



ST. BEDE'S COLLEGE

E-newsletter by
the Department
of Political
Science 2022-2023

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IT'S POLITIC-AL

GOING BY THE NEUTRAL WAY

-DIPTI SOOD

B.A. II YEAR

The electoral landscape of India is wide and varied. The government at the center may have its hold over India as a whole, but never has the center been able to influence state politics! One might even go as far as saying that certain parties (not yet recognized as central parties) hold a large sway in the most influential parts of the country.

A recent election in the **state of Karnataka** has come out with a whopping majority in the favor of Congress party. To understand the degree and the tact behind this win, it becomes sufficiently important to first examine Karnataka as a state.

When talking about the electoral setup, and linking that to the win secured by any political party, demography comes out as a major player. Demographically, Karnataka stands at an impressive estimated population of **67.6 million (6.76 crores), as of 2023**. The religious demography of the state reveals that Hindus enjoy prominence in the region while Muslims, far from a majority form the second largest group. To be precise, Hinduism emerges as the predominant religion, with approximately 84% of the population identifying as Hindus, the Muslim community accounts for around 12.92%, followed by smaller percentages of Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and other religious groups.

Now as we come down to the ideological war that has intermittently waged between the parties since the times of their establishment, this article will be based on two of the major players. Understanding the framework they navigate can reveal a lot about the election results in Karnataka. These parties are Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and Congress.

A roundabout turn about these political parties, back to where it all started does not get us anywhere closer to where we are today, here, however, there is one aspect of history that stays permanent and periodically repeats itself, the loyal voter count or rather, the devotedly affiliated population. Other than that, the real game begins when the political parties come out with their promises and guarantees in the form of a manifesto, a guiding piece of paper for the public that perfectly tries to capture their demands and desires and tries to convert that into votes!



The psychology behind a manifesto, may not have been completely lost on the Congress party. Their stance on ideologies has been completely neutral from the very beginning. This, not only gives them an edge over the population as a whole but in region-based politics, helps them to back up their policies and make them more believable. BJP on the other hand has from the very beginning been a devout member or believer of the right wing! Any policies or promises that may span out of their sphere of Hinduism in regional politics to be specific, may not be deemed credible.

But with Karnataka's dominantly Hindu population, the BJP party should have had an edge in gaining the majority. That, however, did not happen.

Here's what went wrong-

- The party's rightist ideology garners a lack of interest among the masses.
- With BJP's increasing power, perhaps the public may favor change.
- Pertaining to a central agenda, the party follows a consistent policy throughout not changing their strategies pertinent to the states.

The loss of one is a win for another, the other in this case being the Congress party! **Here's what they did right-**

- Leveraging areas of interest like reservations for minorities, which goes on to instill that their presence is recognized, respected, and appreciated (a good methodology or not, the debate remains endless.)
- Providing the common public guarantees related to day-to-day solutions which they may feel go overlooked.
- Basing their strategy on the requirements of the region rather than aligning with their central ideology entirely.

The guarantees made by the Congress party in the elections are as follows-

- Providing free bus travel to all women
- Providing Rs 2,000 per month to every woman head of a family
- Providing Rs 3,000 per month to graduates and Rs 1,500 per month to diploma holders as unemployment monthly payment
- Providing 10 kilos of rice and 200 units of free power to households
- Repealing all 'unjust laws and antipeople's laws passed by the BJP government in Karnataka
- Scraping National Education Policy (NEP)
- Accepting the caste census report

It is difficult to say whether the government's policies will address the region's requirements or align with the central ideology of the party in power. The Congress party has promised to focus on issues such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. However, it remains unclear whether the party will be able to deliver on these promises.

The Karnataka election results are not shocking, but eye-opening at best. What religious angles can be discovered and analyzed here remain unknown until the execution of the government's policies, until then, it's all speculation. One may call it agenda, one may call it change, one may call it a foresighted win, but one thing is for sure, a lot of future discussions are about to be based around these policies.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMIRAL :) -SMRITI THAKUR

St. Bede's has always been a dream for me. From Class representative to Vice captain of INS Vikas to being the Admiral of the college, it has been a beautiful journey with so many memories, life long friends and lessons. Being the Admiral has taught me what it takes to be a leader. I'm extremely grateful to Sister Molly for always being my guiding light and bestowing me with the honor of the Bedian pin. Also, a big thanks to my loving parents and my sister, without their support it could not have been possible. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my loving teachers and my department, who always supported and believed in me. I would like to conclude by saying it's not about perfection, but the effort. And when you put that effort every single day, that's when things work in your favour. Be the change you want. Trust the Universe.



