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*Happy*

**MOTHER'S DAY**

# *Greetings from* IMPACT
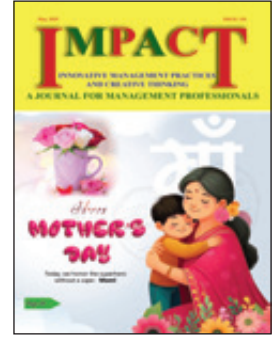
Dear Readers,

A Month of Escalation, Diplomacy, and Resilience

May 2025 has been a month marked by significant geopolitical tensions, particularly between India and Pakistan, alongside notable economic developments and global events.

The month witnessed a sharp escalation in hostilities between India and Pakistan following a deadly attack on Indian tourists in Pahalgam on April 22, which resulted in 28 fatalities. India attributed the attack to Pakistan-based militant groups, leading to a series of retaliatory actions. On May 7, India launched missile strikes, codenamed Operation Sindoor, targeting militant infrastructure in Pakistan. Pakistan reported civilian casualties and responded with claims of downing Indian jets and cross-border artillery fire, resulting in further civilian deaths on both sides.

The conflict has disrupted daily life, with school closures, flight suspensions, and the indefinite suspension of the Indian Premier League (IPL) due to security concerns.

Amidst the geopolitical tensions, significant economic developments have occurred. Japanese banking giant Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) agreed to acquire a 20% stake in India's Yes Bank for approximately $1.58 billion, marking a major cross-border investment in India's financial sector.

Additionally, India and the United Kingdom concluded negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement, expected to be signed in three months. The deal includes provisions for vehicle import quotas and addresses concerns related to the UK's proposed Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

Editorial Team

# INSIDE

# How Shri Narendra Datta Became Swami Vivekananda



Mr. Narendra Datta was born in Kolkata (now- West Bengal) on 12-1-1863 (more than four years before Mahatma Gandhi was born at Porbandar,Gujarat)), in 1869.

Mr. Narendra Datta after finishing his Intermediate in the Calcutta Presidency College, entered the Scottish Church College for higher studies and became an ardent student of Prof. Hastie the English teacher. While the Professor was teaching Wordsworth's 'The Excursion', he was lecturing on a passage which described best, of the 'mystic mood'. Among the students of the class, only one student had the courage, to get up and say that he could not understand what the Professor said. That student was Mr. Narendra Datta. The Professor explained, "Such an experience is the result of the purity of mind and concentration. I have, in my life, seen only one person who has experienced this state of mind. He is none other than Ramakrishna Paramahamsa of Dakshineswar. You can understand that (mystic mood), if you can go and meet him at Dakshineswar".
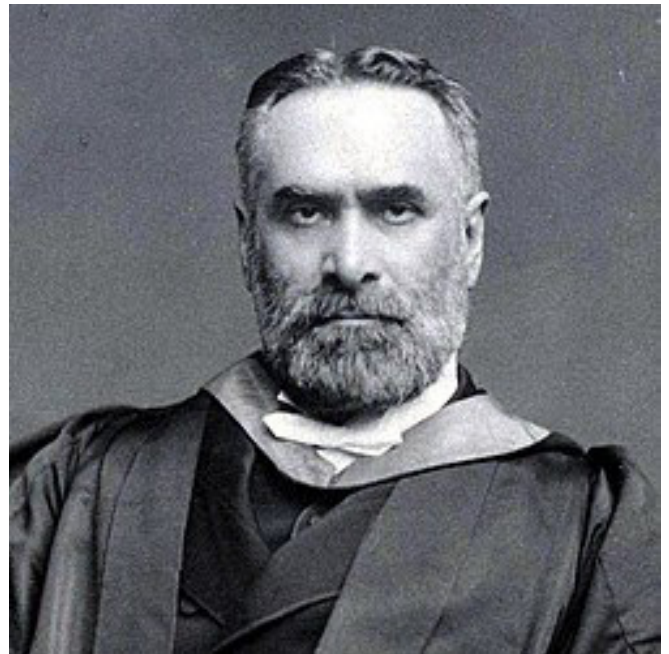
remove the 'scales' from his eyes. Narendra Datta ultimately became Swami Vivekananda.

The subsequent facts of Swami Vivekananda meditating at the Kanyakumari-Rock and going to Chicago to participate in the International conference of all Religions, giving his famous speech on 11th of September 1893 (when he was just 30 years old), starting with his preoration "Brothers and Sisters…" etc., are all parts of history known to the world.

We must ever be grateful to the English Professor Hastie of Scottish Church College, Calcutta, for being indirectly responsible for metamorphosing Narendra Datta into the immortal Swami Vivekananda, who belongs to the whole world, now.

Thus, Narendra Datta was led to Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, by a British Professor! It was this meeting which lighted up the soul of Narendra Datta and made him firm in his vision and dedication. He was seeking a Guru who could give him vision and

**Dr. H.V. Hande**

*Former Health Minister of Government of Tamilnadu. Founder& Director of Hande Hospital.*

# AI and Power BI: Exploration of Data Intelligence and Business Insight

In today's data-driven world, organizations strive to gain actionable insights from massive volumes of structured and unstructured data. The tools that aid this pursuit range from traditional Business Intelligence (BI) software to advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems. Two dominant concepts—AI and Microsoft's Power BI—have emerged as leaders in their respective spheres, each offering distinctive capabilities. But they are often juxtaposed, leading to the question: Is it AI versus Power BI, or are they complementary forces in the analytics ecosystem? This article analyzes the roles, capabilities, differences, overlaps, and future trajectories of AI and Power BI in transforming business insights.

## What is Power BI?

Power BI is a business analytics service by Microsoft that delivers interactive visualizations and business



intelligence capabilities with an interface simple enough for end users to create their own reports and dashboards. It connects to hundreds of data sources, simplifies data prep, and drives ad hoc analysis. Power BI provides a robust suite of tools including Power BI Desktop, Power BI Service, Power Query, and Power Pivot.

## What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think, learn, and solve problems. AI includes technologies such as machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), computer vision, and neural networks. AI systems can analyze large datasets, identify patterns, make predictions, and adapt over time without being explicitly programmed for every task.

**Power BI Evolution**
**Transforming Data into Decisions!**
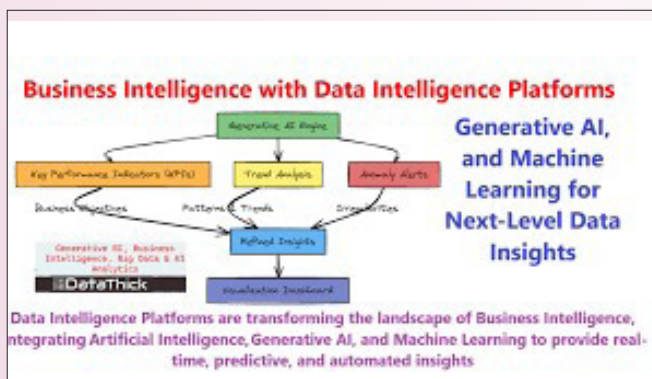
## Comparative Analysis: AI vs Power BI

### Objective and Function

- AI: The objective of AI is to emulate human intelligence and decision-making. It automates decision-making, learns from data, and even recommends actions with minimal human intervention.
- Power BI: Power BI's objective is to enable data-driven decision-making through visual storytelling, reporting, and dashboarding. It focuses on descriptive and diagnostic analytics rather than predictive or prescriptive insights.

