

Celebrating 20 Years of PreSense

**The Journey of
SANSAD RATNAS 2025**

Exclusive interviews with Members of Parliament



**Prime Point Srinivasan
Priyadharshni Rahul**

Prime Point Foundation

**Sansad Ratna MPs 2024 with Hon'ble President of India
Feb 17, 2024**



**Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi
tweeted appreciating all the Sansad Ratna
Awardees 2023 - Feb 22, 2023**

← **Tweet**



Narendra Modi 

@narendramodi

🇮🇳 India government official

...

Congratulations to the MP colleagues who will be conferred the Sansad Ratna Awards. May they keep enriching parliamentary proceedings with their rich insights.



Pralhad Joshi  @JoshiPralhad · 19h

Congratulations to the eminent Parliamentarians on being conferred upon Sansad Ratna Awards for 2023.

13 MPs, 2 Parliamentary Committees and 1 Lifetime Achievement honour will be awarded during the 13th edition of these awards.



सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

MESSAGE

It is indeed heartening to learn about the 13th edition of Sansad Ratna Awards being held in New Delhi. Greetings and heartiest congratulations to the distinguished Parliamentarians for winning the awards.

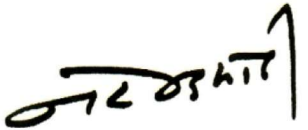
As the Mother of Democracy, India's socio-political systems and practices have an ancient tradition of debate, dialogue, spirit of cooperation, transparency and inclusiveness.

Our democracy, Parliament, Parliamentary systems and procedures and the participation of people's representatives have played a crucial role in furthering the nation's glorious journey.

Discussions and debates in Parliament provide a forum to the government and policymakers to fulfil the people's aspirations and take the country's development journey ahead. It is the responsibility of every Parliamentarian to enhance the quality of debates in the House, as also voice the concerns of the people, particularly the poor and marginalised sections of the society.

This year's edition of Sansad Ratna Awards recognise and honour the outstanding contributions of some of our eminent Parliamentarians. I am sure that the Awards will inspire every Member to further enrich Parliamentary proceedings through their vision and wisdom.

Best wishes to everyone associated with Sansad Ratna Awards Committee for their future endeavours.



(Narendra Modi)

New Delhi
फाल्गुन 05, शक संवत् 1944
24th February, 2023

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Celebrating 20 Years of PreSense

**The Journey of
SANSAD RATNAS 2025**

Exclusive interviews with Members of Parliament



**Prime Point Srinivasan
Priyadharshni Rahul**

Prime Point Foundation

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Publishing date July 2025

Copyright © With the publishers – any part of this book can be reproduced only with prior information to the publishers and with reference to them.

ISBBN 978-93-91803-99-5

Pages 188

Price Free distribution

Publisher Prime Point Foundation, 14, Vasan Street, T Nagar, Chennai 60005

Printer Adyar Students Xerox P Limited, Triplicane, Chennai 600005

WWebsites www.primepointfoundation.org
www.corpezine.com
editor@corpezine.com

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	5
Foreword From Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam For The PreSense100	6
Dedication	7
Authors Profile	8
Prime Point Foundation: 25 Years of Empowering India's Youth	9
Chief Guests at Sansad Ratna Award Ceremonies	11
Sansad Ratna Awards 2010 – 21	13
Sansad Ratna Awards 2022-2024	14
Author's Note	15
Publisher's Note	17
<i>Journey of Sansad Ratnas 2025</i>	19
Bhartruhari Mahtab: Parliament's Man of the Match	21
N K Premachandran - King of Parliamentary Interventions	30
Supriya Sule: A Legacy of Service and Authentic Leadership in Indian Politics	43
Shrirang Appa Barne: Championing Change From Grassroots Up	54
Dr Channi's Lifelong Learning: A Former CM's Unstoppable Academic Quest	61
P. P. Chaudhary – From Farmer's Furrows to Parliament	71

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Bidyut Baran Mahato: A Champion of People's Rights and Development in Jharkhand	79
Arvind Sawant: From Trade Union Leader to Parliamentary Stalwart	93
Ravi Kishan: From Silver Screen to Sansad	104
CN Annadurai: Champion of the Downtrodden and Voice of Tiruvannamalai	113
Dilip Saikia: From RSS Shakha to Sansad Ratna	125
Praveen Patel: From a Village Volunteer to Parliamentary Excellence Introduction	131
Naresh Mhaske: From Slum to Sansad Ratna in Maiden Term	142
Smita Uday Wagh: Grassroots Grit, National Vision	148
Varsha Eknath Gaikwad: From Dharavi's Streets to Parliament's Corridors	159
Medha Kulkarni: Champion of Women's Empowerment and Cultural Heritage	170
Madan Rathore – Champion of Rural Rajasthan in Parliament	181
<i>Our Publications</i>	<i>187</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>188</i>

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Introduction

Foreword From Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam For The PreSense100

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
Former President of India



10, Rajaji Marg
New Delhi-110011

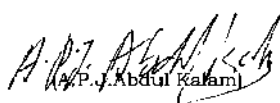
FOREWORD

I am very happy to know that the PreSense monthly ezine published by Prime Point Foundation is bringing out a book based on some of the unique articles, interviews and events published in its editions so far since from March 2006. The 100 issues of the publication have gone through an eventful journey, focusing on knowledge capture and important knowledge dissemination. I recollect my direct association with PreSense in July 2008, when I launched the cartoon character, 'Prince', created exclusively for PreSense.

I see PreSense continuing in its journey under the mentorship of Prime Point Srinivasan, maintaining its status as a must-read ezine, in the fast moving and evolving world of communication, knowledge and connectivity.

I congratulate the Editorial Team of PreSense for bringing out the 100th Edition as a Collector's Digest.

28th May 2015


A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
C

Dedication



*To **Lord Sri Krishna**, the Almighty, my eternal guide and strength. Like the flute that sings only through His touch, this book flows through His divine will. May it serve as an offering at His feet and illuminate minds with wisdom and purpose.*

 **Jai Shri Krishna!** 

Authors Profile

Prime Point Srinivasan



K. Srinivasan (74), popularly known as Prime Point Srinivasan, is a former banker and Founder-Chairman of Prime Point Foundation. He is the Publisher and Managing Editor of PreSense, India's oldest eMagazine, operated by volunteers for positive journalism without commercial motive on the suggestion of Dr Abdul Kalam. He founded the Digital Journalists Association of India, Next Gen Political Leaders, Sansad Ratna Awards, and the Education Loan Task Force. A prolific writer, he has authored several books and published over 50 titles in digital and print formats.

Priyadharshni Rahul



Priyadharshni Rahul, Supreme Court Advocate with dual degrees in Political Science and Law plus a Master's in Psychology, Editor of PreSense and President of Prime Point Foundation, Digital Journalists Association of India, and Next Gen Political Leaders. A distinguished achiever from childhood—Duke of Edinburgh Award, President's Award, Prime Minister's Award for leading Tamil Nadu NCC at Republic Day 2005, and India's Youth Ambassador to UK—she has authored six books and received multiple recognitions, including the Dr Abdul Kalam Award of Excellence. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Indian Parliamentary democracy.

Prime Point Foundation: 25 Years of Empowering India's Youth



**PRIME POINT
Foundation**

Since 1999, Prime Point Foundation has been helping young Indians become better leaders and communicators. Founded by Shri K Srinivasan, a former banker turned digital journalist, this non-profit organisation has grown into one of India's most respected youth development platforms.

What We Do

The Foundation runs five key programmes that make a real difference:

eMagazine PreSense - Started in 2006 following Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's suggestion, this digital magazine promotes positive journalism. With 220 editions published til June 2025 and recognition from India Book of Records, it includes the popular cartoon character Prince, which Dr Kalam himself launched in 2008.

Sansad Ratna Awards - Since 2010, these prestigious awards honour India's best-performing MPs and Parliamentary Committees. Dr Kalam inaugurated the first ceremony, and over 15 years, 143 Awards have been presented. The India Book of Records acknowledges this as the largest parliamentary award programme run by civil society.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Next Gen Political Leaders - This programme trains young people who want to enter politics, connecting them with experienced Ministers and MPs through workshops and mentoring sessions.

Education Loan Task Force - Helping students and families understand education loans since 2010. The team has answered over 30,000 questions and helped resolve 5,000 serious complaints with banks.

Digital Journalists Association of India - Training journalists to adapt to the digital age, including AI through workshops and seminars with industry experts.

