took the oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat. The state he inherited was still clearing the rubble of the Kutch earthquake, facing drought, and unsure of its footing. On 7 October 2026, he completes twenty-five years as head of an elected government, the first thirteen in Gandhinagar and the rest in New Delhi. Very few leaders in any democracy have held executive office this long, and fewer still have returned to the people again and again and been sent back with a larger mandate. This special issue marks that journey. But it is not meant as a list of offices held or elections won. It asks what those twenty-five years have meant, and it answers with one word: Seva.



In the Indian tradition, Seva has never meant charity handed down from above. It is the discipline of a person who does not see himself as separate from society. Modi has given this old idea a modern political form. He calls himself the Pradhan Sevak. He speaks of Jan Seva hi Prabhu Seva. And he has kept insisting that public office is a trust to be discharged, not a privilege to be enjoyed. Contributors to this issue come from classrooms, courtrooms, research institutions, and the organisation itself. Each traces how this ethic of service became a method of governance.

The first thread is continuity. Many of the ideas that now shape national policy were first tested in Gujarat. SWAGAT brought citizens' grievances straight to the Chief Minister's desk, and Digital India later carried that idea to the whole country. Jyotigram powered villages long before the national electrification drive. Kanya Kelavani took girls to school years before Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. Sujalam Sufalam treated water as a people's movement, and Jal Jeevan Mission later took tap water from about one rural household in six to more than four in five. The scale grew enormously, but the instinct stayed the same: government should go to the citizen, not wait for the citizen to come to it.

The second thread is dignity. A pucca house, an LPG connection, a bank account and a tap at the doorstep are not abstractions. They mark the line between surviving and aspiring. When nearly twenty-five crore Indians move out of multidimensional poverty, Antyodaya stops being a slogan and becomes something people live. Several of our writers make the same point: welfare is only the first step. The larger change is from beneficiary to partner. The citizen who once only received from the State now takes part in building the nation, through Swachh Bharat, through Mera Yuva Bharat, and through countless local initiatives that Mann Ki Baat has brought to national notice.

The third thread, perhaps the deepest, is confidence. One contributor, a history teacher, sees it in students who wear a tilak without self-consciousness. Another finds it in the change from asking "Can Bharat?" to asking "Why not Bharat?" A country once grouped among the "Fragile Five" chaired the G20, brought the African Union to its table, and in 2026 hosted the BRICS Summit. At home, the recovery of cultural memory, from Vadnagar's Buddhist past to the renewed study of Indian knowledge systems, has let a civilisation speak about itself again without apology. Seva has also crossed our borders. India now responds first to disasters in its neighbourhood and works as a development partner across the Global South, which is Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in practice.

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It is multiplication: millions of young Indians who treat nation-building as their own work, bring discipline to their own field, and hold themselves accountable to the country before any other loyalty.

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For the youth of this country, and for every BJYM karyakarta, this anniversary carries a responsibility. The organisation has long taught Vyakti se bada Samaj, Samaj se bada Desh: society above the individual, the organisation above society, the nation above all. PM Modi's public life, from swayamsevak to Chief Minister to Prime Minister, shows what that principle looks like when it is lived rather than recited. The right tribute to twenty-five years of seva is not applause. It is multiplication: millions of young Indians who treat nation-building as their own work, bring discipline to their own field, and hold themselves accountable to the country before any other loyalty.

The road to Viksit Bharat @2047 is long, and much of it will be walked by a generation that was not yet born in October 2001. The foundations have been laid. It now falls to us to build on them.

The Confidence to Belong

25 Years of Seva & the Decolonisation of the Indian Mind

Gourav Lama
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Former Vice President, BJYM
West Bengal.

Sometimes, the biggest changes and shifts in a country do not arrive with loud and pompous announcements or the passing of new bills and laws; instead, they come quietly. We encounter them in ordinary, everyday experiences: a student walking into my classroom wearing a tilak without self-consciousness, or a young person talking about a pilgrimage without that familiar defensive smirk.

Today, we Indians reference Indic philosophy and express it without feeling a sudden need to explain or defend it. As a teacher, I see this happening and realise we aren't just watching a political trend; we're witnessing a fundamental shift in lived consciousness. I see it as a quiet, slow recovery of our civilisational values and self-respect.



This is the framework through which I view Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's twenty-five years of public leadership and seva. When he first took his oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat on 7 October 2001, few would have predicted that his most important legacy would be psychological. He has bridged the enormous gap between academia and citizens, restoring India's cultural identity and confidence in the process.

The Burden of Alienation

To grasp the magnitude of this tectonic shift, we must understand the intellectual environment that preceded it. Great historians like R.C. Majumdar and his colleagues laid the foundational work for mapping our continuous cultural history. However, the academic ecosystem that followed them in the post-independence era was manipulated by narratives and ideas that, to a large extent, conditioned the Indian mind to feel alienated and distant from its own cultures and traditions. We were taught and trained to view our culture and heritage through imported sociological categories and lenses. Taking our Indian cultural inheritance seriously was viewed with intense suspicion; to be "modern" and "progressive" meant that we had to cut the cord to our ancestral cultural and traditional roots.

Standing at the Red Fort and addressing the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced himself not as the Prime Minister of India, but as the Pradhan Sevak (First Servant).

On a positive note, today we are finally witnessing a methodological evolution. A new generation of academics and scholars is teaching us to understand our past and culture through indigenous epistemologies and worldviews. The work of historians like Shonaleeka Kaul on early India, especially Kashmir, has shown that our "sacred geography" isn't merely a religious sentiment but a sophisticated spatial framework essential to the Indic worldview and its systems. Similarly, scholars like Nithin Sridhar are trying to reclaim traditional texts. In his work on the Manusmriti, for instance, Sridhar argues that we must read the Dharmashastras through their own internal logic and dynamics—as pramana shastras meant to illustrate the essence of Dharma and Moksha, rather than as the rigid socio-legal constitutions scholars have generally taken them to be.

This methodological shift is essential if we really want to decolonise the mind. It reminds us that true intellectual freedom demands that we engage with our history, culture and traditions on our own terms.

Democratising Decolonisation

However, historians are, at the end of the day, scholars. Academic monographs and articles usually stay trapped within university libraries, read mostly by faculty and students. Understanding that the idea of "sacred geography" is key to our traditional worldview makes a strong academic argument, but an argument confined to the closed spaces of universities and educational institutions does not, by itself, heal the psychological scars and bruises of a colonised society.

This is exactly where Prime Minister Modi's governance broke the old mould. Over the last two and a half decades, he took this abstract idea of indigenous cultural dignity out of university seminar rooms and classrooms and injected it directly into the lived experience of Indian citizens. In a way, he propelled the forces that democratised decolonisation among the masses.

Though the shift started earlier, it took a strong leap on 15 August 2014. Standing at the Red Fort and addressing the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced himself not as the Prime Minister of India, but as the Pradhan Sevak (First Servant). With that one idea and phrase, he rooted the traditional idea of political power back in an ancient Indic moral framework within modern political discourse. True seva, rooted in the cultural discourse of Bharat, means recognising the sacred sources of meaning that keep a society functioning, with a vision of serving others for the benefit of all.

In this light, we can see that a state or modern nation that builds infrastructure only for material prosperity, while ignoring the ongoing cultural and traditional erosion of its citizens in contemporary times, offers them only a half-measure of dignity.

The Honourable Prime Minister directly addressed this psychological alienation, which we had faced for many years, during his Independence Day address in 2022. He introduced the Panch Pran (Five Resolves), laying out a clear mandate for us, and stressed that we all need to totally uproot and eradicate the colonial mindset (Gulami ki maansikta se mukti) and to take uncompromising pride in our cultural heritage (Virasat par garv).

Most importantly, he did not just speak about this pride; he worked to build it. The inauguration of the renovated Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi in December 2021 is an important example, restoring a physical and substantial anchor of our sacred landscape and geography. He laid out a path for us to take up the responsibilities of civic duty (kartavya), such as swachhata (cleanliness) and digital innovation, while remaining fully devoted to our cultural and spiritual roots. It is important to underline that he showed the path to the Praja, or the citizens, by working continuously in the spirit of Seva Bhava.

An Inclusive Civilisational Continuum

This work of cultural renewal is also vast and inclusive, as it tries to embrace the entirety of our Sanatan culture and traditions. We have seen that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has deep reverence for the Tathagata Buddha, which is reflected in his vision to develop the Buddhist Circuit and the inauguration of the international exposition titled "The Light & the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One" in New Delhi. His reverence extends equally to the Jain tradition, as seen in his active participation in April 2024 in the 2550th Nirvana Mahotsav of Bhagwan Mahavira.

This decolonisation process is also reflected in language policy. In October 2024, the Union Cabinet's decision to grant Classical Language status to Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, Bengali, and Marathi was an important, monumental and long-overdue step. It opens new avenues and ensures that youth, scholars, and common citizens can reconnect directly with the important linguistic roots of our Jain, Buddhist, and other regional heritages, allowing us to read our own culture, history, and worldviews without colonial intermediaries and Western interventions.

The Renewal of Dharma

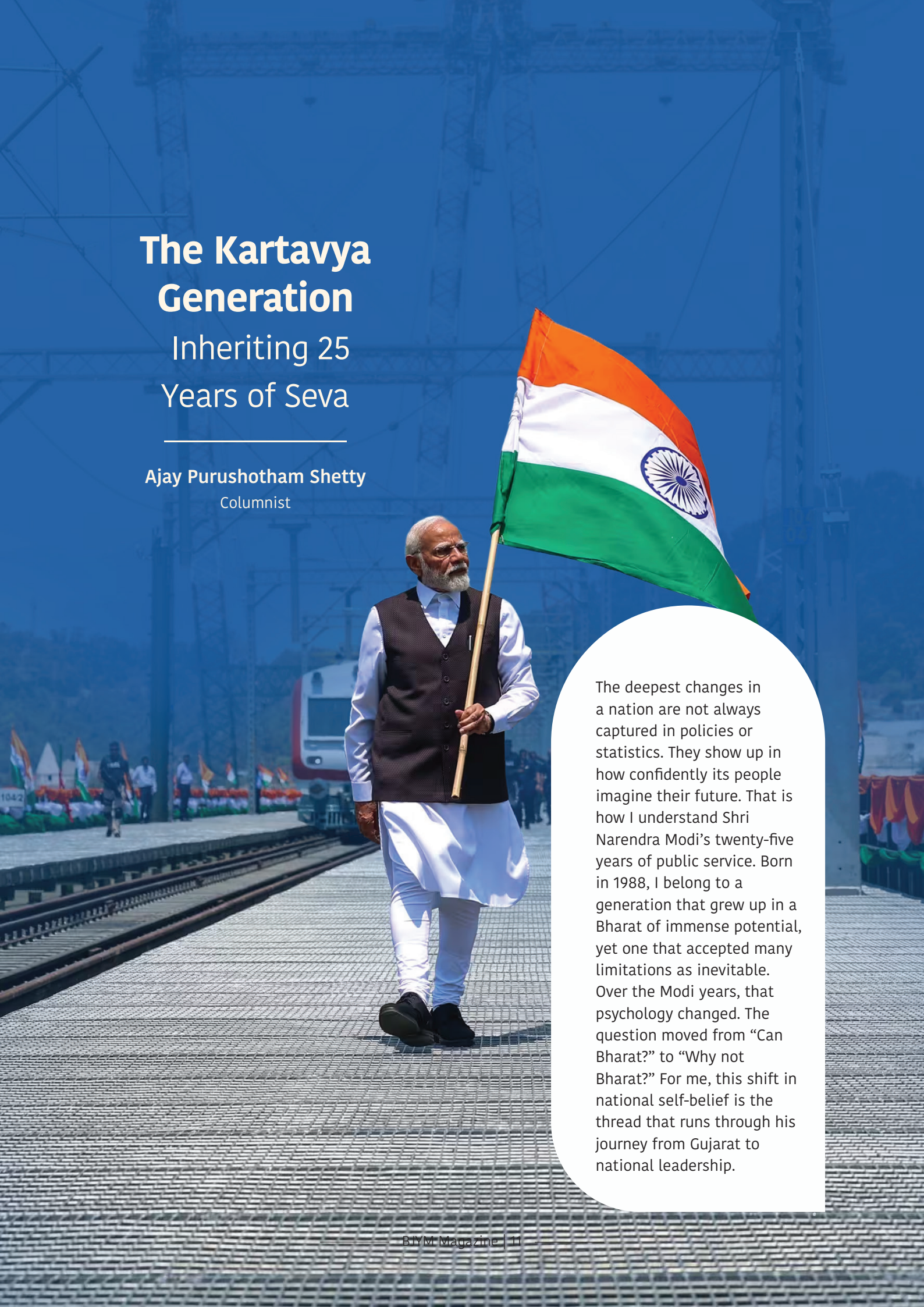
Narendra Modi's era of seva has stripped away the shame and inhibitions that once clouded the expression of our traditions, replacing them with psychological and material confidence in our culture. However, this renewed confidence also comes with a heavy ethical responsibility: the renewal of Dharma in public life should not become an excuse for chauvinistic triumphalism, which would undermine the task our Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken up. Dharma in its truest form is anchored in karu ā (compassion), dama (self-restraint), and satya (truth). A self-assured civilisation always makes room for others, and throughout history, our civilisation has welcomed and absorbed various traditions into its fold.

As our beloved Narendra Modi completes a quarter-century of public leadership, his most important and enduring legacy, at least for me, is written in the psychological rehabilitation that comes with decolonising the Indian mind. Dharma never actually left us; it survived quietly in the practices and devotion of the masses and ordinary people. The Pradhan Sevak has empowered us to stand tall, claim our inheritance in our own cultural terms, step into the 21st-century light with the unshakeable dignity of a people who finally remember who they are, and take a strong resolve to work for a Viksit Bharat.

The Kartavya Generation

Inheriting 25 Years of Seva

Ajay Purushotham Shetty
Columnist



The deepest changes in a nation are not always captured in policies or statistics. They show up in how confidently its people imagine their future. That is how I understand Shri Narendra Modi's twenty-five years of public service. Born in 1988, I belong to a generation that grew up in a Bharat of immense potential, yet one that accepted many limitations as inevitable. Over the Modi years, that psychology changed. The question moved from "Can Bharat?" to "Why not Bharat?" For me, this shift in national self-belief is the thread that runs through his journey from Gujarat to national leadership.

From Dignity to National Aspiration

Lessons from Gujarat

Shri Narendra Modi took office as Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2001, while the state was still recovering from a devastating earthquake. His emphasis on execution, enterprise and Jan Bhagidari showed that governance could turn citizens into participants rather than passive recipients. As Prime Minister, he carried that instinct to the national stage.

Dignity at the Doorstep

Food security, pucca housing, LPG connections, tap water, bank accounts and Direct Benefit Transfer addressed the dignity of everyday life, while UPI widened inclusion through technology. NITI Aayog estimates that 24.82 crore Indians moved out of multidimensional poverty between 2013-14 and 2022-23. To me, this is Antyodaya made practical: once basic needs are secured, families can look beyond survival towards education, enterprise and aspiration.

From "Fragile Five" to Shaping the Global Agenda

The economic turnaround is equally striking. In 2012, commentators questioned whether India was the weak link in BRIC, with some even suggesting that its "I" be replaced by Indonesia. In 2013, India was grouped among the "Fragile Five". In 2026, PM Modi chaired the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi. Bharat had moved from having its place questioned to helping set the global agenda. Make in India, increasingly framed as "Make in India, Make for the World", gave this change an industrial direction, with manufacturing, semiconductors and emerging technologies pointing to an economy that seeks to create, innovate and export.

A New Scale of Ambition

This new ambition is visible across infrastructure and science. The Statue of Unity became the world's tallest statue, the Chenab Rail Bridge the world's highest railway arch bridge, and the Atal Tunnel the world's longest highway tunnel above 10,000 feet. Chandrayaan-3 made India the first country to soft-land near the Moon's south polar region, while SpaDeX demonstrated space-docking capability.

Security Through Self-Reliance

The same confidence extends to strategic capability. Defence production has expanded around platforms such as Tejas, Akash, BrahMos and INS Vikrant, with growing emphasis on indigenous design, manufacturing and exports. The surgical strikes after Uri and Operation Sindoor after Pahalgam signalled a new willingness to respond decisively to cross-border terrorism.

Defence production has expanded around platforms such as Tejas, Akash, BrahMos and INS Vikrant, with growing emphasis on indigenous design, manufacturing and exports.

Seva, Kartavya and Public Life

Public Life Beyond Lineage

For young Indians who do not come from political families, and I count myself among them, Shri Narendra Modi's journey carries special meaning. His call for one lakh young people from non-political backgrounds to enter public life strengthened my belief that politics need not remain an inherited preserve. It can also be entered through work, discipline, Seva and public trust.

The Pradhan Sevak and a Rooted Republic

By calling himself the Pradhan Sevak, PM Modi placed service rather than status at the centre of political office. Race Course Road became Lok Kalyan Marg, Rajpath became Kartavya Path, and the Prime Minister's Office moved into Seva Teerth. The Sengol was given a place of honour in the new Parliament, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose now stands where King George V once did, and the Navy adopted an ensign inspired by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Together, these changes reflect an effort to help independent Bharat think and govern with deeper roots in its own history.

A Personal Connection with Udupi

I first felt that connection personally when I saw PM Modi at Udupi's MGM College Grounds during the 2018 Karnataka Assembly campaign. He recalled

Udupi's early role in the growth of the Jan Sangh and acknowledged the region's contribution to education, banking and public life. Seven years later, at Shri Krishna Matha during the Laksha Kantha Gita Parayana, he said that the Gita can guide not only individual life but also national policy. His nine resolves, among them water conservation, Swadeshi, yoga and the preservation of manuscripts, translated spiritual wisdom into contemporary Kartavya.

Vikas, Virasat and the Civilisational Continuum

Kashi: Renewal Without Erasure

PM Modi's idea of "Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi" became more meaningful to me through my own journeys. I have visited Kashi twice, and the transformation of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham showed how a sacred centre can be made accessible to modern pilgrims while preserving its spiritual character. At its inauguration, PM Modi reminded the nation that when an Aurangzeb comes, a Shivaji also rises. The message was clear: Bharat may endure rupture, but it retains the strength to rebuild.

Somnath, Mahakal and the Sangam

Destroyed and rebuilt repeatedly over the centuries, Somnath Mandir is a reminder that civilisational memory can outlast assault. Shri Mahakaleshwar Mandir carries a different symbolism: Mahakal, the Lord of Time, evokes a continuity that outlives kingdoms and generations. When Allahabad reclaimed the name Prayagraj and PM Modi spoke of the Kumbh as an expression of Bharat's unity, I felt drawn to experience it myself. Taking the sacred dip at the Triveni Sangam reaffirmed for me how traditions carried across centuries can still unite millions in a shared sense of belonging.

Conviction into Decision

The same conviction shaped historic decisions. In 2019, the Modi government rendered most provisions of Article 370 inoperative, fulfilling a long-standing commitment associated with Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee and the cause of national integration. In January 2024, PM Modi took part in the Pran Pratishtha of Shri Ram Lalla at Ayodhya. His words, "Ram is not fire; Ram is energy. Ram is not a dispute; Ram is a solution", framed that moment in the language of harmony and national renewal.

Bharat Before the World

Yoga, the G20 and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

PM Modi has also carried this rootedness onto the world stage. In 2014, he proposed an International Day of Yoga at the United Nations, and 21 June has since become a global observance. During India's G20 Presidency, the theme "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: One Earth, One Family, One Future" placed an Indian civilisational idea at the centre of global diplomacy. To me, Vishwaguru does not mean superiority. It means the responsibility of a civilisation secure in itself to contribute to humanity.

The Kartavya Ahead

A Change in National Expectations

As Shri Narendra Modi completes twenty-five years of public leadership, I do not see his legacy as a catalogue of schemes, projects or election victories. I see a transformation in what the nation expects. Citizens now expect delivery and accountability. Young Indians believe Bharat can innovate, build at global scale, defend itself with resolve, stay rooted in its civilisation and speak to the world in its own voice.