INDIAN ASPIRATION AND ARCHITECTURE

THE PARLIAMENTARY MASTERPIECE

THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT IS A SYMBOL OF THE COUNTRY'S DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, HAVING PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND WITNESSED HISTORICAL MILESTONES.

THE EXISTING PARLIAMENT BUILDING SERVED AS INDEPENDENT INDIA'S FIRST PARLIAMENT AND WITNESSED THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA.

DESIGNED BY BRITISH ARCHITECTS SIR EDWIN LUTYENS AND HERBERT BAKER, THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING IS AN ICONIC STRUCTURE THAT TOOK SIX YEARS TO CONSTRUCT (1921-1927).

CENTRAL VISTA REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT: THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED THE PROJECT IN 2019, AIMING TO REVAMP THE CENTRAL AREA OF NEW DELHI.

NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING: AS PART OF THE PROJECT, A NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING IS BEING CONSTRUCTED. THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY WAS HELD IN OCTOBER 2020, AND THE FOUNDATION STONE WAS LAID IN DECEMBER 2020.

THE NEED FOR A NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING ARISES FROM ITS AGE, LACK OF ORIGINAL DESIGN RECORDS, OVER-UTILIZATION, AND INABILITY TO MEET CURRENT REQUIREMENTS.

THE PRESENT BUILDING DOES NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE SEATING SPACE FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (MPS) AND POSES SECURITY RISKS.

DISTRESSED INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING SEEPAGES, DESTRUCTION OF AESTHETICS, AND FIRE SAFETY CONCERNS, FURTHER NECESSITATE A NEW BUILDING.

OBSOLETE COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES AND POOR ACOUSTICS ARE ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE EXISTING PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

STRUCTURAL SAFETY CONCERNS EXIST DUE TO CHANGES IN SEISMIC ZONES, WITH THE BUILDING NOW LOCATED IN SEISMIC ZONE IV.

INADEQUATE WORKSPACE FOR EMPLOYEES HAS RESULTED IN POOR-QUALITY AND CRAMPED OFFICES DUE TO SUB-PARTITIONS AND CONVERSIONS OF SERVICE CORRIDORS.

CONTROVERSIAL STANCE

THE BUILDING'S INAUGURATION HAS FACED HEAVY CRITICISM, WITH 19 OPPOSITION PARTIES BOYCOTTING THE EVENT AND THE SUPREME COURT HEARING A RELATED CASE.

THE RULING BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP) IS CRITICIZED FOR SIDELINING THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHOICE OF INAUGURATION DATE, WHICH COINCIDES WITH A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY.

CRITICS SEE THE PROJECT AS A MEANS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO ENHANCE HIS IMAGE, WITH PARALLELS DRAWN TO RIGHT-WING POPULIST LEADERS AND THEIR USE OF ARCHITECTURE.

PAKISTAN IN CHAOS: A BAD NEWS FOR INDIA!!

–RIYA SHARMA

E.A. I YEAR

“The longer Pakistan’s political crisis runs, the more vigilant India ought to be on its border.”

The India-Pakistan relations are one of the most complex associations that India shares with any of its neighboring countries. Despite the many contentious issues, India and Pakistan have made significant strides in reducing the “trust deficit” over the past few years. Yet cross-border terrorism is the most critical cause of concern regarding the complex association between the two countries. Terrorism emanating from territories under Pakistan’s control remains a core concern in bilateral relations. The possession of the territory of Kashmir is another major issue of concern between the two countries.

But analyzing the current situation in Pakistan, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Pakistan is in a state of a mess; the economy is in ICU, the politicians are at war, and people are crying for help.