All programmes are run by passionate volunteers and focus entirely on helping young people succeed. Prime Point Foundation proves that dedicated efforts can create lasting change in Indian democracy and society.

Chief Guests at Sansad Ratna Award Ceremonies

At Chennai

15th Lok Sabha Awards

- 2010 Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India
Shri T S Krishnamurthy and Shri N Gopalaswamy
(both former Chief Election Commissioners of India)
- 2011 Shri Era Chezian, veteran Parliamentarian
Shri N Vittal, former Chief Vigilance Commissioner of India
- 2012 Shri Gopalakrishna Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal
- 2013 Dr K Rosaiah, Governor of Tamil Nadu
- 2014 Shri N Gopalaswamy, former Chief Election Commissioner of India

16th Lok Sabha Awards

- 2015 Dr Justice AR Lakshmanan, Retired Judge, Supreme Court of India
- 2016 Dr C Rangarajan,
(Former Governor, RBI, and Former Governor of Andhra Pradesh)
- 2017 Justice P Sathasivam, Governor of Kerala, and
Former Chief Justice of India
- 2018 Shri M K Narayanan, former Governor of West Bengal
- 2019 Shri Bhanwarilal Purohit, Governor of Tamil Nadu

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

At Delhi

17th Lok Sabha Awards

- 2021 Shri Sunil Arora, Chief Election Commissioner of India
Justice Shri A.K. Patnaik, Retd. Judge, Supreme Court of India
- 2022 Shri Sushil Chandra, Chief Election Commissioner of India
- 2023 Shri Bandaru Dattatreya, Governor of Haryana
- 2024 Shri Hansraj Ahir (Chairman, NCBC),
Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan (Governor, Telangana and LG Puducherry),
Ajay Mishra (MoS, Home Affairs) and
Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul (Retd. Judge, Supreme Court of India)

18th Lok Sabha Awards

- 2025 Shri Kiren Rijiju (Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs)
Shri Hansraj Ahir (Chairman, NCBC)
Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, (Union Minister of State I/C, Law & Justice and Parliamentary Affairs)

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Sansad Ratna Awards 2010 – 21



2010



2011



2012



2013



2014



2015



2016



2017



2018



2019



2021

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Sansad Ratna Awards 2022-2024



2022



2023



2024

Author's Note

It is with immense gratitude and humility that I present *The Journey of Sansad Ratnas* — a tribute to the exemplary parliamentarians of India who have been honoured with the Sansad Ratna Awards 2025. This work is not merely a documentation of parliamentary statistics; it is a chronicle of perseverance, vision, and deep-rooted public service by some of the finest representatives of our democracy.

What makes this book truly special is the privilege I had in personally reaching out to each of the award-winning Members of Parliament. These were not mere interviews — they were enlightening conversations that offered me rare insights into the minds and missions of India's most respected lawmakers. Each interaction was a window into their steadfast commitment to their constituents, their party ideals, and most importantly, the Indian Constitution.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Shri Prime Point Srinivasan — the founder of the Sansad Ratna Awards and the guiding light behind this book. His mentorship, trust, and unwavering encouragement have been instrumental throughout this journey. His tireless efforts over the years have made the Sansad Ratna Awards a symbol of parliamentary integrity and performance, respected across political lines.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

I am grateful to Shri Ramesh Sundaram, a veteran in Editing and the Joint Managing Editor of PreSense, for editing and proofreading support. I also acknowledge the support given by all the Private Secretaries of all MPs for excellent coordination and timely submission of responses.

This book stands on the shoulders of a vision initiated by none other than Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who inspired the concept of recognising outstanding parliamentary performance. I sincerely hope that these pages offer inspiration to every aspiring public servant and deepen the public's faith in our democratic institutions.

To every reader — may the stories within these chapters remind us that leadership grounded in ethics, accessibility, and public accountability is not only possible, but thriving within our Parliament.

Jai Hind.

Priyadharshni Rahul
Editor, PreSense
July 2025

Publisher's Note

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas 2025 is a tribute to India's parliamentary excellence, capturing the inspiring stories of this year's Sansad Ratna Award-winning Members of Parliament. As co-author and publisher, I had the honour of engaging directly with each of these distinguished MPs along with Priyadharshni Rahul, spanning the full political spectrum and regions of our vast nation.

Despite their diverse ideologies and constituencies, what unites them is a deep-rooted commitment to public service. A common thread through their stories is their formative training in grassroots politics — many began as panchayat members, municipal councillors, or leaders in student movements. This grounding gave them a real-world understanding of governance and a passion for translating policy into people-centric outcomes.

Mentorship emerged as another defining factor. Each MP credited family elders, party veterans, or community leaders for shaping their values and instilling in them resilience, humility, and a strong moral compass — virtues essential for ethical leadership.

These parliamentarians distinguish themselves through accessibility and engagement. Whether through regular constituency visits or grassroots outreach, they remain deeply connected to the people they serve. Public service,

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

for them, is not ceremonial but lived, anchored in listening, empathy, and action.

Above all, they share a singular focus on welfare and inclusion. Their work in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and social justice reflects a desire to uplift the marginalised and empower every citizen. Their contributions reaffirm that principled, people-first leadership can indeed transform lives.

This book is more than a chronicle; it is a celebration of the democratic spirit and a guide for aspiring public leaders. May the journeys of these Sansad Ratnas inspire a new generation to serve India with purpose and integrity.

Prime Point Srinivasan

Publisher and Managing Editor, PreSense

July 2025

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Journey of Sansad Ratnas 2025

Bhagavad Gita 3.21

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते॥

Yad yad ācarati śhreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah

Sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate

English Translation & Meaning

"Whatever actions a great person performs, common people follow. Whatever standards they set, the world pursues."

Meaning:

This Sloka emphasises that leaders and people in positions of authority set examples for others. Their actions, values, and standards become the benchmarks for society. For parliamentarians, this underscores the immense responsibility to govern ethically and righteously, as their conduct shapes the nation's character and future.

Bhartruhari Mahtab: Parliament's Man of the Match



Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, a seven-term Member of Parliament representing Cuttack, is respected across party lines for his quiet diligence and sharp parliamentary craft. Currently chairing the influential Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, he blends deep subject knowledge with an instinct for consensus. In 2025, he clinched the coveted Sansad Ratna Award, both for his exemplary individual record in debates, questions, and private members' bills, and for the stellar output of the committee

under his stewardship, earning the sobriquet “Man of the Match.” In this exclusive conversation with Prime Point Srinivasan and Priyadharshni Rahul, Mahtab reflects on his remarkable journey and guiding principles today. Excrpts:

You come from a distinguished lineage, with your father, Dr Harekrushna Mahtab, not only being Odisha’s first Chief Minister but also a Member of the Constituent Assembly and a renowned freedom fighter. How did your upbringing and your father’s values shape your entry into politics and your approach to public service?



I have seen my father and mother in public life since childhood. They were, of course, elected representatives, yet they devoted much more of their time to uplifting the people at large, particularly by engaging them in khadi work. As ardent followers of Gandhiji, they fought against casteism, so in our home, no caste was barred from entering or sharing a meal with us.

I watched both my father and mother dedicating all their time to serving the public: helping people, presenting their grievances to the authorities, and striving to create an atmosphere wherein everyone could live amicably. Their

joy was evident whenever they witnessed economic progress in the areas where they had worked.

My father served two terms as Chief Minister and later as a Union Minister, but he was also a legislator, both in government and in opposition. He spent the last decade of his life writing. The most striking aspect of his life was that he was both an accomplished man of letters and a popular politician — such people are rare today.

What were the most significant lessons or principles you imbibed from your early years in Cuttack and Agarpada, and how did those experiences influence your decision to pursue a career in public life?

In my village, Agarpada, I had the good fortune to mingle with farmers. They relied solely on agriculture, yet remained content. Our house stood near our ancestral temple, where cultural and religious festivals were celebrated throughout the year; participating in these events strengthened my roots.

Moving to Cuttack was a completely different experience. I aspired to work for our newspaper, *The Prajatantra*. After finishing my higher studies, I interned for 30 months as an assistant to my father and was then asked to move to Cuttack to edit the English weekly, *The Eastern Times*. Eventually, I joined *The Prajatantra*. Although I had led a

disciplined life, it was during my work at these two newspapers that I learned to express myself in writing.

