



**BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY**

# THE HINDU ANALYSIS

**25 JUNE 2025**



**TOTAL REVOLUTION**





# Samvidaan Hatya Diwas

## When we remember 1975



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Marking Emergency day should go beyond criticism of past to introspection about present

BESIDES POLITICAL REPRESSION, the Emergency of 1975-77 was characterised by comical news bulletins reporting how everything was in good shape. Today, as the Emergency is being remembered, the name and image of the Leader are as ubiquitous as 50 years ago. From vikas to the well-being of cheetahs, everything happens thanks to the Leader. This similarity should make us sombre about commemorating the 50th anniversary of that moment.

Indira Gandhi's Emergency was, in most part, for the sake of her personal authority. However, as we remember that episode — and we should indeed remember it — stopping at the personal level would be a mistake. Democracies often operate within the dialectic of the personal (political leadership) and the institutional, hanging perilously between an expression of popularity and that abstract thing called the rule of law.

Therefore, the act of "remembering the Emergency" should go beyond criticism of the past to introspection about the present. For one, we should ask what made the Emergency possible — how was it possible to persecute citizens? We should also ponder over the possibility of democracy being suspended again. Has the experience made our democracy more sabotage-proof? Or does the memory help us make sense of the politics of undermining democracy — a more contemporary purpose?

Any analysis of the Emergency must begin with 1971. Election outcomes in a democracy are often enigmatic. The voter and the victor diverge in the meanings they attach to the outcomes. In 1971, Mrs Gandhi won a handsome victory. The slogan Garbi Harao caught the imagination of a country whose economic growth had stagnated and failed to deliver. But following that victory and more so after the Bangladesh War, Mrs Gandhi must have concluded that the voters looked upon her as a benefactor, a saviour and, more particularly, as indispensable. This feeling was at odds with the protests that erupted in Bihar and Gujarat. The overall gloom that took over the country post-1973 was also in stark contrast to Mrs Gandhi's idea of her destined role.

The vagueness of the constitutional pro-



The texture of politics and public contestations has altered dramatically since 2014 — all protests are labelled anti-national or urban naxal, and like the foreign hand of the Emergency, the hand of Soros has become the pretext to attack any difference of opinion. These labels are used to liberally invoke draconian laws, particularly the UAPA. Above all, more than during the Emergency, the judiciary has submerged itself in the logic of the political executive.

vision made it possible to formally declare an "emergency". The organisational weakness of her "new" Congress and the concentration of power in the office of the Prime Minister also facilitated the declaration. While the media's timidity has been commented on, we do not give adequate attention to the swiftness with which the civil and police bureaucracies succumbed to the logic of authoritarianism, rejecting the rule of law in favour of rule by diktat of the popular leader. That's not to mention the Supreme Court, which acquiesced to the interpretation of the Constitution dished out by the political executive. Here was a template for a diversion away from democracy.

Mrs Gandhi's defeat and the subsequent amendment to the emergency provision created an impression that "democracy" had won — or, less poetically, that possible sabotage in the future was now averted. And true enough, India has not seen another such amateur attempt to divert the political process away from democracy.

In other words, the Emergency template has been discarded — but has it really? Conflating partisan interests with the national interest, pushing the judiciary to fall in line and above all, converting the police and the bureaucracy into weapons against citizens are the core pathways copied from the 1975-77 template.

There are striking similarities between then and now. The over-reading of election outcomes — not just in 2014 but subsequently too — is one. There is no doubt the outcome was a clear rejection of Congress. No doubt each election since 2014, but 2014 in particular, was a spectacular victory for Narendra Modi. But these facts are understood and presented as a second independence and are being etched into history as the dawn of Amrit Kaal. Megalomania apart, the texture of politics and public contestations has altered dramatically since 2014 — all protests are labelled anti-national or urban naxal, and like the foreign hand of the Emergency, the hand of Soros has become the pretext to attack any difference of opinion. These labels are used to liberally invoke draconian laws, particularly the UAPA. As they did during the Emergency, the bureaucracy and the police have happily joined the battle on behalf of the political executive. Above all,

more than during the Emergency, the judiciary has submerged itself in the logic of the political executive.