It is not the first time that Pakistan’s economy has been unstable, so the question that arises here is why it has become a more talkative thing this time.

The simple answer to this question is that it is not just unstable but nearing collapse this time.

May 9, 2023: Former Pakistani Prime Minister and politician Imran Khan Arrested from inside the High Court in Islamabad.

What does Imran Khan’s arrest mean for Pakistan?

Khan’s arrest represents a significant escalation in Pakistan’s political crisis, and there might be no turning back. Some observers are even calling it the country’s biggest crisis since 1971, when East Pakistan became Bangladesh. Imran Khan and other members and supporters of his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e- Insaf (PTI), now stand accused of as many as 140 crimes. The cases against Khan himself are 34, according to the documents – ranging from contempt of court to terrorism and whatnot.

Pakistan is already going through a severe economic crisis, and the arrest of former PM Imran Khan has now put it into a state of extreme political crisis too. Imran Khan’s supporters have resorted to violent protests, and there have been several cases of attacks on military officials, the bombing of government buildings, and violent protests all over Pakistan. The protest has turned out to be so violent that the Army has declared May 9 as the “**dark chapter**” in Pakistan’s history.

The Pak military is one of the strongest armies. It is often described as a “**state within a state**” because of its strong influence on the entire nation. The military is taking strict measures to stop the ongoing protests, but their efforts are not yielding results. The anger and rage of the supporters of Imran Khan have led to such a situation in Pakistan that it might lead to the collapse of Pakistan as a nation itself.



And if this happens, it will prove to be **BAD NEWS** for India. The failure of the political machinery in Pakistan would lead to a rapid rise in terrorist activities there. All this certainly might result in terrorist attacks in Pakistan and bordering areas of India. It would further stimulate anti-nationalist sentiments among the extremists living within India, too. It might result in cross-border conflicts and even war between both countries in the coming time.

Thus, India needs to be very cautious and fully prepared to deal with any such dispute that might occur soon. India has tried to forge peaceful bonds with Pakistan ever since its independence. Still, Pakistan has always disappointed us through the various activities and tensions it creates near the bordering areas. But whenever such conflicts arise, India has never failed to show Pakistan and the world that we are capable of forging tranquility not only through peace treaties but through armed rebellions and wars too.

SNEAK A LAUGH :)

Why did the politician take up gardening?

Because he wanted to learn how to "plant" ideas in people's minds!



एक राजनेता अपने दोस्त से बोला, "तुम मेरी आदतों को बदल सकते हो?"

दोस्त ने हंसते हुए कहा, "तेरी आदतों को बदलने की कोशिश मैंने बहुत बार की है, पर ये वोटर्स नहीं बदल पाते।"

A politician was asked, "How do you manage to remember all your election speeches?"

He replied, "Easy! I have a great memory. I just forget everything I promised after the elections!"



एक राजनेता अपने दोस्त से: "तू जानता है, मैं चुनावों में निपटता हूँ जैसे एक अच्छा इंजीनियर अपनी गाड़ी में जुगाड़ करता है!"

दोस्त: "हाँ, और जब तक गाड़ी चल रही होती है, तब तक यहां वहां से धुआँ निकलता रहता है!"

How many politicians does it take to change a light bulb? None.

They're too busy blaming each other for the darkness!



राहुल गांधी एक दिन नरेंद्र मोदी से पूछते हैं, "तेरी मन की बातें सुनते हैं, लेकिन मेरी मन की बातें कौन सुनेगा?"

नरेंद्र मोदी बड़े दिलसे जवाब देते हैं, "वो तो है, लेकिन तूने कभी कहीं देखा है कि मन जब बेचारा तूरिया की तरह घुम रहा होता है, तो कोई उसे कौन सुनेगा?"

INTER-STATE BORDER DISPUTES IN INDIA: A PERSISTENT THREAT TO NATIONAL UNITY AND HARMONY

-PALAK SHARMA

B.A. II YEAR

"Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization."

-Mahatma Gandhi

India is described as a **'Union of States' in Article 1 of the Indian constitution**, i.e., an indestructible nation of destructible states where a state or Union territory of India can't secede from India by any means. However, different states in the country have been at each other's throats over the division of resources. Recently, news broke on Indian news channels when **violence erupted between the police of Assam and the police of Mizoram state over the territorial issue**. This violence consumed the life of six police officers and one civilian. This was most probably not the first-ever incident of its kind.