Towards Viksit Bharat 2047

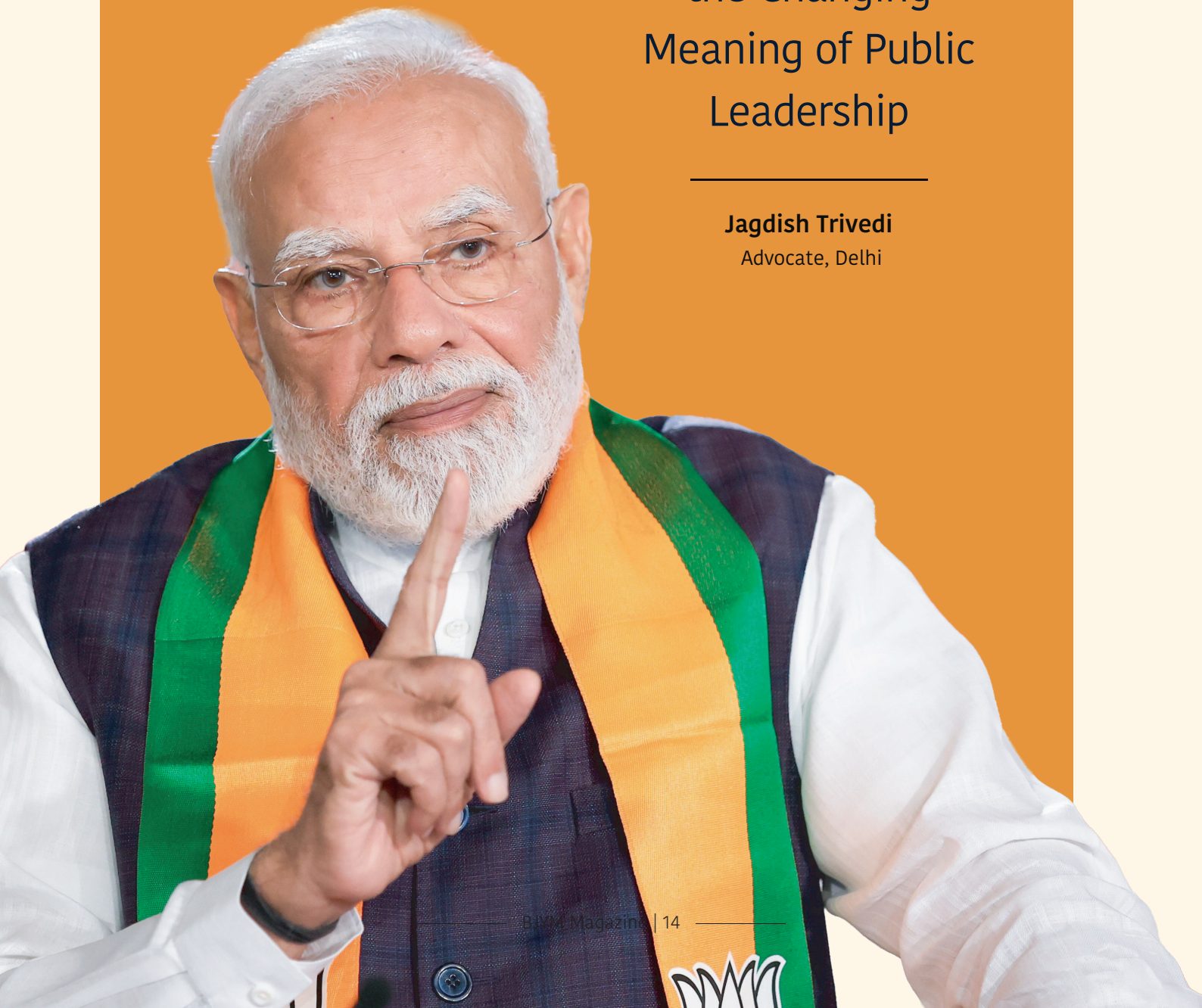
When Bharat marks one hundred years of Independence in 2047, Viksit Bharat must be a lived reality: prosperous, secure, self-reliant, compassionate towards the weakest and rooted in its civilisational inheritance. Through twenty-five years of Seva, institution-building and national renewal, Shri Narendra Modi has laid strong foundations for that journey.

The Kartavya before our generation is to build on those foundations and carry forward the mission he has inspired.

Seva as a Democratic Idea

Twenty-Five Years, Jan Bhagidari, and the Changing Meaning of Public Leadership

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Twenty-five years in public office can be measured in elections, offices held and policies implemented. But in a democracy, longevity means something more demanding. Power is never self-justifying; it must repeatedly return to the people for legitimacy. That is why the public journey of Prime Minister Narendra Modi—from taking the oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat on 7 October 2001 to his present tenure as Prime Minister—invites a question larger than any one government's record: what does sustained public service mean in a Republic?

For a young Indian, and particularly for a young lawyer, the most interesting aspect of this journey is not simply continuity in office. It is the political idea that has accompanied it: seva as duty, jan bhagidari as a method of governance, and public participation as an instrument through which the citizen is invited to become more than a recipient of the State.

From Office to Obligation

The Constitution does not create rulers; it creates constitutional offices, limited by law and sustained by democratic consent. Its opening words—"We, the People of India"—place the citizen before the institution. Article 75 makes the Union Council of Ministers collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha; Article 14 binds the State to equality before law; and the Directive Principles remind every government that public power carries social obligations. The constitutional vocabulary is therefore one of responsibility, not entitlement.

Against that background, the language of seva acquires democratic content. As he entered his twenty-fifth year as head of government in October 2025, Prime Minister Modi publicly recalled his first oath as Gujarat Chief Minister and described service to the country as a duty, while referring to constitutional values as a continuing guide. Whatever one's political perspective, the democratic principle is worth dwelling on: elected authority is held in trust, and its legitimacy must be continuously earned through public work and public accountability.

Gujarat's circumstances in 2001 also matter for understanding the political narrative that followed. The State had suffered the devastating Kutch earthquake and had faced drought and other serious challenges. The governing vocabulary that emerged in subsequent years increasingly emphasised reconstruction, administrative delivery and mobilisation of "Jana Shakti". That experience later became part of a wider national political proposition: government can set direction, but transformation at India's scale requires citizens to participate.

Jan Bhagidari: When the Citizen Becomes a Participant

The highest tribute to twenty-five years of seva, therefore, is not applause. It is multiplication, creating millions of Indians who believe that nation-building is also their work.

This, to my mind, is one of the more consequential ideas associated with the last twenty-five years: the attempt to convert governance from a transaction between ruler and beneficiary into a partnership between State and citizen.

The distinction is important. A government programme can construct infrastructure, allocate funds or issue directions. A people's movement must change behaviour. Cleanliness is the clearest example. Swachh Bharat could never have succeeded as an engineering exercise alone; toilets without use, waste systems without civic discipline and municipal action without citizen ownership would have produced limited change. The programme was therefore repeatedly framed as a Jan Andolan, with citizens asked to become agents of cleanliness rather than passive beneficiaries. Government accounts of the mission themselves describe people's ownership and leadership as central to converting a governmental programme into a people's programme.

The same logic is visible in water conservation. The current Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari approach expressly treats rainwater harvesting and



conservation as a shared responsibility. In 2026, the Government continued to describe "Catch the Rain" in precisely these participatory terms. The underlying proposition is simple: the State may build systems, but a civilisation conserves resources only when conservation becomes social conduct.

This model is open to criticism, as any democratic model should be. Participation must never become a substitute for governmental responsibility. Citizens cannot be asked to compensate for institutional failure. Jan Bhagidari is strongest when it supplements a capable State—when public institutions provide resources, transparency and accountability, while citizens provide ownership, feedback and collective action.

The Psychological Dimension of Governance

Politics also operates in the realm of expectation. Nations are shaped not only by GDP, statutes and institutions, but by what their citizens believe is possible.

For much of post-Independence public discourse, India often described its constraints more confidently than its possibilities. Scarcity, administrative delay and limited state capacity were too easily treated as permanent features of Indian life. A significant feature of the political vocabulary of the Modi era has been an insistence on scale and national ambition: Swachh Bharat, Digital India, Startup India, Atmanirbhar Bharat and, ultimately, Viksit Bharat 2047. These initiatives are different in substance, but they share a rhetorical premise—that India need not define its future by the limitations it inherited.

That rhetoric deserves assessment against outcomes, as all governmental claims must. Yet rhetoric itself is not trivial. Leadership partly consists of enlarging the horizon against which citizens judge institutions. Once people begin to expect direct delivery, cleaner public spaces, digital access, time-bound infrastructure and globally competitive public systems, those expectations become a form of democratic pressure. The standard demanded from the next government is then higher than the standard accepted from the last.

Leadership Without Inheritance

There is another reason this twenty-five-year journey has particular resonance for young political workers. Narendra Modi's political biography is not one of inherited elected office. The BJP has presented his rise from organisational work to the chief ministership and then the prime ministership as an example of advancement through party organisation and electoral politics rather than familial succession.

In a democracy, the larger principle should transcend any individual or party: public leadership ought to remain open to talent from outside

established political families. Political parties are among the most important institutions of representative democracy, and their internal cultures influence who gets an opportunity to govern. The aspiration that an ordinary karyakarta can rise through work, organisation and public acceptance is therefore a democratic ideal worth preserving across the political spectrum.

Merit in politics, of course, cannot be reduced to biography. It must ultimately be tested by constitutional conduct, administrative performance, public accountability and repeated electoral scrutiny. But the widening of political imagination matters. A young citizen should be able to look at public life and believe that leadership is not a hereditary entitlement.

What Twenty-Five Years of Seva Should Mean to Us

The easiest way to commemorate a political milestone is to praise the individual. The more meaningful way is to ask what standard the milestone creates for everyone who seeks public life.

If seva is to mean anything, it must impose discipline. It means that political office cannot become personal privilege. It means that the last citizen in the queue matters as much as the loudest person in the room. It means being answerable when systems fail, correcting them rather than defending the indefensible, and remembering that constitutional power is temporary even when public service is lifelong.

It also creates duties for citizens. Democracy cannot survive as a five-yearly transaction in which government is expected to perform while citizens withdraw from civic responsibility. Article 51A of the Constitution speaks of fundamental duties: preserving the nation's unity and integrity, promoting harmony, protecting the environment, developing scientific temper and striving towards excellence. These are not decorative constitutional sentiments. They describe the civic character without which Viksit Bharat cannot be built.

Jan Bhagidari, properly understood, is therefore not a slogan about helping the government. It is an argument about democratic citizenship. The Republic belongs to neither a government nor an opposition. It belongs to its people, and each generation inherits both its rights and its unfinished work.

The Measure of a Legacy

Twenty-five years after 7 October 2001, the most useful reflection is not whether every decision was perfect; no serious account of democratic leadership can demand such a fiction. The more enduring question is whether a political journey changes the expectations citizens carry into the future.

If Indians now demand faster delivery, greater visibility of public officials, cleaner administration, stronger national ambition and measurable outcomes, those expectations themselves become institutional assets. They bind not merely the present government but every government that follows.

For young Indians entering law, politics, administration, enterprise or public service, that may be the most important lesson of these twenty-five years: leadership is not the possession of authority. It is converting authority into responsibility.

India does not need citizens who merely admire leaders. It needs citizens who absorb the ethic of service, demand constitutional accountability and bring the same discipline into their own sphere of work. The highest tribute to twenty-five years of seva, therefore, is not applause. It is multiplication, creating millions of Indians who believe that nation-building is also their work.

That is when leadership becomes larger than a leader. That is when governance becomes Jan Bhagidari. And that is how a political journey becomes part of a national renewal.

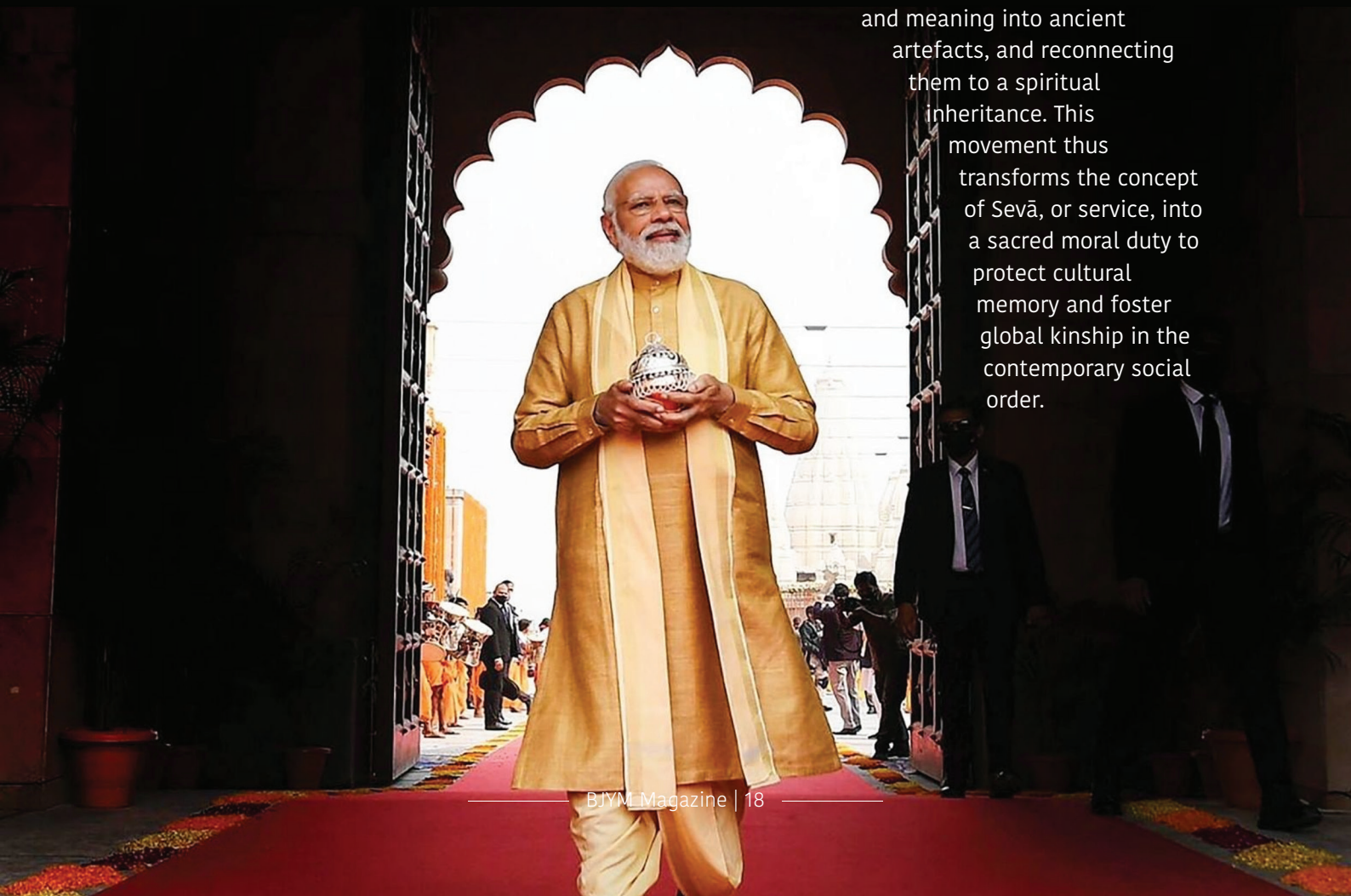
From Vadnagar to Varanasi

How Bharat Rediscovered the Dharma's Gift to the World

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Before the modern political borders were drawn on maps, the Indian subcontinent was united by something far more enduring than the great empires of the past: a philosophy of profound Karuna and ahimsa. It is believed that from the Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya to the deer park in Sarnath where the Wheel of Dharma was first turned, the teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha left an important mark in the history of humanity. His teachings of karu ā (compassion), prajñā (wisdom), and ahi sā (non-violence) did not simply stay within the sanghas or monastic orders; they spread outward like a great river, quenching the spiritual thirst of Bharat and the rest of the world.

For centuries, however, much of India's archaeological heritage lay quietly beneath the ground or behind museum shelves and glass, where it was respected but treated as relics of ancient times. Today, we are witnessing something beautiful and long overdue: a civilisational resurgence. Bharat is not just preserving its Buddhist heritage but also remembering it, breathing new life and meaning into ancient artefacts, and reconnecting them to a spiritual inheritance. This movement thus transforms the concept of Sevā, or service, into a sacred moral duty to protect cultural memory and foster global kinship in the contemporary social order.



A Tapestry of Time: From Vadnagar to Sarnath

A striking, almost poetic symmetry emerges in how this revival intertwines with the leadership of contemporary India. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's journey reflects a civilisational continuum that spans thousands of years.

vWe can chart this journey from Vadnagar, his birthplace in Gujarat. It is not just a modern town; beneath Vadnagar's soil, archaeologists have uncovered a vibrant, ancient Buddhist monastic settlement. The legendary Chinese monk-scholar Xuanzang also walked the streets of Vadnagar in the seventh century, searching for truth and seeking to understand the Dharma. To be born in a sacred place where such monumental spiritual exchange once happened is also to inherit Bharat's great cultural legacy.

This journey also continues to Varanasi; the ancient city Modi now represents in Parliament. Just a short distance from the ancient ghats of Varanasi lies the sacred space of Sarnath. Near it, the historical Buddha, newly awakened, delivered his first sermon to his first five disciples. This connection between a childhood spent in a forgotten Buddhist landscape and a public life anchored beside the very sacred landscape of Dharma is evocative. It reflects a larger civilisational effort to collect the scattered pieces of India's Buddhist heritage and weave them together into a meaningful, living narrative.

Nalanda: The Phoenix of Ancient Wisdom

To see the crux of this renaissance, we need to look at Nalanda. For many centuries, under the patronage of the Palas, the ancient Nalanda Mahāvihāra was the intellectual and spiritual nucleus of the world. Monks, astronomers, logicians, astrologers and philosophers came from as far as Korea, Japan, Tibet, and Mongolia to study the Dharma and carry its essence back to their lands. So, when Nalanda was lost to the ravages of time and the attacks of invaders, Bharat did not just lose a university; it lost a sacred landscape that helped to spread the Dharma throughout the world. The modern establishment of Nalanda University is a triumph of our heritage. When the new campus was inaugurated in 2024, it was not only about constructing buildings but also about honouring our lost heritage. Designed as a Net Zero green campus with solar power and water recycling, the new Nalanda embodies the Buddhist ideal of reverence for nature.

Essentially, it asks an important question. We know what the ancient Nalanda Mahavihara gave to the world, but what can this new Nalanda University offer today? Our contemporary world is fractured by ecological crises, isolation, and political conflict; in this context, the Nalanda Mahavihara is reborn as a space where ancient Buddhist philosophy and ethics can be in direct dialogue with modern global challenges facing humanity. It returns to the belief that true knowledge transcends borders, especially in a new world order.

The Homecoming of the Sacred

Perhaps the most deeply moving chapter in this resurgence is the story of the sacred relics. To a museum curator, a relic is an artefact; to millions of devotees around the world, it is the living breath of the Buddha, a tangible and direct link to the Buddha.

In 1898, an excavation at the Piprahwa Stupa unearthed sacred gems and corporeal relics of the Buddha. Over a century later, in 2025, a collection of these deeply sacred items was about to be auctioned to the highest bidder in Hong Kong. Recognising the spiritual wound this would cause to all the Sanatans, the Indian government intervened to bring them back to India. They were not only fighting for a piece of antique jewellery, but they were fighting for the dignity of faith. Therefore, under the able leadership of Modi, after 127 years, the relics returned to Bharat.

However, this homecoming of the ancient sacred treasure was only the beginning. In a continuing gesture of spiritual diplomacy, Bharat has begun sharing these sacred relics with the world. When such relics travel from India, weeping, joyful crowds in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Mongolia, and Bhutan venerate them. This spiritual diplomacy has thus transcended politics, and India is once again seen as a Guru to the world. It is Sevā in its purest form:

Modi has not only protected a shared heritage but also offered it as a bridge of love between nations.

Bengal: Awakening the Forgotten Frontier

As this resurgence blooms, a new horizon beckons: Bengal. While the international gaze naturally turns to Bodh Gaya and Sarnath, the extraordinary Buddhist legacy of eastern India especially in Bengal, has long remained in the shadows. During the era of the Pāla empire, Bengal was a dynamic, thriving cradle of Tantric and Vajrayāna Buddhism, producing luminous minds like Atīśa Dīpa kara Śrījñāna, who travelled to Indonesia and back to India, then crossed the treacherous Himalayas to revive the Dharma in Tibet. Beneath Bengal's soil lie sites of profound historical importance, from the monastic cells of Jagjivanpur in Malda to the ancient Raktam ttikā Mahāvihāra in the modern Murshidabad district. However, these ruins must be revived rather than remain silent mounds of earth.
This is precisely where Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dual philosophies of Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi (Development Alongside Heritage) and Mission Purvodaya offer a transformative roadmap for reviving the Buddhist heritage. His governance has consistently recognised that the resurgence of Eastern India, especially Bengal, is incomplete without reclaiming its spiritual and intellectual essence. Just as Gujarat's forgotten Buddhist heritage at Vadnagar was unearthed and integrated into living cultural memory during his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat, Bengal today presents the next civilisational frontier under his Act East vision, especially after the Bharatiya Janata Party's victory in the 2026 State elections established a double-engine government. Therefore, by integrating these historic sites into a new, extended Bengal Buddhist Heritage Circuit and supporting various institutional platforms such as a dedicated Centre for Buddhist and Vajrayāna Studies in the state, Bengal can once again revive its rich history and culture and serve as India's bridge to the Himalayan and Southeast Asian worlds. The revival of Nalanda has proven that historical memory can be resurrected into global relevance, and Bengal now represents the natural, vital continuation of that visionary mission.

The Dharma of Tomorrow

The revival of India's Buddhist heritage is not about looking backwards; it is about finding a moral compass to guide humanity's future. Across a twenty-five-year continuum of public leadership, beginning with his transformative governance as Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2001 and expanding across India as Prime Minister from 2014, Modiji has elevated and transformed the concept of Sevā from basic civic administration into a profound civilisational calling by reviving its heritage. In this journey, Sevā becomes Dharma, entrusting the Pradhan Sevak with a sacred duty to heal, preserve, and illuminate the Rashtra.

As Prime Minister Modi memorably declared to the world at the United Nations, India is a nation that has given the world not Yuddha (war), but Buddha (peace). To preserve sacred monuments is to serve our collective memory, and to revive ancient seats of knowledge like Nalanda and elevate languages like Pali is to serve human intellect. This twofold process has been the hallmark of Modi's governance for the last twenty-five years. Safeguarding the sacred relics and sharing them with devotees across Asia is not only to honour living faith but also to foster genuine international fraternity in today's fractured world.

Motivated and guided by the timeless ideal of "Bahujana hitāya, bahujana sukhāya", for the welfare and happiness of the many, this journey of Sevā is India's enduring offering to a suffering world. The resurgence is now in motion, but its lasting impact depends on whether future generations take ownership of this cultural heritage. Reclaiming our sacred inheritance under the leadership of PM Modi is not only a reflection on what India once offered humanity and the world, but a strong, confident answer to a larger question: What peace, what wisdom, and what healing can India give the world today?