In conceptual terms, the short moment of 1975-77 and the current moment manifest similarities in the downgrading of rights, a contempt for federal polity, disdain for protest movements and the mutilation of institutions. Together, they amount to reducing democracy to an anti-people instrument of power. The Constitution and its core principles are the main casualty. No wonder we hear today echoes of "parliamentary sovereignty", which made much noise 50 years ago.

But India today is marked by one grotesque and one deeply troubling distinction from the Emergency. The grotesque is the politics of vigilantism. Anyone who can lay claim to some elements of the establishment's pet ideas has the licence to punish. A parallel system of identifying and cleansing "wrongdoers" seems to be almost institutionalised. Personalised authority, a vengeful state and vigilantes overlap in today's politics and governance.

More worryingly, unlike the Emergency, the present moment is guided by a larger purpose: Of undermining the national movement's legacy and rejecting the constitutional imagination. Operational wrongs can be corrected through institutional efforts but normative or ideological departures are not easy to stall once they are imposed on a society and crowned as the true ideas the nation should uphold. When a gigantic media machine joins the ruling party in legitimising Hindutva and when mobs are unleashed to delegitimise difference and opposition, you have a thoroughly new template of controlling government, politics and popular sentiment.

From Mrs Gandhi's somewhat ad-hoc attempts to divert democracy in order to retain power, India seems to be moving into a very different terrain of using formal democratic mechanisms to undermine both democracy and Indianness. If the Emergency was a dark moment when democracy was suspended, the essence of that Emergency is being normalised in India's current moment.

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❑ Observed on 25 June, **Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas** marks the day when the Constitution of India was severely undermined following the **declaration of the Indian emergency in 1975**.

❑ This emergency declaration was made by then-**President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed**, under Article 352, citing internal disturbances.

❑ This day serves as a tribute to those who suffered suppression, imprisonment, and censorship during the **21-month Indian emergency (1975-77)**, imposed under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

❑ The events leading to this dark period included a judgment by **Justice Jagmohanlal Sinha that invalidated Indira Gandhi's election**, which ultimately triggered the declaration of the emergency of 1975.

## Key Highlights of the Emergency of 1975 in India:

1. **Article 358 suspended Article 19**, curbing fundamental rights like freedom of speech and expression during the Indian emergency period.
2. Courts were barred from redressing grievances or challenging the emergency, effectively **suspending judicial oversight**.
3. **Pre-censorship was imposed on media**, and the Press Council of India was abolished to control information flow during the emergency of 1975.
4. Elections of the PM and Lok Sabha Speaker were placed beyond judicial scrutiny, consolidating power.
5. The government **implemented preventive detention laws**, leading to widespread arrests and human rights violations throughout the Indian emergency.
6. Indira Gandhi introduced the **controversial 20 point program**, ostensibly for economic and social reforms during the state of emergency.

# Total Revolution

## JP's Vision of 'Total Revolution'

"The question is how to bring about a systemic change in society, i.e., how to bring about what I have called a total revolution: revolution in every sphere and aspect of society. The question becomes harder to answer when it is added that the total revolution has to be peacefully brought about without impairing the democratic structure of society and affecting the democratic way of life of the people."

— Jayaprakash Narayan (JP)



### Context:

- ❑ The 51st anniversary of Jayaprakash Narayan's historic **"Total Revolution"** call (June 5, 1974) is being marked, highlighting its enduring influence on Indian politics.
- ❑ A holistic non-violent movement for socio-political transformation based on Gandhian ideals.
- ❑ **Objective:** Achieve "Sampoorna Kranti" — a comprehensive change in economic, political, social, and cultural structures for a just and equitable society

## Causes of Total Revolution:

- ❑ **Electoral Malpractice & Judicial Verdict:** The 1975 Allahabad HC judgment disqualifying Indira Gandhi for electoral malpractices delegitimised her authority, triggering mass protests.
- ❑ Widespread agitations in Gujarat's **Navnirman Movement** and Bihar's student protests exposed the growing youth frustration over unemployment and governance failures.
- ❑ Severe inflation (over 20%), unemployment, and food shortages in early 1970s aggravated public misery, fuelling disillusionment with the state.
- ❑ **Erosion of Democratic Norms:** Centralisation of power, use of draconian laws like MISA, and suppression of dissent alarmed the civil society and intelligentsia.
- ❑ **Inspirational Leadership:** JP's articulation of a 'party-less democracy' combined Gandhian ethics, **Sarvodaya ideals** and Marxist critique, galvanising a broad-based mass movement.