India, with its cultural, linguistic, and geographic diversity, is no stranger to interstate border disputes. These conflicts arise when states contest the demarcation of their territorial boundaries, leading to tensions, at times, even violence. As a result, interstate border disputes have been a persistent challenge to national unity in India, often fueled by historical, political, and socio-economic factors.

According to the Union Home Ministry (MHA), **11 States and one Union Territory have boundary disputes between them**, and "occasional protests and incidents of violence are reported from some of the disputed border areas." Recently, a conflict between Assam and Meghalaya at the border resulted in the loss of lives. Also, a border dispute between Karnataka and Maharashtra is boiling. The Belgaum district is arguably part of one of India's most significant inter-state border disputes. The district has a large Marathi and Kannada-speaking population and has been at the center of a dispute for a long time. The area came under Karnataka in 1956 when states were reorganized, and till then, it was under the Bombay presidency.

The **tussle between Haryana and Punjab is also well-known over the water issue**. Haryana demanded 5.9 billion m³ out of Punjab's total 8.9 billion m³ share of water, while Punjab claimed the entire quantity of water. Also, the Parwanoo region has had the spotlight over the border dispute between the states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. It is next to the Panchkula district of Haryana, and the state has claimed parts of the land in Himachal Pradesh as its own.

Himachal has a territorial disagreement with Ladakh over Sarchu, an area on the route between Leh and Manali. Sarchu lies in between Himachal's Lahaul & Spiti districts and Leh. It is considered a significant point where travelers stop when traveling between the two cities. Other episodes of inter-state border conflict can be seen in Northeast Indian states between Assam-Mizoram, Assam-Arunachal Pradesh, Assam-Nagaland, and Assam-Meghalaya. However, the border dispute between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, which has been going on since 1972, has been resolved permanently.



If we look at the roots of inter-state border disputes, their origin could be traced back to British Policies in colonial times and reflect the consequences of the British policy of creating and recreating boundaries for administrative convenience based on annexation and exploration of territories. Non-resolution of these disputes has given rise to solid community sentiments among states concerned and resultantly vitiated inter-state relations. Some other factors, such as Vote bank politics, regionalism, no constitutional provisions, etc., are also responsible for the non-resolution of such conflicts.

These border disputes trigger violence and regional imbalance. Therefore, it demands the attention of authorities and appropriate steps for their resolution. It requires conducting Land Surveys and then demarcating boundaries properly. Engaging local communities in the exercise of demarcation of borders is necessary. Also, Setting up independent Committees that can work with the Survey of India for proper surveys should be. The central government has consistently taken the position that inter-State boundary disputes can only be settled amicably with the willing cooperation of the State Governments involved and that its role in the process is limited to acting as a facilitator for a settlement that promotes mutual accommodation and understanding. Therefore, Inter-State Councils and Zonal Councils need to be strengthened that can resolve disputes amicably, and separate Laws need to be enacted to address land disputes.

Resolving interstate border disputes requires a balance of legal frameworks, diplomatic negotiations, and sensitivity to local aspirations. Therefore, it is high time for the Indian government to adopt a proactive approach, fostering dialogue and implementing robust mechanisms to address these disputes and ensure long-term peace and stability across state boundaries.

