

## Youth Being The Torch-Bearers To Achieve Viksit Bharat @ 2047

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### Abstract

India in its endeavour to achieve its goal of VIKSIT BHARAT @ 2047 needs to incorporate its youth for attaining success in all its parameters. Youth play a crucial role in nation-building. India with an average age of its youth as 29 years and housing a fifth of the global youth population, is the world's largest democracy. This year we have entered the 'Amrit Kaal', a 25-year-long leadup to India @ 100. Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government is committed to making India a 5 trillion-dollar economy by 2025 and a developed nation by 2047. Many initiatives are being rolled out by bringing the government, private and non-profit sectors to work in tandem; and deliver the required outcome and in this YOUTH are the links and binding factor to achieve all above targets. According to Swami Vivekananda, "The world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong."

**Keywords:** Economy, swachhata, self-practice, societal transformation, youth, health and hygiene

### Introduction

India's most important goal now is achieving Viksit Bharat @ 2047 status and in charting India's course to Viksit Bharat, we can see the journey from Vision to Reality. One can imagine India in 2047 – not just a vision, but a tangible reality fueled by progress across every sector. It's about an India where no one is left behind, where economic growth is inclusive, and opportunities abound for all. This journey, '*Viksit Bharat @ 2047*', is deeply rooted in humanizing development, ensuring it touches the lives of every citizen. There is a great transformation in serving the poor and marginalized. In the recent decade, an inclusive development model has ensured basic necessities like water, electricity, healthcare and education. Initiatives like Mudra Yojana and Stand Up India are not just schemes; they are springboards for young entrepreneurs from marginalized communities. The fact that over half of the 52 crore loans under Mudra have been given to entrepreneurs from the SC/ST/OBC communities is a testament to this commitment. It's about empowering individuals with the tools to shape their own destinies. The narrative of a Viksit Bharat is incomplete without acknowledging the role of Nari Shakti. Development is intrinsically linked to the progress of women. Welfare programmes support women at every stage, addressing malnutrition through Mission Poshan and ensuring safety and empowerment via Mission Shakti. The improved sex ratio at birth and the increased LPG usage under Ujjwala Yojana are indicators of a life of dignity afforded to women.

Empowering the '*Amrit-Peedhi*', the country's youth, is another cornerstone. With the world's largest young population, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is overhauling the education system. The focus on skill training under PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana and initiatives like the Startup India programme are geared towards fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. For the middle class, the focus is on ease of living. Access to banking, LPG, and healthcare has been ensured through various programmes. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) has reduced everyday expenses, while schemes like Udan have made air travel affordable. These initiatives collectively contribute to a better quality of life. Healthcare has seen a paradigm shift with the *Ayushman Bharat: Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana*, reducing the economic burden on low-income households. The *eSanjeevani* telemedicine programme is revolutionizing healthcare accessibility, while *Jan Aushadhi Kendras* provide affordable medicines. On the global stage, India is just not participating but

leading. Becoming the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy, overtaking Japan, is a landmark achievement. The UPI revolution and the digital stack have transformed financial transactions, making them seamless and efficient. Infrastructure marvels, such as the recently inaugurated Chenab bridge in Jammu and Kashmir; symbolize connectivity and integration, linking remote regions to the nation's heart.

A Rig Vedic phrase reminds us that it is the youth who pave the way for a better world. With India's median age today being 29 years, we are witnessing a youth bulge. It is no surprise that India's youth are leading towards the change, as they traverse multiple paths to carry forward the legacy of India and build the future Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for India @ 2047, the empowerment of youth is seen as an essential step to create an empowered future. There is thus the need for nurturing the excellence of our Yuva Shakti. Today, India has one of the largest youth populations in the world. Youth being a key demographic, and with the right policy measures, has the potential to usher in positive change to transform India into an economy with diversified and sustainable high economic growth. Therefore, it is necessary not only to address problems faced by the youth but also to provide them opportunities to grow. To optimally tap constructive and creative energies of the youth, the Government of India has the twin objectives of personality-building and nation-building. i.e. developing the personality of youth and involving them in various nation-building activities. Apart from this, other avenues concerning youth such as Education, Employment & Training, Health & Family Welfare etc., too are a focal point of the Government to support youth development and to enable productive youth participation. When youth develop valuable skills and build self-confidence, we prosper multi-fold as a country. Sports is particularly key to youth development. The fundamental principles of sport, such as teamwork, fair play, cooperation, and discipline, contribute to the development of soft skills in the youth such as collaboration, self-initiative, self-direction, self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, citizenship etc. FIT India movement with a goal to make fitness an integral part of our daily lives has been a symbol of paradigm shift in our approach towards sports. Under Khelo India Scheme, there is a considerable focus on creating world-class sports infrastructure, identification of talented sportspersons in various sports disciplines and conducting sports competitions for positive engagements of youth.

