

DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP FOR STRONGER TOMORROW

Development is not a one-time event; it is a continuous process that demands vision, planning, and committed execution. For a region like Jammu & Kashmir, which holds immense human potential and strategic importance, a clear and inclusive development roadmap is not just desirable—it is essential. The future prosperity of the region depends on how effectively governance aligns infrastructure growth, youth empowerment, economic opportunity, and social harmony into one coherent plan.

At the heart of any development roadmap lies infrastructure. Roads, bridges, power supply, water systems, digital connectivity, and urban amenities form the backbone of economic progress. In recent years, Jammu & Kashmir has witnessed significant improvements in highway connectivity, rural roads, and public utilities. However, the roadmap ahead must focus on last-mile connectivity, especially in remote and border areas, ensuring that development is not confined to cities alone. Smart urban planning, efficient public transport, and sustainable housing must become priorities to meet the needs of a growing population.

Education and skill development form the second pillar of sustainable growth. The youth of Jammu & Kashmir are talented, ambitious, and eager to contribute, but opportunities must match their aspirations. Strengthening schools, colleges, universities, and technical institutes is crucial. Beyond academic education, the roadmap must emphasize vocational training, sports infrastructure, entrepreneurship development, and digital skills. When young people are equipped with the right tools, they become job creators rather than job seekers, driving long-term economic stability.

The healthcare sector is another critical area requiring focused attention. Accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare is a fundamental right. While progress has been made through upgraded hospitals and medical colleges, the roadmap must address shortages of specialists, modern equipment, and healthcare services in rural and hilly areas. Preventive healthcare, mental health awareness, and community-based health programs should be integrated into development planning to ensure holistic well-being.

Economic development cannot succeed without employment generation and industrial growth. Jammu & Kashmir possesses vast potential in tourism, agriculture, horticulture, handicrafts, renewable energy, and small-scale industries. A forward-looking roadmap must encourage investment by creating a business-friendly environment, simplifying procedures, and providing incentives to local entrepreneurs. Tourism, in particular, should be developed responsibly, balancing economic benefits with environmental protection and cultural preservation.

Equally important is sports and youth engagement, which play a transformative role in social development. Investment in sports infrastructure, tournaments, and training academies helps channel youthful energy positively, promotes discipline, and opens national and international opportunities. Sports also act as a powerful tool for social integration and community bonding, strengthening the social fabric.

No development roadmap can succeed without transparent governance and public participation. Accountability, efficient administration, and corruption-free systems build public trust. Citizens must be active stakeholders in the development process, with platforms to voice concerns, suggest solutions, and monitor progress. Technology-driven governance, e-services, and data-based decision-making can significantly enhance efficiency and transparency.

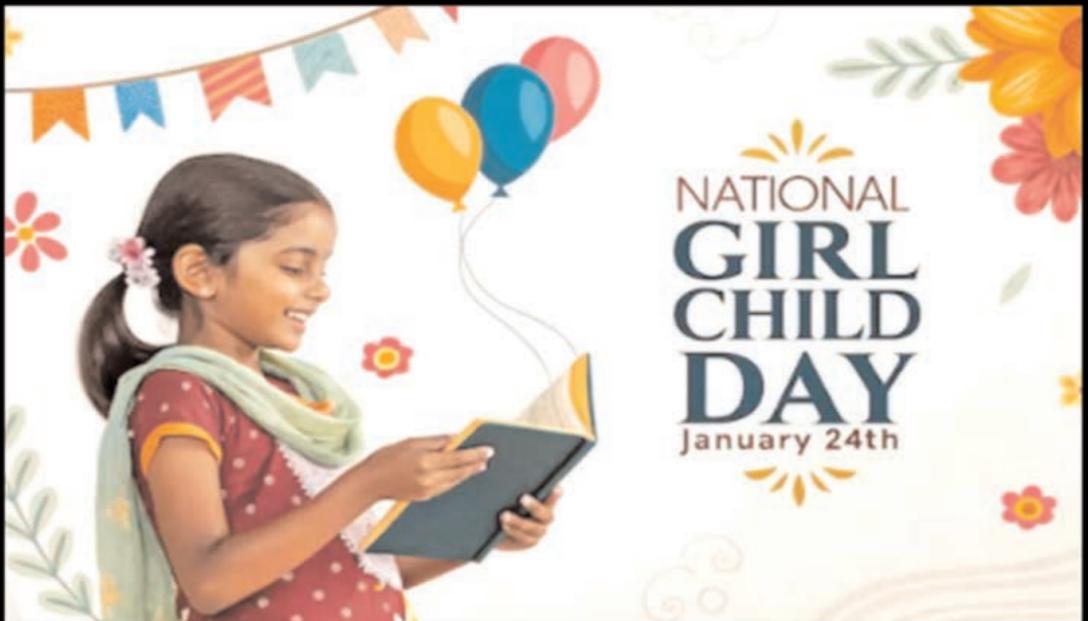
Finally, development must be inclusive and sustainable. Women empowerment, support for marginalized communities, environmental conservation, and climate resilience should be embedded in every policy decision. Growth that ignores social equity or ecological balance is neither just nor durable.

