

# New Nationalism, Social Democracy, and Development: A Commentary on Contemporary India

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*As in the most parts of the world, India of today also is governed and determined by a socioeconomic order where the profit is privatized, while the cost is socialized. The world has been witnessing a vulgar polarization of wealth in favor of a few privileged with a vast majority of the populace getting pushed into the deeper ends of poverty and destitution. India is traversing this trajectory, more aggressively in the last couple of decades, since she opened up her economy to the forces of neo-liberalization. The worsening economic conditions would obviously trigger unrest and anger against those in power, and the ruling class in turn pre-empt the possibility of any such uprising by preoccupying the mass with emotionally charged divisive issues that pit them against one another. "Nationalism" has always been one of the most effective "emotional tools" in the hands of the rightist forces world over in the past in their efforts to ward off mass resistance, and now it is India's turn to endure the enactment of the same. While capitalism is tightly preserving the economic structure that enables amassment of wealth for a few, fascism in the hands of the ultra-nationalists is acting as its gatekeeper to ensure that dispossessed do not gate-crash, revolt, and thrash the capitalist castle. The privileged work overtime to divide the very forces that could form a threat to their economic fortunes and system of loot. This paper is a detailed commentary on how the above said process is currently operating and how it is weakening the democracy, diversity, and sustainable development in India.*

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"Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality, and fraternity as the principles of life," Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the

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chief architect of the Indian constitution, was setting the task cut out for the then political leadership of India when he spoke these words in the constituent assembly more than seven decades ago (Moon et al., 1994, vol-13, p. 1216). For the great visionary, democracy was “a form or method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed” (Moon et al., 1994, vol-13, p. 9). For him, “democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence toward fellowmen” (Moon et al., 1994, vol-1, p. 89). Sadly though, he would be utterly disappointed if he was to witness India of today. Not only that the democracy has failed to blossom and get imbibed in the social psyche of India but the nation is now under the verge of even losing the democracy entirely. Tyranny is looming large over India today. With the Indian society never being able to fully internalize the idea of democracy, thanks to a long history of subjugation under the clutches of a far overreaching feudal structure and a very hierarchical and highly discriminative system of cast and race (*varna*), the possibility of political democracy easily giving way to a totalitarian regime was always around the corner. Dr. Ambedkar, of course, did not miss to foresee this danger either. He, in fact, quite prophetically warned about the threat when he said, “...there is danger of democracy giving place to dictatorship. It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact” (Moon et al., 1994, vol-13, p. 1243). The nation is currently witnessing to his prophesy turning into a reality. As the great man feared, today democracy in India retains only its skeletal form with its flesh and blood siphoned out long back.

A survey conducted a few years back by the Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) revealed that the people are increasingly getting disillusioned with the prospects of democracy in the country. As per the survey, the overall confidence of the people in the system has plummeted to 47 percent from around 55 percent a decade ago. This obviously tells a depressing tale on the sorry state of Indian democracy today with more than half of the population carrying no hope whatsoever. While ever-growing economic and social inequality and diminishing role of common man in the affairs of the nation have contributed majorly in eroding people’s confidence in the democratic system, the recent rise of neo-nationalistic forces to power and subsequent onslaughts on various democratic institutions and nation’s diversity and secular fabric have only accelerated the downfall. If the quality of democracy in a society is to be measured by the level of freedom and security enjoyed by the minorities in the country, sadly India will rank too far below in the column today. Indian democracy has lost much of its vibrancy and shine over the years, and the downfall has been steeper over the last decade or so with ultra-nationalistic fervor overcoming the nation ever since the rightist’s ascendancy to the state power. Moreover, as usual, “nationalism” has been the last resort of the perpetrators.

The current highly skewed debate on nationalism spearheaded by the ultra-nationalist elements and the growing attack on free expression and right to live in the name of the same are alien to the idea of liberal and democratic India that the constitution founders and the leaders of the national movement had envisaged once. The prior instance when nationalism was in the thick of things in India was during the freedom struggle spearheaded and orchestrated by the national movement. This time, however, it comes across more like a farcical and fascist repetition. The difference is that then it was driven by a need to forge unity among people around a national cause against the imperialists, while now, it, the “neo-nationalism,” is pseudo in character and content and mischievous and divisive in the underlying motivation. Ironically, these are the elements that not only had any role to play in the nation’s struggle for freedom but rather actively sided with the enemy, and the same elements are behind the current “nationalistic” fervor today.