Today, the youth of our nation are the biggest ambassadors and advocates of the flagship Swachha Bharat Mission. The Swachha Bharat initiative, more than a scheme or a government programme, is a citizen's movement addressing the genuine concerns of commoners and their pledge to address a societal issue head-on. Ho'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has always asserted "Jan Bhagidari se Jan Andolan" and any campaign is incomplete without the active participation of the youth. The youth of India, while being the 'Future of India', is more importantly "India's Present". They are the drivers of ideas and innovation in this age of AI "Atma Nirbhar Innovation". A youthful mind, body and soul is the key driver of a healthy and fit India. They have a crucial role to play in nation building. More and more youth should come forward and work in rural areas, where they will get the feel of real India and its problems. The youth represent the most progressive section of society and have a transformational role to play in the vision of a New India. The youth must remain conscious about their duties and contribute to nation-building as a tribute to Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to celebrate 75 years of India's Independence. The launch of FIT India movement on 29 August 2019 by the Hon'ble Prime Minister with the goal to make fitness an integral part of our daily lives, has been a symbol of paradigm shift in our approach towards sports. He gave the clarion call for 'FIT India', a movement to take the nation forward on the path of fitness and wellness. The vision is to bring about behavioural changes.

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involving them in various nation-building activities. Apart from this, other avenues concerning youth such as Education, Employment & Training, Health and Family Welfare, etc., too are a focal point of the Government to support youth development and to enable productive youth participation. When youth develop valuable skills and build self-confidence, we prosper multi-fold as a country and come nearer to achieving a Viksit Bharat @ 2047. In this endeavor only, youth of our country have been sought to be harnessed in its cleanliness campaign which is also an important parameter of a Viksit Bharat 2047. Cleanliness was the passion for Gandhiji our esteemed Father of the Nation and a dream closest to his heart. Hygiene and sanitation, for individuals and society, are considered essential qualities of human beings. But for various reasons, the people at large are not taking it seriously and making ourselves vulnerable. Gandhiji said, "Everyone must be his own scavenger." In Porbandar, Gandhiji's birthplace, 'Mehtar' did the scavenging. When Gandhiji was a boy, if he ever touched this scavenger's son, his mother Putlibai, made him take a bath. Gandhiji, otherwise a docile, obedient son, did not like it. The 12-year old son Gandhi resisted and argued with his mother --- "You only told me that Lord Rama resides in everybody's heart. If so, Rama must also reside in Uka's heart. Then how can you say that he is 'untouchable' and touching him with pollute?" "Do what I say."

The necessity to keep ourselves and our environment clean and hygienic came to Gandhiji's mind when he encountered racial prejudice in South Africa. When he visited the places where Indians resided, he could see their way of living. He persuaded them to improve the sanitary conditions in their home and surroundings. Few values he insisted that Indians in South Africa should practice in their lives:

- a. Cleanliness – personal cleanliness and cleanliness in the surrounding area
- b. Learning another language – English is for Indians in South Africa
- c. Truthfulness