Empowering Every Daughter, Building a Stronger India

DR. BANARSI LAL

Every year 24th of January is observed as the National Girl Child Day in India to highlight the rights, achievements and potential of girls while addressing the persistent challenges they face in society. On this day several activities are organised by the various organizations to create awareness among the people on empowering the girl child. It was launched in 2008 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India. This day focuses on empowering girls and creating equal opportunities for their education, health and future success. On this day awareness campaigns are organised on the save the girl child, child sex ratios, healthy and safe environment, education, nutrition for girls etc. The objective of celebration of National Girl Child Day 2026 is to protect, support and uplift the girl child. Awareness is also generated on the issues such as declining sex ratio and also to create a healthy environment around valuing the girl child. It also encourages society to provide equal chances for girls to grow in every area of life including academics, science and technology, sports, defence services and leadership roles. The core message of National Girl Child Day 2026 is every girl deserves the right to be born, to live safely, to receive education, to dream freely and to lead with confidence. There is no dearth of girls issues right from gender inequality to sexual abuse. Gender discrimination is also a major problem that girls or women face throughout their lives. The Indian Government has taken various steps over years on these issues and improve the condition of girls. Many campaigns such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Save the Girl Child, free or subsidized education for the girls, reservations for women etc. to reduce the gender discrimination. This event can help to promote gender equality, empower women socially and economically, provide better future for girls, protection to women against any harassment, provide freedom to women and girls to take action against any violence, to stop child marriages etc. Still we observe the cases of domestic violence, dowry, trafficking and harassment etc. Strenuous efforts are needed to eradicate such kind of menaces in the society.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Sh. Narendra Modi on 22nd of January, 2015 to address the issue of declining sex ratio, enable the women for the education and empower them. The scheme is implemented in the 161 districts of the country where the sex ratio is low. The scheme deals not only on the declining sex ratio but also focuses on females' education, skill and entrepreneurship development. Efforts to change the attitude of the people towards the girl child are also being made under this scheme by involving the media (both print and electronic) of the country. In predominantly male-dominated society, the birth of a girl is still frowned upon and our society is responsible for that. Though girl is considered as 'Lakshmi' in our society but actually she is considered as a liability. It has been observed that some districts of the country are known



for the female infanticide and the parents of the girls live under the shadow of looming dowry which compels them to kill their girl child. The middle class, the upper middle class and rich people like to get rid of girls by using some more scientific methods. One such method is amniocentesis performed by a machine with the help of which a liquid is inserted into the womb with the help of a needle. The liquid produces foam which helps to find out the sex of a child. The Indian Government is making strenuous efforts to create the awareness among the people against this evil and many new schemes/programmes are launched by the Government to eradicate this evil.

Abandoning girls only perpetuated the ingrained discrimination against girls. Has the so called modern society of ours a right to meddle in the process of God's creation? The Census of 2011 revealed that the sex ratio in the 0-6 age group is worst now than in any decade since independence. The child sex ratio in 2011 has registered an all-time low figure of 914 girls per 1000 boys. This decline is more for rural areas from 934 in 2001 to 919 in 2011, and for urban areas it is 906 in 2001 and 902 in 2011. Sex ratio is an important demographic indicator reflecting the socioeconomic structure of any nation. The sociological research has proved that declining female sex ratio in any society is associated with social distress, increased incidences of violence, anxiety and in extreme cases ultimate social degeneration. In India declining sex ratio is a very serious issue and needs an urgent solution. It has been observed through various studies that education and affluence seems to have positive correlation with a decline in the sex ratio. The decline has been observed more in case of educated women than the uneducated women. Son preference

is observed in our nation. In the patriarchal societies especially in North India son is considered as the joy factor while two are seen as the lifetime celebration. The traditional thinking being that if one dies, at least the son will take care of parents. Both the states of Haryana and Punjab are considered as the most prosperous states of the country. But the data reveals that the states of Haryana and Punjab are famous for the female foeticide and female infanticide, are the worst performers in this category, with the former recording 879 females and latter recording 895 females per thousand males. As per 2011 the sex ratio in J&K is 889. It has been found that female foeticide and infanticides is not merely a phenomenon which is associated with poverty and economic burden. Rather it is found more in case of rich and influential families. A son is considered as the controller of the land and hence is preferred in the families. Even after 75 years of the Indian independence son is still considered as the main actor in matters of inheritance of ancestral property and daughters keep on maintaining peripheral roles. We have Anti-dowry Act, Child Marriage Restraint Act, laws punishing rapists but very few among the offenders are nabbed. They find many loopholes through which they find a safe exit. The disturbing trend has already started influencing the institution of marriage in the society. The current sex ratio in Punjab indicates that there are only four women available for every five men. In many cases the men from Punjab and Haryana are marrying women from outside states. Such marriages represent undocumented type that cannot be explained adequately within the framework of categories available for understanding marriage and non-marriage transactions involving women i.e. sexual trafficking,

bride price marriage and buying of women for marriage.