Responsibility Before Privilege

What Modi's Seva Taught a Citizen

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On 7 October 2001, Shri Narendra Modi took the oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat. Twenty-five years later, what stays with me is not simply the length of the journey, but the temperament it reveals: public office as responsibility before privilege, and difficult moments as occasions for action rather than delay. As an ordinary citizen, the moment that crystallised this for me was watching India host the G20 in 2023 and seeing a country move from asking for space to helping shape the room.

The New Delhi G20 Leaders' Declaration was adopted by consensus in an intensely divided geopolitical environment. India brought Global South concerns into the conversation through the Voice of Global South process; the African Union entered the G20 as a permanent member; and the agenda linked development with food and energy security, climate action, multilateral reform, digital public infrastructure and debt vulnerabilities. To me, this was the deeper meaning of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", an ancient civilisational idea used as a modern diplomatic method: prosperity, resilience and security cannot be sustainable if large parts of humanity remain unheard.

I was equally struck by the architecture behind that outcome. Modi's leadership was visible in the confidence he placed in his team. Dr S. Jaishankar, appointed External Affairs Minister in 2019 after serving as Foreign Secretary and ambassador in major capitals, represented a choice to put deep expertise at the centre of foreign policy. For me, that is leadership: identify capable people, back them, and trust them to argue India's case firmly. The G20 consensus reflected political leadership working through an empowered professional state, national interest without isolation, partnership without surrendering perspective.

That same temperament appears in the less glamorous work of administrative reform. Lateral entry brought specialists into senior government roles; the Assistant Secretary programme gave young IAS officers early exposure to Union policymaking; and Mission Karmayogi placed greater emphasis on competencies, continuous learning and citizen-centric delivery. The principle is simple: the State should not be protected from talent, feedback or performance. It should be strengthened by them.

The IMF has described India Stack as a world-class DPI model that supports financial inclusion, competition, and public-service delivery.

That philosophy also has a harder side. Governance cannot be serious if accountability is ceremonial. Under FR 56(j), the government has reviewed officers and used premature retirement provisions where public interest required it. From July 2014 to May 2019, more than 36,000 Group A and 82,000 Group B officers were reviewed under FR 56(j) or similar provisions, with action in a much smaller subset. More than 40,000 regulatory compliances have also been removed and over 1,500 obsolete laws repealed. Such changes carry resistance and political cost, but that is precisely why they reveal willingness to act rather than preserve dysfunction for convenience.

Judicial reform reveals another dimension: leadership in a constitutional democracy also means accepting that institutions can disagree with you. The Modi government pushed the National Judicial Appointments Commission; Parliament passed it unanimously in the Lok Sabha, but the Supreme Court later struck down the 99th Constitutional Amendment and the NJAC framework in a 4-1 judgment. To me, the lesson is democratic maturity. Opposition, political, institutional or intellectual, need not mean enmity; citizens can occupy different ends of an argument and still accept the constitutional process. Reform continued through e-Courts, mediation and the replacement of the principal colonial-era criminal codes with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam.

COVID-19 made this leadership philosophy painfully real. Decisions had to be taken amid incomplete information, anxiety and economic risk. The response combined domestic relief with international action: the ₹20-lakh-crore Aatma Nirbhar Bharat package; CoWIN, which supported a vaccination campaign that delivered over two billion doses; and Modi's proposal for a SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund, with an initial Indian contribution of US$10 million. Vaccine Maitri later extended Indian-made vaccines abroad, showing how national capability could also serve international solidarity. For me, the lesson was that service is not the absence of hard decisions. Sometimes service means deciding early, carrying the burden, and building systems for recovery.

The infrastructure story completes the picture because optimism becomes believable only when it acquires physical form. The pre-2014 landscape was not empty, but the scale and pace of investment changed materially thereafter. The Economic Survey records the national highway network growing 1.6 times between 2014 and 2024, while highway construction rose from about 11.7 km a day in FY2014 to about 34 km a day by FY2024. Railway commissioning averaged 3,118 km a year during 2014-24 versus 1,499 km during 2004-14; operational airports rose from 74 in 2014 to 157 in 2024. For me,

the point is not the number itself: infrastructure reduces the distance between a citizen and an opportunity, makes investment more viable and broadens economic mobility.

And then there is infrastructure that cannot be photographed: India's digital public infrastructure. Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker and interoperable systems created a State that can increasingly reach a citizen through a digital rail rather than a physical queue. The IMF has described India Stack as a world-class DPI model that supports financial inclusion, competition, and public-service delivery. During the G20 presidency, India helped move DPI from a national success story into international cooperation, with G20 consensus around DPI principles and a Global DPI Repository. To me, this is Jan Bhagidari in a new form: not asking citizens to wait for the State, but making participation easier.

Looking back across these 25 years, I do not think the contrast is simply between one government and another. It is between two habits of governance. One asks, "Why is this difficult?" and becomes comfortable with the difficulty. The other asks, "What would it take to make this happen?" and accepts the burden of execution. That habit carries risks: bold decisions create opponents, reform unsettles interests, diplomacy can fail, and infrastructure can miss timelines. Leadership cannot eliminate these realities. It can refuse to turn them into permanent excuses.

During my recent field visit to rural Maharashtra to set up bank accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana, a brief conversation with an elderly local woman offered a clear insight into what Modi has done when we talk about selfless service; her answer was straightforward: "Modi har ghar aata hai, Modi har mahine aata hai" (Modi reaches every house, every month).

What might sound like a simple remark actually highlights a shift to last-mile service delivery. Through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism, welfare delivery has moved away from discretionary, trickle-down channels to automated, direct-to-bank transfers. For rural households, this means living in an era where they don't have to stand in line for basic necessities or plead with a bureaucrat for their pension income. Predictable cash flows, whether via PM-KISAN, old-age pensions, or scheme-specific subsidies, arriving on schedule without administrative leakages or middleman interference is where the confidence and trust come from; sitting in the highest echelons of power, he is not corrupted by it, whereas he thinks about us, the job is responsibility which they have made sacrifices for their whole life.

By systematically targeting basic needs, water, sanitation, energy, health, and income support, governance moves beyond policy on paper to routine execution on the ground. For the furthest and most economically vulnerable sections of society, this reliable presence changes the citizen-state dynamic. It reflects the principle of parens patriae, the state acting as a proactive guardian, by replacing administrative neglect with direct accountability, financial stability, and basic institutional support.

That is what I have taken from Narendra Modi's journey from Vadnagar, Gujarat, to the national and global stage. Service before self is about placing the country's long-term capacity above the government's short-term comfort: choosing people who can deliver, trusting institutions to negotiate, reforming systems that have outlived their purpose, investing ahead of demand, and turning India's civilisational confidence into a constructive role in the world. The most inspiring change, for me, is in the citizen's frame of mind, from waiting for circumstances to improve to believing that circumstances can be changed through intent, institution and collective effort. That shift from fatalism to possibility is a powerful legacy of these 25 years of seva, and an invitation to young India not merely to admire leadership, but to practise responsibility.

Service, Participation, Delivery

Rebuilding the Citizen–State Compact

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Seva as a Philosophy of Governance

On 7 October 2001, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat, beginning an extraordinary twenty-five-year journey of uninterrupted leadership from Gujarat to the highest elected executive office of the nation. Across this journey, one idea has remained central to Prime Minister Modi's conception of leadership: seva. He has consistently presented public office not as an entitlement to power, but as an opportunity and responsibility to serve the people.

What distinguishes Prime Minister Modi's articulation of seva is the scale of aspiration attached to it. His leadership discourse has sought to connect service with national development, citizen participation, and a belief in India's possibilities. From the language of Pradhan Sevak to Jan Bhagidari, Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly placed the citizen at the heart of his vision of governance. Twenty-five years of leadership therefore represent more than longevity in public office; they offer an opportunity to reflect on Prime Minister Modi's enduring conception of leadership as service grounded in duty, sustained by public engagement, and directed towards the larger project of national transformation.

Reimagining Political Leadership

One of the most distinctive features of Prime Minister Modi's conception of leadership has been his persistent emphasis on seva. Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly described himself as the nation's Pradhan Sevak, presenting public office not as a privilege to be possessed but as a responsibility entrusted by citizens. In reflecting on his years in government, Prime Minister Modi has articulated the principle of "Jan Seva hi Prabhu Seva"—service to people as service of the highest order.

Twenty-five years after Prime Minister Modi first assumed executive office in Gujarat, his journey offers a significant case for reflecting on sustained public service in Indian democracy.

This language captures an important dimension of Prime Minister Modi's leadership philosophy: political authority should ultimately be expressed through responsibility, responsiveness and delivery. Prime Minister Modi has also sought direct communication with citizens through platforms such as Mann Ki Baat, which he described as a means of reaching people from remote villages to metropolitan India and incorporating their letters, calls, and suggestions into an ongoing national conversation. Across twenty-five years in executive office, Prime Minister Modi's idea of the leader as sevak therefore offers a distinctive lens for examining his approach to democratic leadership: authority accompanied by duty, leadership connected with citizens, and governance conceived fundamentally as public service.

The Citizen at the Centre

Perhaps one of the most significant ideas in Prime Minister Modi's governance discourse has been Jan Bhagidari, the conviction that citizens should not remain passive recipients of government action but become participants in governance. Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly argued that public participation is essential to successful implementation, urging civil servants to engage directly with people and describing Jan Bhagidari as key to effective administration.

This approach seeks to recast the citizen–state relationship. The citizen is envisaged not simply as a beneficiary but as a stakeholder, participant and partner in nation-building. Prime Minister Modi has described MyGov as an instrument of participative governance through which citizens can contribute ideas and suggestions to government, illustrating how technology can create additional channels between citizens and the state. The idea has also appeared in Prime Minister Modi's emphasis on turning public initiatives into Jan Andolans, or people's movements. In areas such as cleanliness and water conservation, Prime Minister Modi has explicitly argued that governmental action alone cannot produce lasting outcomes without collective ownership and social participation. The state serves, but citizens also participate. In Prime Minister Modi's formulation of seva, therefore, governance becomes not merely something delivered to people, but something pursued with them.

Announcement to Delivery

A defining emphasis in Prime Minister Modi's approach to governance has been the distance between announcing an intention and delivering an outcome. Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly stressed mission-mode implementation, continuous monitoring, and saturation, an approach aimed at



ensuring that government interventions reach citizens at the last mile. Official accounts describe constant monitoring and mission-mode implementation as recurring elements of the government's administrative approach.

This emphasis has also produced institutional mechanisms for monitoring implementation. The PRAGATI platform, operational since 2015, enables Prime Minister Modi to directly review major projects and implementation bottlenecks with Union ministries and State governments. It brings administrative coordination, technology, and high-level monitoring together to address delays and inter-governmental obstacles. Prime Minister Modi has articulated good governance as service-centred rather than power-centred, with particular emphasis on ensuring that intended benefits reach eligible citizens. In this conception, seva is demonstrated not merely through policy intent, but through execution, responsiveness and the capacity of administration to deliver at the last mile.

Technology as an Instrument of Seva

Across his twenty-five years in executive office, Prime Minister Modi has consistently presented technology as an instrument for bringing government closer to citizens. As Chief Minister of Gujarat, Prime Minister Modi introduced SWAGAT in 2003, using technology to connect citizens with government for transparent and time-bound grievance redressal. The initiative later received the United Nations Public Service Award in 2010 for improving transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

At the national level, this approach has expanded through digital public-service delivery, technology-enabled monitoring and grievance redressal. Prime Minister Modi has described Digital India as a means of making governance more transparent, efficient and citizen-centric. Platforms such as CPGRAMS now allow citizens to register and track grievances digitally, while recent reforms have focused increasingly on the quality and speed of resolution.

In Prime Minister Modi's governance approach, therefore, technology is not merely modernisation;

it is a means of reducing the distance between citizen and state and making seva more accessible, responsive and accountable.

Jan Bhagidari: Seva Is Not a One-Way Relationship

For Prime Minister Modi, seva has also been accompanied by Jan Bhagidari—the idea that nation-building cannot remain the responsibility of government alone. Prime Minister Modi has argued that democracy extends beyond voting and that people's participation is one of its most important dimensions.

This gives Prime Minister Modi's conception of seva a reciprocal character. The government has a responsibility to serve, deliver and remain responsive, but citizens are also called upon to participate, contribute and assume ownership of collective challenges. Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly sought to turn public causes into Jan Andolans, emphasising collective action in areas such as cleanliness and water conservation.

Prime Minister Modi's emphasis on Jan Bhagidari places the citizen alongside the state as a participant in governance and nation-building. In this formulation, seva becomes a shared democratic ethic: the state serves its citizens, while citizens contribute to the larger public good.

Trust, Participation, and the Meaning of Seva

Professor Marc Holzer, a leading scholar of public administration, also reflects the significance of Prime Minister Modi's citizen-centred approach. Professor Holzer describes Prime Minister Modi's citizen-driven principles as "exemplars of commitments to deliver on government's foundational promises," drawing particular attention to the relationship between performance, participation and public trust. As Professor Holzer observes, trust grows when citizens can "listen, ask questions, and provide meaningful input" into governmental performance, while accountability is strengthened when the informational needs of stakeholders are met. In this understanding, citizen participation is not peripheral to effective government; it becomes integral to the relationship between the state and the people. Professor Holzer further notes that performance indicators themselves represent commitments about "what an organisation values" and "what it aspires or promises to achieve." His reflections provide an illuminating framework for understanding Prime Minister Modi's emphasis on Jan Bhagidari, accountability and citizen-facing governance: seva is strengthened when citizens are not merely recipients of government action, but informed and active participants in it.

This perspective also acquires an international dimension through the recognition associated with Prime Minister Modi's public-service record. The United Nations Public Service Award received by the Government of Gujarat's SWAGAT initiative during his tenure as Chief Minister is featured in the Virtual Museum of Public Service's curated presentation of significant international public-service awards, situated within its broader exploration of "Public Management as Ideals into Actions."

Twenty-five years after Prime Minister Modi first assumed executive office in Gujarat, his journey offers a significant case for reflecting on sustained public service in Indian democracy.

25 Years of Seva: The Democratic Meaning

Twenty-five years after Prime Minister Modi first assumed executive office in Gujarat, his journey offers a significant case for reflecting on sustained public service in Indian democracy. Prime Minister Modi has described serving the nation as both an honour and a duty, guided by constitutional values. Across his years as Chief Minister and Prime Minister, his governance discourse has consistently emphasised seva, citizen participation and delivery. The enduring democratic meaning of this journey lies in the relationship it seeks to build between leadership and citizens, one grounded in service, dignity, participation, accountability and responsive governance.

Rights with Responsibilities

How Seva Became a Shared Democratic Culture

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In a vast and diverse democracy such as India, the success of governance cannot be measured merely by the number of schemes introduced or the amount of money spent. Its real impact also depends on how citizens perceive their place within the system of governance; whether merely as recipients of benefits or as active participants in the process of development. Since 7 October 2001, when Narendra Modi first took the oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat, and particularly since he became Prime Minister in May 2014, one of the most significant changes in India's approach to governance has concerned precisely this relationship between the citizen and the state. As he completes twenty-five years at the head of an elected government, this transformation deserves closer examination.

In the traditional welfare-state framework, citizens were generally viewed as 'beneficiaries'. The state formulated programmes, the administration implemented them, and their benefits eventually reached the people. Such a system was necessary for social protection and welfare, but it left relatively limited space for citizen participation. In a changing India, a new emphasis has emerged: citizens are not merely recipients of government assistance; they are also participants in public transformation and responsible partners in development. This is the essence of moving from beneficiary to partner.

This approach has its roots in Modi's years in Gujarat. SWAGAT, the online grievance-redressal system launched in 2003, allowed citizens to raise complaints directly with the Chief Minister's office and received the United Nations Public Service Award in 2010. Initiatives such as the Jyotigram Yojana, which brought round-the-clock electricity to villages, and Kanya Kelavani and Shala Praveshotsav, which mobilised communities to enrol girls in school, combined service delivery with public participation. After 2014, this model was scaled to the national level through programmes that sought to make citizens stakeholders rather than spectators.



From Benefits to Rights, and from Rights to Participation

The first foundation of citizen-centred governance is to make access to public services and entitlements more transparent, targeted and direct. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, launched in August 2014 within months of Modi taking office as Prime Minister, is an important example. As of 9 September 2026, the total number of Jan Dhan accounts stood at approximately 592.6 million, with deposits of around ₹3.17 trillion. Women accounted for approximately 330.2 million of these account holders.

The significance of this development extends beyond the number of bank accounts opened. Access to formal banking brings individuals into the organised financial system and lays the foundation for direct transfers of government benefits, savings, and the use of digital financial services.

Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) has similarly altered the financial relationship between the state and citizens. According to the government's DBT portal, cumulative transfers through DBT have exceeded ₹53.32 trillion. The portal also records 2.61 billion transactions across 320 schemes and 56 ministries so far in 2026–27. By March 2025, the estimated gains or savings resulting from various governance reforms were reported at ₹5.14 trillion. These figures matter not merely for financial efficiency. They indicate that the relationship between citizens and the state has gradually become more direct, digital and verifiable.

PM Narendra Modi's twenty-five-year administrative journey, from Gandhinagar to New Delhi, cannot be understood simply through the question, 'What has the government delivered?'

From Government Service to Citizen Participation

Citizen-centred governance, however, means more than improving service delivery. Democracy becomes more vibrant when citizens recognise their role in shaping public policy, contributing to social campaigns, and helping address problems in their communities.

MyGov's experience is particularly relevant in this context. Launched on 26 July 2014, the citizen-engagement platform had 64.6 million registered users as of 1 September 2026. According to government information, MyGov provides a platform for citizens to engage with ministries and government institutions in policy formulation, consultations on public issues, and dialogue on matters of governance. The Prime Minister's monthly radio address, Mann Ki Baat, which began in October 2014, has similarly sought to make citizens' own stories of local initiative part of the national conversation.

A significant conceptual shift is visible here. Citizens are not merely expected to receive public services; they are also encouraged to express their views, offer suggestions, share experiences and contribute to public objectives. In a democracy, this development matters more than the numbers alone suggest, because it expands citizenship beyond voting to include ongoing public participation.

Behavioural Change: When Citizens Become Agents of Transformation

The transformation in citizens' roles is especially clear through the example of sanitation. When Prime Minister Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) on 2 October 2014, Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, rural sanitation coverage stood at about 39 per cent. According to government data, it reached 100 per cent by 2019, with all villages declaring themselves Open Defecation Free (ODF). By March 2025, 564,096 villages had declared themselves ODF Plus. According to government information available as of September 2026, 569,000 villages had attained ODF Plus status, while 525,000 villages had reached the ODF Plus Model category.

The sanitation experience demonstrates that constructing toilets alone is not sufficient. Sustained use, hygienic practices, solid and liquid waste management, and clean public spaces require behavioural change and collective responsibility. In this sense, citizens become part of

the implementation process itself.

The same principle applies to the Jal Jeevan Mission, announced by the Prime Minister on 15 August 2019. Laying pipelines is not an end in itself. By August 2025, more than 124.6 million rural households had tap-water connections, compared with approximately 32.4 million in 2019. Protecting water sources, using water prudently, and managing water sustainably at the local level can succeed only when communities also take responsibility for them.

Women: From Beneficiaries to Agents of Change

The expanding economic and social participation of women is another important dimension of citizens' changing role. Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, launched in May 2016, more than 105.7 million LPG connections had been issued by 17 September 2026.

Here again, the real question is not merely whether a connection has been provided. Regular use of clean cooking fuel, energy security, health benefits, savings in household time and women's participation in family decision-making represent wider outcomes that can move citizens beyond the role of passive recipients of welfare. From this perspective, defining women solely as 'beneficiaries' is inadequate. They can also become active agents of change within the family, community and economy.

Youth: From Volunteers to Nation-Builders

Youth participation adds a new dimension to this transformation. Platforms such as MY Bharat seek to connect young people with volunteering, experiential learning, community work and activities related to nation-building. Its portal offers young volunteers opportunities to participate in initiatives related to sanitation, road safety, assistance to senior citizens, water conservation, and other social causes. This approach strengthens the idea that young people should not be viewed merely as potential recipients of employment opportunities or government support, but also as a productive social force capable of contributing to the wider community.

The Way Forward: Institutionalising Participatory Governance

Yet it would be premature to regard this transformation as complete. Citizen participation can become sustainable only when it is accompanied by stronger transparency, access to information, grievance redressal, institutional capacity at the local level, social inclusion and independent assessment of outcomes. Participation should not mean merely increasing the number of people involved in a campaign; it should give citizens a meaningful place in decision-making and implementation.

India's democratic strength will truly expand when, from the panchayat to Parliament, citizens stop seeing themselves as external observers of governance and increasingly regard themselves as co-creators of the democratic system.

For this reason, PM Narendra Modi's twenty-five-year administrative journey, from Gandhinagar to New Delhi, cannot be understood simply through the question, 'What has the government delivered?' The broader question is: What role has been given to citizens, and how have they responded by accepting their responsibilities? The journey from beneficiary to participant is ultimately not the story of any single government programme. It is a story of democracy's maturation. A capable state provides citizens with services; a participatory democracy provides them with opportunities alongside services, responsibilities alongside rights, and a sense of ownership alongside development.

This is where Seva, the idea of service that has framed these twenty-five years, begins to take on a broader meaning. It ceases to be merely an expression of the state's commitment to public service and becomes a democratic culture of shared responsibility between citizens and the state.