The leaders of the Indian national movement were indeed wary of the dangers of overplaying nationalism. Nationality is only one of the forms of how we organize ourselves. These forms evolve over time and we do not know what would be the new form that may emerge couple of generations ahead. However, humanity is a virtue that makes us humans. Triumphs of humanity over any other entities of identity is essential for our survival as a human race and in our constant thrive to form better civilized egalitarian societies. Placing humanity over patriotism, the great Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, author of India’s national anthem, had said: “Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live” (Dutta & Robinson, 1997, p. xix).

Post-independence, India had opted parliamentary democracy as its governance model and has organized its economic activities largely around a capitalist mode of production. However, with a strong influence of its feudal past, a cultural reminiscence that is still actively present in the nation’s social fabric, the country has always been struggling to advance into a modern democratic state that thrives on high scientific literacy. Indian constitution has been a magnificent response to the question of how to transition the independent, largely medieval India into a modern nationhood. Indian constitution had put forth a comprehensive blueprint and a new set of liberal values for the generations to internalize and be guided by as they get engrossed in the process of nation-building. The architects of the constitution were confronted with a stark reality that India is a society where “inequality” and “injustice” are accepted norms in every sphere of social and economic life, institutionalized through the deep-rooted caste system. Constitution was to undertake the herculean task of freeing the people from the clutches of the discriminative system of race (*varna*) and cast (as codified in the ancient rulebook called *Manusmrithi*) and handhold them into the new world of Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Moreover, Dr. Ambedkar was explicitly identifying the reactionary forces that may come on the way of realizing this dream when he said: “If Hindu Raj does become a fact, it will no doubt be the greatest calamity for this country... It is a menace to liberty, equality, and fraternity. On that account, it

is incompatible with democracy. Hindu Raj must be prevented at any cost” (Moon et al., 1994, vol-8 p. 358). Sadly, today India is horrifyingly witnessing to his fears becoming a reality. Turning India into this very “Hindu Raj” that Dr. Ambedkar referred to, a theocratic religious nation and the ultimate anti-thesis to everything modern and civil, has become the eventual goal today of the rightist forces in India, namely, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which leads from the front and acts as the motherly organization for all the reactionary and right-wing elements.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is the Indian counterpart of the western alt-right ideologies today and the flag-bearers of ultra-nationalism in this part of the world. Founded in 1925, primarily with an objective of consolidating Hindus against Muslims, RSS is driven by a divisive communal “Hindutva” ideology. They always had close links with fascist ideologists and organizations since the very beginning. One of the founders of RSS (B.S. Moonje) had visited Italy in 1931 to study the methods of the Italian fascist youth organization “Ballila” and had personally met up with the fascist dictator Mussolini. RSS founders had, in fact, drawn their inspiration and ideas from Italian and German fascists, and modeled their ideology of ethnic nationalism and built their organization emulating the Nazis. RSS’s slogan “one flag, one leader and one ideology” is a direct adaptation from Nazis and other European fascist outfits. RSS wants to transform India into a “Hindu Nation,” where Muslims and Christians are treated as second-class citizens. RSS ideologue Golwalkar (1939) was a staunch follower and admirer of Hitler and Nazism. He had never supported a secular India and was of the view that Hindus and other non-Hindu religions cannot coexist in India. He was, in fact, a strong proponent of using Nazi model to purge India of non-Hindu races. In his book *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, Golwalkar (1939, p. 87–88) wrote:

To keep up the purity of the race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by purging the country of the Semitic race—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures having differences going to the roots, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by.

One of the reports filed in 1933 by the British Home Department had categorically identified RSS as an organization that aspired to be in the future India what the “Fascists” were to Italy and the “Nazis” to Germany.