Verdict: AI offers a broader cognitive scope, while Power BI excels in visualization and user-friendly data interpretation.

### Data Handling Capabilities

- AI: Can handle massive unstructured datasets such as images, text, audio, and video, making it useful for diverse analytics—from sentiment analysis to fraud detection.
- Power BI: Primarily handles structured and semi-structured data. It is optimized for tabular data and works best when datasets are clean and pre-processed.

Verdict: AI is superior in handling unstructured data, whereas Power BI is tailored for structured business data.

### Insight Generation

- AI: Goes beyond describing what happened; it predicts what will happen and suggests optimal decisions (predictive and prescriptive analytics).
- Power BI: Mainly focuses on what happened and why it happened (descriptive and diagnostic analytics), although it integrates with Azure ML for some predictive capabilities.

Verdict: AI leads in foresight, Power BI in hindsight and real-time visualization.

### Automation and Intelligence

- AI: Capable of automating decision-making processes in real-time. AI-driven bots, recommendation systems, and anomaly

detection engines exemplify its capabilities.

- Power BI: Automates reporting and dashboarding processes, but does not independently make decisions. However, with integration of AI insights, it can support semi-automated analysis.

Verdict: AI is inherently autonomous; Power BI becomes semi-intelligent when integrated with AI models.

## Integration and Ecosystem

- AI: Requires substantial computational power and complex architecture. Integration with existing business processes can be resource-intensive but offers long-term value.
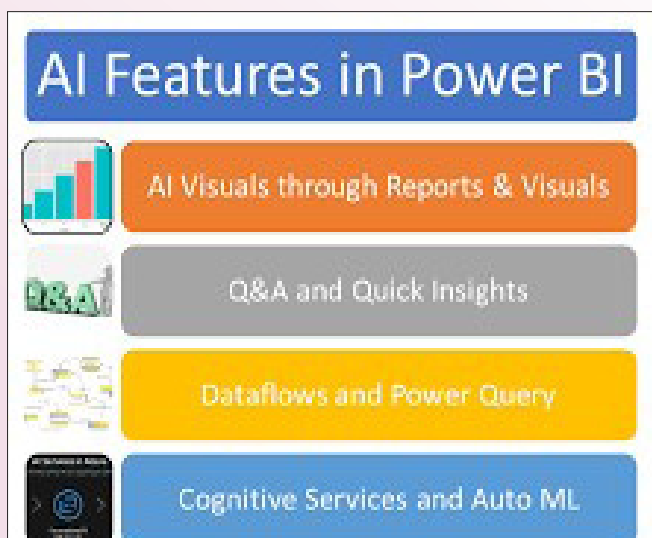


- Power BI: Easily integrates with Microsoft's ecosystem (Excel, Azure, Dynamics 365), and supports plugins for other tools. It's often the final layer where insights are consumed.

Verdict: Power BI is easier to implement and integrates well in existing corporate tech stacks; AI offers more transformative potential but at a higher cost and complexity.

## Complementary Possibilities: AI within Power BI

Rather than positioning them in opposition, businesses increasingly leverage both AI and Power BI together. Microsoft has embedded AI capabilities into Power BI itself:

- Cognitive Services Integration: Users can extract sentiment from text, identify key phrases, and detect language directly within Power BI.
- AutoML in Power BI Premium: Enables users to create, train, and deploy ML models within the Power BI environment.
- Q&A and Natural Language Querying: Powered by NLP, users can type queries in natural language and receive visualized responses instantly.

Thus, Power BI serves as the canvas, while AI provides the paint and the creative brushstrokes.

## Real-World Applications and Case Studies

### AI in Action

- Healthcare: AI systems predict patient readmission risks and optimize treatment plans.
- Retail: Recommendation engines predict buying behavior and personalize marketing.
- Banking: AI is used for fraud detection, credit scoring, and process automation.

## AI Powered Analytics in Power BI

Data Scientists
- Extend with Azure ML
- R Integration
- Integrate into reports
- Python Integration

Business Analysts
- Create ML models
- Sentiment Analysis
- Explore predictions
- Key Phrase Extraction

Business users
- AI Visualizations
- Natural Language

## Power BI in Action

- Sales Dashboards: Visualize KPIs, revenue, and territory performance in real time.
- Finance Reporting: Consolidate expense, income, and investment data for monthly board reports.
- Operations Monitoring: Track production output, efficiency, and downtime across factories.

Combined Use Case: A manufacturing company uses AI to predict equipment failures using sensor data and visualizes alerts and maintenance schedules in Power BI dashboards.

## Challenges and Considerations

- AI:
  - o Requires skilled personnel (data scientists, ML engineers).
  - o High upfront costs and long development cycles.
  - o Issues around ethics, bias, and interpretability.

- Power BI:
  - o Limited in-depth analytical capabilities without external integrations.
  - o May not scale well for big data workloads without additional tools.

o Reliance on structured data may constrain use in modern analytics contexts.

## The Future: Convergence, Not Competition

The future of business analytics is not about choosing between AI and Power BI, but about integrating both to build a seamless pipeline of data → insight → action. Microsoft's own roadmap reflects this convergence, embedding more AI into Power BI, and enabling easier connections to Azure Machine Learning and cognitive APIs.

We are heading toward a paradigm where Power BI is the front-end user interface for all forms of intelligence—human, artificial, or hybrid. Meanwhile, AI continues to evolve as the backend powerhouse that processes, predicts, and prescribes with growing precision.

The phrase "AI vs Power BI" is a misnomer. AI and Power BI serve different yet increasingly overlapping purposes. AI brings intelligence, automation, and learning into the business decision-making ecosystem, while Power BI translates complex insights into digestible formats for stakeholders. Together, they empower organizations to become not just data-rich, but insight-driven and future-ready.

Author: S.Rajagopalan,
*Data Scientist*

# Life, Death and Mysterious Motherhood

When I decided to read the Garuda Purana, I didn't know it would be so mysterious. The only mystery that we are not able to prove in open must be the mystery of life and death. And in the Garuda Purana, all those questions asked by beloved devotee Garuda have been answered by Narayana and it is upto us whether we accept those answers or not. Unlike scientific experiments, where the results can be reproduced in the laboratory, the experiments of life and death can't be done in real life. Yet we hear many spiritual leaders and saints who describe about the phenomenon of life beyond death and we listen to them. But what we experience personally that gives us a more stronger connection with the universe .



Mother represents colourless love that knows no barter, love that never dies.

In the Garuda Purana it is mentioned that a mother's womb is the hell through which the soul has to pass through to enter into earth. While we enjoy stating that the baby is kicking inside the mother's womb, it is mentioned that, the infant is attacked by all those bacterias and acids and because of that the infant finds it helpless inside the womb and keeps trying to survive by trying to get rid of those bacterias which we feel as kicking inside and it is also mentioned that while being inside the womb, the soul has the memories of the previous birth and when it comes out of the womb ,for few months it remembers those past memories and then those memories go back to the subconscious and the infant starts living with the parents and other family members with the consciousness of the current life.

### How mysterious it is ! Isn't it?

But, I don't know how the medical practitioners and the scientists would visualise these statements. Even for  common human beings like all of us, it's a little difficult to accept these things. And it was terrific for me as I was already experiencing several extra sensory perceptions and in my dreams I was experiencing a different world and many times experiencing even a different realm while being awake. I got such fearful experiences while reading the Purana that I left it halfway and gave it back to my father.