I was often invited to address meetings and soon began giving speeches. I enjoyed this life because it enriched me every day. Since Cuttack is considered the cultural capital of Odisha, I had the privilege of meeting nearly everyone of good stature and consequence in the State.

Having served as a Member of Parliament for seven consecutive terms, what were some of the most formidable challenges you faced — political, personal, administrative, or otherwise —and how did you navigate them?

The most formidable challenge as an MP is getting things done within a set timeframe. Elected members are expected to voice their constituents' concerns in Parliament, but in our country, they must also act as quasi-executives — people expect them to *do* things. To accomplish that, one needs the support of the administration.

This was sometimes difficult, yet I managed to deliver results in my constituency because I rarely quarrelled with anyone, including opponents. That attitude helped me greatly. Moreover, by maintaining a positive outlook, one can always earn friends.

You have consistently been recognised as a top performer in the 16th, 17th, and 18th Lok Sabha, and now as the recipient of the Sansad Ratna Award 2025 for both individual performance and your role as Chairman of the Finance Committee. What drives your continued commitment to parliamentary debates, legislative scrutiny, and committee work?

I am deeply indebted to my constituents, who have repeatedly placed their faith in me. When I first contested the Cuttack parliamentary seat in the 1996 by-election, I lost — even though the legendary leader, the late Biju Patnaik, campaigned for me. But since his demise in 1997, I have been elected in every parliamentary election from 1998 onward. People have faith in me because, perhaps, they see that I do exactly what they expect. I try not to raise their expectations unduly but to deliver on what I have promised.

I use every parliamentary instrument available — matters of urgent public importance, calling-attentions, half-hour discussions, Rule 377, the Question Hour — and I make it a point to present my views during debates. Delhi offers many distractions, yet I spend more time in the library than gossiping in the lobby or canteen. That does not mean I avoid those places entirely, but I devote myself first to the Parliament, listening to other viewpoints during debates.

I have also been fortunate to chair the prestigious Finance

Committee. It is challenging, no doubt, yet with solid support from all quarters and my colleagues, I have performed well, which drew your attention.

What advice would you offer to the young Indians who aspire to enter politics today, especially regarding the values, skills, and mindset needed to succeed and serve effectively?

I am not seasoned enough to dispense *advice* per se, but I would say this: to succeed in politics, you must be a good communicator and also a good listener at the same time. Write down your ideas so that you never utter something you may regret later. And remember — never let anger overpower your emotions.

How do you envision the future of Odisha and India? What are your key priorities for your home State and the nation as a whole, particularly in the realms of economic growth, social justice, and cultural preservation?

I dream of an Odisha that is prosperous and healthy. Our land had a glorious past, with flourishing trade and commerce, and it served as a centre of academic activity for centuries. Skilled people from here travelled across South and Southeast Asia, built powerful empires, and erected magnificent temples.

Since independence, new “temples” have emerged: the Hirakud Dam, Rourkela Steel Plant, NALCO, and more. Today, Kalinga Nagar has become the nation’s steel hub, aluminium production has multiplied, and Paradeep Port is India’s largest revenue-earning port. An expanding rail network now connects interior regions, allowing value addition to the extracted minerals.

Odisha is also advancing in software technology, with a large community of engineers in the field. Bhubaneswar and Cuttack attract students from far and wide to their educational campuses. People note that crime is relatively low here; our culture of friendliness is another advantage. Despite rapid growth, our social fabric remains intact under the watchful eye of Lord Jagannath, the State’s presiding deity. I firmly believe Odisha is destined to rise.

Could you share some of the most impactful initiatives or unique projects you have championed for the people of Cuttack, and how you ensure your constituency’s voice is heard at the national level?

A detailed answer would be lengthy, but since my first term, I have worked to improve Cuttack’s human-development index: providing drinking water, classrooms, toilets for girls, roads, irrigation, better healthcare, and sports infrastructure also.

As the editor of *Prajatantra*, a legacy publication founded by your father, how do you balance the roles of journalist and parliamentarian? What role do you believe responsible journalism should play in strengthening democracy, especially in today's rapidly changing media landscape?

I have found a perfect balance between being a journalist-editor and a parliamentarian. Responsible journalism has allowed me to express myself fully as a legislator. A journalist hears various viewpoints yet must form an informed opinion; as a parliamentarian, it is then easier to shape my stance in line with my party. Ultimately, democracy is about expressing one's views persuasively and influencing others.

What are your thoughts on the current state of journalism in India? What steps do you believe are necessary to restore and uphold ethical values in the media?

In our rapidly changing world, journalism is no longer confined to print or television. The internet has revolutionised the entire spectrum: we now have print, electronic, and social media. Traditionally, the publisher was accountable for content; in social media, however, anyone can post anything, while the platform often evades responsibility. This freedom has led to a decline in ethical standards.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Therefore, we must be vigilant regarding the content circulated across platforms, and platform owners should be held accountable.

Looking back on your decades of service, what do you consider your most enduring legacy? How would you like to be remembered by your constituents, colleagues, and the next generation of leaders?

Legacy is determined by the people, not by the individual. As for how I wish to be remembered — well, I have not yet reached the twilight of my career, so why dwell on that now? Just wish me good luck.

Jai Hind

N K Premachandran - King of Parliamentary Interventions



N K Premachandran stands as one of India's most distinguished parliamentarians, representing Kollam constituency in Kerala, five term in Lok Sabha and one term in Rajya Sabha. A stalwart of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), he has carved a unique niche in Indian politics through his exceptional parliamentary interventions and unwavering commitment to legislative excellence. Currently serving as the central secretariat member of RSP, Premachandran's political journey began in his student days with the Progressive Students Union. His ministerial experience as Kerala's Water Resources Minister,

combined with his consistent recognition through the prestigious Sansad Ratna Awards for outstanding parliamentary performance, underscores his dedication to public service. Known for his technical prowess in legislative matters and his ability to effect meaningful change through parliamentary procedures, he has become a respected voice across party lines, earning accolades even from political opponents for his constructive contributions to India's democratic discourse. Excerpts:

You began your political career through the student wing of the Revolutionary Socialist Party and rose through the ranks of local governance before entering state and national politics. What inspired you to join politics, and who were your early mentors or influences during those formative years?



My political journey commenced during my student days when I joined the Progressive Students Union (PSU) , the student wing of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP). I was deeply influenced by leftist ideology from my childhood, harbouring a pro-poor and socialistic mindset. Initially, I started as an activist with the Students Federation of India (SFI), but subsequently shifted to PSU due to ideological differences.

The inspiration came naturally from my conviction in principles of equality and justice. I believed that the downtrodden and marginalised sections of society needed to be uplifted, which aligned perfectly with Marxist-Leninist ideology. Kollam district, where I spent my college years, had a strong base of the Revolutionary Socialist Party with veteran leaders like Comrade N Sreekantan Nair, who were truly inspiring figures. Their leadership and the party's strong presence in the region naturally drew me towards RSP. I progressed from State Secretary to State President of the Progressive Students Union, and subsequently became the national President and general secretary of Revolutionary Youth Front (RYF) and further involved with various trade unions including those of titanium, cashew workers, and plantation workers, eventually rising to become the Central Secretariat member of RSP.

What drew you to the ideology of socialism and communism, and why did you choose to align yourself with the Revolutionary Socialist Party in a political landscape dominated by larger parties?

The attraction towards socialism stems from fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism - the concept of equality, justice, and the vision of a classless society. From my student days onwards, I was closely associated with ideals of equity and justice, believing that these principles must be provided to all sections of society.

Though there were larger parties in the political landscape, the Revolutionary Socialist Party's strong base in Kollam and the presence of veteran leaders created a compelling environment. The party's commitment to socialistic principles, combined with its focus on revolutionary change while maintaining democratic values, resonated with my personal convictions. The RSP's approach to addressing the concerns of the working class and marginalised communities through both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary means aligned perfectly with my vision of how politics should serve the people.

You have served as a Member of Lok Sabha five times, one time in Rajya Sabha and as the Minister for Water Resources in Kerala. What do you consider your most significant contributions to Kerala and the nation during your tenure in these roles?

As Minister for Water Resources in Kerala, I introduced transformative changes in the water sector by formulating a comprehensive, scientific water policy after two years of extensive consultation with stakeholders. This landmark policy addressed water resources management, and environmental concerns comprehensively. It became a model policy that was subsequently adopted by the Government of India in the national water policy.