## Components of Total Revolution:

- ❑ **Political Revolution:** Advocated bottom-up governance, participatory democracy, and accountability to counter bureaucratic centralism.
- ❑ **Economic Revolution:** Sought equitable land redistribution and people-centric development to tackle socio-economic disparities.
- ❑ **Social Revolution:** Championed eradication of casteism, gender discrimination and dowry to build an egalitarian society.
- ❑ **Educational Revolution:** Proposed ethics-based curriculum with focus on civic duties, rural development and vocational empowerment.
- ❑ **Cultural-Spiritual Revolution:** Aimed at fostering self-discipline, national unity and moral rejuvenation through individual transformation.

## Significance of Total Revolution:

- ❑ **Revival of Dissent Tradition:** Reaffirmed dissent as a democratic right, legitimising protest in postcolonial India.
- ❑ **New Leadership Pipeline:** Created a fresh generation of leaders with mass roots—many of whom dominated Indian politics for decades.
- ❑ Exposed systemic vulnerabilities, catalysing institutional reforms to safeguard democratic structures.
- ❑ Widened space for civil society participation, influencing governance beyond electoral politics.
- ❑ **Contemporary Lessons:** Offers enduring relevance in tackling present-day issues like centralisation, youth alienation, and democratic erosion.



# Sustainable Development Report 2025

## For first time, India breaks into top 100 in global SDG rankings

The index measures overall progress toward achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015; India takes 99th rank, up from 109

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

India has, for the first time, secured a position among the top 100 countries in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index, ranking 99th out of 167 nations in the 2025 edition of the Sustainable Development Report (SDR), released on Tuesday by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

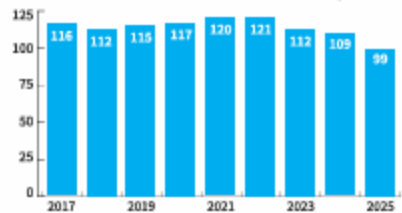
The latest report places India with a score of 67 on the SDG Index, a significant improvement from its 109th rank in 2024. China is ranked 49th with a score of 74.4, while the United States stands at 44th with 75.2 points.

The index measures overall progress toward achieving the 17 SDGs adopted by United Nations member states in 2015, with a score of 100 indicating full achievement of all goals.

Among India's neighbours, Bhutan ranks 74th (70.5), Nepal 85th (68.6), Bangladesh 114th (63.9),

### Moving up

India ranks 99th on the 2025 SDG Index with a score of 67, while China ranks 49th with 74.4 and the US 44th with 75.2 points



SOURCE: UNSD

and Pakistan 140th (57). Maritime neighbours Maldives and Sri Lanka stand at 53rd and 93rd places respectively.

The report noted that since the adoption of the SDGs, India has steadily improved its standing: it ranked 112th in 2023, 121st in 2022, and 120th in 2021.

Despite India's gains, the report flagged that global progress on the SDGs has largely stalled. "Only 17 per cent of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030," it stated, attributing this to "conflicts,

structural vulnerabilities, and limited fiscal space" in many regions.

The SDR, authored by a team led by economist Jeffrey Sachs, pointed to continued dominance by European nations on the index. Finland, Sweden and Denmark hold the top three positions, with 19 of the top 20 countries located in Europe.

However, even these nations are facing challenges related to climate change and biodiversity due to unsustainable consumption patterns.