Her Name on the Account, the Deed and the Panchayat

25 Years of Seva

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On 7 October 2026, Narendra Modi completes 25 years as head of government, first as Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 and, since 2014, as Prime Minister of India. Any assessment of these 25 years of Seva that relies only on gross domestic product, infrastructure or income overlooks one of its most consequential dimensions: the changing geography of opportunity for women. Women's growing presence in education, employment, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, property ownership and local leadership has turned development into a process of social and spatial change. That change has not been uniform; it varies across rural and urban areas, States, social groups and economic circumstances. Understanding it requires looking beyond 'women's welfare' to the geography of opportunity, access, assets and decision-making.



Many of these shifts have roots in the Gujarat years. Initiatives such as Kanya Kelavani, the girls' enrolment drive launched in 2003, the Chiranjeevi Yojana for institutional deliveries and Mission Mangalam for women's self-help groups anticipated an approach treating women's education, health and collective enterprise as development priorities that was later scaled up nationally through programmes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Jan-Dhan Yojana and the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.

From Education to Opportunity

Education remains the foundation of women's empowerment. According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021–22, India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for the 18–23 age group was 28.4 per cent: 28.5 per cent for women and 28.3 per cent for men. Among Scheduled Castes, the female GER of 26.0 per cent was slightly higher than the male GER of 25.8 per cent, and in 26 States and Union Territories the female GER exceeded the male GER.

These figures reflect changing social aspirations, widening women's entry into teaching, science, administration, medicine, management and entrepreneurship. Regional disparities remain: GER was 64.8 per cent in Chandigarh, 61.5 per cent in Puducherry, 49 per cent in Delhi and 47 per cent in Tamil Nadu, but well below the national average in several other States. The next stage is to build a continuous chain from education to skills, skills to employment, and employment to economic autonomy.

The transitions from education to employment, employment to entrepreneurship, bank accounts to assets, and representation to effective decision-making must be completed.

The Changing Employment Landscape

Female economic participation has also changed markedly. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the Labour Force Participation Rate for women aged 15 and above (usual status) rose from 23.3 per cent in 2017–18 to 41.7 per cent in 2023–24, while the female Worker Population Ratio rose from 22.0 to 40.3 per cent.

The increase is especially significant in rural India, where women's work is linked to agriculture, livestock, self-help groups, micro-enterprises, handicrafts, food processing and local services. In urban areas, formal employment, professional services, digital work and the service sector offer important avenues.

Yet does entry into the labour market translate into economic independence? That depends on the quality of employment, income, social security, workplace safety and women's role in economic decision-making. The next challenge is to move from participation to decent, productive work.

Entrepreneurship: From Beneficiaries to Economic Partners

According to the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the 73rd Round of the National Sample Survey estimated approximately 1.24 crore women-owned proprietary MSMEs, more than 20 per cent of the total. Under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), 1,86,027 women entrepreneurs received assistance between 2018–19 and 2023–24.

Self-help groups have been central to this process. Under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), more than 10 crore rural households have been organised into over 90 lakh self-help groups, whose access to bank credit allows them to move from savings to enterprise, production and local markets. Rural women are thus increasingly seen not as recipients of assistance but as producers, entrepreneurs, borrowers and managers of local economic activity.

From Bank Accounts to Asset Ownership

Financial inclusion has been a hallmark of this period. Launched in 2014, the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana had 59.26 crore accounts as of 9 September 2026, of which 33.02 crore, about 56 per cent, were held by women. A bank account is not

empowerment by itself, but it provides a foundation for direct benefit transfers, savings, credit and insurance. Its significance grows when it connects women with income, assets and decision-making.

Housing matters here. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Gramin, about 73 per cent of houses completed by 2024 were registered in a woman's sole name or jointly with her husband. Under PMAY–Urban and PMAY-U 2.0, by August 2026, nearly 1 crore of approximately 1.25 crore sanctioned houses were in women's names or jointly owned.
A house thus becomes a foundation for a woman's asset ownership, security and economic identity.

From Democratic Participation to Leadership

In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, approximately 47.63 crore women voters were registered, 48.62 per cent of the electorate. Female turnout was 65.78 per cent, compared with 65.55 per cent for men, and exceeded male turnout in 20 States and Union Territories.

In 2024, 75 women were elected to the Lok Sabha. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, which reserves one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women, will widen this further once implemented. Local governance already shows the broader shift: by March 2025, approximately 14.5 lakh women were elected Panchayati Raj representatives, around 46 per cent of the total. An elected woman in a Gram Panchayat is directly connected to water, sanitation, nutrition, schools, health and livelihoods. Representation is therefore about influencing local development priorities, not merely numbers.

Understanding Regional Diversity

Indicators of education, employment, entrepreneurship, banking and political participation vary considerably across States. In 2024, female voter turnout was 81.71 per cent in Assam, 71.86 per cent in Kerala and 57.22 per cent in Uttar Pradesh, and GER differences remain substantial. The national average shows the direction of progress, but the real picture emerges only through spatial variation. Women in rural eastern India, tribal regions, Himalayan States, metropolitan cities and small towns face different opportunities and constraints.

The Next Stage of Opportunity

Over 25 years of Seva, from Gujarat to the national stage, a defining shift has been the recognition of women not merely as recipients of welfare but as participants in education, finance, housing, employment, entrepreneurship, and governance a move from women's development to women-led development.

The next challenge is more complex: reducing spatial inequalities in the quality, accessibility and outcomes of these opportunities. The transitions from education to employment, employment to entrepreneurship, bank accounts to assets, and representation to effective decision-making must be completed.

This is where 'Nari Shakti' meets a geographical understanding of development. When a village woman becomes a co-owner of her home, a self-help group member, an entrepreneur, a bank account holder and a Gram Panchayat representative, the change extends beyond her own life to the spatial structure of the family, community and local economy.

The changing geography of opportunity for women is therefore not merely a story of women's development. It is the story of 25 years in which expanding opportunity, social participation and economic autonomy have together begun to create a new geography of development in India.

First Responder to the World

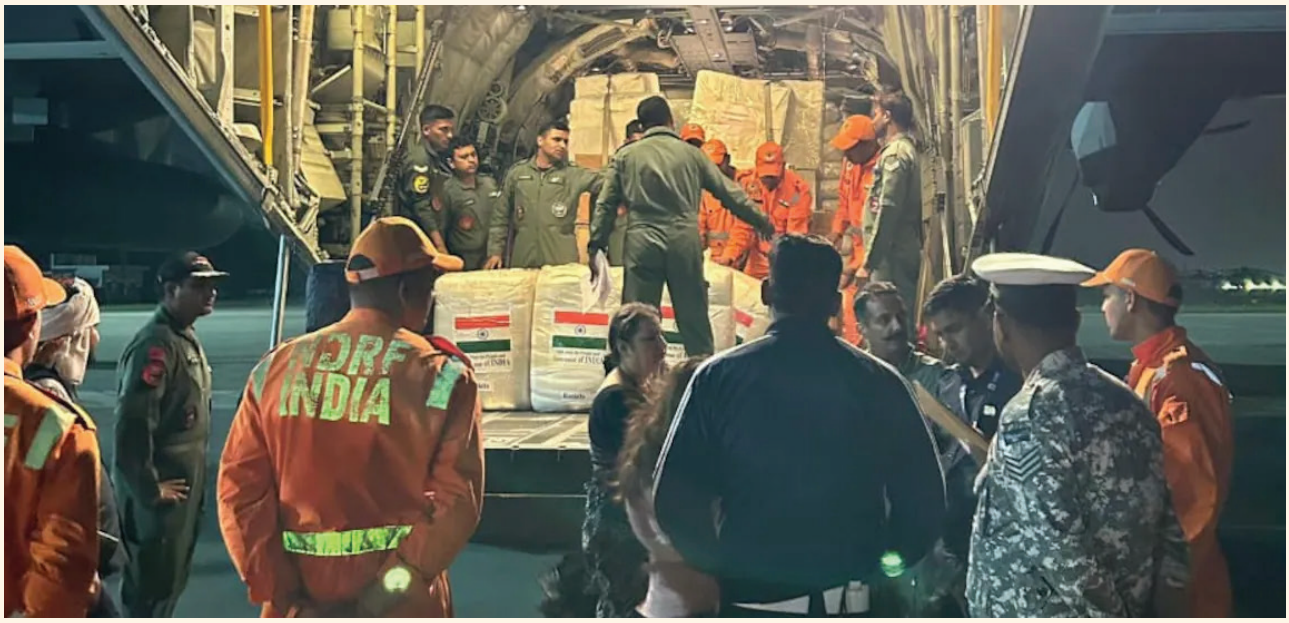
25 Years of Seva Beyond Borders

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In the Indian tradition, seva has never been confined to one's own family, community, or nation. The civilisational ideal of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", the world is one family, has always tied service to a wider sense of human responsibility. As Shri Narendra Modi completes 25 years in public office, first as Chief Minister of Gujarat from October 2001 and, since May 2014, as Prime Minister of India, this ideal has acquired a practical, outward-looking form. Development partnerships, disaster assistance, humanitarian relief, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing with the Global South have given India's international engagement a distinctly human-centred character.

This transformation is visible not only in diplomatic declarations but in concrete projects. Under PM Modi, India has stressed that development cooperation must be demand-driven, responding to partners' priorities rather than imposing conditions. Its principal instruments are grants, concessional lines of credit, technical assistance, training, and institution-building, spanning energy, healthcare, agriculture, information technology, infrastructure, education, and disaster relief.





The Gujarat Years: Where the Approach Took Shape
This approach traces its roots to PM Modi's years in Gujarat. He took charge as Chief Minister in October 2001, months after the devastating Kutch earthquake, and the reconstruction that followed made disaster management a matter of institutional design rather than improvised response. Under his leadership, the state strengthened the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority and, in 2003, enacted one of India's first state-level disaster management laws. The Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, launched the same year, reflected an early conviction that development is best pursued in partnership with the wider world.

Development Partnership: From Assistance to Capacity-Building

A defining feature of India's development outreach is that it seeks to build lasting local capacity, not merely to supply resources. Under the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS), India has extended more than 300 Lines of Credit worth approximately US$32 billion to 68 countries, supporting nearly 600 projects in railways, roads, agriculture, energy, ports, hospitals, hydropower, and disaster management.
Africa offers a telling example. India has extended 196 Lines of Credit worth approximately US$12 billion to 42 African countries. PM Modi's outreach to the continent, marked by the third India–Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in 2015, the first to include all 54 African countries, has given these projects a clear purpose: creating infrastructure, employment, connectivity, and local development.
Seen this way, seva does not mean creating dependence; it means strengthening a country's own capacity to develop.

Sharing Knowledge and Skills

Perhaps the most enduring dimension of this outreach is knowledge sharing. Launched in 1964, the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme now reaches nearly 160 partner countries, training officials and professionals in fields ranging from information technology, agriculture, and healthcare to climate change, renewable energy, rural development, banking, and women's empowerment. More recently, India has offered its digital public infrastructure, including digital identity and payments platforms, as a global public good, a theme it championed during its G20 Presidency.

The aim is mutual learning, not one-way transfer. In 2025, the third Global South Young Diplomats Forum brought together 43 young diplomats from 43 countries, while specialised training programmes continue to foster the exchange of institutional and administrative expertise.

India as a First Responder in Times of Disaster

The most visible expression of seva emerges in times of crisis. The lessons of Gujarat's reconstruction have found national expression in India's growing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) capabilities. From Operation Maitri after the 2015 Nepal earthquake to Vaccine Maitri during the COVID-19 pandemic, when India supplied vaccines to close to 100 countries, India has emerged as a first responder for neighbouring and friendly nations.

After the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria in February 2023, Operation Dost deployed more than 250 personnel from three National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams and set up a 30-bed field hospital in Türkiye that treated about 3,600 people. India also sent 8.8 tonnes of relief material to Türkiye and 28.8 tonnes to Syria.

The same year, Operation Karuna delivered about 40 tonnes of medical and relief supplies to cyclone-hit Myanmar. In 2024, after Typhoon Yagi, Operation Sadbhav assisted Laos, Vietnam, and Myanmar. After an earthquake in Nepal, India delivered 4.14 tonnes of medicines and 41 tonnes of relief material, followed by about 36 tonnes of supplies and 10 Bailey bridges during later floods and landslides. Such operations show that seva goes beyond dispatching supplies, encompassing search and rescue, medical care, transport, communications, restoration, and close coordination with local authorities.

Giving the Global South a Voice

Giving the Global South a stronger voice has been a defining theme of PM Modi's foreign policy. In January 2023, India hosted the Voice of Global South Summit with 125 countries. Its priorities were carried into India's G20 Presidency, whose theme, "One Earth, One Family, One Future", echoed Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, and which saw the African Union admitted as a permanent G20 member at the New Delhi Summit in September 2023.

In the same spirit, DAKSHIN, the Development and Knowledge Sharing Initiative, has been established as a Global South Centre of Excellence, premised on the idea that developing countries learn best from one another. In 2025, India and the Central Asian countries agreed to advance South-South Cooperation through it.

India has also helped build new global institutions. The International Solar Alliance, launched with France in 2015, and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, launched by PM Modi in 2019, reflect the same belief: that solutions built through cooperation should be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable.

That is the true meaning of seva beyond borders: turning India's development experience into a shared resource & making development a means of partnership.

Conclusion: From Service to Partnership

India's external engagement over these 25 years cannot be understood within the framework of aid alone. From the rebuilding of Kutch to relief in Türkiye, and from ITEC classrooms to the G20 table, a consistent thread runs through Shri Narendra Modi's quarter-century in public life: service rooted in India's own development experience and offered in partnership.

This engagement rests on three commitments: standing with countries in crisis, working alongside them in their development, and strengthening their capacities for the future, always respecting partners' own priorities.

That is the true meaning of seva beyond borders: turning India's development experience into a shared resource and making development a means of partnership. It is a practical expression of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, and one that has helped India become a trusted partner and first responder for the Global South.

When Distance Stops Mattering

25 Years of Digital Seva

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On 7 October 2026, Narendra Modi completes twenty-five years at the helm of government, first as Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014 and, since May 2014, as Prime Minister of India. Few threads run as consistently through this quarter-century as the use of technology to bring the state closer to the citizen. In a country as vast and geographically diverse as India, the success of governance depends not only on policies and institutions, but on how far, at what cost and with what ease public services reach people. The needs of mountain regions, remote villages, border districts, tribal areas and fast-growing cities differ widely. Over these twenty-five years, digital transformation has been less a technological revolution than a sustained effort to overcome geographical distance and make public services simpler and more widely accessible.



The Gujarat Years: Laying the Foundations

Many of the ideas that later shaped national policy were first tested in Gujarat. SWAGAT (State Wide Attention on Grievances by Application of Technology), introduced in 2003, used video conferencing to let citizens in distant talukas and districts present their grievances directly to the Chief Minister and senior officials. The e-Gram Vishwagram initiative sought to connect village panchayats electronically so that certificates and records could be obtained locally, while the Jyotigram Yojana's reliable rural electricity supply created the physical conditions on which digital services could run.

The underlying principle was spatial: a citizen should not have to travel to the state capital, or even to the district headquarters, to be heard by the government. When Modi moved to New Delhi in 2014, this principle was carried to a national scale.

From Gujarat to the Nation: Digital India

The Digital India programme, launched in July 2015, became the principal vehicle for this national expansion. Digital connectivity has grown remarkably since 2014. According to government data, broadband subscribers rose from about 25 crore in 2014–15 to 103 crore in 2024–25. Over the same period, mobile base transceiver stations increased from about 7.9 lakh to 29.5 lakh, and the number of villages with mobile connectivity rose from approximately 5.27 lakh to 6.35 lakh. Optical fibre expanded from 358 kilometres to 6,92,676 kilometres, while the average cost of one gigabyte of data fell from about ₹269 to ₹7.9.

These figures matter not merely for their scale but for their spatial meaning. As internet access becomes affordable and connectivity reaches remote areas, citizens no longer need to travel to district headquarters or large towns for every administrative or financial service. Connectivity thus becomes a form of spatial inclusion — the same goal SWAGAT pursued in Gujarat two decades earlier, now extended across the entire country.

JAM: The Triad of Identity, Finance and Connectivity

Among the most important foundations of this national phase has been the JAM trinity: Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile. Although Aadhaar predates 2014, it was after 2014 that it scaled up and was systematically linked with bank accounts and mobile numbers, becoming the backbone of service delivery. According to UIDAI, 144.66 crore Aadhaar numbers had been generated by 2026, and the platform had recorded more than 17,759.21 crore authentication transactions. Financial inclusion has expanded on a similar scale. The Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana, launched in August 2014 within months of Modi taking office as Prime Minister, had recorded approximately 59.26 tcrore accounts with deposits of around ₹3.17 lakh crore as of 9 September 2026. The share of rural and semi-urban areas in this expansion is particularly significant.

The implications for India's spatial development are considerable. Distance from bank branches, documentation requirements and limited access to financial institutions long excluded rural and disadvantaged households. By combining Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar-based authentication, and mobile connectivity, the JAM framework has brought financial services to individuals, regardless of where they live.

UPI: Reducing the Distance Between Markets and Citizens

Digital payments have further loosened the constraints imposed by physical space. Since its launch in 2016, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has become one of the defining achievements of the Modi era. According to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), approximately 24,508.96 million (2,450.9 crore) UPI transactions worth about ₹29.82 lakh crore were conducted in August 2026 alone, with 752 banks live on the platform.

UPI's significance extends well beyond digital markets in large cities. Small retailers, local entrepreneurs, self-employed workers and rural consumers now take part in mobile-based payment systems, reducing the need for physical intermediaries in everyday transactions. Digital

inclusion, in this sense, means not only access to the internet but access to economic opportunity.
From Government to Citizen: A New Geography of Service Delivery

Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is another pillar of this governance model, reflecting a conviction that runs from the Gujarat years to the present: benefits should reach citizens without intermediaries. By integrating Aadhaar, bank accounts and digital payments, DBT allows a wide range of government benefits to be credited directly to beneficiaries. According to government estimates, by March 2025 DBT and related administrative reforms had yielded substantial gains by weeding out fictitious, inactive and duplicate beneficiaries and curbing leakages across schemes. Estimated cumulative savings of ₹74,031.34 crore have been reported in the LPG sector and ₹3,12,977.81 crore in the Public Distribution System.

The geographical significance is evident. When assistance arrives directly in a bank account, the beneficiary need not visit an intermediary office or travel long distances, and administrative distance is decoupled from physical distance. Yet the effectiveness of these systems still depends on complementary foundations: banking access, internet connectivity, digital literacy, local-language accessibility and responsive grievance redressal.

BharatNet and the Last-Mile Challenge

Last-mile connectivity remains the most demanding test of digital inclusion. According to government information available in July 2026, more than 2.21 lakh Gram Panchayats had been made service-ready through BharatNet, a national-scale echo of Gujarat's early effort to connect its village panchayats. More than five lakh Common Service Centres were operating across the country, offering over 800 services, and nearly 6.39 crore people had received digital literacy training.

This underlines an important principle: the goal is not merely a ‘connected India’ but an ‘accessible India’. A remote village may have network coverage, but if its residents lack suitable devices, digital skills, information in local languages or reliable assistance, connectivity alone will not translate into genuine social inclusion.

Twenty-Five Years On: Beyond Technology to Equality of Access

A quarter-century on, the record of digital governance should not be measured solely by the number of applications, portals, databases or payment platforms created. The more fundamental question is whether digital public infrastructure has narrowed the distance between India's diverse regions and its citizens in accessing opportunities and public services.

The next challenge is the second-generation digital divide: the question is no longer simply who has access to the internet, but who can derive meaningful benefit from it. For women, older persons, persons with disabilities, remote rural and border communities, and groups with limited digital literacy, the quality of access will matter most.

Viewed across twenty-five years from SWAGAT in Gujarat to Digital India, JAM, UPI and BharatNet at the national level, Modi’s digital agenda is best understood as an infrastructure for inclusive governance suited to India's geographical diversity. Its success should be judged not by how advanced technology is, but by how easily the citizen at the farthest edge of the country can reach the state, the market and public services.

In this sense, the digital transformation of the past quarter-century has been more than a technological change. It has been a steady restructuring of the geography of governance in India one in which distance is becoming less of a barrier to opportunity, and connectivity is increasingly a means of widening access.



Seva to Sushasan to Surajya

The Road to Viksit Bharat @2047

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We have grown up hearing a simple thought in our organisation: "Karyakarta Pradhan Party, Vichar Pradhan Sangathan." But for me, the deeper source of inspiration has always been another Mul Mantra that I heard:

"Vyakti se bada Samaj, Samaj se bada Desh."

This simple sentence carries a profound message. It tells us that public life is not about the individual. It is about society, organisation and, above everything else, the nation. To understand Shri Narendra Modi's 25-year public journey and his vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, this principle offers an important lens on his leadership. It connects Sushasan@25 with the larger national resolve of Viksit Bharat@2047.

Unfortunately, public life sometimes takes us in the opposite direction. Personal ambition begins to dominate organisational responsibility, and organisational interests can sometimes be placed above the larger national interest. When that happens, unnecessary internal conflicts emerge. PM Modi's public life presents a different example. From 7 October 2001, when he first became the Chief Minister of Gujarat, to his long journey in national politics, his politics has consistently centred on the ideas of seva, governance, development, and national interest.

That is the essence of his leadership.

Narendra Modi Ji's leadership provides one important example of how long-term public service can shape governance, institutions and national confidence.