My interventions in inter-state water disputes, particularly the Mullaperiyar issue between Kerala and Tamil Nadu,

were well appreciated. I also established a consultancy wing within the Kerala Water Authority - not a private consultancy, but an internal mechanism that has become instrumental in executing most water sector projects, especially in the drinking water sector.

During my tenure, a prominent Malayalam news channel, Asianet, conducted a public survey where I was elected as the best minister in the LDF government led by Comrade V S Achuthandan. This recognition from the public validated the effectiveness of our water sector reforms.

Could you highlight a few initiatives that you believe have had a lasting impact on your constituency of Kollam, as well as on national policy, especially in areas such as water resources, employment, or social welfare?

In my long years of parliamentary practice, I take pride in participating meaningfully in almost all legislations. One of my most significant achievements was moving a Private Member's Resolution on the Employees' Pension Scheme in the 16th Lok Sabha. This resolution generated unprecedented interest - it was discussed for nine days with 28 Members of Parliament participating, and the then Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya responded positively to most of the demands placed in the resolution.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

The remarkable outcome was that the Labour Ministry constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Additional Labour Secretary, and in an unprecedented move, the government order specifically stated that before finalising recommendations, the committee must consult N K Premachandran, the MP who moved the resolution. This recognition in a government order, that too for a Member in the opposition, was extraordinary. The initiative benefited over 85 lakh pensioners through minimum pension increases and various other improvements.

Another significant intervention was regarding the Railway Compensation Bill, where the proposed legislation would have denied compensation to passengers standing on doorsteps during accidents. Through logical argument - pointing out that passengers inside compartments could only exit through doorsteps in emergencies - I convinced the entire House, forcing the government to withdraw the bill. This single intervention saved the existing compensation framework for railway passengers.

Why do you believe it is important for more youngsters, particularly women, to enter politics today? What unique perspectives or strengths do you think they bring to public life?

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the visionary former President and mentor of the Prime Point Foundation, first highlighted India's demographic dividend, noting that over 62% of our

population is in the adolescent or youth age group. He emphasised that empowering this young population could make India the strongest nation in the world.

The new generation possesses the aspirations and vision necessary for the country's future. They should become policymakers and lawmakers since the future belongs to them. Unfortunately, well-educated youth are withdrawing from politics, and women's participation remains insufficient.

The transformation in women's political participation following the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments illustrates this potential. Initially, it was difficult to find women candidates for the 33% reservation in panchayats. Now, with 50% reservation in Kerala, there's a queue of women contestants. This demonstrates how constitutional provisions can drive empowerment.

Women and youth bring fresh perspectives, creative energy, and modern approaches to governance. The youth force represents the creative force of our nation, and their active participation in politics is essential for realising India's full potential.

What advice would you offer to young political aspirants, especially women, who wish to make a meaningful difference in society through public service?

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

My primary advice is to enter politics with genuine commitment to public service rather than personal gain. Political aspirants must develop a deep understanding of constitutional principles, legislative processes, and the needs of their constituents. They should be prepared to work at the grassroots level, understanding ground realities before aspiring for higher positions.

For women particularly, the constitutional framework now provides adequate protection and opportunities. The reservation system in local governance has proven that when given opportunities, women excel in leadership roles. They must leverage these constitutional provisions while building their capabilities through education and practical experience.

Young aspirants should also embrace technology and modern communication methods while maintaining the fundamental values of public service. They must be prepared for challenges, including resource constraints and ideological opposition, but should never compromise on their principles while remaining flexible in their approach to problem-solving.

You have faced various challenges throughout your political journey, from resource constraints to ideological opposition. What have been the most significant obstacles, and how have you managed to

overcome them while maintaining your principles and performance?

Resource constraints represent one of the most significant challenges. As a Member of Parliament, I maintain offices in both Delhi and my constituency, employ multiple staff members, and travel approximately 200-300 kilometres daily in my constituency. The current allowances and facilities provided by Parliament are inadequate to meet these operational requirements.

My suggestion is that instead of increasing salaries, Parliament should provide comprehensive facilities including research teams, human resources, and modern technological support. Kerala's approach is exemplary - the state government provides each MP with a Class One officer as personal assistant, regardless of party affiliation, along with driver facilities.

The transition to a paperless Parliament presents particular challenges for members of my generation who are accustomed to preparing notes manually, underlining documents, and making physical annotations. The digital transformation requires substantial adaptation, and Parliament must provide adequate technological support and training.

Despite these challenges, I've maintained my performance through personal dedication and by utilising available

resources effectively. My wife's salary and our property investments help subsidise parliamentary work, though this shouldn't be necessary in an ideal system.

How do you envision the future of Kerala and the nation? What are your key priorities for development, social justice, and democratic values in the coming years?

As the world's largest democracy, India's future is extremely prosperous, provided we maintain unity. Unfortunately, divisive politics based on caste and religion currently impedes our progress and growth. All citizens must develop a sense of being Indians first, transcending these divisions.

For Kerala, despite our social development indicators, economic growth hasn't matched our potential due to various political and administrative challenges. However, compared to other states, Kerala's approach to inclusive development provides a model worth emulating.

My priorities include strengthening democratic institutions, ensuring social justice through constitutional means, and promoting inclusive development that benefits all sections of society. The focus should be on education, healthcare, employment generation, and sustainable development while preserving our democratic values and secular fabric.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Unity in diversity must be celebrated and preserved, as this represents India's greatest strength in the global community.

You have been repeatedly honoured with the Sansad Ratna Award for your outstanding and consistent parliamentary performance. How do these recognitions influence your work, and what impact do they have on your image among your constituents and the wider public?

I'm extremely proud and grateful to the Prime Point Foundation and the award committee. The Sansad Ratna Award has become tremendously popular in Kerala, with people considering it equivalent to recognition by Parliament itself. When my work receives recognition from a civil society organisation mentored by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, it carries immense weight and credibility.

These awards significantly impact elections and public perception. Just before the last election, receiving the Sansad Maha Ratna award created substantial momentum among voters, demonstrating that their Member of

Parliament's work was being recognised nationally. This recognition has expanded beyond Kerala - I now receive acknowledgement throughout the country.

The awards motivate me to maintain high standards of parliamentary performance while providing public validation

for the technical and detailed work that often goes unnoticed. They serve as bridges between parliamentary work and public understanding, helping constituents appreciate the complexity and importance of legislative contributions.

You are renowned for your interventions and amendments in Parliament, even when they are not accepted by the government. What motivates you to persist with these efforts, and how do you see the role of constructive dissent and debate in strengthening Indian democracy?

Parliamentary work has become my passion - moving amendments, raising technical points, presenting adjournment motions, and participating in debates energises me regardless of government acceptance or rejection. My responsibility is to perform my duty conscientiously; whether the government accepts or rejects proposals depends on their judgment.

Even ministers from different parties have openly acknowledged in Parliament that while they may not accept my amendments, they appreciate my efforts in effectively participating in legislative processes. Even Prime Ministers have recognised my contributions in Parliamentary Party meetings.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

I moved thousands of amendments across various bills, and interestingly, many amendments initially rejected are later incorporated by the government in subsequent legislation. This demonstrates the value of persistent, principled opposition and constructive suggestions.

Parliamentary interventions strengthen democracy by ensuring thorough scrutiny of legislation, raising important technical issues, and compelling governments to defend their positions logically. This process ultimately leads to better laws and more accountable governance.

My satisfaction comes from fulfilling my parliamentary duties diligently. The recognition I receive - both from the public and across the political spectrum - validates that consistent, principled parliamentary work contributes meaningfully to India's democratic discourse and legislative quality.

Supriya Sule: A Legacy of Service and Authentic Leadership in Indian Politics



In this exclusive interview for the special Sansad Ratna edition of eMagazine PreSense, we engage with Smt. Supriya Sule, a distinguished Member of Parliament from Maharashtra's Baramati constituency. As the Working President of the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and daughter of veteran politician Sharad Pawar, she has carved her remarkable path in Indian politics. A recipient of the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award for both the 16th and 17th Lok Sabha and a Special Award for consistent performance in the 18th Lok Sabha, Smt. Sule exemplifies parliamentary excellence whilst championing causes close to her heart, particularly women's empowerment and sustainable development.

Could you share some memories from your early days in Pune and how your upbringing, particularly as the daughter of Sharad Pawar, influenced your values and initial interests outside politics?