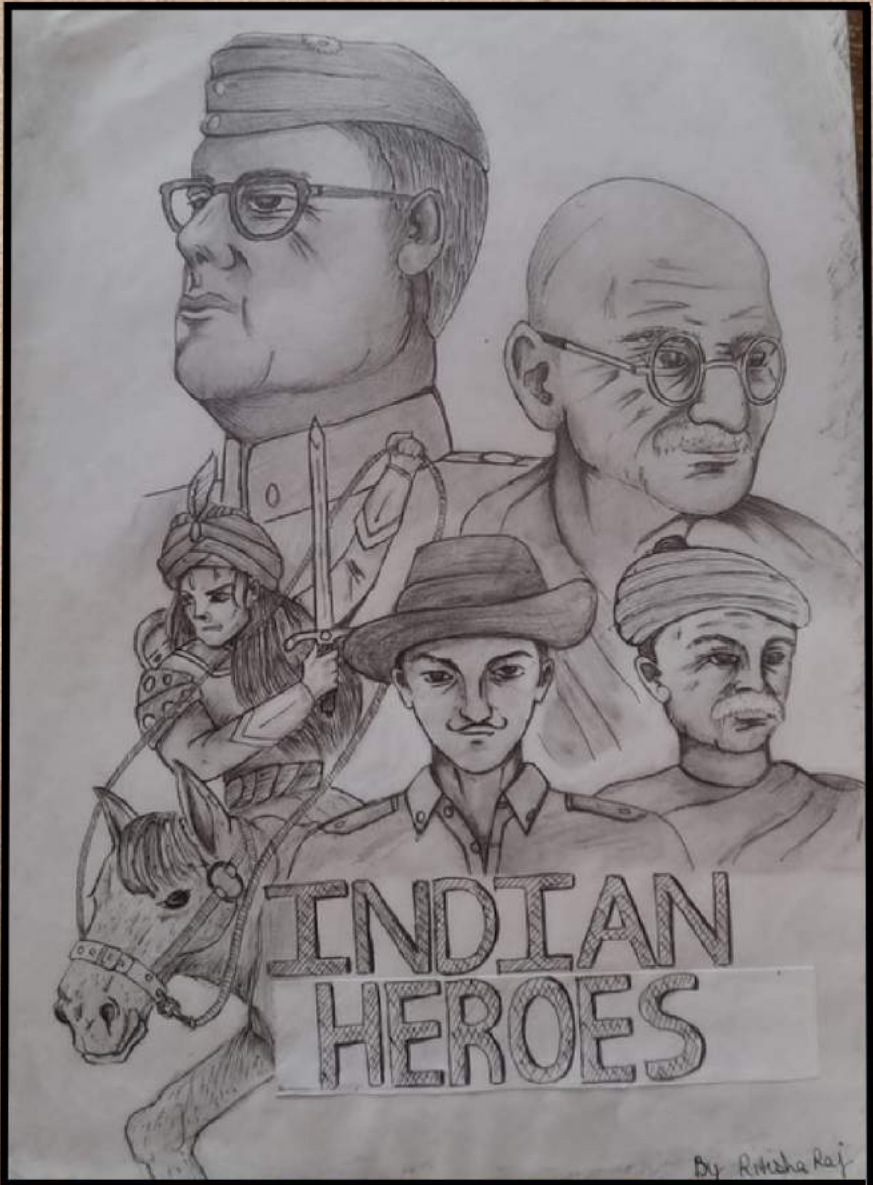
ART CORNER :)



PALK SHARMA, BA II YEAR



ANJALI VERMA, BA III YEAR



RITISHA RAJ, BA III YEAR



PALAK SHARMA, BA II YEAR



RIYA SHARMA, BA I YEAR

INSIGHTS ON THE ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370

-SHRUTI

B.A. II YEAR

Located in northern India, **Jammu Kashmir was a princely state until 1947**. It has been a dispute between India and Pakistan since the partition of 1947. After that, it was transformed into a state with several distinctive authorities and autonomies assigned to it. It finds mentioned under part XXI, **Article 370, and Article 35A** of the Indian Constitution. Thus, Jammu Kashmir has appointed a special status to the people inhabiting the region. This provision continued till the enactment of the **Jammu Kashmir Bill of 2019**.