A New Model of Development

On 7 October 2001, Shri Narendra Modi took the oath as the Chief Minister of Gujarat at a difficult moment. The state was dealing with the consequences of the Bhuj earthquake, drought, social tensions and several economic and administrative challenges. At that time, few could have imagined the political and developmental journey that Gujarat would subsequently undertake. One important aspect of Modi's Gujarat experience was the attempt to connect governance directly with people's everyday lives.

Sujalam Sufalam focused on water conservation and local participation. Krishi Mahotsav took agricultural knowledge and scientific expertise closer to farmers. Kanya Kelavani focused on bringing girls into the education system. These initiatives were not simply government programmes on paper. Their significance lay in connecting administration with ordinary citizens. This approach also reflected the larger Indian idea of lok kalyan.

Chanakya's well-known principle, "Praja Sukhe Sukham Rajyah", reminds us that the welfare of the people is ultimately the foundation of good governance.

Similarly, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism placed the welfare of the last person at the centre of development. Over time, this philosophy of governance found expression at the national level through initiatives such as Swachh Bharat, Jan Dhan Yojana, Digital India, Ujjwala, Ayushman Bharat and many others.

The significance of these programmes was not limited to government expenditure or infrastructure. They also attempted to change the relationship between citizens and the state. When a Prime Minister picks up a broom, for example, the message goes beyond cleanliness. It challenges the social habit of considering certain kinds of work inferior. It reminds us that dignity of labour is also an essential part of a developed society.

What Kashi Has Seen

For those of us living in Varanasi, Sushasan@25 is not merely a subject for discussion. We have seen many changes around us. Before 2014, Kashi was globally known primarily for its spiritual and cultural heritage. At the same time, the city faced familiar urban challenges—congestion, infrastructure limitations, sanitation concerns and pressure on its historic spaces.

Over the past decade, Kashi has witnessed a visible transformation in infrastructure and public spaces. The redevelopment of Kashi Vishwanath Dham, improvements around the ghats, expanded connectivity, Vande Bharat services, and new urban infrastructure have changed how the city presents itself to visitors and residents alike. But Kashi's transformation is not only about buildings and roads. For us, the more meaningful part is the city's growing confidence. Kashi today increasingly sees itself not only as an ancient city but also as a city

capable of participating in India's modern development journey.

I have personally found the emphasis on accessibility and direct interaction with people particularly significant. Whether interacting with local workers, boatmen, small traders or ordinary citizens, such engagement creates a sense that governance is not something distant from society.

This is where the idea of “Seva” becomes important. A political leader may hold a constitutional position, but a karyakarta begins his journey with a commitment to service. That distinction matters. For young workers in Kashi, the story is also deeply inspiring because the Prime Minister represents the possibility of political mobility through organisational work and public service rather than inherited political privilege.

From Cynicism to Confidence

Perhaps the most important contribution of the last 25 years is something that cannot be measured by statistics alone. It is a change in public confidence. Many Indians who grew up in the early 2000s remember the familiar expression: “India mein kuch nahi badlega.” Today, a young Indian is much less willing to accept that idea. He has grown up seeing India undertake ambitious missions in space, expand digital public infrastructure, manufacture vaccines at scale, build highways and modern transport networks, and take a more confident position in the world.

India's achievements in space, including Chandrayaan-3, the expansion of digital payments, large-scale welfare delivery and India's role in vaccine production have contributed to a new sense of national confidence. This confidence is important because development is not only about physical infrastructure. A nation also needs self-belief.

Sushasan creates Vishwas, and Vishwas creates the confidence necessary for Viksit Bharat. That is why 2047 is not simply a year on the calendar. It is a national Sankalp.

What Does 2047 Demand from Us?

The real question before us is not only what Narendra Modi Ji has accomplished during 25 years of public life. The more important question is: What do these 25 years demand from us?

If leadership teaches us to place the nation above personal interest, can we not place organisational responsibility above individual ambition? If public life is ultimately about seva, can we not make service more important than position?

And if our destination is Viksit Bharat @2047, can we afford to waste our energy in unnecessary internal conflicts and personal competition? These are not questions meant for others. They are questions every karyakarta should ask himself. For the youth of Kashi, this responsibility is even greater. Our role should not be limited to celebrating Sushasan@25. We must become active participants in the journey towards Viksit Bharat@2047. That means taking the spirit of seva into our universities, workplaces, villages, communities and public life. It means listening to people, understanding their concerns and contributing wherever we can.

From Seva to Sushasan, From Sushasan to Surajya

The journey from Sushasan@25 to Viksit Bharat@2047 is not the journey of one individual alone. It is a collective national journey. Narendra Modi Ji's leadership provides one important example of how long-term public service can shape governance, institutions and national confidence. But the final responsibility belongs to all of us. For a young karyakarta in Kashi, the message is simple: Vyakti se bada Samaj.Samaj se bada Sangathan.Sangathan se bada Desh. Let this not remain only a slogan. Let it become a way of working, a way of thinking and a way of serving the nation. From Seva to Sushasan, from Sushasan to Surajya, and from Surajya to Viksit Bharat @2047 this is the journey before us.

One life. One purpose. One national resolve.



Where Development Lands

A Geographer's Reading of 25 Years of Seva

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In a country as vast and diverse as India, development cannot be adequately understood through national income, gross domestic product, or any single aggregate indicator. India's real development is visible in the changing landscapes of its villages, towns, cities, border areas, tribal regions, aspirational districts, and metropolitan centres. Therefore, if the 25-year journey of public service is to be viewed from a different perspective, it is useful to examine it through the lens of geography; that is, in relation to place, region, resources, connectivity, inequalities, and local needs.

Narendra Modi's public leadership journey began in October 2001 when he became Chief Minister of Gujarat. His subsequent role at the national level has consistently highlighted the need to connect development with local realities. One important feature of this journey has been the effort to move governance beyond a capital-centric approach and to translate policy outcomes at the level of districts, blocks, and villages. For a country of continental scale, this is itself a major administrative challenge.

India's Diversity and the Spatial Challenge of Development

A single development policy cannot have identical effects across all geographical regions of India. The problems of the Himalayan states differ from those of the coastal regions; the water challenges of arid western India differ from those of the Northeast or the Ganga–Brahmaputra basin; and the infrastructure requirements of metropolitan cities are different from those of tribal and remote rural areas.

This is why spatial inequality must be central to any discussion of development. The NITI Aayog has also recognised that national averages can sometimes conceal India's internal geographical disparities. In this context, the Aspirational Districts Programme, launched in January 2018, identified 112 relatively underdeveloped districts for outcome-oriented improvement in areas such as health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development, and basic infrastructure. The programme is based on the principles of Convergence, Collaboration and Competition.

A significant shift is evident: development is now assessed not merely by the number of schemes implemented, but by a more fundamental question: how much change has taken place in a particular district? According to NITI Aayog, the Aspirational Districts Programme has evolved into a major experiment in outcome-based governance, reaching nearly 250 million people.

From the Village to the Household: The Smallest Geography of Development

The ultimate test of any national policy lies at its smallest spatial scale; in the household, the village, and the local community. The Jal Jeevan Mission provides a notable example. When the Mission launched in August 2019, about 3.23 crore rural households, or 16.7 per cent, had access to tap water. According to government figures, by 3 March 2026, tap-water supply had been reported for approximately 15.82 crore rural households, representing about 81.71 per cent of rural households.

The significance of this transformation extends beyond pipes and water sources. In rural India, access to water is closely connected with women's labour, children's time, health, education, and the everyday functioning of households. An infrastructure intervention therefore becomes more meaningful when assessed not merely by its physical scale, but by its spatial and social impact.

The past 25 years can therefore be read not only as a period of political leadership, but also as a period of changing development geography in India

Connectivity: Turning Distances into Opportunities

India's geography is not only a geography of diversity; it is also a geography of distance. A road reaching a village, a railway connecting a district, freight connectivity to a port, air links to a smaller city, or a digital network reaching a remote area can redistribute access to economic and social opportunities.

In this context, the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan is particularly significant. Its objective is to view infrastructure planning through an integrated spatial framework by bringing together the plans of different ministries and states. The National Master Plan brings together data and infrastructure-related layers from 58 ministries/departments and 36 States and Union Territories on a common platform. It also incorporates satellite-based information from ISRO and spatial planning technologies.

The relationship between governance and geography becomes particularly clear here. When roads, railways, ports, industrial areas, agricultural regions, logistics centres, and economic corridors are viewed not as isolated projects but as components of an interconnected spatial system, infrastructure becomes more than construction; it becomes an instrument of regional economic integration.

Digital Geography: Redefining the Meaning of Distance

In the twenty-first century, the meaning of geographical distance is also changing. Earlier, access to a bank, market, or government service often required physical travel. Digital public infrastructure has now substantially redefined that distance.

UPI is a major example. In financial year 2016–17, UPI recorded approximately 1.78 crore transactions. By financial year 2025–26, the number had risen to more than 24,162 crore transactions, with transaction value reaching approximately ₹314 lakh crore. By July 2026, 741 banks were connected to the UPI platform. Its geographical significance lies in how digital payments have created new avenues for small shopkeepers, self-employed workers, rural consumers, and small enterprises to participate in formal economic networks. In this sense, digital infrastructure has created a new digital geography alongside India's physical geography.

Development and the Environment: An Essential Geographical Condition

India's next challenge is not simply to produce more, but to achieve sustainable production and sustainable ways of living. The energy transition is one example. According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, as of 31 August 2026, India's total renewable energy capacity stood at approximately 295.55 gigawatts, including around 168.04 gigawatts of installed solar capacity.

This transformation is geographical as well. Rajasthan and Gujarat's solar resources, the wind potential of coastal regions, the hydropower potential of the Himalayas, and rural bioenergy sources are not uniformly distributed. India's energy future must therefore account for local resources, regional conditions, and environmental carrying capacity.

From Local Needs to a National Resolve

Viewed through a geographical lens, the 25-year journey reveals a fundamental proposition: the nation is built through the development of its places. India's strength lies not only in its metropolitan centres but also in villages where access to water, roads, electricity, and digital connectivity can alter the course of everyday life; in districts once regarded as being outside the mainstream of development; and in border and tribal regions whose distinctive geographical conditions need to be reflected in development policy. From this perspective, Seva does not simply mean implementing a programme. It also means ensuring that the benefits of development do not remain inaccessible because of place, region, income, social circumstances, or geographical distance. Understanding local problems and connecting them with national policies is the real test of governance in a country as diverse as India.

The past 25 years can therefore be read not only as a period of political leadership, but also as a period of changing development geography in India; a period in which villages are increasingly seen not as the periphery of national development but as its foundation; districts not merely as administrative units but as laboratories of development; connectivity not merely as transport but as an expansion of opportunity; and digital technology as a force redefining the traditional limitations imposed by distance.

Ultimately, national development takes on a broader meaning when its geography is equally inclusive: from the local to the regional, from the regional to the national, and from the national to the global. Within this continuum, Seva, development, and nation-building converge.



Team India

25 Years of Seva and the Architecture of Cooperative Federalism

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India's federalism is not merely a constitutional distribution of powers; it is a continuing effort to balance national unity with regional aspirations in a land of immense diversity. No national goal can be fully realised unless the States are effective partners in its formulation, implementation and assessment. Few leaders have viewed this question from both sides of the federal relationship. Shri Narendra Modi became Chief Minister of Gujarat in October 2001 and, after nearly thirteen years in that role, Prime Minister in May 2014. His 25 years in public office offer a distinctive vantage point on how development can be institutionalised as a shared responsibility of the Union and the States.

Drawing on his experience as Chief Minister, Shri Modi has argued that States must be trusted as engines of growth rather than treated as mere implementing agencies. As Prime Minister, he has sought to translate that conviction into national institutions. The resulting transformation concerns how priorities are set, how resources are shared, how the needs of different States are accommodated and how outcomes are measured.

From Cooperative Federalism to 'Team India'

One of PM Modi's earliest reforms was replacing the Planning Commission with NITI Aayog in 2015. Its Governing Council brings together the Prime Minister, the Chief Ministers of all States and Union Territories, their legislatures, and the Lieutenant Governors and Administrators of other Union Territories, embodying his idea of the Centre and the States working as 'Team India'. At its 11th meeting, on 11 June 2026, 30 Chief Ministers, two Lieutenant Governors and one Administrator representing 28 States and five Union Territories deliberated on "Inclusive Human Development for Viksit Bharat@2047."

NITI Aayog has extended cooperative federalism beyond formal meetings through policy dialogue, technical support, capacity building and the exchange of best practices. The Aspirational Districts Programme, launched in 2018, and the Aspirational Blocks Programme bring Union, State and district administrations together around shared outcomes: a national vision for policy, State capacity for implementation and local monitoring of results.

PM Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 rests on this premise: a developed India built by developed States, capable local institutions & responsive multilevel governance.

Competitive Federalism: Encouraging Healthy Competition among States

Cooperation does not require every State to follow an identical model. PM Modi has consistently paired cooperation with competition, speaking of 'competitive cooperative federalism'. NITI Aayog's indices, among them the School Education Quality Index, State Health Index, Composite Water Management Index, SDG India Index, India Innovation Index and Export Competitiveness Index, allow States and Union Territories to benchmark performance and identify gaps, while monthly delta rankings keep Aspirational Districts focused on results.

The aim is not merely to rank States but to spread what works. Competitive federalism thus complements cooperative federalism, reflecting a lesson from Gujarat, where Shri Modi's government used initiatives such as the Vibrant Gujarat summits to position the State competitively for investment.

Fiscal Federalism: Sharing Resources

The effectiveness of federalism depends heavily on Union–State fiscal relations. The Finance Commission, constituted under Article 280 of the Constitution, recommends how tax revenues are shared and the principles governing grants to the States.

Soon after PM Modi took office, his Government accepted the 14th Finance Commission's recommendation to raise the States' share of the divisible pool from 32 to 42 per cent, a landmark in fiscal decentralisation. The 15th Finance Commission set the share at 41 per cent for 2021–26, and the 16th Finance Commission's recommendation of 41 per cent for 2026–27 to 2030–31 has also been accepted. The Union Budget 2026–27 provides ₹1.4 lakh crore to the States as Finance Commission grants, including for rural and urban local bodies and disaster management. These transfers do more than move funds; they institutionalise a constitutional sharing of resources, shaped through consultations with Union and State governments, local bodies, academic institutions and other stakeholders.

The GST Council: A Working Experiment in Federalism

The Goods and Services Tax, rolled out on 1 July 2017, is perhaps the clearest expression of the federal approach of the Modi years. Under Article 279A, the GST Council brings the Union and the States together: in a vote, the Union holds one-third of the weighted votes and the States collectively two-thirds, with three-fourths required for adoption. In practice, the Council has largely worked by consensus.

Having held 55 meetings, the Council shows how the Union and the States can sustain dialogue to build a common fiscal framework and a unified

national market while respecting their respective constitutional interests.

Centrally Sponsored Schemes: A Model of Shared Responsibility

Many major programmes are delivered in partnership, with Centrally Sponsored Schemes linking national priorities to local implementation. In 2015, the first meeting of NITI Aayog's Governing Council, chaired by PM Modi, constituted a Sub-Group of Chief Ministers to examine rationalising these schemes, after extensive consultation with States and Union ministries.

Funding patterns vary by scheme and category of State. According to the Union Budget 2026–27 documents, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana follows a 60:40 Centre–State ratio for general States and 90:10 for North-Eastern and Himalayan States, recognising their differing geographical and fiscal circumstances.

Regional Aspirations and National Development

Indian federalism draws its strength from accommodating diversity. The North-East, the Himalayan States, coastal and tribal-majority regions, arid zones and fast-urbanising States each face distinct challenges that an effective federal system must address while pursuing national goals. Under PM Modi, NITI Aayog has emphasised region-specific interventions and capacity building for the North-Eastern and Himalayan States and island territories, while the Act East Policy has brought fresh focus to the North-East. States have been encouraged to prepare long-term visions aligned with national objectives; the theme of the 10th Governing Council meeting in 2025 was "Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat@2047." Federalism thus moves beyond a Union-versus-State framing towards a shared national responsibility.

Extending Federalism to the Local Level

The next frontier is ensuring that the gains of Union–State cooperation reach districts, blocks, municipalities and villages. The real test of development lies not in national or State averages but in the change citizens experience where they live.

District-level data systems and the Aspirational Districts and Blocks programmes carry the principles of cooperative and competitive federalism to the district level, bringing development assessment closer to the people and places where implementation occurs.

Towards Viksit Bharat through Partnership

Over Shri Narendra Modi's 25 years in public office, first as Chief Minister and then as Prime Minister, Indian federalism has evolved into more than a redistribution of powers. Alongside the constitutional framework, new mechanisms have emerged for policymaking, fiscal transfers, tax-sharing, performance-based competition, joint programmes and multilevel planning.

In this architecture, cooperative federalism provides shared objectives, competitive federalism rewards performance, fiscal federalism supplies the resource base, and decentralised governance connects development to local realities. Given India's diversity, success should be judged not by identical outcomes but by whether each State progresses according to its own circumstances while contributing to the national trajectory.

PM Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 rests on this premise: a developed India built by developed States, capable local institutions and responsive multilevel governance. That is the central developmental role of cooperative federalism: connecting national aspirations with State capacity and local needs.



Not a Post, but a Purpose

How Fifty Years Shaped the Pradhan Sevak

Mahiman Tiwari
Advocate and Social Worker

> ***I first heard PM Modi in school say: "Kuch banne ka sapna mat dekho, kuch karne ka sapna dekho"***
> *(Don't dream of becoming something; dream of doing something.)*

This is an autobiography compressed into a sentence: a boy at a tea stall who dreams of serving the motherland through the army, and who, at seventeen, leaves everything behind to walk into the Himalayas with no idea what lies ahead.

Fitness to govern is too often judged by credentials. But a credential certifies only that a person sat in a classroom for a fixed number of years and demonstrated recall and analysis on a pre-designed syllabus.

Governing asks for far more. A head of government must deal with everything from a poor family in distress and an anxious student to a drought-hit farming district, a reluctant bureaucracy, party workers facing a difficult election, banking reform, bilateral trade, the challenges of AI, a security crisis and even a pandemic. No university can train anyone for that.

So the real question is what the true curriculum for governance is, and who has completed it most thoroughly. Examine Narendra Modi's curriculum, and the answer stops being a matter of opinion.

If a boy from a tea stall at Vadnagar railway station can work for fifty years and end up leading the fastest-growing major economy on earth for more than a decade

The Curriculum of a Lifetime

The Ashram: Mastering the Self

At seventeen, he walked out of Vadnagar and into the ashrams of Belur Math, the Ramakrishna Mission, Almora and the Himalayas. He asked to be initiated as a sanyasi but was turned away; they told him his path lay elsewhere. Fifty years into public life, there is still no personal leave, no personal wealth and no dynasty being quietly groomed. That is no happy accident. It was forged in those ashrams, where the examination tests the appetite for comfort.

The Sangh: Learning India

He became a full-time pracharak in his early twenties, owning nothing, paid nothing and going wherever he was sent. This is where he learned India not through statistics, but on the floors of thousands of homes. He has slept in villages in nearly every district of the country. What is often overlooked is that a scheme reaches the last village not because of its elegance on paper, but because someone in the chain knows how to push an instruction down through layers of people. That is the organisational skill he acquired here. During the Emergency, he even went underground disguised as a Sikh to resist the authoritarian regime. It is ironic that the man who risked prison and his life for constitutional values is so casually accused of being a danger to democracy.

The Party: Building an Organisation

In 1987 he moved to the BJP as organising secretary of its Gujarat unit. There he organised the Gujarat leg of the Ram Rath Yatra and the Ekta Yatra, which culminated in the Tricolour being hoisted at Lal Chowk. He then became the party's National General Secretary, tasked with rebuilding the organisation and improving its electoral performance in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab.

Gujarat: Governing a State

In 2001, he was sworn in as Chief Minister of Gujarat. The state was still broken by the earthquake. He did not merely restore it; he rebuilt it into something better. Over the next 12 years and 7 months, he ran the most detailed governance experiment in modern India: electrifying rural Gujarat through the Jyotigram Yojana, driving a water revolution through Sujalam Sufalam, launching online public grievance redressal, enrolling girls in school, bringing agricultural scientists to farmers through Krishi Mahotsav, and turning the state into a destination for global capital through Vibrant Gujarat. The results won him three consecutive re-elections and delivered double-digit GDP and agricultural growth.

India: Delivering at Scale

He arrived in Delhi in 2014 having already governed six crore people for twelve years. No Prime Minister of independent India had taken the oath with so

much executive experience. What followed is best told in numbers, because in politics arguments are cheap; numbers are not. Under his leadership, 25 crore people have been lifted out of poverty, 58 crore people have received Jan Dhan accounts, 11 crore households have received gas connections (the relief to women's lungs cannot be quantified), 4.5 crore houses have been provided under the Awas Yojana, and 55 crore people have been given health cover. Free foodgrain reaches 82 crore people, 15 crore households now have tap water, and 11 crore toilets have been built.

Beyond fixing a decades-old broken system and delivering amenities denied for generations, his larger goal has been to restore India to the stature she deserves. India has become the world's fourth-largest economy, helped by ease-of-doing-business reforms, a simplified GST regime and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and it has built UPI, the digital public infrastructure that now handles more online payment transactions than any other system in the world. His government has built over 50,000 km of national highways and 83 airports in 12 years, compared with 74 in the preceding 67 years, made 3,000 km of freight corridor operational, and set the bullet train project in motion. It has also taken difficult but necessary decisions for Indian civilisation: the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, the consecration of the Ram Mandir, the abrogation of Article 370 and freeing the nation from Left-wing extremist insurgency. Along the way, it delivered 220 crore vaccine doses to Indians, shipped vaccines to over 100 nations, landed Chandrayaan-3 and won global adoption of International Yoga Day.