I was raised primarily in Mumbai. My upbringing was simple and grounded — we lived like any other family. I took the school bus, received no special treatment whatsoever, and my father, if he were dropping me off at school, would stop at a distance from where I walked to school. Neither my friends nor teachers treated me differently, which I deeply appreciate in retrospect. Mumbai, with its egalitarian spirit, provided a truly humbling experience that fundamentally shaped my character and worldview.

My mother played a pivotal role in my early development, consistently encouraging me to explore diverse extracurricular activities. This exposure to various disciplines instilled in me a profound curiosity about the world and an appreciation for different forms of expression — qualities that continue to enrich my approach to public service today. The values of simplicity, hard work, and treating everyone with equal respect were ingrained in me from childhood, and these principles guide my political journey even now.

Before entering active politics, you spent time abroad studying water pollution and lived in various countries. How did these international experiences shape your worldview and later approach to public service in India?

My time in Singapore, Jakarta, and the United States was transformative in multiple ways. These experiences reinforced my belief that India's values are not only relevant but also deeply respected worldwide. Living abroad gave me a broader perspective on governance, policy implementation, and the interconnectedness of global challenges that we face in the 21st century.

My studies in water pollution were particularly enlightening, as they helped me understand the wider ecological impact of every policy-making decision. This scientific background has proven invaluable in my parliamentary work, enabling me to approach environmental and developmental issues with a more comprehensive understanding of their long-term consequences. It taught me that sustainable development requires us to consider the environmental implications of every policy initiative we undertake. The rigorous scientific training also instilled in me the importance of evidence-based decision-making, which I carry into my political work even today.

You have been known for your simple lifestyle and artistic interests, as well as your early involvement in sports. How did these passions contribute to building the perseverance and work ethic that define your political journey?

Sports have been integral to my development, both personally and professionally. My grandfather represented India in cricket, which instilled in me an early appreciation for the values that sports embody. Through athletics, I learned the importance of consistency, strategic planning, discipline, and perhaps most crucially, the ability to move forward without dwelling on setbacks. Sports also taught me invaluable lessons about teamwork and ethical leadership — principles that are fundamental to effective governance.

These principles translate directly into political work, where collaboration, integrity, and resilience are absolutely essential. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including mental fitness, has been crucial for sustaining the demanding pace of public service. The discipline and perseverance required in sports have become foundational elements of my approach to addressing complex political and social

challenges. Just as in sports, politics requires you to stay focused on long-term goals whilst managing immediate pressures and setbacks with grace and determination.

What inspired you to transition from a career in science and social activism to electoral politics in 2006? Was there a defining moment or a mentor who guided this decision?

My journey into politics was organic, evolving naturally from my work in the educational sector and with underprivileged communities. Through regular engagement with NGO work and organisations like the Yashwantrao Chavan Centre, I began to realise the immense scope of work that needed to be done at the grassroots level. The challenges were vast, and I felt a growing sense of responsibility to contribute meaningfully to addressing them.

Whilst working directly with communities, I recognised that sustainable change often requires systemic intervention — something that's more effectively achieved through policy-making and legislative processes. When the opportunity arose to contest for the Rajya Sabha through the Nationalist Congress Party, I saw it as a chance to add strength to policy formulation and ensure more impactful work. The platform allowed me to scale my efforts and contribute to meaningful change at a broader level, reaching more people and addressing systemic issues that individual activism alone couldn't tackle effectively.

As someone who succeeded your father in Baramati and has maintained the family's influence, how have you balanced legacy with your own vision and

leadership style as a senior leader and Working President of the NCP?

Working under my father's guidance has been an incredible learning experience that continues to shape my political approach. He leads by example: speaking thoughtfully rather than frequently, and encouraging everyone to develop their own authentic leadership style. Even today, I continue to learn from his approach and wisdom, which emphasises patience, strategic thinking, and genuine commitment to public service.

The key to balancing legacy with personal vision lies in understanding that we're all guided by the core values and ideology of the party. These fundamental principles provide the framework within which we can each contribute our unique perspectives and strengths. We build and innovate upon the robust foundation of the party whilst staying true to our commitment to social justice and inclusive development in line with constitutional values. My approach has been to respect the legacy whilst bringing my own experiences, particularly my scientific background and international exposure, to bear on contemporary challenges.

Among your many initiatives, your campaign against female foeticide and the founding of the Rashtravadi Yuvati Congress stand out. What motivated you to

focus on these issues, and as a result, what impact have you witnessed?

When I returned to India and immersed myself in social development work, I observed a troubling paradox. Whilst there had been substantial progress in women's education, numerous social barriers continued to impede true gender equality. This realisation motivated my focus on these critical issues, as I believed that addressing them was fundamental to India's overall development.

The Party had always had the Rashtravadi Yuvak Congress, but we recognised the pressing need to create a dedicated platform for women's voices. On the advice of many colleagues and after extensive consultations, we established the Rashtravadi Yuvati Congress to encourage and promote women's participation in political and social processes. This initiative has been instrumental in strengthening women's representation and providing them with a platform to address issues that directly affect them and their communities.

The impact has been encouraging — we've seen increased women's participation in local governance, greater awareness about gender-based discrimination, and a stronger collective voice advocating for women's rights and empowerment. The campaign against female foeticide has helped raise awareness about this critical issue and contributed to changing mindsets in many communities.

You have consistently utilised MPLAD funds for education, health, rural infrastructure, and women's empowerment. Could you highlight a few projects that have had a transformative effect on your constituency, and how you ensure accountability and community involvement?

One initiative that has had remarkable large-scale impact is the distribution of bicycles to women students. This seemingly simple intervention has profound effects — it provides access to education, builds confidence, and promotes independence. The ripple effects extend beyond individual beneficiaries to entire communities, as educated women contribute significantly to family and community development.

Another transformative project has been our hearing aid distribution programme, conducted through camps across Maharashtra. This initiative has directly improved the quality of life for hundreds of individuals, enabling better communication, educational opportunities, and social integration. The joy on people's faces when they can hear properly again is truly moving and reinforces why such targeted interventions are so important.

Community involvement is central to our approach. We ensure that the local stakeholders participate in project identification, implementation, and monitoring. This

participatory approach not only enhances accountability but also ensures that our initiatives address genuine community needs and have a sustainable impact. Regular feedback sessions and transparent reporting mechanisms help maintain trust and effectiveness in our programmes.

Indian politics presents numerous challenges, from managing party dynamics to addressing diverse social issues. What have been some of the most significant challenges in your career, and how have you navigated them?

Politics, like any field, comes with its inherent challenges. The key to navigating these successfully lies in building strong teams, establishing robust systems, and developing strategic approaches to problem-solving. Every day presents new challenges, but I've learned that most obstacles can be overcome effectively with the right framework and collaborative approach.

One of the most important lessons I've learned is that time is a powerful ally. Patience, combined with persistent effort and strategic thinking, often resolves issues that initially seem insurmountable. Building consensus, maintaining open communication, and staying focused on our core objectives of public service have been crucial in managing both party dynamics and the complex social issues we address. The ability to listen, understand different

perspectives, and find common ground has been essential in my political journey.

As a role model for young political aspirants, especially women, what advice would you offer to youngsters considering politics as a career? How can we encourage greater participation of women and youth in the political process?

My primary advice to young aspirants is to have absolute clarity about their objectives and the purpose behind entering politics. This clarity becomes your compass during challenging times and helps maintain integrity in your decisions. I would strongly advise them to remain committed to their cause, maintain honesty, and understand that the power that comes with politics exists for one purpose only — to serve the people. It is a catalyst for positive change in society. I always maintain that first the country, then the State, then the party, and then family.

To encourage greater participation of women and youth, we need to create more inclusive platforms, provide mentorship opportunities, and demonstrate through our actions that politics can be a noble profession focused on public service. Young people need to see authentic role models who prioritise service over self-interest. We must also work to change the perception of politics and show that it can be a vehicle for meaningful social transformation.

Having received the Sansad Ratna Award for the 16th and 17th Lok Sabha and the Special Award for consistent performance in the 18th Lok Sabha, how does this recognition influence your motivation and sense of responsibility?

I am deeply grateful to the people of the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency for their continued trust in my representation. These awards serve as valuable recognition and feedback that I am fulfilling my duties as a parliamentarian effectively. Such recognition from the Sansad Ratna team is both rewarding and profoundly humbling.