Girls must be given the opportunity not only to show their hidden talent but also to live their life with full freedom. In order to empower the nation, empowerment of girl child is very important. Consistent efforts are needed to tackle this menace of declining the sex ratio. Law is the only solution but change of mindset of the people is more important that perpetuates the prejudice against girls and women. The states should come forward seriously to fight this menace. Review in the states should begin with the review of the quarterly reports. There is need to contemplate on the long-term consequences if the girl children are denied to born. Those who still have the notion that boy is an asset and girl is liability need to change their mindset. The doctors who are doing this heinous job need to get the punishment. The certain new schemes such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) should be implemented strongly so that the girl child can be protected. Liberal scholarships for all level of education may contribute substantially in getting the achievements for the girls. The Parliament and the state legislatures must lead from the front and support the women empowerment. Enforcement based and incentive based measures may have salutary effect. It is really a challenging task to make India a less-male dominated country. This day is powerful occasion to reflect on progress and continue actions that support girls education, rights and empowerment. A multi-pronged strategy is required to protect, educate and empower the girl child. We should be proud of our daughters.

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Brotherhood and Diversity: Pillars of India's National Strength A Noble Vision for a Viksit Bharat 2047

VIJAY ANANT KAMBLE

India's aspiration to achieve Viksit Bharat 2047 encompasses more than just economic expansion, technological advancement, and infrastructural progress; it is also contingent upon the robustness of its social fabric, cultural integration, and institutional development. Within a nation characterized by unparalleled linguistic, cultural, and geographic diversity, the concepts of brotherhood and unity transcend mere abstraction, manifesting as tangible realities that unify the populace. India's most significant asset resides in its diversity, wherein a multitude of languages, traditions, and identities coexist in a state of harmony, thereby collectively fostering national advancement. Educational establishments, athletic venues, cultural platforms, research facilities, and civic organizations serve as the arenas where this diversity is cultivated into a source of national strength. Furthermore, India's musicians, dancers, and cinematic artists have historically functioned as crucial representatives of unity and national pride.

Legendary Hindustani musicians such as Pandit Ravi Shankar, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Pandit Hridayanath Mangeshkar, Ustad Bismillah Khan, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Ustad Zakir Hussain, and Ustad Alla Rakha, along with Carnatic stalwarts like M.S. Subbulakshmi, Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna, Dr. K.J. Yesudas, and K.S. Chithra, have brought India's diverse musical heritage to global audiences while uniting millions at home across linguistic and regional lines. Kathak dancers, folk performers such as Chaturbhuj Rathod, and other regional artists preserve indigenous arts while integrating them into the national consciousness.

Contemporary icons like Ilayaraja, Jagjit Singh, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, and Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt demonstrate how classical depth, innovation, and cross-cultural collabora-

tion can create pan-Indian and global impact. Cinema, with collaborative productions across Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati, and Bengali and other regional film industries, amplifies stories rooted in regional identity to a national and international stage, cultivating empathy, shared narratives, and cultural pride.

In the realm of music, Indian luminaries like Lata Mangeshkar, Mukesh, Kishore Kumar, Mohd. Rafi, Rahul Dev Burman, Zubin Mehta, Channi Singh, Biddu, and A.R. Rehman and many other Indian legends exemplify artists who have projected Indian music onto the international arena. Their artistic achievements and collaborative endeavors across cultures have bolstered national musical integration and simultaneously cultivated global cultural ties. Their respective artistic trajectories illustrate music's capacity to transcend linguistic, geographical, and national boundaries, thereby functioning as a potent instrument of unity and a shared mode of human expression.

Sport serves as a significant platform for national integration, uniting regional identities beneath the national flag. Olympic and international athletes like Neeraj Chopra, P.V. Sindhu, Mary Kom, Bajrang Punia, and Dutee Chand, along with hockey and cricket teams, represent a multitude of states, languages, and communities, yet they collectively foster a sense of national pride. Sporting accomplishments cultivate discipline, teamwork, resilience, and ethical competition, mirroring values essential for leadership and national unity. Through inter-state training academies, grassroots initiatives, and national leagues, sport exemplifies how localized talent and institutional collaboration converge to achieve excellence, thereby functioning as a metaphor for national progress and collaborative leadership. Furthermore, India's scientific and technological advancements provide additional evidence of the integrative potential inherent in its diversity.