Alongside all this, his leadership has taken decisive action on national security: the surgical strikes, the Balakot airstrike and Operation Sindoor against terrorism.

The People's Verdict

He also holds a qualification no committee can confer: the repeated verdict of the largest electorate in human history. He has won three consecutive general elections and, counting his three terms in Gujarat, six consecutive mandates as head of government; no other leader has done this. In a democracy where a single anti-incumbency wave can end a career in five years, this is twenty-five years of answerable governance, and the voters keep sending him back.

The Man Behind the Ledger

Data alone will not tell you why any of this matters. When Heeraben Modi died in 2022 at the age of a hundred, her son had been heading a government for twenty-one years yet had built her nothing. She lived in a small house. No wife waiting to be accommodated, no children to be positioned, no brother's company collecting contracts, no son being launched.

If a boy from a tea stall at Vadnagar railway station can work for fifty years and end up leading the fastest-growing major economy on earth for more than a decade, the question is no longer whether he is qualified. The question is whether anyone else is nearly as qualified to lead the nation. The boy never dreamt of becoming something. He dreamt of doing something, and he did it.

Rooted and Modern

Knowledge, Science and Viksit Bharat

Menka Bharati
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On 7 October 2001, Narendra Modi took the oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat; since May 2014, he has served as Prime Minister. Across these twenty-five years of seva as head of government, one recurring theme has been the effort to bring India's traditional knowledge into conversation with modern development. That knowledge is empirical and wide-ranging, spanning agriculture, water conservation, medicinal plants, weather, food systems, and natural resource management, and much of it still informs community livelihoods. The question is not whether tradition or science should be preferred, but how knowledge accumulated through tradition can engage meaningfully with scientific methods.



Tradition and Science: Not Competition, but Dialogue

Reassessing Indian knowledge traditions should not mean treating every traditional belief as inherently scientific. Traditional knowledge embodies long experience and local adaptation; modern science rests on testing, reproducibility, and critical scrutiny. The productive relationship between the two lies in dialogue and validation.

The National Education Policy 2020 gave this dialogue an institutional home, emphasising the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems with education and research. According to the Ministry of Education, during 2023–24 its Indian Knowledge Systems Division supported 53 centres, 88 research projects, more than 5,200 internships, and the digitisation of over 1,800 books, treating traditional knowledge as a subject of research rather than merely an object of preservation.

Renewed Relevance of Traditional Knowledge in Agriculture

Indian agriculture has long relied on local seed varieties, mixed cropping, crop rotation, organic recycling, and rain-fed cultivation adapted to local climates. Climate change, soil degradation, and water scarcity have made scientific examination of these practices more urgent. In Gujarat, the Krishi Mahotsav campaign launched in 2005 took agricultural scientists to villages to work alongside farmers, and the state's pioneering soil testing was scaled nationally as the Soil Health Card scheme in 2015.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has likewise documented and validated Indigenous Technical Knowledge in Agriculture across regions, so that farmers' experience and scientific research can together produce solutions suited to local conditions.

Millets offer a notable example. At India's initiative, the United Nations declared 2023 the International Year of Millets, and the Government promoted them as Shree Anna. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, millets can be grown with limited water and low external inputs, supporting climate-resilient farming. A traditional crop has thus entered contemporary debates on nutrition and climate adaptation.

Weather Knowledge: From Local Observation to Scientific Research

Rural communities across India have developed local weather-observation systems based on clouds, winds, birds, insects, vegetation, and astronomical phenomena. These require scientific evaluation, since they are not uniformly reliable.

Yet dismissing them altogether would be equally inappropriate. Comparative research combining local observations with satellite data, radar, automatic weather stations, and numerical modelling could enrich agro-climatic research, treating local knowledge as a supplement to, not a substitute for, scientific forecasting. In a country as climatically diverse as India, local knowledge offers fine-grained, place-specific observations, while science supplies the tools to test them at scale.

Water Management: Learning from Earlier Systems

India's water traditions, including tanks, stepwells, ahar-pyne systems, johads, and tankas, evolved in response to local geography and community needs. Water management is as much a question of community participation and institutions as of engineering. Gujarat's experience in the 2000s, when community-built check dams and the Sujalam Sufalam scheme recharged groundwater in drought-prone regions, showed how older principles of local water harvesting could be combined with state planning.

Nationally, the Ministry of Jal Shakti was created in 2019, and the Jal Shakti Abhiyan–Catch the Rain campaign has combined rainwater harvesting, geo-tagging of water bodies, conservation planning, and afforestation. Mission Amrit Sarovar, launched in 2022, set out to develop or revive 75 water bodies in every district, while the National Water Mission has identified 75 traditional structures as Water Heritage Structures. Here tradition and modernity converge: an old water structure need not be preserved merely as heritage; its hydrological utility and local institutional capacity can also be scientifically assessed.

Health Traditions and an Evidence-Based Approach

India's health traditions encompass Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, and many community-based healing practices. Their institutional profile rose markedly after 2014, with the creation of a separate Ministry of AYUSH and the United Nations' adoption, on India's proposal, of 21 June as the International Day of Yoga. According to the NSSO's All-India Survey for 2022–23, about 95 per cent of rural and 96 per cent of urban respondents were aware of AYUSH, while approximately 46 per cent of rural and 53 per cent of urban respondents had used it in the preceding 365 days.

These figures indicate social presence, not the effectiveness of every treatment. Standardisation, clinical research, quality control, and evidence-based evaluation remain essential. The Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) guards' traditional medicinal knowledge against misappropriation. According to CSIR, it has documented more than 520,000 formulations and practices and provides access to 18 patent offices.
The effort has also gone global. In 2022, India and the World Health Organisation agreed to establish the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine at Jamnagar, and Gujarat hosted the first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit in 2023, platforms that widen the conversation while underscoring the importance of evidence and research.

Biodiversity and Local Communities

Rural and indigenous communities hold valuable knowledge of local plants, seeds, medicinal herbs, and the sustainable use of natural resources, which can be documented and studied alongside modern biosciences and genetic-resource conservation.
Preserving such knowledge, however, cannot be separated from community rights. The Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023 revisited the rules on access and benefit-sharing; wherever traditional knowledge generates economic value, benefit-sharing, intellectual property, and community informed consent must receive equal attention.

Reintegrating Knowledge in the Digital Age

The expansion of India's digital public infrastructure over the past decade offers an unprecedented opportunity to connect local knowledge with modern research. Digital archives, GIS, remote sensing, artificial intelligence, and data analytics can help document, map, and analyse traditional knowledge. Examples include GIS mapping of traditional water structures, matching local crop knowledge with agro-climatic datasets, building databases of medicinal plants, and comparing indigenous weather indicators with long-term meteorological records.

Conclusion

Revitalising India's knowledge traditions is not about returning to the past, but about connecting experience-based knowledge with future needs. Tradition offers insight into local conditions and relationships with nature; science provides methods of testing, validation, and innovation. Integrating the two can make development more place-sensitive, sustainable, and socially relevant.
Twenty-five years of Narendra Modi's seva as head of government, first in Gujarat and then as Prime Minister, have seen sustained efforts to link Indian knowledge systems with education, research, healthcare, agriculture, water management, and intellectual-property protection. These provide an important foundation. Their lasting success will depend on whether local knowledge remains confined to repositories or becomes a source of scientifically tested innovation, entrepreneurship, and public value.

Modernity in India need not mean a departure from its knowledge traditions. It can mean re-examining them through evidence, reason, and science, and creatively reworking their useful elements. That bridge moves knowledge from heritage to a living resource for a Viksit Bharat.

Growth with Green Conscience

25 Years of Seva and the Environment

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For a long time, development in India was viewed primarily in terms of economic growth, industrialisation, and infrastructure expansion. In the twenty-first century, however, development cannot mean simply producing more and consuming more. Access to clean water and clean air, a safe environment, healthy ecosystems, energy security and climate resilience are equally essential to the quality of life. Within this broader framework, India's environmental approach to development in recent years needs to be understood.

This emerging approach reflects an effort not to treat environmental protection as separate from development, but to balance the two. The fundamental question is: Can development meet the needs of the present generation while safeguarding the natural resources future generations need? A key aspect of India's current environmental policies and initiatives is seeking an answer to this question.

Water: From a Resource to a Foundation of Life Security

In a country as vast and geographically diverse as India, water is not merely a natural resource; it is a foundation of social and economic security. This is why access to safe piped drinking water in rural India has increasingly become an important measure of development.

When the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was launched in August 2019, only 3.23 crore rural households, approximately 16.7 per cent of rural households, had tap-water connections. By 18 July 2026, this figure had risen to about 15.89 crore households, covering 82.09 per cent of rural households. In March 2026, the Mission was extended until December 2028, and a total outlay of ₹8.69 lakh crore was approved for its restructured phase, JJM 2.0. A key shift in this phase is the emphasis not merely on installing pipes and taps, but on ensuring reliable, quality, and sustainable water services.

This shift matters because effective water management ultimately depends on the sustainability of the entire system, from source to point of consumption. Groundwater recharge, protection of water sources, rainwater harvesting, maintenance of local water structures and community participation are all essential components. From this perspective, treating water security not merely as a question of supply, but as a question of water conservation and water governance, offers a more sustainable pathway.

India has a long tradition of viewing nature not merely as a collection of resources, but as an integral part of the larger system of life.

From Sanitation to a Cleaner Environment

Sanitation, too, cannot be reduced to building toilets. After achieving the objective of eliminating open defecation, the next stage of rural sanitation involves solid and liquid waste management, effective drainage, and creating a clean village environment. This is why ODF Plus has gained importance under the second phase of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).

According to government data available up to December 2024, many villages had attained different ODF Plus categories, and efforts had been made to institutionalise solid and liquid waste management at the village level. Its broader significance is that sanitation is no longer merely a matter of individual behaviour; it is increasingly part of public health, the local environment, and village governance.

The same approach is evident in relation to rivers. By March 2026, 524 projects had been sanctioned under the Namami Gange Programme, and 355 had been completed. Over the preceding five years, 76 sewage infrastructure projects, with a combined treatment capacity of 3,200 MLD, were completed.
The next stage is to view a river not merely as a channel of flowing water, but as part of the ecology of an entire river basin. River conservation can be sustained only when catchments, tributaries, wetlands, groundwater, sewage management and downstream ecosystems are considered as interconnected components of a single ecological system.

Energy Transition: A New Balance between Development and the Environment

Energy transition is another major dimension of India's environmental journey. In June 2025, the share of non-fossil sources in the country's total installed power capacity crossed 50 per cent; more than five years ahead of India's stated 2030 target. According to data from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, as of 31 August 2026, India's total renewable energy capacity stood at approximately 295.55 GW, while total non-fossil fuel capacity was about 304.33 GW. Solar power accounted for approximately 168.04 GW and wind power for about 58.52 GW.

This transition is not merely a climate policy matter. It is also linked to energy security, reduced dependence on imports, technological capability, employment and long-term economic competitiveness. The target of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil electricity capacity by 2030 is part of this broader energy transition. At the same time, plans are being developed to strengthen transmission infrastructure so that large-scale renewable generation can be effectively integrated into the national grid.

This leads to an important policy lesson: green

growth cannot be achieved simply by installing solar panels; it requires a balance among energy generation, storage, transmission, land use and local ecological conditions.

Forests, Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration

India's environmental security rests upon its forests, wetlands, mangroves, grasslands, mountain ecosystems and marine environments. According to the India State of Forest Report 2023, the country's total forest and tree cover was 827,357 square kilometres, accounting for 25.17 per cent of its geographical area. This comprised 715,343 square kilometres of forest cover and 112,014 square kilometres of tree cover. The assessment recorded an increase of 1,445 square kilometres in forest and tree cover compared with 2021.

The importance of forests extends far beyond green cover. They are fundamental to water conservation, soil protection, biodiversity, livelihoods and carbon sequestration. The 2023 assessment estimated India's forest carbon stock at 7,285.5 million tonnes, while the total carbon stock was estimated at 30.43 billion tonnes of CO_2 equivalent.

Wetland conservation has also expanded significantly. By January 2026, India had 98 Ramsar Sites. These included six sites in Bihar: Kabartal, Nagi, Nakti, Gokul Jalashay, Udaipur Lake and Gogabil Lake. This expansion also highlights that biodiversity conservation is not simply about increasing the number of protected areas; it is about maintaining the functional integrity of ecosystems.

Climate Resilience: Development for the Future

Climate change has challenged conventional notions of development. Floods, droughts, extreme temperatures, cyclones, forest fires and changes in sea level affect different regions in different ways. For India, therefore, climate policy is not limited to reducing emissions; it also means building a climate-resilient and disaster-resilient society.

Land restoration is a key part of this effort. In August 2026, India informed the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification that 21.76 million hectares of land had been restored during 2011–2020, generating 1.22 billion person-days of employment. This example demonstrates that environmental protection and rural development need not be treated as separate domains. Land restoration, water conservation, afforestation, and local livelihoods can advance together.

Towards a New Development Ethic

Recent years' experience points to a broader principle: sustainable development does not mean stopping development; it means changing direction and quality of development. Roads, industries, housing, energy infrastructure and urbanisation are necessary. But planning must also account for catchment areas, biodiversity, the carrying capacity of land, pollution, and climate-related risks.

The environmental governance of the future could therefore be built around five foundations: water security, sanitation, clean energy, ecological conservation and climate resilience. Above these stands an even more important foundation: citizens' environmental responsibility.

India has a long tradition of viewing nature not merely as a collection of resources, but as an integral part of the larger system of life. Dialogue between modern science and technology and traditional ecological knowledge can further enrich this perspective. Ultimately, the environmental meaning of seva is not limited to providing better facilities for society today; it also means safeguarding water, forests, soil, biodiversity and a healthy environment for generations to come. At this point, seva moves beyond social welfare and becomes an intergenerational responsibility.

The true measure of India's development journey over the next 25 years will therefore not be only how much we build, but also how successfully we protect our rivers, forests, soils, climate and biodiversity while pursuing development. In this sense, sustainability is not an additional environmental objective; it is a fundamental measure of the quality of development itself.



स्वयंसेवक से प्रधान सेवक तक

निष्काम कर्मयोगी की अतुलनीय सेवा यात्रा

आदर्श तिवारी
सदस्य संपादकीय बोर्ड,
BJYM पत्रिका

भारतीय चिंतन में सेवा का अर्थ कभी दया या उपकार नहीं रहा है। सेवा उस भाव का नाम है जिसमें व्यक्ति स्वयं को समाज से अलग नहीं मानता। दूसरों का दुःख उसे विचलित करता है, दूसरों की आवश्यकता उसे सक्रिय करती है और दूसरों का उत्थान उसके अपने जीवन का उद्देश्य बन जाता है। यही कारण है कि भारत की सांस्कृतिक परंपरा में लोकसेवा को केवल सामाजिक दायित्व नहीं, अपितु साधना माना गया है। सार्वजनिक जीवन का मूल्य भी अंततः इसी कसौटी पर आँका जाता है कि उसने सामान्य नागरिक के जीवन में कितना परिवर्तन लाया।

नरेंद्र मोदी के सार्वजनिक जीवन को समझने के लिए भी यही दृष्टि सबसे अधिक उपयुक्त प्रतीत होती है। उनकी यात्रा को केवल चुनावी सफलताओं, प्रशासनिक निर्णयों या सरकारी योजनाओं तक सीमित कर देना उसके व्यापक स्वरूप के साथ न्याय नहीं होगा। अधिक महत्त्वपूर्ण यह समझना है कि स्वयंसेवक के रूप में विकसित सेवा दृष्टि ने मुख्यमंत्री और फिर प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में उनकी शासन शैली को किस प्रकार आकार दिया। यही वह सूत्र है जो उनके ढाई दशकों लंबे प्रशासनिक जीवन को निरंतरता , भरोसा और जनविश्वास प्रदान करता है।

स्वयंसेवक का जीवन व्यक्ति को समाज के बीच रहकर सीखने की प्रेरणा देता है। समस्याओं को दूर से देखने के बजाय उनके बीच जाकर समझना, संवाद को समाधान का पहला माध्यम मानना और जनभागीदारी को परिवर्तन की सबसे बड़ी शक्ति समझना, यही संस्कार आगे चलकर नरेंद्र मोदी की कार्यशैली में स्पष्ट दिखाई देते हैं। मुख्यमंत्री बनने के बाद भी उन्होंने प्रशासन को केवल सचिवालय की चारदीवारी तक सीमित नहीं रहने दिया। वे लगातार जिलों, गाँवों और दूरस्थ क्षेत्रों का प्रवास करते रहे। उनके लिए विकास का अर्थ फाइलों में स्वीकृत योजनाएँ नहीं, बल्कि उन लोगों के जीवन में दिखाई देने वाला परिवर्तन था, जिनके लिए शासन उत्तरदायी होता है।

> किसी भी सार्वजनिक जीवन की सबसे बड़ी उपलब्धि पदों की संख्या या कार्यकाल की अवधि नहीं होती। उसकी वास्तविक कसौटी यह होती है कि उसके निर्णयों ने समाज के सबसे साधारण व्यक्ति के जीवन में कितना विश्वास, कितनी गरिमा और कितने नए अवसर जोड़े।

वर्ष 2001 गुजरात के इतिहास का सबसे कठिन अध्याय था। विनाशकारी भूकंप ने विशेष रूप से कच्छ को गहरे घाव दिए थे। हजारों परिवार उजड़ चुके थे। घर, विद्यालय, अस्पताल और बाजार मलबे में बदल गए थे। उस समय सबसे बड़ी आवश्यकता पुनर्निर्माण के साथ-साथ लोगों के भीतर यह विश्वास लौटाना भी था कि जीवन फिर से सामान्य हो सकता है।

मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में नरेंद्र मोदी ने पुनर्निर्माण को केवल इंजीनियरिंग परियोजना नहीं बनने दिया। वे बार-बार प्रभावित क्षेत्रों में पहुँचे, लोगों से मिले और स्थानीय समाज की भागीदारी को पुनर्वास का आधार बनाया। कच्छ का पुनर्निर्माण धीरे-धीरे इस बात का उदाहरण बना कि यदि शासन संवेदनशील हो और समाज सहभागी बने, तो आपदा के बाद भी विकास का नया अध्याय लिखा जा सकता है। यही अनुभव उनके प्रशासनिक दृष्टिकोण का पहला बड़ा आधार बना। कच्छ की चुनौती अभी पूरी तरह समाप्त भी नहीं हुई थी कि गुजरात का पुराना संकट फिर सामने खड़ा था। उत्तर गुजरात, सौराष्ट्र और कच्छ के विशाल भूभाग में पानी जीवन का सबसे बड़ा प्रश्न बना हुआ था। ऐसे अनेक गाँव थे जहाँ वर्षा का इंतजार केवल खेती के लिए नहीं, बल्कि पीने के पानी के लिए भी किया जाता था। भूजल लगातार नीचे जा रहा था और किसान अनिश्चित मानसून पर निर्भर थे।

यहीं से जल संरक्षण को जनआंदोलन बनाने की सोच विकसित हुई। सुजलाम-सुफलाम योजना केवल नहर निर्माण का कार्यक्रम नहीं थी। उसके साथ चेक डैम, खेत तालाब, वर्षाजल संचयन और पारंपरिक जलस्रोतों के पुनर्जीवन को व्यापक जनभागीदारी से जोड़ा गया। अनेक क्षेत्रों में ग्रामीणों ने स्वयं श्रमदान किया। स्थानीय संस्थाओं, किसानों और प्रशासन ने मिलकर जल संरक्षण को सामूहिक अभियान का स्वरूप दिया। बाद के वर्षों में गुजरात के जल प्रबंधन मॉडल की चर्चा देशभर में हुई और इसी अनुभव ने आगे चलकर जल संरक्षण तथा हर घर जल जैसी राष्ट्रीय पहलों की सोच को भी प्रभावित किया। गुजरात के गाँवों में घूमते हुए नरेंद्र मोदी को यह अहसास हुआ कि किसान की मुश्किलें सिर्फ पानी या कर्ज़ तक नहीं रुकतीं, उसे सही जानकारी और सरकार से सीधी बातचीत भी चाहिए होती है। इसी विचार ने कृषि महोत्सव को जन्म दिया, जो 2005 में शुरू हुआ, जहाँ वैज्ञानिक और अफसर दफ्तर छोड़कर सीधे खेतों तक जा पहुँचे और हजारों गाँवों में किसानों को आधुनिक तकनीक और सलाह दी गई। बच्चों की पढ़ाई, खासकर बेटियों की पढ़ाई, बड़ी चिंता थी। इसे सुलझाने के लिए शाला प्रवेशोत्सव और कन्या केलवाणी अभियान शुरू किए गए। मुख्यमंत्री खुद घर-घर जाकर परिजनों को समझाते कि बच्चों को स्कूल भेजना क्यों जरूरी है। इसका नतीजा साफ दिखा, स्कूलों में दाखिले बढ़े और बच्चों का पढ़ाई छोड़ना कम हुआ। सरकार को जनता के करीब और जवाबदेह बनाने के लिए अप्रैल 2003 में SWAGAT नाम की व्यवस्था लाई गई, जिसमें शिकायतों की सुनवाई खुद मुख्यमंत्री हर महीने करते थे, इस नई कार्य संस्कृति के द्वारा आम आदमी अपनी समस्या सीधे शासन तक पहुंचाने में सफल हुआ। आदिवासी इलाकों के लिए 2007 में वनबंधु कल्याण योजना बनाई गई, जिसमें शिक्षा, इलाज, पानी और रोजगार, सबको एक साथ जोड़कर काम किया गया। यह मॉडल इतना कारगर रहा कि बाद में इसे देश के अन्य राज्यों में भी अपनाने की कोशिश हुई। इन सारे प्रयासों में एक ही सोच झलकती है। नरेंद्र मोदी ने सरकार को कागज़ी योजनाओं से निकालकर लोगों के बीच पहुँचाया। लगातार दौरे, सीधी बातचीत और स्थानीय समस्याओं को मौके पर सुलझाने की यही संस्कृति आगे चलकर उनकी राष्ट्रीय कार्यशैली की बुनियाद बनी।