For the “Hindutva” nationalists, their nationalism is based on the premise that Hindus are the indigenous people of India, the Aryans, and others were “invaders” (although several scientific and historical evidences have proved the claim to be absolutely baseless). The reality is that India never had a single monolithic religious system. Religion in India evolved over time through many parallel, and even opposing at times, schools of beliefs, customs, sects, and cults. Ancient India has been a composite society with numerous diverse cultures, tribes, traditions,

customs, beliefs, and languages. The nationalist's attempt to portray Hinduism as a monolithic homogeneous religious system having eternal beginning is a political ploy to create and consolidate a religious majority powerbase. Their brand of nationalism is built through glorifying ancient Indian history and carefully constructing a Hindu identity that is homogeneous and monolithic. The key ingredient of their nationalism is hatred toward Muslims and Christians and all other critics of "Hindutva" communal ideology, and they have continued with an aggressive propaganda, even resorting to violent means, to brand all of them as anti-nationals. RSS has grown by adopting social engineering tactics and sowing seeds of hatred and rivalries among different sections of the society. The organization has recorded high growth wherever there have been communal conflicts and violence. The strategy is to flare up communal feelings, especially among the poor and marginalized sections, so as to polarize people on religious lines and ward off any discussions and uneasy questions on development and livelihood. RSS never consider non-Hindu population as Indians. Golwalkar (1939, p. 104–105) wrote:

The non-Hindu people of Hindustan must either adopt Hindu culture and language, must learn and respect and hold in reverence the Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but of those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture ... In a word they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizens' rights.

It is this skewed and dangerous brand of nationalism that the right-wing forces, the RSS family and their political outfit Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), pledge its allegiance to and are trying their best to implement in India.

Nationalism is a construct, not a phenomenon that is time immemorial or naturally evolved, contrary to what the rightists believe. For RSS though, as Golwalkar (1966, p. 90) suggested in his work *Bunch of Thoughts*: "Since times immemorial, a great and cultured people called by the name 'Hindu' have been living here as the children of this sacred motherland." The truth is quite contrary to it. Indian nationalism is relatively a recent construct, created and evolved as part of the Indian national movement leading the fight for India's independence. It is the struggle against British that fuelled and acted as the basis for the formation of Indian nationalism. The word "Hindu" itself is the contribution of outsiders and was used to denote and refer to the people living in the land of river Sindhu, and it had no religious connotation to it in the beginning. There was no notion of a nation "India" until the emergence of freedom movement. Till then the Indian subcontinent consisted of hundreds of small kingdoms with hugely diverse and unique cultures, languages, traditions, food habits, myths, beliefs, rituals, laws, value systems, currencies and economies, etc. That is why, Tagore called India as a "nation of nations" (Dutta & Robinson, 1997). Some of these kingdoms spanned across today's India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.

There were many large kingdoms, known as “mahajanapadas,” in ancient India, such as Kamboja, Gandhara, Panchala, Matsya, Avanti, Magadha, and Kashi etc, which were all like independent sovereign countries. People’s allegiance was to their local rulers or kings, and their “nationalism,” as we define today, was determined by their loyalty to the king and the royal family. People submitted themselves to the king, not the kingdom. The kingdom, the physical geographical entity, never remained static, as the kings and satraps were continuously engaged in wars and conquests in order to expand or defend their empires. Some of the empires extended across India that the subjects of those empires consisted of people from different cultures, speaking different languages and following different faiths. Thus, language, cultures, or race could not have been the base of their “nationality,” and rather the king was the rallying point that defined their national identity. Moreover, these kings fought with each other, with the victorious either merging the conquered territory to his empire or looting the wealth and subjugating the defeated kingdom and the people in their empire. Looting and destroying temples were so common in those days as temples were the seats of wealth where kings kept their treasures.