### Context:

- ❑ India has, for the first time, ranked in the top 100 (99th) in the Sustainable Development Report (SDR) 2025 released by the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions** Network (SDSN), marking its 10th edition.
- ❑ The Sustainable Development Report is the world's most authoritative ranking on progress towards SDGs for 193 UN member states.
- ❑ **Top Rankers:** Finland (1st), Sweden (2nd), Denmark (3rd)

## Key Highlights of SDG Report 2025:

1. 190 of 193 UN member states submitted **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)**, reflecting high global engagement on SDGs.
2. **East and South Asia Lead** These regions show **fastest SDG progress** since 2015, driven by rapid **socio-economic growth** and targeted policies.
3. **Europe Tops**: 19 of top 20 SDG-performing countries are **European**, highlighting long-term investment in social welfare and green transitions.
4. None of the 17 SDGs are fully on track globally and only **17% of targets progressing**, signalling serious implementation gaps.
5. **Fiscal Space Gap**: Nearly **50% of countries** lack sufficient fiscal capacity to fund SDG priorities, aggravating development inequality.
6. **Broken Global Finance**: Current **Global Financial Architecture (GFA)** disproportionately favors rich countries, starving EMDEs of needed capital.

## Key Challenges to SDG Progress:

- ❑ **Geopolitical Conflicts:** Conflicts and wars disrupt SDG delivery, particularly in fragile and conflict-prone states.
- ❑ **Debt burdens** in many low- and middle-income countries restrict investments in SDGs and welfare programs.
- ❑ Climate change is exacerbating **food insecurity, inequality, and biodiversity loss**, undermining SDG progress.
- ❑ **Weak Financing Mechanism:** Global finance disproportionately benefits wealthy countries, leaving EMDEs underfunded for sustainable development.
- ❑ Many nations face weak **institutional capacity, poor governance**, and lack of data-driven SDG planning.

# Gender Equity in Urban Bureaucracy

## The need for gender equity in urban bureaucracy

India is in the midst of a profound urban transformation. By 2050, over 800 million people, about half the population, will live in cities, making India the largest driver of global urban growth. As cities expand spatially, economically and demographically, they are rewriting the social contract of a modern India and shaping the future of its democracy and development.

In the last three decades, progressive constitutional reforms have advanced gender equity. The 73rd and 74th Amendments mandate 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Governments (ULGs), further strengthened to 50% by 17 States and a Union Territory. Today, women comprise over 46% of local elected representatives (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2024), as a rising presence of mayors and councillors.

However, the bureaucratic apparatus that implements their decisions remains overwhelmingly male. While women's representation in grass-root politics has increased, administrative cadres (city managers, planners, engineers, police) exhibit a stark imbalance, limiting the ability of cities to respond equitably to all citizens. As we invest in highways, metros, and smart cities, we overlook a foundational aspect of inclusive development – gender equity in bureaucracy.

### The bureaucratic gender gap

Despite more women entering the civil services, the urban administrative architecture remains male-dominated. As of 2022, women constituted just 20% of the Indian Administrative Service (IndiaSpend-2022), with even lower representation in urban planning, municipal engineering and transport authorities. In policing, only 11.7% of the national force are women (Bureau of Police Research and Development-2023), and often confined to desk roles.

This gap is cause for concern. In cities, the engagement of women is different. They rely more on public transport, make multi-stop journeys for work and caregiving, and depend on neighbourhood-level infrastructure. An Institute



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In India, while women's representation in grass-roots politics has increased, administrative cadres tell a different story

for Transportation and Development Policy and Safetipin study found that 84% of women in Delhi and Mumbai used public or shared transport; it was 63% for men. Yet, urban planning prioritises mega-projects over safe, accessible, neighbourhood-level mobility. A 2019 Safetipin audit across 50 cities found over 60% of public spaces were poorly lit. With few women in policing, community safety initiatives often fail to resonate with women.

This underrepresentation is not superficial; it affects outcomes. Women officials bring perspectives shaped by lived realities. Studies by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations and UN Women show that they prioritise water, health and safety, and improve public trust in law enforcement through empathetic enforcement. Gender-sensitive design requires gender-diverse institutions.

### Missed opportunity in gender budgeting

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), which integrates gender considerations into public finance, is a promising but underutilised tool in India's urban governance. Introduced globally in the 1990s, GRB recognises that budgets are not neutral and can reinforce inequities if left unchecked.

India adopted a Gender Budget Statement in 2005-06, with Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Kerala leading efforts. Delhi has funded women-only buses and public lighting; Tamil Nadu applied GRB across 64 departments in 2022-23, and Kerala embedded gender goals through its People's Plan Campaign. Yet, studies by UN-Women and the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy show that most such efforts suffer from weak monitoring and limited institutional capacities, especially in smaller cities. For many ULGs, GRB remains tokenistic, overlooking essentials such as pedestrian safety or childcare in urban planning.