वर्ष 2014 में जब उन्होंने प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में दायित्व संभाला, तब दायरा पूरे देश का था। भौगोलिक विस्तार बड़ा था, सामाजिक विविधता अधिक थी और चुनौतियाँ भी कहीं व्यापक थीं। इसके बावजूद उनकी कार्यशैली में एक निरंतरता स्पष्ट दिखाई देती है। गुजरात में विकसित सेवा दृष्टि राष्ट्रीय नीतियों की पृष्ठभूमि बनती हुई दिखाई देती है।

इसका सबसे स्पष्ट उदाहरण गरीब कल्याण की प्रमुख योजनाएं हैं जिसने गरीबों को सम्मान, स्वाभिमान और सुलभ जीवन प्रदान किया। ग्रामीण भारत के प्रवासों के दौरान उन्होंने अनगिनत ऐसे घर देखे थे जहाँ महिलाओं का अधिकांश समय धुएँ से भरे रसोईघर में बीतता था। लकड़ी, उपले और कोयले के चूल्हों से निकलने वाला धुआँ केवल असुविधा नहीं, गंभीर स्वास्थ्य संकट भी था। उज्ज्वला योजना को केवल एलपीजी कनेक्शन वितरण की योजना के रूप में देखना पर्याप्त नहीं होगा। इसके पीछे महिलाओं के स्वास्थ्य, सम्मान और जीवन की गुणवत्ता को बेहतर बनाने का व्यापक उद्देश्य था। जब किसी परिवार की रसोई धुएँ से मुक्त होती है, तब उसका लाभ केवल एक व्यक्ति तक सीमित नहीं रहता, बल्कि पूरे परिवार के जीवन पर सकारात्मक प्रभाव पड़ता है।

किसानों के साथ वर्षों के संवाद का विस्तार प्रधानमंत्री किसान सम्मान निधि में भी दिखाई देता है। छोटे और सीमांत किसानों के लिए खेती केवल व्यवसाय नहीं, जीवन का आधार है। मौसम की अनिश्चितता, बढ़ती लागत और सीमित संसाधनों के बीच समय पर उपलब्ध आर्थिक सहायता उनके लिए महत्त्वपूर्ण संबल बनती है। इस योजना ने करोड़ों किसानों को प्रत्यक्ष वित्तीय सहायता उपलब्ध कराकर खेती की निरंतरता को मजबूत करने का प्रयास किया। यह केवल आर्थिक सहायता का कार्यक्रम नहीं था, बल्कि किसान की गरिमा और आत्मविश्वास को सुदृढ़ करने की दिशा में भी एक कदम था।

आदिवासी समाज के प्रति वही संवेदनशील दृष्टि आगे चलकर एकलव्य मॉडल आवासीय विद्यालयों के विस्तार में दिखाई देती है। दूरस्थ क्षेत्रों के प्रतिभाशाली विद्यार्थियों को गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा उपलब्ध कराना केवल शिक्षा नीति का विषय नहीं, सामाजिक न्याय का प्रश्न भी है। शिक्षा अवसरों की समानता का सबसे प्रभावी माध्यम है और इसी सोच के साथ जनजातीय क्षेत्रों में शैक्षिक सुविधाओं के विस्तार पर बल दिया गया।

इसी प्रकार असंगठित क्षेत्र के करोड़ों श्रमिकों के लिए ई-श्रम पोर्टल की स्थापना एक महत्त्वपूर्ण पहल थी। लंबे समय तक यह वर्ग औपचारिक सामाजिक सुरक्षा व्यवस्था से बाहर रहा। किसी भी कल्याणकारी नीति की सफलता इस बात पर निर्भर करती है कि वह अपने लक्षित नागरिक तक पहुँचे। श्रमिकों की पहचान, पंजीकरण और भविष्य की सामाजिक सुरक्षा योजनाओं के लिए एक व्यापक डिजिटल आधार तैयार करना सेवा को अधिक संगठित और प्रभावी बनाने की दिशा में महत्त्वपूर्ण कदम था।

इन्हीं अनुभवों का विस्तार जल, स्वास्थ्य, आवास और सामाजिक सुरक्षा से जुड़ी अनेक राष्ट्रीय पहलों में भी दिखाई देता है। गुजरात में जल संरक्षण को लेकर विकसित दृष्टि राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर जल जीवन मिशन में दिखाई देती है। गरीब परिवारों की स्वास्थ्य संबंधी कठिनाइयों की समझ आयुष्मान भारत में परिलक्षित होती है। सम्मानजनक जीवन के लिए सुरक्षित आवास की आवश्यकता प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना में स्पष्ट रूप से दिखाई देती है। इन सभी पहलों के केंद्र में एक ही विचार है कि शासन का उद्देश्य केवल

योजनाएँ बनाना नहीं, बल्कि नागरिक के जीवन को अधिक सुरक्षित, सम्मानजनक और अवसरों से युक्त बनाना है।

कोविड-19 महामारी के दौरान यह सेवा दृष्टि एक बार फिर व्यापक स्तर पर दिखाई दी। जब पूरी दुनिया अभूतपूर्व संकट से जूझ रही थी, तब भारत के सामने सबसे बड़ी चुनौती केवल स्वास्थ्य व्यवस्था को मजबूत करना नहीं थी, बल्कि करोड़ों गरीब परिवारों के जीवनयापन को भी सुरक्षित रखना था। ऐसे समय में प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण अन्न योजना के माध्यम से करोड़ों लोगों तक निःशुल्क खाद्यान्न पहुँचाने की व्यवस्था की गई। इस योजना ने कठिन समय में करोड़ों परिवारों को खाद्य सुरक्षा का भरोसा दिया। यह केवल राहत कार्यक्रम नहीं था, बल्कि इस विश्वास की अभिव्यक्ति थी कि संकट की घड़ी में राज्य अपने सबसे कमजोर नागरिक के साथ खड़ा रहेगा।

इसी प्रकार प्रत्यक्ष लाभ अंतरण, जनधन खातों का विस्तार और डिजिटल माध्यमों से सरकारी सेवाओं की पहुँच बढ़ाने के प्रयासों ने शासन और नागरिक के बीच की दूरी कम करने का कार्य किया। वर्षों तक यह शिकायत रही कि सरकारी सहायता का एक बड़ा हिस्सा वास्तविक लाभार्थी तक पहुँचने से पहले ही व्यवस्था की जटिलताओं में उलझ जाता है। तकनीक के माध्यम से पारदर्शिता और प्रत्यक्ष हस्तांतरण की व्यवस्था ने इस प्रक्रिया को अधिक सरल और उत्तरदायी बनाने का प्रयास किया। यहाँ भी मूल उद्देश्य प्रशासन को नागरिक के अधिक निकट लाना था।

नरेंद्र मोदी की कार्यशैली का एक उल्लेखनीय पक्ष यह भी रहा कि उन्होंने अनेक विषयों को केवल सरकारी कार्यक्रम नहीं रहने दिया। स्वच्छता, जल संरक्षण, योग, पोषण, पर्यावरण संरक्षण और जनभागीदारी जैसे विषयों को सामाजिक चेतना से जोड़ने का प्रयास किया गया। स्वच्छ भारत अभियान इसका प्रमुख उदाहरण है। स्वच्छता को केवल नगरपालिका की जिम्मेदारी मानने के बजाय जनआंदोलन का स्वरूप देने का प्रयास किया गया। इसी प्रकार एक पेड़ माँ के नाम जैसे अभियानों के माध्यम से पर्यावरण संरक्षण को भावनात्मक जुड़ाव के साथ प्रस्तुत किया गया। सेवा का यह स्वरूप व्यक्ति को केवल लाभार्थी नहीं, बल्कि परिवर्तन का सहभागी बनाता है।

यदि नरेंद्र मोदी के मुख्यमंत्री और प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में किए गए कार्यों का एक साथ अध्ययन किया जाए, तो एक स्पष्ट निरंतरता दिखाई देती है। गुजरात में जिन विषयों पर उन्होंने विशेष ध्यान दिया, वही व्यापक रूप में राष्ट्रीय नीतियों में विकसित होते दिखाई देते हैं। जल संरक्षण की चिंता जल जीवन मिशन तक पहुँचती है। किसानों के साथ प्रत्यक्ष संवाद की सोच किसान सम्मान निधि में दिखाई देती है। बालिका शिक्षा और सामाजिक जागरूकता का अनुभव शिक्षा और महिला सशक्तीकरण से जुड़े राष्ट्रीय प्रयासों में परिलक्षित होता है। आदिवासी क्षेत्रों के विकास की प्रतिबद्धता जनजातीय शिक्षा और आधारभूत सुविधाओं के विस्तार में दिखाई देती है। असंगठित श्रमिकों, गरीब परिवारों और वंचित वर्गों को शासन की मुख्यधारा से जोड़ने का प्रयास राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर और व्यापक स्वरूप ग्रहण करता है।

यही इस पूरी यात्रा का सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण पक्ष है। यहाँ सेवा किसी एक योजना, किसी एक कार्यकाल या किसी एक राजनीतिक उपलब्धि तक सीमित नहीं है। यह एक ऐसी कार्य दृष्टि है जिसमें शासन का मूल्य इस बात से निर्धारित होता है कि उसका लाभ समाज के उस व्यक्ति तक पहुँचा या नहीं, जो सबसे अधिक आवश्यकता में है। सेवा का अर्थ अवसर उपलब्ध कराना, आत्मविश्वास जगाना और नागरिक को सम्मान के साथ आगे बढ़ने का वातावरण देना भी है।

लोकतंत्र में नेतृत्व का मूल्यांकन समय के साथ बदलता रहता है। राजनीतिक बहसें अपने स्थान पर महत्त्वपूर्ण होती हैं, किंतु इतिहास अंततः उन परिवर्तनों को अधिक स्थायी रूप से याद रखता है जो सामान्य नागरिक के जीवन में दिखाई देते हैं। जब कोई किसान बेहतर सिंचाई के साथ अपनी खेती को सुरक्षित देखता है, जब किसी ग्रामीण घर की महिला धुएँ से मुक्त रसोई में भोजन बनाती है, जब किसी आदिवासी छात्र को गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा का अवसर मिलता है, जब किसी श्रमिक को पहली बार औपचारिक पहचान प्राप्त होती है या जब किसी गरीब परिवार को संकट की घड़ी में खाद्यान्न और स्वास्थ्य सुरक्षा का भरोसा मिलता है, तब शासन का वास्तविक अर्थ सामने आता है।

नरेंद्र मोदी के सार्वजनिक जीवन की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता यही है कि उन्होंने शासन को सेवा का माध्यम बनाने का निरंतर प्रयास किया। दायित्व बदलते रहे, परिस्थितियाँ बदलती रहीं और कार्यक्षेत्र का विस्तार होता गया, किंतु मूल भाव एक ही रहा कि शासन का केंद्र सत्ता नहीं, समाज होना चाहिए। स्वयंसेवक के रूप में विकसित सेवा का संस्कार मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में प्रशासनिक शैली में दिखाई दिया और प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में राष्ट्रीय नीतियों का आधार बना। इसी निरंतरता ने उनके सार्वजनिक जीवन को केवल राजनीतिक यात्रा नहीं रहने दिया, अपितु उसे लोकसेवा की एक सतत साधना का स्वरूप प्रदान किया।

किसी भी सार्वजनिक जीवन की सबसे बड़ी उपलब्धि पदों की संख्या या कार्यकाल की अवधि नहीं होती। उसकी वास्तविक कसौटी यह होती है कि उसके निर्णयों ने समाज के सबसे साधारण व्यक्ति के जीवन में कितना विश्वास, कितनी गरिमा और कितने नए अवसर जोड़े। इसी दृष्टि से देखा जाए तो नरेंद्र मोदी की सार्वजनिक यात्रा सेवा को शासन की आत्मा बनाने के एक निरंतर प्रयास के रूप में दिखाई देती है। भारतीय लोकतंत्र की जड़ों को निरंतर मजबूत करते हुए जनसेवा की यह यात्रा नरेंद्र मोदी के सार्वजनिक जीवन का सार है और लोकतंत्र के प्रति उनकी प्रतिबद्धता का सबसे स्थायी संदेश भी।

नरेंद्र मोदी
25 वर्षों की सार्वजनिक यात्रा एवं युवा आकांक्षाओं के सारथी

अनुराग तिवारी
आर्थिक एवं स्टार्टअप
विषयों के जानकार

आज के बदलते दौर में किसी भी देश की सबसे बड़ी ताकत उसके संसाधन के साथ उसके युवाओं के सपने होते हैं। और भारत जैसे युवा देश में इन सपनों को दिशा देना केवल सरकार की जिम्मेदारी नहीं, बल्कि नेतृत्व की सबसे बड़ी कसौटी भी है। पिछले 25 वर्षों में नरेंद्र मोदी की सार्वजनिक यात्रा को यदि इसी दृष्टि से देखा जाए, तो यह यात्रा गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री से लेकर भारत के प्रधानमंत्री तक केवल सत्ता की यात्रा नहीं, अपितु बदलती युवा आकांक्षाओं के साथ संवाद और उनके उम्मीदों को पूरा करने की भी यात्रा रही है। साल 2001 में गुजरात की जिम्मेदारी संभालने से शुरू हुआ यह सफर आज उस भारत तक पहुंचा है, जहां युवा स्वयं को देश की नीतियों, योजनाओं और निर्णयों में लाभार्थी के साथ, खुद को इसमें सहभागी भी मानने लगा है।

दो दशक पहले नरेंद्र मोदी ने 2001 में गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में जिम्मेदारी संभाली, तब राज्य कई गंभीर चुनौतियों से गुजर रहा था। उसी वर्ष आए विनाशकारी भूकंप, उससे पहले के चक्रवात, लगातार सूखे और राजनीतिक अस्थिरता ने गुजरात के सामने कठिन परिस्थितियां खड़ी कर दी थीं। ऐसे समय में पुनर्निर्माण केवल इमारतों और सड़कों का नहीं था बल्कि लोगों के विश्वास और भविष्य की उम्मीदों का भी पुनर्निर्माण आवश्यक था। यहीं से शासन को लोगों के दरवाजे तक ले जाने की सोच ने आकार लिया। वर्ष 2003 में गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री रहते हुए शुरू किया गया 'स्वागत' कार्यक्रम इस दृष्टि से महत्वपूर्ण उदाहरण था। तकनीक के माध्यम से नागरिकों की शिकायतों को सीधे मुख्यमंत्री तक पहुंचाने और उनके समाधान की व्यवस्था ने शासन और आम नागरिक के बीच एक नया संवाद बनाया। इसका मूल विचार था कि सरकार केवल कार्यालयों में बैठकर लोगों की समस्याओं का इंतजार न करे, बल्कि तकनीक के माध्यम से नागरिकों तक पहुंचे।



किसी युवा के लिए सबसे बड़ी उम्मीद केवल यह नहीं होती कि सरकार उसके लिए कोई योजना बनाए बल्कि उसकी असली उम्मीद यह होती है कि उसकी मेहनत को अवसर मिले। गुजरात के वर्षों में स्वावलंबन, कौशल और रोजगार से जुड़े प्रयासों को इसी व्यापक सोच के संदर्भ में देखा जा सकता है। बाद के वर्षों में भी युवाओं और महिलाओं के लिए स्वावलंबन तथा कौशल विकास पर जोर दिया गया।

समय का पहिया घूमा और नरेंद्र मोदी का प्रदेश की जिम्मेदारी से राष्ट्रीय जिम्मेदारी तक का सफर शुरू हुआ लेकिन युवाओं के साथ संवाद का मूल सूत्र नहीं बदला असल में उस सोच का विस्तार हुआ। अब सामने केवल एक राज्य का युवा नहीं, बल्कि जम्मू-कश्मीर से कन्याकुमारी और गुजरात से पूर्वोत्तर तक फैला हुआ विशाल युवा भारत था। मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में जिन आकांक्षाओं को राज्य स्तर पर समझने और संबोधित करने का प्रयास हुआ था, प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में उन्हें राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर नीति और कार्यक्रमों से जोड़ने का प्रयास दिखाई दिया।

युवा भारत की सबसे बड़ी आकांक्षा रही है और इसी सवाल को ध्यान में रखते हुए कौशल विकास, नवाचार, उद्यमिता और तकनीक को विकास की मुख्यधारा से जोड़ने पर प्रधानमंत्री का सबसे अधिक जोर रहा। कौशल भारत, डिजिटल भारत, अटल नवाचार अभियान और स्टार्टअप भारत जैसे प्रयासों ने युवाओं के लिए रोजगार खोजने के साथ-साथ स्वयं अवसर पैदा करने की संभावना को भी नया मंच दिया।

एक दौर था कि भारत का युवा यह सोचने को मजबूर होता था कि अच्छी नौकरी ही सफलता का सबसे सुरक्षित रास्ता है। पिछले दशक में इस सोच के सामने एक नया विकल्प अधिक मजबूती से आया जिसका नाम है अपना उद्यम और अपनी समस्या का अपना समाधान। स्टार्टअप भारत जैसी पहल ने उद्यमिता को राष्ट्रीय विकास के विमर्श में स्थान दिया। इससे युवा के सामने यह सवाल भी खड़ा हुआ कि वह केवल नौकरी पाने वाला क्यों बने, वह नौकरी देने वाला क्यों नहीं बन सकता। लेकिन अवसर केवल बड़े शहरों के युवाओं तक सीमित रह जाएं, तो युवा भारत की तस्वीर अधूरी रह जाएगी। आज छोटे शहरों और गांवों से निकलने वाले युवा भी तकनीक, विज्ञान, अंतरिक्ष, ड्रोन, निर्माण, खेल और उद्यमिता जैसे क्षेत्रों में अपनी पहचान बना रहे हैं। प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय ने भी हाल में इस बात को रेखांकित किया है कि छोटे शहरों और गांवों से आने वाले युवा नवाचार और उद्यमिता में आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। युवा और सरकार के बीच दूरी कम करने में तकनीक ने भी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। जिस तकनीक का इस्तेमाल कभी नागरिकों की शिकायतें मुख्यमंत्री तक पहुंचाने के लिए किया गया था, वही तकनीकी सोच आगे चलकर डिजिटल शासन और सीधे जनसंवाद के बड़े माध्यमों में दिखाई दी। आज युवा सरकार की किसी योजना की जानकारी लेने, आवेदन करने, अपनी बात रखने और विभिन्न गतिविधियों में भाग लेने के लिए डिजिटल माध्यमों का उपयोग कर सकता है। यह बदलाव केवल तकनीकी नहीं है साथ ही यह नागरिक और शासन के रिश्ते में बदलाव का संकेत भी है। इसी क्रम में 2023 में मेरा युवा भारत मंच की शुरुआत हुई। इसका उद्देश्य युवाओं को अनुभव आधारित सीख, सामाजिक भागीदारी और विकास की गतिविधियों से जोड़ना तथा उन्हें विकसित भारत के निर्माण में सहभागी बनाना है। यह सोच इस बात को सामने रखती है कि युवा केवल सरकारी योजनाओं का लाभ लेने वाला व्यक्ति नहीं, बल्कि राष्ट्र निर्माण में योगदान देने वाला सक्रिय नागरिक भी हो सकता है।

युवाओं से जुड़ाव केवल योजनाओं से नहीं, संवाद से भी बनता है। 'परीक्षा पे चर्चा' जैसे कार्यक्रमों ने प्रधानमंत्री और विद्यार्थियों के बीच सीधे संवाद का एक मंच बनाया, जहां परीक्षा, तनाव, कौशल, सपने और भविष्य जैसे विषयों पर विद्यार्थी स्वयं प्रश्न पूछते हैं। 2026 के कार्यक्रम में भी विद्यार्थियों ने कौशल, शिक्षा और अपने सपनों को लेकर सीधे सवाल किए। पिछले वर्षों में युवाओं को नवाचार, उद्यमिता, कौशल, खेल, स्वयंसेवा और तकनीक से जोड़ने की कोशिश इसी दिशा में देखी जा सकती है। आज युवा अपने आसपास की समस्याओं को केवल समस्या के रूप में नहीं, बल्कि समाधान और अवसर के रूप में देखने लगा है।

इसमें कोई दो राय नही कि पिछले 25 वर्षों की इस यात्रा में एक बड़े बदलाव को हर स्तर पर देखा गया है। इस दौर में युवा और शासन के बीच संवाद का दायरा बढ़ा है। गुजरात में मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में लोगों की समस्याओं को सीधे शासन तक पहुंचाने की कोशिश से लेकर प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में युवाओं को उद्यमिता, कौशल, नवाचार, तकनीक और सामाजिक भागीदारी से जोड़ने तक, एक निरंतरता दिखाई देती है जैसे सरकार को जनता से जोड़ना और जनता को विकास की प्रक्रिया से जोड़ना। जब युवा अपनी आकांक्षाओं को देश की आकांक्षाओं से जोड़ने लगता है, तब विकास केवल सरकारी कार्यक्रम नहीं रहता बल्कि वह जनभागीदारी का आंदोलन बन सकता है।

हरहाल, नरेंद्र मोदी के सार्वजनिक जीवन के 25 वर्षों को इसी नजरिए से देखने पर यह यात्रा मुख्यमंत्री से प्रधानमंत्री तक की राजनीतिक यात्रा से आगे बढ़कर दिखाई देती है। यह उस भारत की बदलती कहानी है, जहां युवा पहले अवसर की तलाश करता था, फिर अवसर पैदा करने की बात करने लगा और अब स्वयं को नीति, तकनीक, नवाचार और राष्ट्र निर्माण की प्रक्रिया से जोड़कर देख रहा है। गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में शुरू हुआ संवाद आज विकसित भारत के संकल्प तक पहुंच चुका है। किसी भी राष्ट्र का भविष्य उसके युवाओं के सपनों में जन्म लेता है, लेकिन उसकी वास्तविक तस्वीर तब बनती है जब उन सपनों को अवसर, दिशा और भागीदारी मिलती है।



वसुधा का नेता कौन हुआ?
नव धर्म-प्रणेता कौन हुआ?
अतुलित यश-क्रेता कौन हुआ?
जिसने न कभी आराम किया,
विघ्नों में रहकर नाम किया?"