Though our jathakam predicts the entire course of life, as human beings we don't simply sit keeping

hand on hand rather we navigate through the uncertainty that life is and those who follow the prescribed pariharams may not be getting rid of every difficulty the way they might be believing. And the ultimate experience of life is believing in good things and trying to do the good things even at the face of difficulties.And that is where life and death meet, and the horizon gives us the ultimate experience of life on earth.

While carrying my first child, I didn't know that I was going to lose it a few days before the delivery. It was Monday,9 th August 2010.The maid was a good person but was not regular.That day she didn't turn up and lots of vessels were there.I could manage to do the other household works and finally when it became night and there was no sign of her appearing I managed to clean up all the vessels. Some friends had visited our house and after they left I was very exhausted . I sat down for a moment and the Super Singer program was going on in the TV .I could feel the kicks so prominently and I was telling my husband that may be the baby is liking the music and it's kicking inside.We both were getting ready to experience parenthood in a month or less .After having worked so much I wasn't able to stand and cook and I asked my husband to get some food from a nearby food counter.He got

some food and we both had and it was around 9:30 pm, I was just strolling in the big corridor we had in that house.He was inside.Suddenly a gang of dogs came running towards our house and started crying seeing our corridor.I got a bit scared and went inside and narrated that to my husband.

Then we both went to sleep and around 12:30 am,it was Tuesday,Adi Amavasya and suddenly my stomach was upset and I rushed to the washroom twice and that is when the placenta got abrupted fully and I was rushed to the hospital and in the morning my baby was no more with me to enjoy any music.Our world turned upside down.Maybe the child was suffering inside from the evening when it was signalling by kicking so much and I thought it was enjoying the music as I didn't get any other pain or any other uneasiness from outside.

My parents had rushed to Coimbatore from Sunabeda.My father who had declared himself dead for me had rushed in to see me when I was really struggling with life and death.

Again life was so uncertain and yet I tried to navigate through that.

Then we shifted to Chennai and I had conceived again and the doctor prescribed some strong injection that would hold the placenta in place because of my previous case study.But it so happened that the zygote didn't get heart beat and she had to administer a D'And C procedure and again I was deprived of motherhood.Already the loss of career,loss of parents' love and affection and the loss of the first child had left me helpless and this added some more pain.Then my husband was jobless,we both were childless and I have seen my husband going through the worst days of his life.

Despite severe losses and difficulties we both tried to navigate through the course of life and finally he joined his job and I joined an IAS academy as a faculty and again I conceived.But everytime I lost in the prelims of UPSC exam and every time I lost in my efforts to become a mother.Hence the fear of losing the child was always haunting me from within.

From one of our neighbours I had come to know about the Kurungaleeswarar temple located in Koyambedu Chennai where as per the narratives it is believed that Lav and Kush the twin sons of Mata Sita had obstructed the horse of Lord Rama and Mata Sita is worshipped as a pregnant woman and many pregnant women carry out the pujas over there praying for safe delivery. And I had visited that temple once with those neighbours.

When I was carrying my child and was carrying out the coaching courses at the academy,my inner voice had asked me to pray in that temple.April 7 th 2014.It was a regular check up at the hospital. We both went to the hospital and the pressure was a bit high and already my previous case histories had kept the doctor on high alert.She asked me to wait for 3 hours and to have a recheck after the lunch. Already I was too tired after a very busy schedule of previous Sunday when I had to carry out mock tests as the prelim exams were scheduled in the month of May and on the same day my relatives had visited the house.I requested my husband to wait in the hospital and have the lunch over there in the hospital canteen.But his experience of having eaten the dinner outside during the first child case stopped him from taking that decision and he accompanied me to the house where I cooked the lunch standing in the hot oven like kitchen and when we went for the recheck the pressure was still high.

And I got hospitalized as my husband's family didn't want to take any risk.My parents were unaware and they were planning to visit us for a few days. When they reached Chennai, again they found me struggling with life and death in the hospital .It so happened that the canteen food that my husband didn't prefer me to eat that day, I had to eat that food for two months in that hospital.

I was put under close monitoring even the sisters making me wake up from a deep sleep at midnight or in the early morning as part of the protocol of monitoring pressure and the fluid intake and output was under strict observation.But I wasn't able to accept my admission to the hospital as I had no other issues like many other to-be mothers who had got admitted happily for an entire pregnancy period due to several gynec difficulties.

One of my students from the academy was a doctor who was practicing at the government hospital and he and another faculty had paid a visit to the hospital and seeing my reports he was shocked as to why I was confined to the hospital.

It's the fear of past experiences,the apprehension of the repetition of the past in the future and the decision we take.I asked to arrange some support system at home for household activities and routine checkups and nobody listened to me.I was confined to the hospital.My parents who had planned few days of stay got confined with me in the hospital.In the morning my father used to stay with me and at night my husband used to be the attendant.

During those days of confinement,on April 28 th,my birthday,I had expressed my dreams about Lord Shiva and his blessings to the consulting doctor.

May 7,2014 Wednesday.My husband left the hospital for his office and my father had started from the house to reach me with some home cooked food made by my mother.It had started to drizzle and when the chief doctor had visited along with other doctors,my whole body was fully swollen and immediate delivery was the decision taken.My husband was informed,my father was shocked and I was going through the procedures to deliver my child.

Two days ago,on Monday night, I had a unique dream.That I had given birth to my son and he



**PREPARING FOR PARENTHOOD**

was lying in a white cloth,he was very tiny and when suddenly a white beam of ray fell on him he started to grow, and I expressed that to my husband.

May 7-2014,I cried with my son's first cry . When I got sense in the recovery room,my son was in the NICU.Finally when I went to see him,he was sleeping in a small baby bed completely white in colour and was on supplement and donor mothers feed.He was healthy but was preterm and underweight and hence I had to be there in the hospital for another one month till he gained weight and declared safe to go home.Along with him some more infants were admitted to the NICU. One infant had holes in the heart and the parents had arranged a cultured heart and were waiting for the baby to gain some more weight to go through the heart transplantation and two more babies were in the ventilator, twins, who had entered the earth a little too early.

As a kid, I was very close to other children and as I grew up I had developed lots of love for small children.But I had never imagined I had to go through so many challenges to have my own kid.

Few days before my son was handed over to us in the normal ward I had a dream.I was standing near my son's bed when a very tall person wearing a red colour full on ,entered the NICU room. And in that dream ,that day I had got scared and had got the feeling of Yamdut entering the room. When I had dared to look into his face,he shouted at me saying, " Look at your son, don't look at me". Then he had taken two kids from there and had left the room.

On the day of discharge, when I was busy meeting all the doctors and collecting the discharge summary and guidelines to take care of my son,I came to know that the baby who underwent heart transplantation lost his battle after the operation and another baby in the ventilator had failed the battle due to brain failure.

Having got my son with so much of difficulties,my career option became secondary, child rearing became primary,I had to console myself to deal with the situation of UPSC giving two options to the general category students and raising the age limit to 32 when I was crossing my age limit, receiving two chances beyond the age limit and receiving my son to take up the duty of motherhood .And I have tried to serve my child and my family before serving the nation.