The concept of nationalism itself is very recent. So, Indian nationalism is not something that existed since long and or something that people had inherited from their ancient forefathers. Even a national identity based on language evolved only during early twentieth century. It was in 1918 that Indian National Congress decided to form regional congress committees based on linguistic states. These regional sub-nationalisms emerged in the 1900s were not in conflict with the Indian nationalism that was taking its root along with the national movement and freedom struggle. They mostly acted as complimentary to the larger Indian nationalism, with a very few exceptions. There were various factors for a nationality to emerge, including a distinct geographical location, myths, and stories about its origin, heroes and legends, language, unique culture, etc., and many of these regions and populations therein had those essential ingredients to emerge as sub-nationalisms. Various leaders and movements contributed to the emergence and consolidation of these sub-nationalities in India during the twentieth century. Each of these sub-nationalisms evolved in its own distinct and unique manner and they possess their own contents and characters along with deep-rooted beliefs, values, and cultures. So, India is a coming together of such very diverse sub-nationalisms, cultures, and populations, vowing their allegiance to the larger national entity and voluntarily subordinating their regional nationalisms to the parental Indian nationalism. Recognizing and acknowledging this diversity is the foundation and core of Indian nationalism. Any attempt to disrupt or break these sub-nationalisms will disturb the delicate balance and weaken the fabric of Indian nationalism, will give rise to dissents, and will sow the seeds of suspicion among different sections. The proponents of “Hindutva” are trying to impose an ideology of “exclusion” and “elimination,” which will be extremely detrimental to the existence and survival of Indian nationalism. Attempts to impose the cultures, faiths, and values of one group on the other will be against this spirit of togetherness and

will be a threat to the national integrity and to the very idea of India being a prosperous, civilized, scientific, and secular nation.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its affiliated communal outfits entered into the Indian political mainstream in a big way during the 1980s. This was the time when the focus on socioeconomic issues got diluted and in turn communal agenda, use of religious symbols, and emergence of identity politics took the center stage. Secularism was the causality in the newly emerged political climate, and communal discourses were led by ultra-nationalists under RSS. These reactionary forces found acceptance in the political and social life of India as the rightists gained strength world-over. Campaign to demolish an ancient Muslim mosque in Ayodhya claiming that the place belonged to Hindus as the birthplace of their revered deity and the eventual demolition of the structure in 1992 became a watershed moment in the Indian polity. Massive outbursts of communal violence followed the demolition, including the infamous communal carnage in the state of Gujarat, across the country that helped RSS to grow and strengthen further. By the dawn of the twenty-first century, RSS's political wing (BJP) had captured power in several states and used resources and power to spread themselves and gain strength, and, in turn, intimidate and attack their opponents. Currently, emboldened by being in power at the federal government, ultra-nationalists have upped the ante and are aggressively perusing their communal and nationalistic agenda. They are engaged in spreading their campaign of hatred, creating an atmosphere of distrust and insecurity among the minorities and indulging in wide-spread violence by creating communal tensions and conflicts. Deliberate campaigns are run to promote "Islamophobia" and to create an atmosphere of distrust among the public, casting doubt on the integrity of Muslims and branding them as anti-nationals or even terrorists. In a quest to project a picture of homogeneity and monolithic Indian (Hindu) culture, RSS wants to quell all the diversities that have once made India proud and unique. Richness in diversity has been the hallmark of Indian society, India being the motherland to very diverse cultures, customs, beliefs, traditions, foods, dresses, languages, festivals, etc. since very long. RSS wants to bring India under "one nation, one religion, one language, and one culture" paradigm that would ensure the end of diversity and merge everything into one "Hindu society." Instead of celebrating the diversity and learn to coexist and cooperate, RSS wants every "Indian" to submit to the hegemony of the so-called dominant "Hindutva culture," termed as "sanathana dharma." The rightists are trying to reduce the question of nationalism to a simplistic binary where only those who conform to their idea of nationalism are "nationals," while all others are anti-nationals.