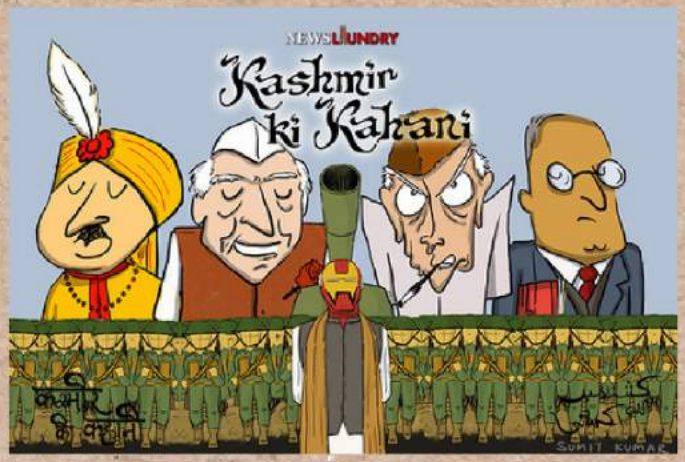
The special status given to Jammu and Kashmir abrogated in the aftermath of the decision taken by the BJP government. The same provision was a part of the election manifesto of the BJP government for the 2019 general elections. The provision that was abrogated in 2019 was a historic decision in the context of the territorial integrity of Jammu Kashmir.

After the revocation of special status to Jammu and Kashmir, it has become a Union Territory. After state reorganization, Jammu Kashmir is divided into two union territories, Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh. Thus the provisions that were applied to the former state of Jammu Kashmir, such as the independent constitution, dual citizenship, and separate state flag and anthem, are not applied to the Union Territory anymore.

This is quite a debatable question, **was the abrogation of Article 370 a justifiable decision?** Some groups say that the decision of the BJP government was in the direction of equality, justice, and freedom. However, the critics are of the contrary point of view. Critics like A.G. Noorani say that the Indian government's decision to abrogate Article 370 through controversial means was "utterly and palpably unconstitutional."

Before concluding the rights and wrongs of the amendment, it is important to know the reasons for the repeal of the provision.

The most plausible or acceptable reason for the abolition of Article 370, given by the BJP government, was to integrate Kashmir into India. Second, many Kashmiris believe that the union government ultimately wants to change the demographic character of the Muslim-majority region by allowing non-Kashmiris to buy land there.



On the 5th of August 2019, the President of India promulgated the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019. This amendment settled the relationship between the center and the state. This provision is supported on several grounds. Article 370 is mentioned in part XXI of the constitution. Since its inception, it was made clear that the respective provisions are **"Temporary, Transitional, and Special Provisions."** Hence, this provision gives authority to the union government to amend, modify or repeal the provisions.

Some people say Article 370 is like a tunnel through which the constitution is applied to the former state of Jammu and Kashmir. However, some critics say that the termination of Article 370 has not only threatened the relationship between India and Pakistan but also put security, peace, and harmony in Jammu Kashmir at stake.

Article 370 is also known as the **"Permanent Residents' Law."** Supporters of Article 370 abolition state that initially, this Article defied several provisions, such as: denying the state's female residents of property rights in case they marry an 'outsider.' The provision also extends to children born of any such woman. So, an amendment to the Article resulted in freedom in this regard. After its abolition, people from anywhere or everywhere in India could settle in the union territory and buy property, etc.

Undoubtedly, this provision has both pros and cons. **The cons of the same is the perpetuity of fear amongst Kashmiris. They feel that the end of Article 370 and Article 35 A would lead to the state's demographic transition from Muslim majority to non-Muslim or Hindu majority.**

So, claiming the Jammu Kashmir Act of 2019 a good decision would be partially correct or incorrect because, as every up has a down, so is the case in the subject of the abolition of Article 370. It also has merits and demerits at the same time.

POETIC JUSTICE :)

नज़र और नज़रिया

मतभेद से रंगे चश्मे हैं, आईने हैं, नज़रे हैं।
 नज़रंदाज़ करके सुर्खियां पूछते है, नई क्या खबरें हैं।
 धर्म और जाति के नाम पर,
 भारत माता को मतभेद और नफरत के धागे में बांधने वाले,
 इन सत्ता के ठेकेदारों से,
 चलो आज सभी ने सवाल करते है,
 क्या वह दिवाली की मिठाई, किसी की जाति देखती है ?
 क्या देखा जाता है इफ्तारी खाने वाले का धर्म?
 शासन की भी यह कैसी विचित्र लीला हैं,
 शक्ति और सिद्धांत है जिसकी शान,
 उसके कण-कण में है आज केवल भ्रष्टाचार विद्यमान।
 इस देश की मिट्टी की महक,
 सुरीली आवाज़ में एक ही गीत गाती है,
 न मैं धर्म हूं, न हूं कोई भाषा,
 न कुछ लोगो का समूह हूं, न केवल एक इंसान।
 विविधताओं में जो एकता का प्रतीक है,
 मैं हूं वह हिंदुस्तान।
 उठो और संघर्ष करो।
 आओ! मिलकर बनाए अपनी इस जन्मभूमि को महान कि,
 छल-कपट और पाप से परिपूर्ण इस दुनियां में,
 स्वर्ण अक्षरों से लिखी जाए इस भारत देश की दास्तां।