Being confined to the hospital for two months I couldn't carry out the pooja in the Kurungaleeswarar temple as desired by me.But I carried out my duties as a dedicated mother.I couldn't carry my son for the full term in the womb but I have carried him in my hand beyond the age other mothers are carrying their children.That's because of my fear .I couldn't show the courage to leave my child alone and I kept carrying him and kept doing my works not knowing about the broken bone .Finally when the physical pain started,the psychological impacts were at the peak and personal life was completely uncertain,I had surrendered to almighty by carrying out 22 Ekadashi poojas and on the 22nd Ekadashi day, I had visited the Kurungaleeswarar temple,had offered garland and angavastram for the Perumal or Lord Narayan residing over there and had the darshan of Lord Shiva and mother Sita and during one such Ekadashi day I had felt the jerk in the left knee and subsequently I had discovered the mystery of the broken bone by December 2019.And after that we all have witnessed the pandemic when the mystery of life and death and the invisible corona had left each one of us a little more mysterious.



Surround Yourself with Positivity: Transform Your Life

Life was completely uncertain for everyone.Yet we all navigated through that uncertainty and many left this world while many new souls entered into this world.The mysteries of life and death is continuing and would continue eternally.Through my personal experiences I have got a glimpse of the world not visible to the naked eye which I can't show to anyone. But I have shared all those experiences of mine through the 21 articles and this is my 22nd article.

While watching the webseries Kota Factory that is about the coaching classes for JEE and NEET exams, during one episode,a teacher guided a few students stating that anything if we try continuously for 21 days,for sure a change will happen on the 22nd day.But we must try continuously.And dear readers, I have tried continuously and I have completed 21 articles and this 22nd article is a little closer to my heart.

When I decided to take up writing as the career option,I was clueless as to how it was going to help me.Yet that was my inner voice and for one year I kept writing when many times my husband had asked me to take up the content creation job online for which payments are made on word count basis.And I kept expressing my feelings through my articles .After one year of writing I entered the academy as a grammar and creative writing teacher and before joining the job I had attended a workshop on design thinking.

And guess what,two months back I got a mail from them where a project is undertaken to create a platform of knowledge for research scholars and any person from any profession to take a look into the matters that connect traditional wisdom with current technologies in the form of creating 500 articles on several topics by the selected few and I participated in that writing contest.By the time you would be reading this article of mine, I would have received the results whether I am selected or not .If I am selected,I will turn up to be a professional writer and if I don't, I would continue to write passionately.

alchemize your
limitations &
propel yourself
into your future

The 22nd step of the Jagannath temple leads to the Ananda Bazar where the devotees enjoy the Mahaprasad.Through this 22nd article of mine I have reached that Ananda Bazar of my life, where I feel blissful as a daughter,as a sister,as a life partner ,as a mother and also as a writer .

A mother's service is unparalleled.Wishing all the mothers a blissful Mother's Day who are the carriers of mysteries of life and death .

As I said,life is so uncertain and yet we navigate through that with every good intention ,I am navigating through it happily and hopefully .Now also it is uncertain as to how my life is going to be.But my fear and phobias are certainly gone.And having seen so much of failures and losses I have become more calm and composed and now I am not scared of reading Garuda Purana.

**Ms. Chinmayee**

*Am a full-time homemaker and a self-taught passionate artist and an amateur writer looking forward to take my passions to a professional level. I have written certain situational stanzas in English and an amateur autobiography of my life experiences from 1999 to 2021 in Odia titled Baishi Pahache meaning on the 22 nd step.*

# Civil Servants vs Elected Representatives: Roles in Good Governance

Good governance is the cornerstone of a functioning democracy. It is marked by accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, responsiveness, rule of law, efficiency, and effectiveness. Two pillars uphold this ecosystem: civil servants, the permanent executive, and elected representatives, the political executive. Each plays a distinct, often complementary role, though tensions and overlaps are frequent. Understanding their roles, responsibilities, challenges, and areas of synergy is vital to evaluating how well a government serves its people.

Civil servants are career officials appointed based on merit, usually through competitive exams. They provide continuity, institutional memory, and non-partisan expertise. Elected representatives, on the other hand, derive legitimacy from the people's mandate and are responsible for policy direction and legislative oversight. The dynamic between these two actors determines the tone and quality of governance in a country.



Tussles between elected representatives and civil servants become widespread



" Our nation is defined by its people, not by its borders. We count on our civil servants to uphold this spirit and serve with integrity, dedication, and empathy.

— ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
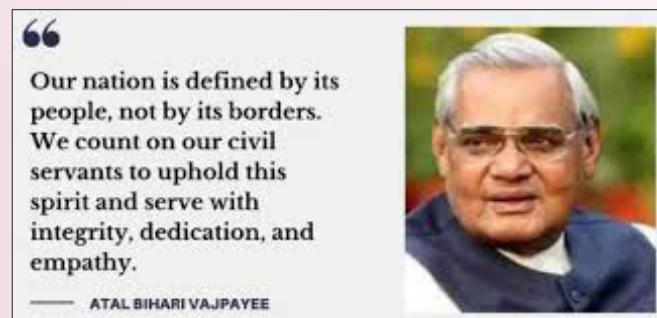
## Constitutional Roles and Democratic Mandate

In most parliamentary democracies, the Constitution lays out a clear division of responsibilities. Elected representatives—ministers, members of parliament or assemblies—are entrusted with formulating public policy, passing laws, and setting developmental priorities. Their authority stems from elections, making them accountable to the public. Their power, however, is often time-bound by electoral cycles.

Civil servants, conversely, are tasked with the execution of these policies and laws. Their role is technocratic and administrative. They manage public resources, implement programs, and ensure service delivery across domains like health, education, infrastructure, and law enforcement.
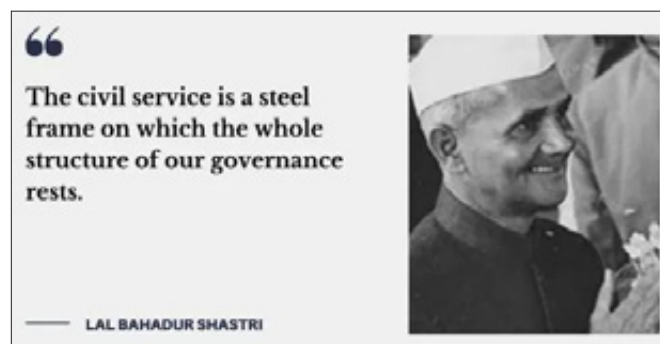
This division, in theory, creates a balance between political vision and professional administration. However, the challenge lies in harmonizing the vision-driven aspirations of elected leaders with the procedural rigidity and continuity offered by bureaucrats.

## Points of Conflict and Complementarities

Tensions often arise from the difference in incentives and orientations. Elected representatives are motivated by public perception and re-election prospects. They may prioritize short-term gains or populist policies. Civil servants, though insulated from political pressures, can sometimes be risk-averse, overly procedural, or indifferent to ground realities.

Conflicts can manifest in several ways:

- Policy vs. Implementation: Ministers may propose schemes without considering administrative capacity, while bureaucrats may resist policy shifts fearing disruption or controversy.
- Control and Accountability: Elected leaders may perceive bureaucrats as unresponsive or obstructive; bureaucrats may view political leaders as interfering or lacking expertise.