As the hold of rightist forces on the nation strengthens and the state slips into an increasingly autocratic tyrannical rule, the level of scientific literacy also has seen a downward spiral, with those at the helm themselves becoming big-time advocates of superstitions, myths, and unscientific methods and practices. Increasing apathy and ignorance toward science and rationale have been acting as blockers for the nation to develop and progress. This ignorance also reflects in

the muted reactions and lack of responses against attacks on democracy. A democratic model presumes that all citizens must have equal opportunity in the process of nation-building, including its policy formulation and its overall governance. For a democracy to be meaningful and successful, a wide cross-section of the society should be actively participating in the political process and all must have stake in the nation's progress. Sadly, a vast majority of the citizens in India are outside the purview of this process and have absolutely no equity on their own land. As per the latest global indexes, India is placed where the highest inequality exists in the world in terms of wealth distribution. If anything threatens to destabilize India as a country, it is this abject inequality among her populace. The beneficiaries of the system very much recognize the threat and they turn to the most potent weapon in their hand, namely, the nationalism, to ward off any possible outrage and uprising. Therefore, the resistance against political nationalism and economic neo-liberalism is inseparable and needs to be well integrated. However, the rightists in power are extra vigilant to thwart the budding of any possibility of such an uprising. Today, every democratic and constitutional institution of any consequence is "infiltrated" and "conquered" by the "nationalists." Media of any standing is either bought out or severely curtailed. India is ranked 150 among 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index, and 111 out of 162 countries in the Human Freedom Index. India is placed at 46th position in the Democracy Index 2021 under "flawed democracy," and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has reported India as one of the worst violators of religious freedom in 2020, naming India under "countries of particular concern." None of these indexes makes Indian democracy any proud.

Once again, Dr. Ambedkar was emphatic when he warned how the huge social and economic inequality, if left unresolved, will blow up the democracy itself in the country:

... We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian Society. One of these is equality. On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty. On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy



which this Assembly has so laboriously built up. (Moon et al., 1994, vol-13, p. 1249)

Article 15 of the Indian constitution is a telling evidence of how concerned and acutely aware the founders of the nation were about the deep-rooted social inequality that prevailed then (and still prevailing) in India. The Article 15 reads:

No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction, or condition with regard to—(a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels, and places of public entertainment; or (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads, and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

Probably, no constitution in the world would have had to go into such specific details, where it had to direct its people not to discriminate and restrict some sections of their own fellow citizens from using wells, tanks, etc.! The realization that there existed (and still exists) a large section of people who were denied the rights to use even public wells, tanks, and roads in the name of caste hierarchies and practice of “untouchability” must have forced the founders not to leave anything to chance. It also speaks volumes on how serious the founders were when they spoke about equality. One must be extra vigilant not to allow anyone to tinker with it and take away from the people one of the most key fundamental rights that the constitution guaranteed the people of India.

While the economic stature had a direct correlation and a direct consequence of the social stature, to begin with, the neo-liberalization had only worsened the plight of those who have been bearing the brunt of inequality. Inequality in the economic life that Dr. Ambedkar referred to has only become wider, deeper, and severe today. India occupying an unenviable 131st position among 189 countries in the 2020 UN Human Development Index summarizes it all. It doesn't surprise anyone when India was positioned at 136th place out of 146 countries in United Nation's World Happiness Index 2022. India slipping to a position as low as 101 out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2021 is a glaring testament on the severity of poverty that a large section of the population is subjected to. This has only worsened since India started following neo-liberal economic policies.

Considering the calorie norms that define the official benchmarks for poverty (2200 calories per person per day in rural India, and 2100 calories per person per day in urban India), the proportion of population unable to spend enough to reach these norms was 58.5 percent and 57 percent in the rural and urban India, respectively, in 1993–1994. In the post-liberalization period, after more than a decade of “liberalizing” the economy, the situation has only worsened as reflected by the proportion of 68 percent and 65 percent in the rural and urban India, respectively, in 2011–2012. This implies that not only the fruits of the