It reinforces my commitment to maintaining a high standard of parliamentary participation and constituency service. More importantly, it reminds me of the responsibility I carry, not just to my constituents, but to the institution of

Parliament itself. These awards motivate me to continue striving for excellence whilst remaining grounded in the values of service and integrity that have guided my political journey from the beginning.

Shrirang Appa Barne: Championing Change From Grassroots Up



Shrirang Appa Barne, the dynamic Lok Sabha Member representing Maval in Maharashtra, has earned widespread acclaim for his unwavering parliamentary diligence and grassroots outreach. A successful builder and agriculturist turned public servant, he bridges urban aspirations with rural realities, championing defence, infrastructure, and tribal development. His stellar record of questions, debates, and Private Members' Bills has secured him multiple Sansad Ratna Awards, culminating in the coveted Sansad Maha Ratna accolade. In this exclusive interview for the special Sansad Ratna edition of eMagazine PreSense, Mr Barne reflects on the influences,

initiatives, and ideals that continue to shape his public journey. Excerpts:

Your early years in Thergaon, Pimpri-Chinchwad, were rooted in a close-knit community and shaped by your family's values. Could you share some experiences or influences from your childhood that later inspired your journey into public service?



My father was always at the forefront of helping others in the village, actively participating in community affairs. My elder brother also served as the Deputy Sarpanch. Observing their commitment to public service deeply inspired me and laid the foundation for my journey into social and political life.

Before entering politics, you established yourself as a successful builder and agriculturist. How did your professional background in construction and agriculture prepare you for the responsibilities and challenges of public office?

From the outset, I worked closely with people at the grassroots. While pursuing a career in construction and real estate, I remained deeply connected to our family's agricultural roots. This dual engagement helped me

understand the needs of both urban and rural populations. Whenever people came to meet me, I gave them my full attention — an approach that fostered a keen sense of responsibility, essential in public service.

You began your political career as a corporator in the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation in 1997 and steadily rose through the ranks. What motivated you to take that first step into local governance, and how did those formative years at the municipal level shape your approach to national politics?

I entered politics in 1997 when I was elected as a corporator. Motivation stemmed from my family's tradition of public service. Prior organisational experience and early interaction with senior political leaders guided me. The lessons and grassroots insights gained during those years have continued to shape my vision and approach in national politics.

Mentorship often plays a pivotal role in political growth. Was there a particular individual or leader who guided or inspired you during your early political journey? What key lessons did you learn from them that continue to influence your work today?

During my early political career, I was mentored by the then local MP, Prof Ramkrishna More, who taught me the value

of public outreach, meaningful dialogue, and treating every individual with genuine respect. At the State level, periodic guidance from former Maharashtra Chief Minister Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh enriched my administrative perspective. The late Hindu Hriday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray ji profoundly influenced me with his ideals of selfless service and organisational strength. I am also inspired by the simplicity and decisive leadership of the current Deputy Chief Minister, Shri Eknath Shinde, whose dedication to the poor remains exemplary.

You have been consistently recognised for your outstanding parliamentary performance, including your high attendance, active participation in questions, debates, and the introduction of several Private Members' Bills. What drives your commitment to such sustained excellence in Parliament?

I have always remained active in our parliamentary democracy — asking questions, introducing Private Members' Bills, and raising issues of public interest. This dedication, evident since my days as a corporator, is fuelled by the trust of my voters and the steadfast support of party workers.

Your tenure as MP for Maval has seen you focus on issues ranging from defence and infrastructure to social justice and rural development. Could you

highlight a few significant initiatives or achievements from your parliamentary career that you believe have made a tangible difference to your constituency or the nation?

My constituency spans parts of Pune and Raigad districts, enabling work across urban, rural, and tribal areas. Key accomplishments include railway and metro projects, extensive road construction, implementation of tribal welfare schemes, electrification of more than 250 villages under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Jyoti Yojana, water-supply projects through the Jal Jeevan Mission, the establishment of passport service centres, and the development of Jawaharlal Nehru Port alongside a new airport. These achievements have positively impacted both my constituency and the nation.

Under the MPLAD scheme, you have implemented various development projects in Maval, particularly in infrastructure, education, and health. Can you share an example of a project funded through MPLADS that has had a lasting impact on the community? What was the process behind identifying and executing such initiatives?

I prioritised extending Central and State education and healthcare schemes to rural areas. Through MPLADS funds, we constructed school buildings and ensured access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation. These

projects addressed fundamental needs and significantly improved the quality of life. Local consultations and on-site assessments guided project selection, while transparent monitoring ensured timely execution.

Politics in India is often fraught with challenges—be it electoral competition, public scrutiny, or administrative hurdles. What have been some of the most significant challenges you have faced in your political career, and how did you overcome them?

Coalition politics in India demand coordination among diverse ideologies. Voter expectations are high, and the social-media age often brings demands to fulfil even non-parliamentary tasks immediately. Remaining constantly accessible and responding swiftly are vital. I have met these challenges with determination, diligence, and a strong sense of duty.

You have authored several books sharing your parliamentary experiences and insights. What message do you hope to convey to young political aspirants — especially women — through your writings and your own example? How do you think more young people, particularly women, can be encouraged to participate in politics?

I have authored five books:

- *Shabdved* (शब्दवेद)

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

- *Samarth Ladhavayya (समर्थ लढवय्या)*
- *Apla Vaibhavshali Maval – The Glory of Maval Lok Sabha (आपला वैभवशाली मावळ – मावळ लोकसभा की महिमा)*
- *Mee Anubhavleli Sansad (मी अनुभवलेली संसद)*
- *Sangharsh Yodha (संघर्ष योद्धा)*

These works chronicle my political journey and aim to inspire educated youth and women to engage actively in nation-building. I believe their participation is essential for a vibrant democracy.

You have been honoured with the Sansad Ratna Award multiple times, including this year, and have also received the Sansad Maha Ratna Award. How does this recognition impact your motivation and sense of responsibility? How has it influenced your relationship with your constituents and your public image?

While I have received many awards over the years, I attribute them to the collective effort of my colleagues and team. Such honours provide encouragement and distinction in public life. The awards earned during my tenure as an MP are especially meaningful. I cherish them deeply and thank my constituents for their unwavering trust and support, which motivate me to serve continually with greater commitment.

Dr Channi's Lifelong Learning: A Former CM's Unstoppable Academic Quest



At 60, Dr Charanjit Singh Channi epitomises the spirit of lifelong learning and humble service. His journey is remarkable, from his modest beginnings in a Punjab village to becoming the State's first Dalit Chief Minister. A former sports champion who represented Panjab University in handball, an NCC cadet, and a dedicated public servant, Dr Channi recently completed his PhD whilst serving as MP and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture. Even today, he pursues an MA in Public Administration, balancing parliamentary duties with academic pursuits. In an exclusive conversation with eMagazine PreSense for the Special Edition, Dr Charanjit Singh Channi narrates his journey. Excerpts:

Dr Channi, your journey from a small village in Punjab to the Chief Minister's Office is truly inspiring. What were the key moments that shaped your path in public life?



I come from a simpleton background — my father, S. Harsa Singh, was a small shopkeeper and my mother, Ajmer Kaur, was a devoted homemaker. Growing up in modest circumstances taught me the value of hard work, empathy, and staying connected to the grassroots.

The earliest turning point was my entry into student politics, where I experienced the power of collective voice and realised the importance of leadership with integrity. Later, serving as a municipal councillor and twice as President of the Municipal Council of Kharar gave me invaluable grassroots experience.

A major milestone was my being elected as an independent MLA, reinforcing my belief that people's trust is earned through service, not just party affiliation. Eventually, being chosen as Punjab's Chief Minister (photo above) and becoming the first Dalit CM of the State was not just a personal achievement but a powerful symbol of representation for marginalised communities. In this regard,

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

I am thankful to our leader, Rahul Gandhi, who played a significant role in my selection as Chief Minister. After Baba Sahib Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru, Rahul Gandhi is the man who is working strenuously to uplift the weaker sections of society.

What prompted you to enter politics? Who inspired you?

Actually, it was my father who first showed me the path to politics. Though a small shopkeeper, he also served as Sarpanch of our village Bhajauli and as a Member of the Block Samiti. He believed deeply in public service.

My first leadership experience came during 10th class when students encouraged me to contest for President of the Students' Welfare Association. When asked to speak at assembly, I froze. That evening, my father took me to the fields and said, "Imagine the crops are students — now speak to them." I practised that way, and next morning, I spoke with confidence.