> 66
> The civil service is a steel frame on which the whole structure of our governance rests.
>
> —— LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI



- Corruption and Patronage: Both sides can misuse their positions—politicians through favoritism or rent-seeking; civil servants through administrative corruption or inaction.

Yet, examples of synergy also abound. When visionary politicians collaborate with innovative civil servants, the outcomes can be transformative—as seen in successful programs like the Aadhaar initiative in India, or participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

## International Comparisons and Best Practices

Globally, governance models vary in the relative power accorded to civil servants and elected officials.

- Westminster Model (UK, India, Australia): Emphasizes political control over bureaucracy, with civil servants providing non-partisan advice and execution. Conflicts are managed through conventions and a culture of professionalism.
- Weberian Model (Germany): Prioritizes bureaucratic expertise and legal-rational authority. The state is seen as a technical apparatus guided by rules and norms.

> **The role of civil servants is crucial in building a strong and prosperous nation.**
>
> — MANMOHAN SINGH

- United States: A politically appointed bureaucracy in key positions makes the lines more blurred. This model enables quicker policy shifts but can compromise continuity and technical depth.

Best practices include:

- Fixed tenure for key administrative roles to reduce political interference.
- Strengthening parliamentary committees and public audit bodies to ensure accountability.
- Encouraging lateral entry in civil services to bring in fresh perspectives and specialized skills.
- Institutionalizing performance metrics to assess both bureaucrats and elected officials.

## Emerging Challenges in Governance

In the 21st century, both civil servants and elected representatives face new challenges:

- Digital Governance: Requires tech-savvy leadership and rapid adaptability—skills not always present in traditional bureaucracies or political classes.
- Complex Crises: From pandemics to climate change, today's crises are cross-sectoral and unpredictable. They demand coordinated governance, not siloed functioning.
- Citizens Expectations: With rising education and connectivity, citizens demand transparency, participation, and quick results. Governance must shift from rule-centric to citizen-centric.

These challenges call for a recalibration of roles. Civil servants must embrace innovation, responsiveness, and community engagement. Politicians must appreciate domain knowledge, long-term thinking, and institutional integrity.

## The Way Forward – Towards Collaborative Governance

Good governance is not a zero-sum game between civil servants and elected representatives. It is a co-production, requiring mutual respect, accountability, and shared vision.

Recommendations for improving this relationship include:

- Capacity Building: Regular training for both bureaucrats and politicians on ethics, public management, and emerging issues.
- Institutional Mechanisms: Creation of joint task forces, inter-ministerial committees, and inclusive planning bodies to foster dialogue.
- Transparency and Ethics: Enforcing codes of conduct and conflict-of-interest disclosures for both groups.
- Citizen Engagement: Making room for participatory governance through gram sabhas, urban planning forums, and feedback loops.

The civil servants and elected representatives are two wheels of the same cart. When aligned, they can deliver inclusive growth, uphold the rule of law, and deepen democracy. When misaligned, the result is inefficiency, erosion of public trust, and policy paralysis. The challenge—and the opportunity—lies in crafting a governance model where vision meets execution, and politics meets professionalism.

**Author: H.Subramanian**
*Social Scientist Consultant*

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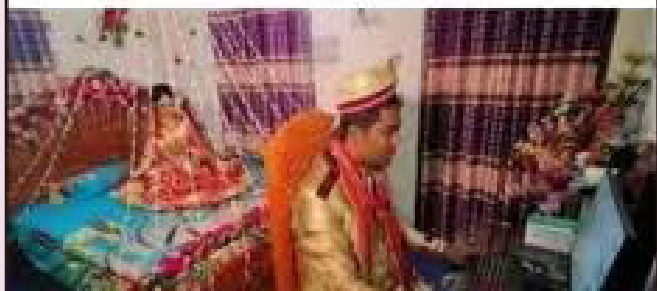
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# Are You Staring At Your Wife?

The Chairman of Larsen & Toubro recently disturbed the hornet's nest when he suggested to his employees as following, " If I can make you work on Sundays, I will be happier. What you do sitting at home? How long can you stare at your wife?"

Now many people began wondering, " What should I do now? I have stared at my wife in the morning. Shall I start this process with my neighbour"s wife- again which neighbour first, is it my left hand neighbour or right hand or upstairs or downstairs neighbour?" Some persons became delighted, " In this process, the full Sunday is not enough. I should request for half-day permission from my Boss on Monday morning"!

I feel that the Chairman concerned would be spending entire Monday answering the phone



Ignoring or dismissing a wife's emotional needs can make her feel undervalued and unloved. Emotional neglect often leads to a breakdown in intimacy and connection.



'How long can you stare at your wife?': L&T chairman says he wants employees to work on Sunday too

calls and emails received from his employees regarding the success or failure of their staring exercises.

But the more embarrassing part will be when some enterprising wives of his employees pose the question, " Is staring allowed only for husbands?"

Anyways now all the employees face the trouble of a long critical look of their better halves when the husbands simply stand staring at the sky. " Are you looking at the Heavenly maidens like Apsaras!" is the query of the ladies.

### The Real Stare of the Husband

One husband provoked by his Boss began staring at his wife after he got up from bed on a Sunday morning.

His wife had risen earlier to him, finished her bath and was busy preparing coffee for him. She had filled up all the buckets in the bath room and kitchen as she was aware of the municipal taps' water flow timings. After preparing breakfast, she woke up their two children, made them go to the bath room, brush their teeth etc. As it was a Sunday, there was no school for kids. Otherwise, she would have readied them for the school, packed their lunch boxes, given their breakfast and taken them to their street corner for putting them in their school bus. Then she would have prepared the office tiffin box for her husband and propelled him to get ready for the office by snatching the newspaper from his hands. I need not narrate her duties when the children returned from school in the afternoon and her husband came back from office.

Since it was a Sunday, the husband expected her to take some rest after breakfast. He was wrong-she did all the dusting, cleaning, ironing all the washed clothes and changed all the bed sheets.

By afternoon, the husband felt tired staring at his wife and went for his nap, sympathezing with his Boss as to how he was staring at his wife throughout the Sunday!



## It is Wife's Turn now

Almost all the wives opine that their husbands never look at them, especially after a few years of marriage especially if T20 Cricket matches are on. Of course, this may not be true to Cricketer husbands! Otherwise why should BCCI contemplate of curbing the time wives spend on tour with the players! Because BCCI have a problem with husbands staring at their wives instead of at Cricket.

All these issues came to the front when a Bangalore entrepreneur of yesteryears suggested a 70 hour week for all employees. Before this din settled down, the L & T Chairman raised it to 90 hours a week, asking the employees not to stare at their wives on Sundays, luckily not at the wives of others.

Anyway, let me end this staring business immediately before any other Chairman increases the work hours to 100 a week, especially if he is a Cricket lover!