During Gandhiji's second trip to India from South Africa in 1901, he attended the Congress session in Calcutta (now Kolkata). The sanitary condition of the Congress camp was horrible. Some delegates used the verandah in front of their rooms as latrines, others did not object to it. With his own experience in South Africa, Gandhiji reacted immediately and invited volunteers to ask them to restrain their practice and clear the surroundings. When he spoke to the volunteers, they said, "This is not our job, this is a sweeper's job. Gandhiji did not wait for anybody to come and support him. He took a broom and cleaned the filth. He was a practicing lawyer in South Africa and dressed like an English gentleman. The volunteers were astonished to see it, but no one came forward to share his cleaning campaign. Years later, when Gandhiji became the guiding force of the Indian National Congress, volunteers formed a '*bhangi*' (sweeper) squad in the Congress camps, where even the so-called 'higher' caste members also worked happily as '*bhangis*'. Two thousand teachers and students were specially trained for doing the scavenging at the Haripura Congress. Gandhiji could not think of having a set of people labeled as untouchables for cleaning filth and dirt. He started his campaign against the practice of untouchability in South Africa and later in India. After twenty-one years of struggle for equality and self-respect for the Indians in that alien land, Gandhiji, at 46, finally returned to India with his group of inmates of Phoenix Settlement in 1915. With the kind invitation of Swami Sharadananda, they went to Haridwar, During that time there was Kumbh Mela at Haridwar, and he and his Phoenix boys served as scavengers at the religious gathering. Why are people considered untouchables? Because they are doing scavenging work and other forbidden work in society. Therefore, they are 'polluted' and should not be touched by others. It is also quite interesting to observe our mindset of usage of our two hands. Normally, we avoid using the left hand for receiving and giving away gifts or doing any other auspicious acts. We consider our left hand as 'polluted'. Why? We are using the left hand, normally in the Indian context, for 'cleaning'. Even within ourselves, we are practicing untouchability. Gandhiji wanted to erase this social stigma of

untouchability from the minds of the people. Vinoba Bhave, a close associate of Gandhiji, belonged to the so-called higher 'higher' caste and used to do two things in the ashram. That was his routine duty, and he did those two activities with the utmost care and reverence. (a) Discourse on Gita and (b) Cleaning the Toilets. For Vinoba, both activities are one and should be equally respected. East and West: "I shall have to defend myself on one point, namely, sanitary conveniences. I learnt 35 years ago that a lavatory must be as clean as a drawing room. I learnt this in the West. I believe that many rules about cleanliness in lavatories are observed more scrupulously in the West than in the East. The cause of many of our diseases is the condition of our lavatories and our bad habit of disposing of excreta anywhere and everywhere. I, therefore, believe in the absolute necessity of a clean place for answering the call of nature and clean articles for use at the time. I have accustomed myself to them and wish that all others should do the same. Gandhiji said, "So long as you do not take the broom and the bucket in your hands, you cannot make your towns and cities clean." When he inspected a model school, he told the teachers, "You will make your institution ideal if besides giving the students literary education, you have made cooks and sweepers of them." To the students, his advice was, "If you become your own scavengers, you will make your surroundings clean. It needs no less courage to become an expert scavenger than to win a Victoria Cross.

Though Gandhiji led the freedom struggle, back of the mind he always thought of reconstructing society. When political freedom comes to India, the Indian society should also be ready to take on the challenges. To make independence more sustainable and meaningful, there were certain weaknesses in the Indian socio-religious and economic structures that needed to be corrected and strengthened. Therefore, he along with 'Satyagraha' introduced 18-point constructive programmes for the reconstruction of Indian society. Among the 18 points, there were two points related to 'Swachhata'. Two constructive programmes were village sanitation and knowledge of health and hygiene. According to Gandhiji, people's participation and support in the Swachhata Movement was very essential and everyone should take the 'Swachhata' Pledge. Mahatma Gandhi dreamt of an India that was not only free but also clean and developed. He secured freedom for Mother India. Now it is our duty to serve Mother India by keeping the country neat and clean. I take this pledge that I will remain committed to cleanliness and devote time to it. I will devote 100 hours per year, that is, two hours per week, to voluntarily work for cleanliness. I will neither litter nor let others litter. I will initiate the quest for cleanliness with myself, my family, my locality, my village and my workplace. I believe that the countries of the world that appear clean are so because their citizens don't indulge in littering, nor do they allow it to happen. With this firm belief, I will propagate the message of the 'Swachha Bharat Mission' in villages and all over the country. Thus it is important to harness and rope in our YOUTH in the development of our country especially in its cleanliness drive because still India is not as clean as it should be and in order to achieve our dream of VIKSIT BHARAT @ 2047 and to become like other developed countries of the world, we know that we cannot achieve this if our country is not clean. Thus it has been emphasized here that cleanliness is the first goal to be achieved for a VIKSIT BHARAT @ 2047 and in this our youth are our torch-bearers.

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