Another critical turning point was when Congress denied me a ticket in 1999, 2002, and again in 2007. My father pushed me forward, saying, "Don't wait for someone to choose you, go to the people and contest independently." I did exactly that and won.

Just a day before that election, I said: "No rich person should vote for me. I am not their representative. I am here

to serve the poor, the middle class, the kisan (farmers), and the khet mazdoor (farm labourers)—regardless of caste or religion."

That speech wasn't strategy — it was truth – the words came from my heart. I won as an Independent MLA, defeating the candidates of other political parties.

Despite your demanding political responsibilities, you are persistently pursuing higher education, including recently completing a PhD. What motivates this commitment to academic growth?

Though my childhood circumstances weren't promising, my father always believed education was the only way to rise above poverty. He used to say, "We may not have wealth, but we can build our future through learning."

With that encouragement, I pursued education seriously, completing my BA, LLB, MBA, MA in Political Science, and recently a PhD. Even today, I haven't stopped learning. I'm currently pursuing an MA in Public Administration and am in the middle of my second semester exams.

People ask why I continue studying when I don't need more degrees for career or financial reasons. The answer is simple: I don't study for personal gain, I study because I want to serve my nation better, especially Punjab. Education broadens one's perspective, sharpens decision-making, and deepens empathy.

You were an accomplished athlete, playing handball at the university level. How has your sporting background influenced your leadership style?

Sports, cultural activities, and disciplined training have been the foundation of my personality and have played a vital role in shaping my journey in public life.

I actively played cricket as a wicketkeeper and football as a goalkeeper, but my main game was handball, where I represented Panjab University as a goalkeeper. Our team proudly won three gold medals in inter-university championships.

My entire education was supported through sports. I never paid admission or tuition fees; colleges and the university awarded me full scholarships for my Sports achievements. Even my pocket money came from scholarships. My sports kits were provided by institutions, giving me early financial independence.

I was also actively involved in cultural activities, especially as captain of Bhangra teams. Performing Bhangra kept me rooted in our culture and gave me confidence, teamwork skills, and public presence — qualities that later became essential in leadership.

Additionally, I was a cadet in the NCC and a member of the NSS during my college days. These programmes taught me discipline, service to society, leadership, and physical

endurance. That training built a strong foundation for public responsibility and civic duty.

Punjab has seen significant socio-economic challenges. What would you consider your most meaningful achievements in addressing these issues?

Coming from a humble background, my passion has always been to uplift the downtrodden and work for the welfare of the weaker and middle-class sections, regardless of caste or religion. I firmly believe that education and healthcare are the two main pillars that need strengthening.

During my tenure as Chief Minister, one of the most impactful initiatives was the 'Mere Ghar Mere Naam' scheme. In many rural areas, especially within Lal Dora zones, poor families lived in houses not legally registered in their names, leaving them without property rights or collateral security.

Under this scheme, we facilitated registration of these houses in the actual occupants' names. This transformative step gave poor families legal ownership of their homes. With registered deeds, they could now get loans and credit to start small businesses. This initiative not only provided economic security but also dignity and empowerment to thousands of families.

Recognising evolving needs of Punjab's agricultural sector, I recommended renaming the Department of Agriculture

and Farmers Welfare to include Farm Labour Welfare. This reflects my commitment to inclusive growth and justice for all stakeholders in agriculture.

You've held various ministerial portfolios. Can you share a project you're especially proud of?

One initiative I'm especially proud of is overseeing the celebration of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550th birth anniversary as Tourism Minister. This event was appreciated worldwide and showcased Punjab's rich spiritual heritage on the global stage.

As MLA from Chamkaur Sahib and Tourism Minister, I fulfilled a long-cherished dream by building the 'Dastan-e-Shahadat' theme park in Chamkaur Sahib. This unique park tells the inspiring history of Sikh martyrs through animated films and immersive storytelling. It welcomes thousands of visitors from across the world daily.

Another project close to my heart is initiating the Skill University's construction, aimed at empowering Punjab's youth with practical and industry-relevant skills.

You've been described as humble and approachable. How have you maintained this grounded approach in politics?

Staying humble isn't a strategy — it's simply my lifestyle. I haven't done anything special to stay grounded; this is how

my parents raised me. They taught me to live with contentment, irrespective of the circumstances.

Arrogance creates distance between you and the people, but humility builds trust. Even today, though I've been an MP for over a year, I haven't been allotted an official bungalow in Delhi. Instead, I live in a single hostel room. But I have no complaints because I lived in a mud house during childhood, and completely comfortable with simplicity.

Power is temporary. Values are permanent. I want to serve with humility, not demand with entitlement.

Many young people are disillusioned with politics. What needs to change to attract idealistic youth?

They often associate politics with negativity, power struggles, or a lack of accountability. But politics, at its core, is one of the most powerful tools for bringing positive change if practised with sincerity and integrity.

Political spaces must become more transparent, inclusive, and merit-based. Young people want to see that ideas, effort, and honesty matter more than influence or background.

At the same time, we must restore the dignity of public service. politics is guided by integrity, humility, and purpose, it naturally attracts the right kind of participation.

Most importantly, I would say to the younger generation: if you want to see change, you have to be part of the process. Real transformation doesn't happen from the sidelines.

What is your message to young aspirants in politics?

Don't run behind positions; always work with passion, honesty, and sincerity. Then the positions will automatically follow you.

Politics should not be seen as a shortcut to power, but as a lifelong commitment to public service. If you enter with the right intentions, to uplift others, solve problems, and be the voice of the voiceless, you will earn respect, and eventually, responsibility will find its way to you.

And never stop learning. Keep strengthening yourself through education and experience, because when you grow, your ability to serve grows too.

India needs not just young leaders; it needs young leaders with values, vision, and a true sense of duty.

Your Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture has been selected for the Sansad Ratna 2025 Awards. How do such recognitions motivate parliamentarians?

I am deeply grateful to my party and especially to Shri Rahul Gandhi ji for entrusting me with the responsibility of chairing this important committee. It is under his visionary leadership that our work has found meaningful direction.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

It's a great honour to receive an award initiated by the late Dr APJ Abdul Kalam ji.

Such recognition from respected civil society organisations motivates parliamentarians to maintain high standards of transparency, performance, and public service. It reassures us that our efforts are noticed beyond political arenas.

This award is a collective achievement, reflecting the hard work of the entire committee and the democratic values we uphold.

P. P. Chaudhary – From Farmer’s Furrows to Parliament



Exclusive to this Sansad Ratna special edition of eMagazine PreSense, we present an in-depth conversation with Shri P. P. Chaudhary, three-time MP for Pali and multiple Sansad Ratna Award laureate. A farmer’s son turned Supreme Court Senior Advocate, minister, and parliamentary committee chair, Chaudhary, embodies the bridge between grassroots realities and national policy. In this interview, he reflects on his agrarian roots, decisive legal victories, and pioneering rural initiatives, from mass solar lighting to women’s insurance, that have earned him public trust. His insights reveal how disciplined service, inclusive development, and relentless follow-up can

reshape both the constituency and the country. Their impact endures today. Excerpts:

Your early life was rooted in a farming family in Bhavi, Jodhpur, and you joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh at a young age. Could you share some formative experiences from childhood and youth that shaped your values and inspired your journey into public service? How has the training under RSS helped you later in life?



Growing up, dawn meant tending fields beside my father before trekking kilometres to a modest school. Farming drilled into me that a harvest — like any public project — demands discipline, patience, and teamwork. The RSS shakha added a wider purpose: dawn drills, history discussions, and weekend village clean-ups taught punctuality, collective effort, and service first. When a crop failed, I watched whole families slide into debt; that empathy later drove my pro-bono farmer cases and today's focus on irrigation, roads, and safety nets. In essence, the farm taught hard work, the RSS taught structured service, and both convinced me that politics is worthwhile only when it lifts ordinary lives.

Before entering politics, you had an illustrious career as a senior advocate, handling over 11,000 cases, including those for farmers and public-interest

litigations. What motivated you to transition from law to active politics, and how has your legal background influenced your approach as a Parliamentarian?

Each brief I argued sought dignity for ordinary people, yet too often, policy failed to match court victories. When Shri Narendra Modi became the BJP's prime-ministerial candidate, his development vision offered a route to systemic reform. I saw Parliament as the next courtroom, one where laws are drafted, not merely tested. My legal training still shapes my work: I scrutinise Bills line by line, insist on enforceable rules, and translate grassroots grievances into precise legislative amendments. The move from bar to bench of the nation felt less a leap, more an inevitable extension of public service.