**R. Venugopal**

*Mr. Venugopal has served in LIC of India from 1968 to 2006 for 38 years and retired as an Executive Director.*

# Indian Traditions - A Tapestry of Timeless Values

India, one of the world's oldest civilizations, is renowned not just for its diversity in language, culture, and geography, but also for its deeply rooted traditions. These traditions are not merely rituals or customs but form the spiritual and moral backbone of Indian society. Passed down generations, they shape the everyday lives of people, influencing family structures, societal norms, and individual behaviors. Indian traditions are interwoven with its festivals, religious practices, social customs, attire, cuisine, and even its approach to nature. This article explores the major Indian traditions and the values and meanings they impart.
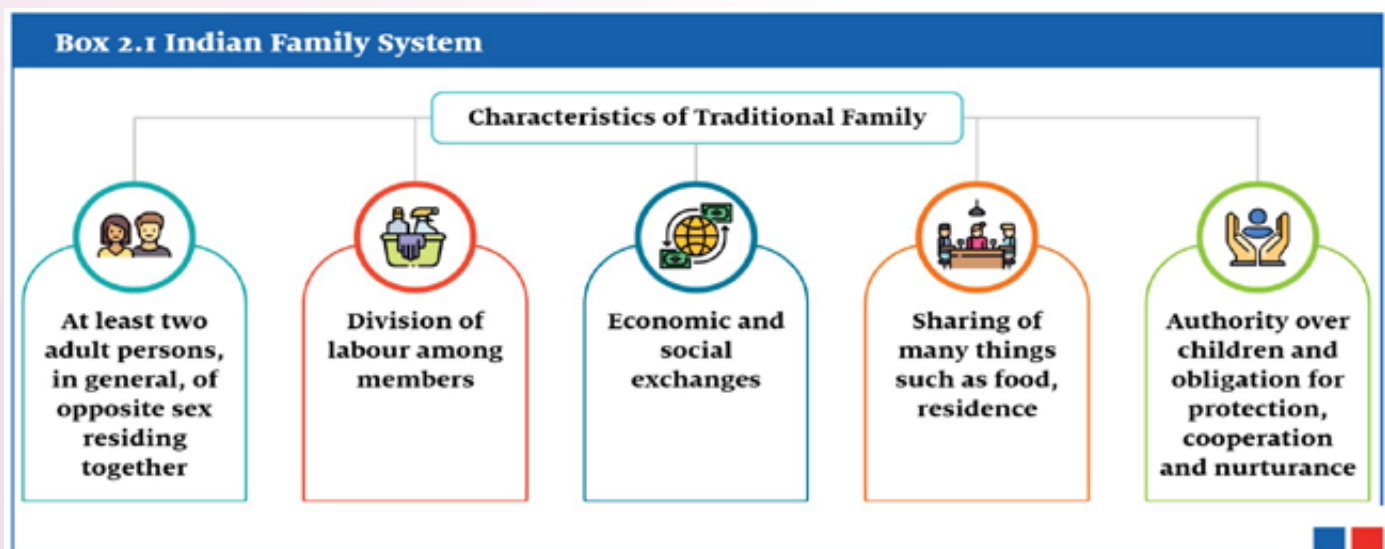
## The Philosophical Roots of Indian Traditions:

Indian traditions are deeply influenced by its philosophical foundations. The Vedas, Upanishads,



KARMA, DHARMA AND MOKSHA
Interpreting Indian Philosophy
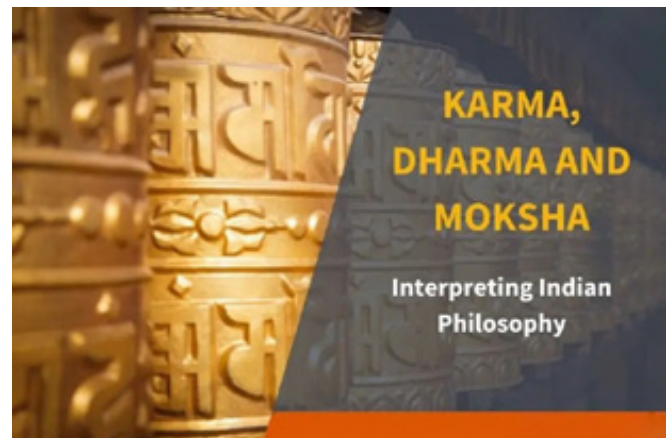
epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita have shaped a worldview where life is seen as a journey toward spiritual realization.

Concepts like Dharma (duty/ethics), Karma (actions and their consequences), Ahimsa (non-



**Box 2.1 Indian Family System**

Characteristics of Traditional Family

- At least two adult persons, in general, of opposite sex residing together
- Division of labour among members
- Economic and social exchanges
- Sharing of many things such as food, residence
- Authority over children and obligation for protection, cooperation and nurturance

violence), and Moksha (liberation) are not just religious ideals but permeate everyday life. The tradition of Guru-Shishya Parampara (teacher-disciple lineage) underlines the importance of learning, respect, and continuity.

This spiritual worldview encourages a balance between material life and inner development. Thus, even mundane rituals often carry a deeper symbolic and psychological significance.

## Family and Social Structures:

## Joint Family System:

One of the most enduring Indian traditions is the joint family system, where multiple generations live under one roof. It is not only a model of collective living but also reinforces values like mutual respect, sharing of responsibilities, and economic cooperation.

## Respect for Elders:

Touching the feet of elders (charan sparsh) is a common practice, symbolizing reverence and seeking blessings. Elders are seen as carriers of wisdom and are integral in decision-making and maintaining family harmony.

## Marriage Rituals:

Indian weddings are replete with rituals like saptapadi (seven steps around the sacred fire), haldi, and mehendi, symbolizing the sanctity of marriage, fertility, and commitment. The emphasis on arranged marriages in many communities reflects a cultural preference for familial compatibility and social bonding.

## Festivals and Celebrations:

Festivals such as Diwali, Holi, Eid, Christmas, Pongal, Navratri, and Onam celebrate the diversity of India while reinforcing shared values such as gratitude, joy, forgiveness, and community bonding. Most festivals are deeply rooted in mythology and agrarian cycles, linking spirituality with nature.

## Religious and Spiritual Practices:

## Puja and Rituals:

Daily worship (puja) at home or temples involves offerings of flowers, food, and light to deities. These acts cultivate mindfulness, devotion, and gratitude. The aarti (ritual of light) and mantra chanting create a meditative atmosphere, aligning individual consciousness with cosmic rhythms.

## Yoga and Meditation:

India gifted the world with yoga and meditation—disciplines that promote holistic health and spiritual insight. Rooted in ancient texts like the Yoga Sutras, these practices are now globally embraced for their benefits in stress reduction, emotional balance, and self-realization.



Pilgrimage Sites in India

Traditional Textiles of India
History | Dresses
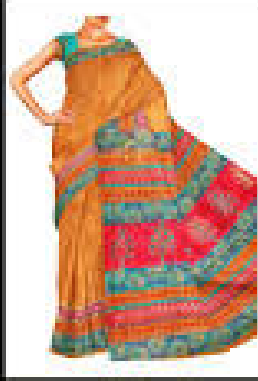
## Pilgrimage Traditions:

Pilgrimages to places like Varanasi, Amritsar, Tirupati, Ajmer, and Bodh Gaya foster devotion and humility. They are often arduous journeys undertaken with faith, symbolizing inner purification and spiritual merit.



Textiles and Costumes in Early India

## Sacred Geography:

The reverence for rivers like the Ganges, Yamuna, and Godavari, and mountains like the Himalayas, is rooted in a tradition that sees divinity in nature. This sacred outlook encourages ecological respect and environmental preservation.

## Arts, Attire, and Cultural Expressions:

### Classical Arts:

Indian dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Odissi, and music traditions like Hindustani and Carnatic, are not merely artistic expressions but deeply spiritual practices. Each performance is a narrative of devotion, mythology, and emotional transcendence.