--पलक शर्मा

E.A. II YEAR

ICBM

An explosion,
 A collision,
 Of colors so blinding,
 So binding.
 A pact with death,
 With blinded eyes,
 We signed a contract,
 With a destiny destroyed.
 And so nuclear,
 Is the love of life,
 That one signs off
 To the cost of another,
 A thumbprint,
 With ink that's red,
 So thick, so volatile
 To have stamped death with death.
 An explosion,
 And all is gone,
 From the night today,
 To the 2000th dawn.
 When a child cries,
 Somewhere in 1994,
 Know that his blind eyes,
 Bleed as my own.
 So thick, so volatile,
 A thumbprint of blood,
 Made of a thousand lives,
 And I count till eyes my own,
 Stay intact,
 And my body whole,
 Is not strewn away,
 Into particles and threads.
 On the 2000th night,
 When there is a mournful dance,
 Know that a pact with death,
 Led to unfortunate circumstance.
 A pact with death,
 With blinded eyes,
 We signed a contract,
 With a destiny destroyed.
 A death nuclear,
 In blinding shades,
 Quick and bright,
 Cruel and Clement,
 A death so nuclear,
 A death through ICBM.



-- Dipti Sood

E.A. II YEAR

HIMACHAL PRADESH ELECTIONS 2023 :)

In Himachal Pradesh, government changes every 5 years. In the last election, BJP tried to build a narrative that they'll repeat. Elections were close in terms of percentage of votes obtained. Congress party's poll promise of restoring the old pension scheme and giving Rs 1500 per month to women played a crucial role in clinching the victory.



-Aanya Saroch, BA 1st Year



According to me, there were two main factors that lead to the victory of the Congress party in the MC elections. The implementation of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) was a major factor as the SMC has the highest number of government employees. The party also had an advantage in the civic polls as assembly constituencies of two cabinet ministers, Anirudh Singh and Vikramaditya Singh and the constituency of MLA Harish Janartha constituted the SMC.

-Jahnvi Bhardwaj, BA 1st year

There is a continuous reshuffling of power that goes on between the two major parties, Congress and BJP in Himachal Pradesh. According to me, this time Congress presented a more comprehensive agenda catering to the needs of all sections of people living in the state in comparison to that presented by the BJP which served as the main reason for their victory.



-Riya Sharma, BA 1st year



Feel good about the change in government we have seen in Himachal. It's good for the public because change is important for progress and development.

-Riya Chauhan, BA 2nd year

HP General Assembly election 2023 was shaped by 3 major factors starting with pro-OPS sentiments impacting the results majorly. Secondly, Rs. 1500 is for women constituting 50% of voters in the state. Lastly, Himachal's long political history of voting out the incumbent government. The vote share of the two major parties was close, showing the dominance of local issues over leadership.



-Palak Sharma, BA 2nd year



Change of leadership is very important in a democracy to prevent dictatorship and I'm very contented to see that the people of Himachal Pradesh know this very well. I hope to see improvement in the education, health, and employment sector with this change in leadership.

-Meenakshi Kumari, BA 2nd year

Himachal's Politics has been consistent with time if not else, with power shifting after every completed term, and so the tradition continues. Basing their strategies around local problems, and providing solutions for said problems, worked as a favourable framework for the Congress party.



-Dipti Sood, BA 2nd year



Himachal pradesh election symbolized that federal fabric of India is strong and it emphasize on leadership of people.

-Palk Sharma, BA 2nd year

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

-MINAKSHI SHARMA

E.A. II YEAR

Freedom of religion Recently, the **Tamil Nadu (TN) Government** has stated that **Article 25 (Freedom of Religion)** of the Indian Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to propagate his religion while replying to a petition in the Supreme Court (SC).