In contrast, countries such as the Philippines mandate 5% of local budgets for gender programmes; Rwanda integrates GRB into national planning with oversight bodies; Uganda mandates gender equity certificates for fund approvals; Mexico ties GRB to results-based

budgeting; and South Africa pilots participatory planning to anchor GRB in lived realities. These are not just fiscal reforms but also a reimagining of citizen-centric governance in cities.

Building inclusive cities requires moving beyond political quotas to ensure women's presence in bureaucracy. This demands systemic reforms in recruitment, retention and promotion across administrative and technical roles. Affirmative action, through quotas and scholarships in planning and engineering, is key to dismantling structural barriers.

Globally, countries as varied as Rwanda, Brazil, and South Korea show the impact of representation. Rwanda boosted maternal health and education spending; Brazil prioritised sanitation and primary health care; South Korea's gender impact assessments reshaped transit and public spaces and Tunisia's parity laws gave women more technical roles, improving focus on safety and health. The Philippines uses gender-tagged budgeting to fund gender-based violence shelters and childcare. Gender-balanced bureaucracies are not about fairness alone. They are essential for building safer, equitable, responsive cities.

### The cities we deserve

As India aspires to become a \$5 trillion economy, its cities must also aspire to be more than economic growth engines. They must become spaces of inclusion and equity. Gender must be mainstreamed into planning and implementation through mandatory audits, participatory budgeting, and linked evaluation. GRB should be institutionalised across ULGs, supported by targeted capacity-building.

Representation must also translate into agency, and help dismantle glass ceilings. Local gender equity councils and models such as Kudumbashree offer templates, especially for small and transitioning cities. Women are already reshaping governance as elected leaders. They must now shape how cities are planned, serviced and governed. When cities reflect women's lived experiences, they work better for all. To build cities for women, we must start by building cities with women.

- ❑ Women's representation in **grass-roots politics** in India has increased significantly. However, their presence in **administrative and bureaucratic cadres** remains disproportionately low.
- ❑ Urban India is undergoing a **rapid urban transformation**, expected to continue over the coming decades.
- ❑ By 2050, over **800 million Indians** (about half the population) will reside in **urban areas**. This makes India the **largest contributor to global urban growth**.
- ❑ The **expansion of cities**—spatially, economically, and demographically—is transforming the **social fabric**.



## Gender Gap in Urban Governance and Bureaucracy

- ❑ Over the last **three decades**, India has implemented **progressive constitutional reforms** to promote **gender equity**.
- ❑ The **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments** mandate **33% reservation for women** in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Governments (ULGs).
- ❑ **17 States and 1 Union Territory** have further **increased this quota to 50%**.
- ❑ As of 2024, **women make up over 46%** of local elected representatives (**Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2024**).
- ❑ There is a **visible rise in women representation** as mayors and councillors, reflecting enhanced **political participation at the grassroots**.
- ❑ However, the **urban administrative architecture** that executes these decisions—comprising **city managers, planners, engineers, and police**—remains **predominantly male**.
- ❑ This **gender imbalance** in administrative cadres limits cities' ability to **respond inclusively and equitably** to all citizens.

## Missed Opportunity in Gender Budgeting

- **Gender responsive budgeting** is a key tool that integrates **gender considerations into public finance**, but remains **underutilised in Indian urban governance**.
- Globally introduced in the **1990s**, gender responsive budgeting challenges the myth of **gender-neutral budgets** by revealing how public spending can **reinforce inequities**.
- India introduced the **Gender Budget Statement in 2005–06**, with **Delhi, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala** leading efforts:
  - **Delhi** invested in **women-only buses** and improved **public lighting**.
  - **Tamil Nadu** applied gender-responsive budget planning to **64 departments** in 2022–23.
  - **Kerala** embedded gender goals through the **People's Plan Campaign**.
  - However, studies by **UN Women** and **National Institute of Public Finance and Policy** highlight issues:
    - **Weak monitoring and limited institutional capacity**, especially in **smaller cities**.
    - Gender responsive budgeting often remains **tokenistic**, ignoring core urban concerns like **pedestrian safety** or **childcare infrastructure**.



# Thank you

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