### Textiles and Attire:

Clothing traditions, such as wearing sarees, dhotis, turbans, or kurta-pajamas, signify regional identity and cultural pride. Handloom weaving, block printing, and embroidery reflect centuries-old craftsmanship.

### Symbolic Adornments:

Bindi on the forehead, bangles, toe rings, and sindoor (vermillion) are traditional adornments with symbolic meanings—marital status, energy balance (as in the third eye), and aesthetic beauty.

CLASSICAL ARTS
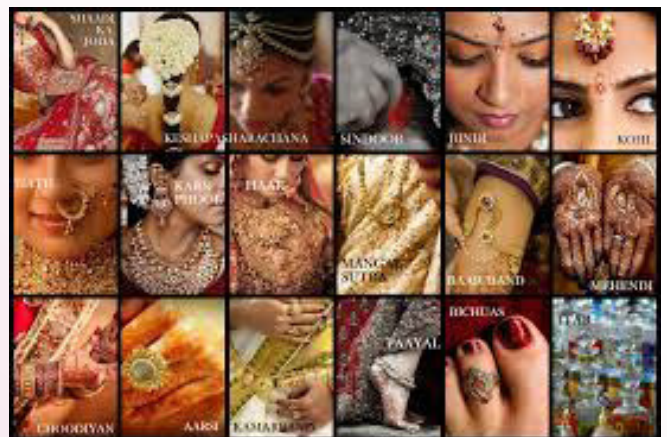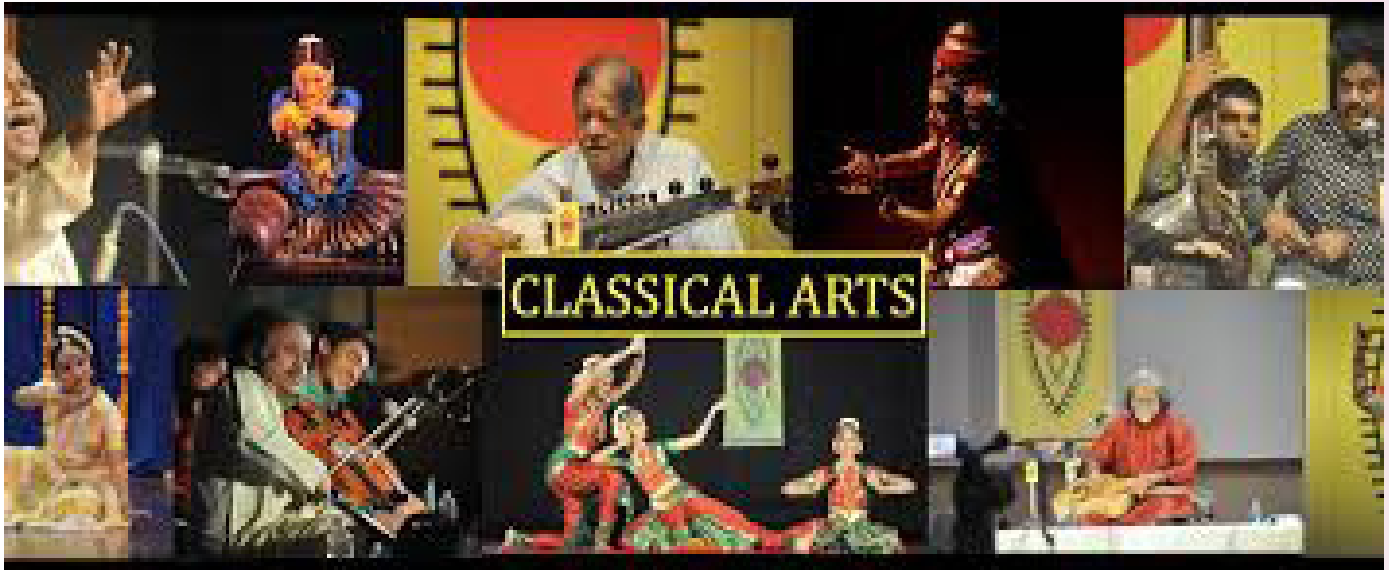
## Cuisine and Dining Customs:

Indian food culture emphasizes Ayurveda-inspired cooking, seasonal eating, and the use of spices for health and flavor. The tradition of eating with hands is rooted in the idea of engaging all senses and creating a mindful eating experience.

## Traditional Knowledge Systems:

## Ayurveda and Siddha:

India's ancient medical systems like Ayurveda and Siddha emphasize balance among bodily humors (doshas), herbal remedies, and lifestyle modifications. Health is viewed as a dynamic equilibrium of mind, body, and spirit.

## Vastu Shastra and Architecture:

Vastu Shastra, the traditional Indian system of architecture, guides the design of homes and temples in harmony with cosmic principles. Temples built according to these principles are believed to radiate energy conducive to spiritual upliftment.

## Panchang and Astrology:

Traditional Indian calendars and astrology (Jyotish Shastra) are not just used for predicting the future but also for aligning human actions with cosmic rhythms—like selecting auspicious days for marriage, naming ceremonies, and festivals.

## Folk Knowledge and Oral Traditions:

India's rural traditions include a wealth of oral stories, proverbs, herbal medicine, and sustainable agricultural practices that have stood the test of time. These often reflect ecological wisdom and community-centric values.

## The Evolving Relevance of Traditions in Modern India:

While urbanization and globalization have transformed lifestyles, many Indian traditions continue to remain relevant. Practices like yoga and Ayurveda have found global acceptance. Joint families are evolving into nuclear ones, but the underlying emphasis on family values endures.

Modern Indians increasingly blend tradition with modernity—celebrating festivals digitally, wearing ethnic attire on special occasions, or adapting rituals to suit contemporary life. Wedding rituals, for instance, are now more inclusive and sometimes interfaith.

JEWELRY OF INDIA



Moreover, traditional ecological wisdom is gaining relevance in the age of climate change. Concepts like ahimsa, reverence for nature, and simple living are being revisited for sustainable futures.

However, it is equally important to critique and reform certain traditions that perpetuate inequality—such as caste-based discrimination or gender restrictions—so that Indian traditions evolve toward inclusivity and universal human dignity.

Indian traditions are not static relics of the past but living, evolving expressions of a civilization that balances spiritual ideals with everyday life. They offer a deep sense of identity, belonging, and continuity. Whether in the serenity of a temple, the vibrancy of a festival, or the quiet gestures of daily reverence, these traditions provide meaning, cohesion, and moral compass in a rapidly changing world.

In embracing their essence while allowing space for reform and reinterpretation, India's traditions can continue to serve as a guiding light—not only for its people but for a global community seeking connection, balance, and meaning.

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# The Changing Colour of War

## From Uniforms to Algorithms

War has never been static. From tribal skirmishes to world wars, humanity's methods of conflict have constantly evolved with time, technology, and ideology. In the 21st century, however, the "colour" of war is changing more rapidly and more radically than ever before. The metaphorical colour — once associated with khaki uniforms, red battlefields, or grey smoke — now includes cyber green, digital blue, disinformation black, and economic grey. Today's wars are often undeclared, hidden, asymmetric, and multidimensional.

How war has changed globally: from battlefields to cyberspace, from soldiers to software, from military strategy to psychological manipulation — mapping the new theatres, new weapons, and new warriors of the global conflicts of the 21st century.