रश्मिरथी का नायक, राष्ट्र का प्रधान सेवक

सेवा के 25 वर्ष

अनूप तिवारी
राजनीतिक एक्टिविस्ट

राष्ट्र कवि रामधारी सिंह 'दिनकर' की कालजयी कृति रश्मिरथी की ये पंक्तियाँ कविता भर नहीं हैं। विद्यालय में जब हम इन्हें पढ़ते थे, तब मन में यही जिज्ञासा रहती थी कि सच्चा नेता आखिर होता कैसा है। वह जो कठिनाइयों से घबराए नहीं, अपने लक्ष्य पर अडिग रहे, अपने कर्मों से यश अर्जित करे और अपने समाज तथा राष्ट्र को सही दिशा दे।

वर्ष 2014 में देश की जनता ने भ्रष्टाचार और कुशासन की पुरानी राजनीति को नकारते हुए माननीय नरेंद्र मोदी जी को भारत का प्रधानमंत्री चुना। इससे पहले गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में और उसके बाद देश के प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में उनके सार्वजनिक जीवन को निकट से समझने के लिए जब अध्ययन करते हैं तो यह साधारण व्यक्ति की असाधारण यात्रा दिखाई पड़ती है। उनके लगभग 25 वर्षों के सार्वजनिक जीवन और विभिन्न संवैधानिक पदों पर निभाए गए दायित्वों को देखें, तो रश्मिरथी की इन पंक्तियों में झलकने वाले नेतृत्व के सभी गुण उनमें दिखाई देते हैं, और इनके साथ मानवीय संवेदना, सेवा, समर्पण, कुशल संवाद-शैली,स्पष्ट दृष्टि तथा भ्रष्टाचार के प्रति जीरो टॉलरेंस का भाव भी।

माननीय प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी का व्यक्तित्व इसलिए प्रेरित नहीं करता कि वे देश के प्रधानमंत्री हैं। प्रेरणा का असली कारण वह समझ है, जो उनके सार्वजनिक जीवन को देखने के बाद बनती है, कि नेतृत्व किसी पद पर बैठ जाने का नाम नहीं है, और न ही अपने सहकर्मियों से काम करवा लेना भर। नेतृत्व वह क्षमता है जिसमें व्यक्ति लगातार परिश्रम करते हुए कठिन परिस्थितियों में सही निर्णय लेने का साहस रखता है, लोगों की आवश्यकताओं और अपेक्षाओं को समझता है और राष्ट्रहित में अपना सर्वस्व न्योछावर करने को तैयार रहता है।

इसी दृष्टि से जब हम नरेंद्र मोदी जी के सार्वजनिक जीवन को देखते हैं, तो नेतृत्व का एक ऐसा स्वरूप सामने आता है जिसमें संघर्ष, अनुशासन, निर्णय क्षमता, कर्म और सेवा की भावना प्रमुख है। रश्मिरथी के वैचारिक धरातल और उनके कर्मयोगी नेतृत्व के बीच का यह जुड़ाव उनके सार्वजनिक जीवन के प्रमुख आयामों में स्पष्ट दिखाई देता है।

आपदा के समय निर्णय लेने का साहस

किसी भी नेता की असली परीक्षा तब होती है, जब परिस्थितियाँ अनुकूल न हों। शांति के समय निर्णय लेना अपेक्षाकृत आसान होता है, लेकिन जब सामने कोई बड़ी चुनौती हो और हर निर्णय से करोड़ों लोगों का जीवन जुड़ा हो, तब नेतृत्व की वास्तविक क्षमता सामने आती है। कोरोना महामारी के अभूतपूर्व संकट को शायद ही कोई भूल सकता है। उस समय पूरी दुनिया अनिश्चितता में डूबी हुई थी और भारत जैसे विशाल तथा विविधतापूर्ण देश के सामने चुनौतियाँ और भी विकराल थीं। उसी संकट के बीच प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी ने 22 मार्च 2020 को जनता कर्फ्यू के माध्यम से देश को देशव्यापी लॉकडाउन के लिए मानसिक रूप से तैयार किया, और इसके बाद स्वदेशी वैक्सीन बनाकर तथा दुनिया के सबसे बड़े टीकाकरण अभियान को पूरा करके भारत ने अपनी क्षमता पूरी दुनिया को दिखा दी। कठिन हालात में फैसला लेने से न घबराना और संकट के बीच 'आत्मनिर्भर भारत' की सोच के साथ जरूरी सामान, दवाइयों तथा वैक्सीन के उत्पादन और आर्थिक गतिविधियों को बढ़ावा देना, यह सब उसी दृष्टिकोण का हिस्सा था। इतना ही नहीं, अपनी मुश्किलों के बावजूद भारत ने 'वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्' की भावना निभाते हुए दुनिया के कई देशों की मदद भी की। कुशल नेतृत्व की सबसे बड़ी पहचान शायद यही है कि संकट में सिर्फ समस्या न देखी जाए, सबको साथ लेकर उससे बाहर निकलने का रास्ता भी दिखाया जाए।

लोगों से जुड़ने और उन्हें साथ लेकर चलने की क्षमता

नरेंद्र मोदी जी के व्यक्तित्व का एक बहुत प्रभावी पहलू आम लोगों से संवाद करने की उनकी विशिष्ट शैली है। किसी विचार को सरकारी योजना बनाकर छोड़ देना आसान है, लेकिन उसे जन-आंदोलन का रूप देकर लोगों को उसका भागीदार बनाना वास्तविक नेतृत्व का प्रमाण है। इसका प्रत्यक्ष उदाहरण 'स्वच्छ भारत अभियान' है। स्वच्छता कोई नया विषय नहीं था, लेकिन जब देश के प्रधानमंत्री ने लाल किले की प्राचीर से इसका संदेश देते हुए स्वयं अपने हाथ में झाड़ू उठाई, तो यह विषय राष्ट्रीय प्राथमिकता बन गया। इस अभियान की सबसे बड़ी उपलब्धि यही रही कि स्वच्छता सरकार की जिम्मेदारी तक सीमित न रहकर जन-भागीदारी का रूप ले सकी। इसी प्रकार 'मन की बात' के माध्यम से प्रधानमंत्री जी देश के दूर-दराज के हिस्सों में काम कर रहे सामान्य नागरिकों, छोटे नवाचारों और स्थानीय प्रयासों को राष्ट्रीय मंच देते हैं, जिससे यह विश्वास और मजबूत होता है कि राष्ट्र-निर्माण बड़े शहरों या सरकारी तंत्र तक सीमित काम नहीं है, गाँव-देहात में बैठा साधारण व्यक्ति भी देश के लिए बड़ा योगदान दे सकता है।

समाज के अंतिम व्यक्ति तक योजनाएँ पहुँचाने की सोच

किसी भी राष्ट्र की प्रगति का आकलन बुनियादी ढाँचे या बड़ी इमारतों को देखकर नहीं किया जा सकता। असली मापदंड वह बदलाव है, जो समाज के अंतिम पायदान पर खड़े उस व्यक्ति के जीवन में आता है, जो दशकों से मूलभूत सुविधाओं से वंचित रहा। इसी दृष्टि से जनधन योजना, उज्ज्वला योजना, प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना और आयुष्मान भारत जैसी योजनाएँ ऐतिहासिक सिद्ध हुई हैं। जनधन योजना के माध्यम से 59.21 करोड़ से अधिक नागरिक पहली बार औपचारिक बैंकिंग व्यवस्था से जुड़े, जिससे भ्रष्टाचार पर लगाम लगी और सरकारी सहायता सीधे DBT के माध्यम से लाभार्थियों के खातों में पहुँचने लगी। उज्ज्वला योजना ने 10.58 करोड़ गरीब परिवारों की माताओं-बहनों को धुएँ से मुक्ति दिलाकर



गरिमापूर्ण जीवन दिया, वहीं 4 करोड़ से अधिक पक्के घर और 5 लाख रुपये तक के मुफ्त इलाज की सुविधा ने उन परिवारों को सामाजिक सुरक्षा दी, जिनके लिए ये बातें कभी केवल स्वप्न थीं। ये सभी जनकल्याणकारी योजनाएँ पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय जी के 'अंत्योदय' के दर्शन को धरातल पर साकार करती हैं।

वैश्विक मंचों पर भारत का सामर्थ्य बढ़ाने का प्रयास

बीते वर्षों में भारत की वैश्विक भूमिका बड़े बदलाव से गुजरी है। आज भारत अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर अपनी बात बिना किसी दबाव के, पूरी स्पष्टता और आत्मविश्वास के साथ रखता है। आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध 'सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक' और 'एयर स्ट्राइक' जैसी कार्रवाइयों ने कड़ा संदेश दिया कि अपनी सीमाओं और नागरिकों की सुरक्षा के विषय में भारत का रुख जीरो टॉलरेंस का है, नया भारत ईंट का जवाब पत्थर से देने में विश्वास रखता है। वहीं रूस-यूक्रेन संघर्ष हो या ईरान-अमेरिका तनाव, ऐसे जटिल वैश्विक संकटों के समय भारत ने किसी गुट का हिस्सा बनने के बजाय अपने राष्ट्रीय हितों को सर्वोपरि रखते हुए स्वतंत्र और संतुलित विदेश नीति का परिचय दिया। साथ ही भारत की सांस्कृतिक विरासत को वैश्विक पहचान दिलाने के प्रयास भी असाधारण रहे हैं। अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग दिवस की स्वीकृति तथा G20 और ब्रिक्स जैसे आयोजनों की सफल अध्यक्षता ने आधुनिकता और परंपरा के अद्भुत संतुलन को दुनिया के सामने रखा है।

परिश्रम, अनुशासन और 'प्रधान सेवक' का भाव

नरेंद्र मोदी जी के व्यक्तित्व में जो बात देश के युवाओं को सबसे अधिक प्रभावित करती है, वह है उनका अदम्य परिश्रम और कठोर अनुशासन। सार्वजनिक जीवन में लगातार सक्रिय रहना, देशव्यापी दौरे, कूटनीतिक संबंधों को मजबूत करने के लिए विदेश यात्राएँ, देर रात तक चलने वाली बैठकें और राष्ट्रहित में एक के बाद एक निर्णय लेना, यह सब असाधारण समर्पण की माँग करता है। दीपावली जैसे त्योहारों पर सीमा पर जाकर सैनिकों के बीच समय बिताना दिखाता है कि उनके लिए पद अधिकार नहीं, एक बड़ा दायित्व है। वे स्वयं को प्रधानमंत्री नहीं, 'प्रधान सेवक' मानकर कार्य करते हैं। यह शब्द महज संबोधन भर नहीं, निष्काम कर्मयोग की भावना का प्रतीक है। उनके जीवन से हर युवा को यह सीख मिलती है कि बड़े लक्ष्य केवल इच्छाओं से पूरे नहीं होते, उनके लिए लगातार मेहनत, अनुशासन और अटूट निष्ठा चाहिए।

आज रश्मिरथी की पंक्तियाँ फिर स्मरण होती हैं, 'जिसने न कभी आराम किया, विघ्नों में रहकर नाम किया।' तब लगता है कि उनका अर्थ केवल काव्य-कल्पना नहीं, एक जीवंत यथार्थ है। माननीय नरेंद्र मोदी जी का नेतृत्व केवल एक राजनीतिक यात्रा नहीं है, यह इस बात का उदाहरण है कि राष्ट्र-सेवा का संकल्प दृढ़ हो, तो परिस्थितियाँ कितनी भी कठिन क्यों न हों, मार्ग निकल ही आता है। उनका सार्वजनिक जीवन देश की युवा पीढ़ी के लिए परिश्रम, अनुशासन, विपरीत परिस्थितियों में धैर्य और 'राष्ट्र प्रथम' की भावना के साथ आगे बढ़ने का सशक्त प्रेरणा-पुंज है।



श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी
जिस नेता ने मुझे प्रेरित किया

राज कुमार
राजनीतिक, मीडिया और
डिजिटल संचार विशेषज्ञ

वर्ष 2014 को याद करता हूँ तो सबसे पहले अपनी उम्र याद आती है। मैं केवल 20 वर्ष का था और पहली बार मतदान करने जा रहा था। झारखंड के एक गाँव से आने वाले उस युवा के लिए यह केवल वोट देने का अवसर नहीं था। पहली बार महसूस हो रहा था कि जिस लोकतंत्र को अब तक किताबों और बड़ों की बातों से समझा था, उसमें मेरी भी एक आवाज है। देश के राजनीतिक वातावरण में बदलाव की आहट थी और मेरे भीतर भी एक नई उम्मीद जन्म ले रही थी। उस उम्मीद के केंद्र में थे, श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी। मैं पहले से भारतीय जनता पार्टी का समर्थक था, लेकिन श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी के नेतृत्व ने मेरे भीतर केवल राजनीतिक समर्थन की भावना नहीं पैदा की। उनके काम और उनकी सोच ने मुझे यह महसूस कराया कि यदि देश में बदलाव की बात हो रही है, तो मुझे केवल उसका दर्शक नहीं रहना चाहिए। मुझे भी अपनी क्षमता के अनुसार उसमें योगदान देना चाहिए।

श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी को लेकर मेरी शुरुआती प्रेरणा उनके गुजरात के कार्यकाल से जुड़ी थी। गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में विकास को लेकर उनकी सोच ने मुझे विशेष रूप से प्रभावित किया। प्रशासन में नई सोच, निवेश और रोजगार के अवसरों पर जोर तथा 'वाइब्रेंट गुजरात' जैसी पहलों में मुझे भविष्य को लेकर एक स्पष्ट दृष्टि दिखाई देती थी।

यह मेरे लिए इसलिए भी महत्वपूर्ण था क्योंकि उस समय मेरे कुछ



मित्र रोजगार की तलाश में गुजरात चले गए थे। उन्हें अपने गाँव से निकलकर बेहतर अवसरों की तलाश में दूसरे राज्य जाते देखना मेरे लिए थोड़ा दूसरा किस्म का अनुभव था। इसलिए गुजरात मेरे लिए केवल समाचारों में दिखाई देने वाला राज्य नहीं था, उससे मेरे अपने लोगों और उनके भविष्य का संबंध जुड़ गया था। मेरे मन में सवाल उठता था, अगर हमारे गाँव का युवा रोजगार के लिए गुजरात जा सकता है, तो क्या एक दिन ऐसा नहीं हो सकता कि झारखंड में ही इतने अवसर पैदा हों कि युवाओं को अपने घर-परिवार से दूर न जाना पड़े? यहीं गुजरात का चहुंमुखी विकास मेरे लिए एक संभावना बन गया। मुझे लगा कि विकास केवल सड़क, इमारत या उद्योग का नाम नहीं है। विकास का अर्थ अवसर पैदा करना है, ऐसे अवसर, जिनसे एक युवा अपने भविष्य के बारे में बड़े सपने देख सके।

श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी की राजनीतिक यात्रा ने मेरी नेतृत्व की समझ को भी बदला। एक कार्यकर्ता के रूप में शुरुआत, संगठन में वर्षों तक काम करना, लोगों के बीच रहना और फिर गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में जिम्मेदारी संभालना, इस यात्रा ने मुझे समझाया कि नेतृत्व केवल पद नहीं है। नेतृत्व जमीन से जुड़े रहने, जिम्मेदारी उठाने, कठिन परिस्थितियों में निर्णय लेने और लोगों को किसी बड़े उद्देश्य के लिए साथ लेकर चलने का नाम है। इसी सोच ने मुझे वर्ष 2014 के आम चुनाव में भारतीय जनता पार्टी के स्वयंसेवक के रूप में जुड़ने के लिए प्रेरित किया।

मैं केवल अपना पहला वोट देकर घर लौटना नहीं चाहता था। मुझे लगा कि यदि मैं बदलाव की उम्मीद करता हूँ, तो मुझे भी अपनी भूमिका निभानी चाहिए। लोगों के बीच जाना, कार्यकर्ताओं के साथ काम करना, संवाद करना और चुनावी प्रक्रिया को करीब से देखना मेरे लिए महत्वपूर्ण अनुभव बना। तभी लोकतंत्र का एक नया अर्थ समझ में आया। लोकतंत्र केवल मतदान के दिन अपना मत देने का नाम नहीं है। उसमें नागरिक की भागीदारी, कार्यकर्ता की मेहनत और देश के प्रति जिम्मेदारी भी शामिल है। यहीं से 'सेवा' शब्द का अर्थ मेरे लिए और गहरा हुआ। सेवा किसी बड़े पद से शुरू नहीं होती। सेवा उस भावना से शुरू होती है जिसमें व्यक्ति अपनी क्षमता, समय और ऊर्जा को किसी बड़े उद्देश्य के लिए समर्पित करने का निर्णय लेता है। 2014 में स्वयंसेवक के रूप में जुड़ना मेरे लिए इसी भावना की पहली अनुभूति थी।

इसी दौर में 'नया भारत' भी मेरे लिए एक विश्वास बनना शुरू हुआ। उस समय मैं इसे आज की तरह विस्तार से परिभाषित नहीं कर सकता था। मेरे लिए नया भारत ऐसा भारत था जो अपनी क्षमता पर विश्वास करे, जहाँ गाँव और छोटे शहर विकास की मुख्यधारा से जुड़ें, युवाओं को अवसर मिलें और हर नागरिक स्वयं को राष्ट्र निर्माण का भागीदार समझे।

आज जब पीछे मुड़कर उस 20 वर्षीय युवक को देखता हूँ, तो लगता है कि अनुभव कम था, लेकिन विश्वास बहुत था। और आज, श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी की 25 वर्षों की सार्वजनिक सेवा को देखते हुए, 2014 की वे स्मृतियाँ और भी अर्थपूर्ण लगती हैं। अक्टूबर 2001 में गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में जिम्मेदारी संभालने से लेकर राष्ट्रीय नेतृत्व और प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में देश की सेवा तक की उनकी यात्रा को मैं केवल राजनीतिक पदों की यात्रा नहीं मानता। इसमें मुझे एक कार्यकर्ता की निरंतरता दिखाई देती है, संगठन, संघर्ष, जिम्मेदारी, प्रशासन, नेतृत्व और सबसे बढ़कर सेवा।

इसीलिए 'सेवा के 25 साल' मेरे लिए केवल 25 वर्षों की राजनीतिक यात्रा का स्मरण नहीं है। यह उस निरंतर संकल्प का प्रतीक है जिसमें सार्वजनिक जीवन को राष्ट्रसेवा का माध्यम माना गया है। इस यात्रा के साथ 'विकसित भारत' का संकल्प भी जुड़ा है, ऐसा भारत जो अपनी विरासत पर गर्व करे, आधुनिकता और नवाचार को अपनाए, अपने युवाओं की ऊर्जा को अवसरों में बदले और विश्व पटल पर आत्मविश्वास के साथ खड़ा हो। 2014 में जिस 'नए भारत' को मैंने एक युवा मन की उम्मीद के रूप में महसूस किया था, आज उसे एक व्यापक राष्ट्रीय संकल्प के रूप में देखता हूँ। श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी के 'सेवा के 25 साल' मेरे लिए माँ भारती की सेवा और भारत के भविष्य के निर्माण के उस निरंतर संकल्प की यात्रा हैं, जिसमें गुजरात के विकास की सोच से लेकर पूरे देश के लिए 'नए भारत' की व्यापक दृष्टि तक एक स्पष्ट निरंतरता दिखाई देती है।

एक कार्यकर्ता से गुजरात के नेतृत्व तक और फिर देश के प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में राष्ट्रीय जिम्मेदारी तक की यह यात्रा बताती है कि बड़े परिवर्तन केवल विचारों से नहीं आते, उनके पीछे वर्षों की सेवा, परिश्रम, अनुशासन और संकल्प होता है। माँ भारती के प्रति समर्पित सेवा के ये 25 वर्ष उस विश्वास को मजबूत करते हैं कि भारत अपनी सामर्थ्य को पहचानकर एक नए युग का निर्माण कर सकता है। यही 'नया भारत' है, अपनी जड़ों से जुड़ा, अपने भविष्य के प्रति आश्वस्त और अपनी क्षमता पर विश्वास करने वाला भारत। गुजरात में विकास की जिस सोच ने एक 20 वर्षीय युवा के मन में उम्मीद जगाई थी, आज वही प्रेरणा 'सेवा के 25 साल' और 'विकसित भारत' के व्यापक संकल्प में और अधिक विराट रूप में दिखाई देती है।


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