The petitioner complained about the instances of forceful conversion in TN, violating Fundamental Rights. What is the Case About? The petitioner sought an NIA (National Investigation Agency)/CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) investigation into the "root cause" of the death of a 17-year-old girl in Tamil Nadu amidst a swirl of accusations that she had been forced to convert to Christianity.

The petition argued that forcible or deceitful conversion violated fundamental rights. TN govt has replied that the acts of missionaries to spread Christianity alone cannot be seen as illegal since the Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to propagate his religion under Article 25.

However, suppose their act of spreading their religion is against public order, morality, and health and against other provisions of Part III of the Constitution. In that case, it has to be viewed seriously.

What is Understood by the Freedom of Religion?

About: Every citizen is entitled to this right and liberty to preach, practice, and propagate the religion of his choice. This right also provides an opportunity to spread it among everyone without any fear of government intervention. But also, it is expected by the state to practice it amicably within the jurisdiction of the country.

Need: India is home to people following different religions and having different faiths. As per the Pew Research Centre 2021 data, there are 4,641,403 people who follow other religions apart from the six major religions, which are Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Christianity. So with such a diverse population following different religions and beliefs, it becomes necessary to protect and secure rights regarding the faith of each and every religion.

Secularism: The 42nd Constitutional amendment in 1976 added the word 'secular' to the preamble of the Constitution. India being a secular state, is a no-state religion which means that it follows no particular religion. In Ahmedabad St. Xavier's College v. State of Gujarat (1975), the SC held that Secularism neither means anti-god nor pro-god. It just ensures that no one is differentiated based on religion, eliminating the concept of God in matters of the state.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Freedom of Religion:

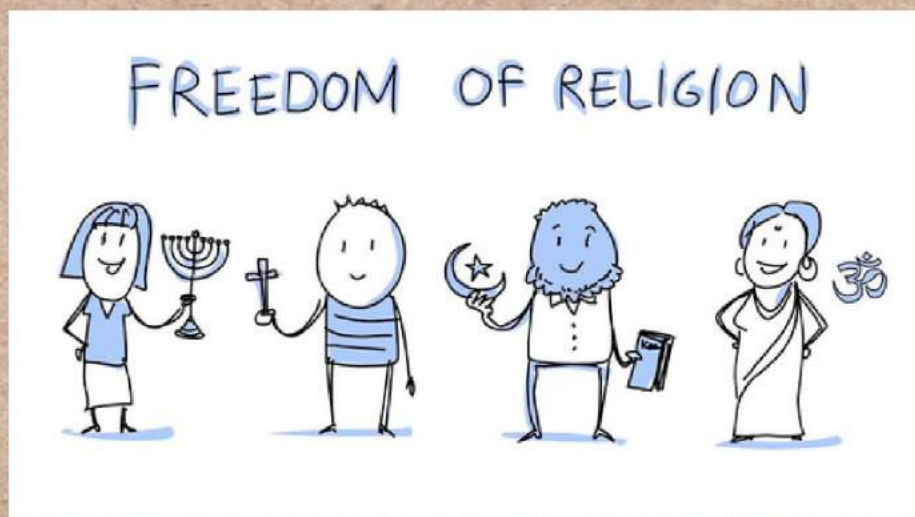
Article 25: It imparts freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion.

Article 26: It gives freedom to manage religious affairs.

Article 27: It sets freedom as to payment of taxes for the promotion of any particular religion.

Article 28: It gives freedom to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.

Despite all these provisions mentioned in our Constitution, we still can't say that India has adopted Secularism in its true essence. Secularism is one of the main pillars that keep the Democratic value of our country upheld. But as explained above, the issue of Secularism in India is downgrading as of now. The number of extremists tainting the nation's freedom as a whole is on the rise. Thus, these kinds of groups must be dealt with quickly, as they can affect how India develops.



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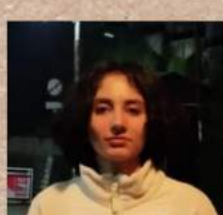
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