## The Decline of Conventional Wars

The age of two state armies facing off on a defined battlefield is fading.Instead, irregular warfare, insurgencies, proxy wars, and terrorism dominate
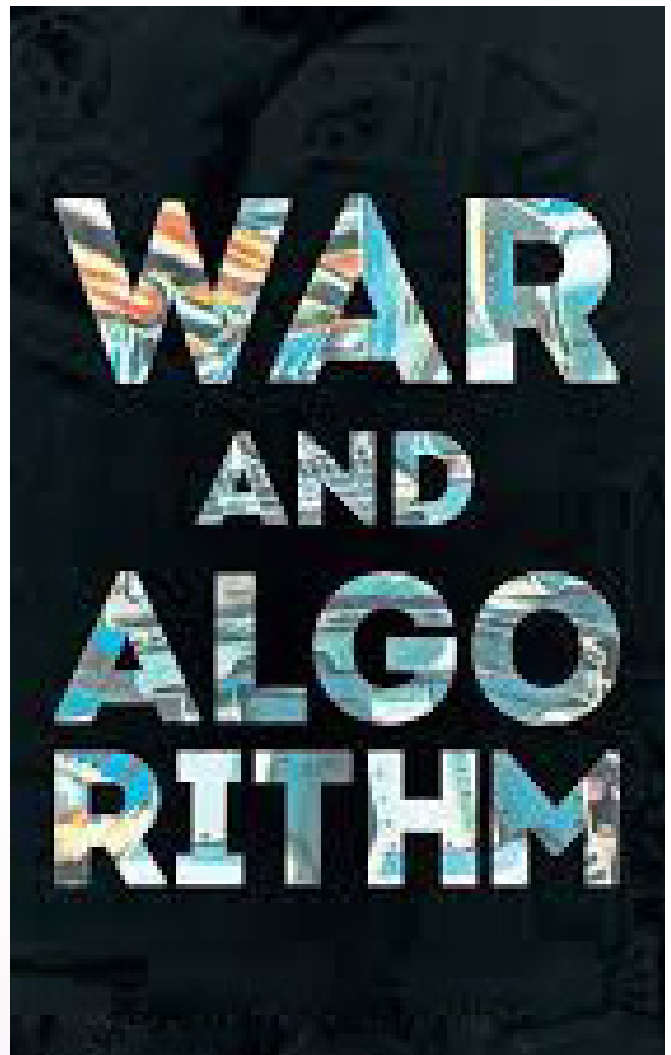




the global security narrative. Powerful nations now prefer surgical strikes, drone attacks, and mercenary forces over full-scale invasions.

- In the Middle East, Iran backs proxies like Hezbollah and Houthis instead of direct confrontation.
- Russia used private military contractors like Wagner Group in Syria, Ukraine, and Africa.

- The U.S. relies on special forces, cyber capabilities, and air strikes over long-term boots-on-ground operations.

## Non-State Actors as Main Players

Groups like ISIS, Boko Haram, and drug cartels in Latin America wield more power than some nation-states. Their tactics — guerrilla ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and information propaganda — redefine warfare's structure and objective.

## Technology and the Rise of Remote Warfare

### Drones and Autonomous Systems

One of the most striking symbols of modern war is the drone. Whether used by the U.S. in Pakistan and Yemen, Turkey in Azerbaijan, or Russia and Ukraine in Donbas, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) offer precision, distance, and deniability.

- Bayraktar drones were game-changers in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.
- Swarm drones and loitering munitions are replacing costly air fleets.

### AI and Algorithmic Warfare

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used for target recognition, battlefield logistics, autonomous weapons, and even propaganda generation. Algorithms now determine what information is pushed to a population, how cyber attacks are launched, and when missiles are fired.

Countries like the U.S., China, and Israel lead in AI-integrated military platforms, while debates rage on about autonomous killer robots and the ethical implications of removing humans from the kill chain.

## Cyber Warfare: Invisible, Intimate, Immediate

Modern war doesn't always leave craters — it can leave power grids off, hospitals hacked, and elections compromised.

- In 2010, the Stuxnet worm targeted Iran's nuclear program, likely deployed by U.S.-Israeli collaboration.
- Russian hackers have been linked to attacks on Ukraine's energy sector, U.S. elections, and European networks.
- China's cyber army is vast, allegedly conducting corporate espionage, surveillance, and ransomware operations.

## Information Wars: Narratives as Weapons

Social media platforms like Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook have become warzones. Disinformation, fake news, deepfakes, and bot campaigns are now standard tactics.

## Examples:

- Russia's use of propaganda in Crimea and Donbas.
- ISIS's recruitment through slick media and Telegram channels.
- Global campaigns to spread vaccine disinformation or incite civil unrest.

**"Decline" of Conventional War**

- Absolute or relative?
- Cold War: higher potential costs of escalation; regional effects on ethnic and other sources of internal conflicts
- Power imbalance favoring status quo-oriented great powers
- International diplomatic and economic pressure to respect recognized borders
- Ethnic and other internal conflicts may be more difficult to resolve

Misinformation now travels faster than bullets — and its impact is often just as destabilizing.

## Economic Warfare: Sanctions and Supply Chains

### Sanctions as Strategic Bombs

Economic sanctions are the new siege weapons. Instead of invading a country, powerful nations now isolate them financially:

- U.S. sanctions on Iran have crippled its economy but emboldened its resistance.
- Sanctions on Russia post-Ukraine invasion triggered a shift in global oil, gas, and currency dynamics.
- China faces tech and chip restrictions from the West, while it leverages its rare earth dominance.

## Supply Chain Disruption

Global conflicts increasingly target supply chains — not just militarily, but economically.

- The Ukraine war disrupted global grain and fertilizer supply.
- The Red Sea and Suez Canal have become flashpoints, affecting trade from Asia to Europe.
- Semiconductor wars between China and the U.S. reflect a high-tech economic battle with global consequences.

## Psychological Warfare: Winning Hearts, Breaking Minds

Modern states use soft power, influence operations, memes, and psychological ops (psy-ops) to

## WHAT IS CYBERWARFARE?

- Arctic militarization is rising as ice melts and new sea routes open.
- Droughts, floods, and famines are creating climate refugees, leading to border conflicts and nationalist backlash.

### Many Shades of Modern War:

War today is no longer red with blood alone — it is green with cyber code, blue with data, black with propaganda, grey with blurred morality, and increasingly invisible. The changing colour of war reflects not only how we fight, but who fights, where, and for what.

destabilize adversaries. Emotional manipulation, fear-mongering, and false flag operations are now used to fracture public opinion, incite riots, or sow dissent.

### Tools of psychological war include:

- Troll farms
- Fake news factories
- Cultural influence through media, cinema, and sports

### Climate and Environment as War Catalysts

Climate change is increasingly being viewed as both a driver and consequence of war:

- Water scarcity is fueling tension in regions like the Indus Basin (India-Pakistan) and the Nile (Egypt-Ethiopia).



### In this transformed battlespace:

- The battlefield is everywhere — your phone, your newsfeed, your bank account.
- The enemy is anyone — a state, a group, an algorithm, or an idea.
- The weapon is anything — a missile, a meme, a virus, or a supply chain glitch.

To understand war today is to understand not just military might, but narrative power, digital sovereignty, technological supremacy, and global interdependence.

As the world steps deeper into this multidimensional battlefield, the greatest weapon of all may be wisdom — the ability to distinguish truth from illusion, defense from aggression, and resistance from recklessness.

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