In the world of sports, cricket especially, figures like Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, Mohammad Azharuddin, Sachin



Tendulkar, Vinod Kambli, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Virender Sehwag, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh, Rohit Sharma, and Irfan Pathan, alongside badminton stars Prakash Padukone, Pallela Gopichand, P.V. Sindhu, and Saina Nehwal, and tennis greats Mahesh Bhupathi, Leander Paes, and Sania Mirza, and many others have repeatedly put India on the global map. Hailing from all corners of the country, speaking different languages, and coming from various walks of life, these athletes embody qualities like teamwork, discipline, leadership, and the ability to bounce back. Their accolades have done more than just bring India international acclaim; they've also boosted national pride, fostered social unity, and highlighted the enduring strength of India's diversity.

The advancement of the nation is demonstrably driven by the fusion of knowledge from varied origins, as evidenced by the achievements of figures like C.V. Raman, Homi Bhabha, Jayant

Narlikar, and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, in conjunction with the efforts of modern entities such as ISRO, IITs, IIMS, and AI research institutions. This progress is facilitated by a commitment to national priorities, superseding individual ambitions, and a selfless devotion to the country, reflecting its diverse cultural heritage.

Moreover, India's international reputation is strengthened by collaborative research, space exploration, public health initiatives, and the cultivation of startup ecosystems, all of which illustrate the ability of knowledge, creativity, and innovation to overcome linguistic and regional barriers. In the realm of science and intellectual leadership, India has produced globally influential figures who have contributed to the expansion of human knowledge and the enhancement of societal welfare.

Prof. Venkatraman Ramakrishnan received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2009, recognizing his pioneering research on ribosomal structure and function, which has had a profound

influence on contemporary biology, medicine, and pharmaceutical sciences. Likewise, Prof. Amartya Sen, awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998, reshaped the global development conversation through his contributions to welfare economics, social choice theory, and human development, underscoring the importance of education, health, equity, and human dignity for advancement. Their worldwide influence illustrates how India's intellectual diversity and ethical scholarship foster both national unity and global leadership. Social reformers and humanitarian leaders have, in turn, translated the principle of brotherhood into concrete societal outcomes.

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule, Vinobha Bhave, Dr. Ravindra Kolhe, Dr. Smita Kolhe, Baba Amte and Family, Sunil Dutt, Nargis Dutt, Dr. Verghese Kurien, Ela Bhatt, Medha Patkar, Kailash Satyarthi, Padmashri Dr. Milind P. Kamble, and others have championed inclusion, empowerment, and equitable development throughout various states; concurrently, grassroots social workers cultivate community cohesion, civic responsibility, and ethical conduct. Their endeavours exemplify how shared values and collective action bolster national solidarity.

Furthermore, political leadership in India has formalized unity in diversity, with figures ranging from Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to present-day leaders advocating for federalism, interstate collaboration, and linguistic pluralism. Policies that prioritize education, cultural preservation, regional development, and civic engagement demonstrate that diversity is not a hindrance but rather a strategic national asset, fostering resilience, creativity, and strength. India's inherent value stems from its capacity to transform plurality into unity and diversity into a collective benefit.

The achievements of musicians, athletes, scientists, social reformers, and political leaders demonstrate how local accomplishments collectively shape a

cohesive national identity. Institutions of higher education, such as the Indian Institutes of Management and the Indian Institutes of Technology, serve as microcosms of this integration. Within these settings, multilingual classrooms, interdisciplinary research, student mobility, and executive education foster ethical leadership, intercultural understanding, and collaborative problem-solving. Management development programs and industry-academia partnerships further extend these principles to public sector enterprises, startups, and government organizations, reinforcing cohesion and a shared vision.

India's ascent to global prominence will depend not only on its economic and technological capabilities but also on the enduring strength of its social, cultural, and institutional bonds. The principles of brotherhood, unity in diversity, and collective striving for excellence transform regional and linguistic differences into strategic national assets. India's richness lies in its diversity, and its strength stems from its unity, as exemplified by the accomplishments of its musicians, dancers, athletes, scientists, social reformers, and political leaders.

Progress, however, is not possible without the active involvement of the general public. Inclusive collaboration, where individuals from different cultural and regional backgrounds work together for the nation's benefit, promotes all-around development. This fosters brotherhood, strengthens social cohesion, and accelerates progress through both individual and collective efforts. Brotherhood and diversity thus emerge as cornerstones of India's national strength and as guiding principles for achieving Viksit Bharat 2047.

Brotherhood will remain the nation's most enduring competitive advantage, while ethical leadership, inclusive growth, cultural confidence, and institutional collaboration will collectively contribute to realizing the noble vision of a Viksit Bharat 2047, as articulated by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji.

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