so-called economic development have made any positive impact in the lives of the vast majority, it has, in fact, worsened their plight to a significant extent. The skewed distribution of the wealth created in the meantime has only widened the gap between the super-rich few and the dispossessed majority. As per the 2018 Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report, richest 1 percent Indians holds 51.5 percent of country's wealth and their assets continue to grow every year. While 77 percent of the nation's total wealth is in the hands of the richest 10 percent, the bottom 60 percent has just 4.7 percent wealth for themselves. This "vulgar" polarization and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few is not just an Indian phenomenon though. According to the Oxfam (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) report 2022, in the 2 years period since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, 263 million people have been pushed to extreme poverty, while 573 new billionaires were added. The billionaires have increased their wealth more in the first 24 months of the COVID-19 pandemic than what they have amassed in the last 23 years combined. Clearly, the pandemic has not impacted everyone the same way, and it would be hypocritical to claim that everyone is united in this fight. In India, the number of billionaires was just 9 in the year 2000 but it crossed 100 within just two decades. Another glaring statistics is on the per capita availability of food grains. The per capita availability of food grains in the pre-independent India was around 200 kg in the early 1900s. It came down to less than 150 kg by the time India got independence. It increased to 180 kg by the end of 1980s. Instead of showing a further steady improvement, the per capita availability has only fallen or remained stagnant over the years, hovering around 160–170 kg during the neo-liberal period. This mirrors more or less the pattern in general of the socioeconomic development in India, namely, an initial forward leap in the post-independent period and a later retrogression during the neo-liberal era.

The economic "liberalization" has obviously not benefitted the mass of India, but on the contrary the period has only increased inequality, hunger, and suffering. Even after seventy-plus years of independence, the socioeconomic conditions of the vast majority of Indians have remained distressing. As the neo-liberalism miserably starts failing in its promise of accelerated growth for all, it is feared that it would kindle frustrations, rebellion, and uprising among the mass. This is where the need for an unholy alliance between the finance capital oligarchy and the communal-authoritarian forces emerges, as the beneficiaries of the system are required to keep the disgruntled mass in check and divert their energy before they turn against the system. Moreover, the most potent tool they find to implement this strategy is nothing but communal "nationalism"! In India, the corporate-ruling class nexus finds its rescue in their brand of "Hindutva nationalism" and conveniently turn the social and political discourses into aggressive anti-minority, jingoistic propaganda. Communalism acts as a cover to actually conceal the neo-liberal economic agenda. Democracy has become merely a disguise under

which an authoritarian regime conveniently operates uninterrupted and implements their economic agenda of amassing unlimited wealth for their class.

Is the Parliamentary democracy the only and most ideal model for structuring a society? Dr. Ambedkar himself doesn't claim so. He said:

I do not say that the principle of parliamentary democracy is the only ideal form of political democracy. I do not say that the principle of no acquisition of private property without compensation is so sacrosanct that there can be no departure from it. I do not say that Fundamental Rights can never be absolute and the limitations set upon them can never be lifted. What I do say is that the principles embodied in the Constitution are the views of the present generation. (Moon et al., 1994, p. 1211)

Ambedkar was well aware that the future generation may invent a better model around which the society can be structured in a more egalitarian way. The reservation against Parliamentary democracy is not that it is democratic but that it is not democratic enough where the people can assume power over their own destiny. As Thomas Jefferson once said, we shouldn't make the earth belong to the dead and not the living by imposing burdens on new generations with institutions and rules permanently etched on stone and insisting that they never be touched. A social order that forces the majority of human race to live in destitution despite having collective capability to produce surplus for all will have to eventually give way to a more efficient and just system that would make life better for everyone. An alternate development model where the progress is measured by a "life quality" index of the people instead of the quantum of wealth created for a few would be an immediate and essential first step in the effort to address the monstrous inequality that is currently engulfing the humanity.

Whole of the world currently lives under a globalized and aggressive neoliberal capital order. Entire humanity is being adversely impacted by this economic order because of the ills it creates such as depleted natural resources, environmental hazards, intensifying conflicts for controlling resources, widening inequalities, etc. Contemporary India is no exception. Such a system can only lead to the collapse of human civilization. Contrary to the expectation, an overwhelmingly impressive and unprecedentedly huge development in productive forces did not bring down the "socially necessary labour time," and consequently has not enhanced social leisure for the vast majority of humanity. Rather, people have only become slaves of the system. The damage on the nature inflicted by the capitalist notion of "development," which depends dearly for its existence on the continued manufacturing of human needs, will be detrimental to the very existence of the human race on the planet earth. The only alternative will be to transition to a more sustainable development path instead of an exponential growth trajectory that indiscriminately exploit both human and nature.

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