Mentorship often plays a crucial role in shaping leaders. Who have been the key mentors or influences in your life, both in your legal and political careers, and what lessons did you imbibe from them?

I lacked a single personal mentor, yet two towering figures guided my compass. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's ability to marry conviction with consensus showed that dignity and debate could coexist in politics. Shri Narendra Modi's transformative leadership proved that bold reform and grassroots empathy need not be opposites. My vision blends those lessons with lived experience: a farmer's understanding of rural hardship and a lawyer's reverence

for constitutional safeguards. Together, they remind me that politics must remain both people-centred and institution-anchored.

Your political journey has been remarkable, with three consecutive victories from Pali and significant responsibilities such as leading the Joint Parliamentary Committee on ‘One Nation, One Election’. What do you consider the turning points in your career, and how did you navigate challenges during these phases?

Key points stand out. Joining the BJP in 2011, shifted my fight from individual cases to national policy. Contesting — and winning — the 2014 election validated that a farmer-lawyer narrative resonated across caste lines. The 2016-18 “Sansad Aapke Dwaar” drive, covering 500 panchayats, converted scepticism into cooperation through relentless follow-up. Now, chairing the JPC on One Nation One Election demands the broadest consultation Parliament has attempted; lessons from earlier committees — clear agendas, data-driven debate, equal speaking time — help build cross-party trust on a reform that could redefine India’s democratic rhythm.

I also had the privilege of chairing two earlier Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPC) on the Jan Vishwas Bill 2022 (2022-2023), and the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 (2021-2021).

My tenure as the Chairman of two Parliamentary Standing Committees on Offices of Profit. (2014-2016) and External Affairs (2019-24) gave me rich experience and knowledge to serve the nation better.

You have pioneered several unique initiatives in your constituency, such as installing over 50,000 solar street lights and ensuring insurance cover for nearly two lakh women. Could you elaborate on the thought process behind these projects and their impact on constituents?

Both ideas emerged from village dialogues. Women feared dark roads, so abundant Rajasthan sunlight made solar lighting the logical answer. Today, brighter lanes keep shops open longer, crime lower, and children studying under pooled light. Insurance began after self-help groups revealed how one mishap ruins a family. I seeded the fund with five years of my salary; now nearly 200,000 women hold basic cover, giving households dignity in adversity. Simple, targeted steps — safety on the road, security at home — have strengthened community confidence and women's agency.

Through MPLAD funds, you have focused on rural development, women's empowerment, and girls' education. Can you share two or three examples of projects that brought tangible improvements?

First, weather-proof tin sheds in government schools now host assemblies, meals, and outdoor classes, lifting attendance, especially among girls. Second, upgraded gaushalas keep stray cattle off village lanes, reducing accidents and safeguarding crops. Third, the widened roads with proper drains allow ambulances year-round and let women's self-help groups reach markets confidently. Each modest investment turns daily inconvenience into daily convenience — proof that well-planned MPLADS spending transforms quality of life.

Having served as Minister of State for Law and Justice, Electronics and Information Technology, and Corporate Affairs, what do you view as your most significant contributions, and how did these roles help you address national challenges?

Across three portfolios, I pursued structural change. In Corporate Affairs, striking off thousands of shell firms and tightening compliance deterred fraud and improved India's ease-of-doing-business standing. In IT, the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan trained 200–300 villagers per gram panchayat in digital basics, shrinking the technology divide. At Law and Justice, expanding the e-Courts programme — e-filing, video hearings, dashboard case management — cuts delays and costs for litigants. Together, these reforms formalised the economy, bridged

digital gaps, and accelerated justice, underpinning more inclusive growth.

As someone who has worked extensively for the uplift of marginalised communities and farmers, what key challenges did you face in implementing social-welfare initiatives, and how did you overcome them?

Three barriers dominated: distrust, bureaucracy, and resources. Years of broken promises made villagers wary, so I travelled door-to-door, logged each grievance, and publicly reported progress. File-bound delays vanished only after weekly reviews with district officials and legal nudges to clear red tape. Financing gaps were bridged by donating my salary and leveraging CSR funds for solar lights. Persistent engagement, procedural rigour and creative funding turned scepticism into ownership, ensuring schemes now run with community pride rather than political push.

You have been a strong advocate for the education and empowerment of women and girls in rural Rajasthan. What message would you give to young political aspirants, especially women, who wish to enter public life? How can we encourage greater youth and female participation?

Indian politics is no longer the preserve of pedigree; performance and purpose matter more than surnames. I

entered without dynasty or patronage — proof that merit can prevail. The forthcoming Women's Reservation Act will widen doors further. To young aspirants, particularly women: cultivate subject expertise, ground yourself in local realities, and approach politics as disciplined service, not as status. Parties and institutions must mentor first-generation entrants and measure success by delivery, not lineage. An India led by its youngest and its women will be truer to its demographic promise.

You have been honoured with the Sansad Ratna Award multiple times, including in 2025. How does this recognition motivate you, and what does it mean for your constituents and your vision for the future?

The award is a public audit: which confirms that constituency concerns are echoed in Parliament and tracked until resolved. Far from complacency, it pushes me to sharpen every intervention, back it with data, and ensure implementation on the ground. For voters, it signals that their voices carry national weight; for me, it is a reminder that legislative performance is measured not only in debates but also in visible change in Pali's villages and towns.

Bidyut Baran Mahato: A Champion of People's Rights and Development in Jharkhand



Bidyut Baran Mahato, Member of Parliament from Jamshedpur constituency in Jharkhand, is a testament to grassroots leadership and unwavering commitment to public service. A three-time consecutive Lok Sabha winner and recipient of the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award 2025 and Sansad Maha Ratna winner of 17th Lok Sabha. his journey from leading land acquisition movements to becoming a prominent voice in Parliament exemplifies the power of persistent advocacy. This exclusive interview for the special Sansad Ratna edition of eMagazine PreSense explores his

remarkable political journey, developmental initiatives, and vision for India's youth and democratic future. Excerpts:

Could you share with us some memorable experiences from your early days that helped shape your personality and leadership qualities?



In my early days, our agricultural and homestead land was acquired by Adityapur Industrial Development Authority in 1964. The step taken by the Government was very much oppressive and unnatural. In 1970, a movement was started against this land acquisition. Slowly and gradually, this movement spread among all the villages. During the agitation, the entire industrial area was made to halt many times. Ultimately, C.K. Basu IAS made a recommendation in this regard to restore the status of the acquired land of 36.41 acres. Throughout this movement, I was actively involved in all the activities. When I was elected as an MLA in 2009, I raised this issue in the Jharkhand Assembly, and finally all the acquired land was restored to the original landlords.

This experience taught me the power of collective action and the importance of standing up for justice. It shaped my understanding that sometimes you have to fight long battles to achieve what is right. The struggle lasted for decades, but persistence and determination eventually prevailed. This early exposure to grassroots movements and the harsh realities faced by common people instilled in me a deep sense of responsibility towards public service.

What inspired you to enter public life and pursue a career in politics, especially coming from Jharkhand?

The movement against land acquisition in my village and the movement for Jharkhand as a separate State inspired me to enter public life and active politics. Parallel to these movements, strikes were held for the rights of workers in the industrial belt. I witnessed firsthand how ordinary people were struggling for their basic rights and dignity. The exploitation of tribal communities, the displacement of farmers, and the neglect of workers' welfare made me realise that real change could only come through active political participation.

Jharkhand's unique position as a State rich in natural resources but poor in terms of development opportunities for its people motivated me further. I saw the need for leaders who understood the ground realities and could represent the genuine aspirations of the people. The separate statehood movement was not just about administrative convenience; it was about ensuring that our land's resources benefit our own people first.

Was there a particular mentor or role model who guided you during your initial journey in politics? How did their influence impact your approach to leadership?

Shahid Nirmal Mahato, Sri Shibu Soren, and Sri Shailendra Mahato were my mentors. Under their guidance only I started my journey in politics. These leaders were very much directly connected with the locals and the public issues. Their honest approach to resolving the issues influenced me greatly.

From Shahid Nirmal Mahato, I learnt the importance of sacrifice for the greater good. His dedication to the cause of tribal rights and his ultimate sacrifice for the movement taught me that leadership

sometimes demands personal costs. Sri Shibu Soren showed me how to remain connected with the grassroots while operating at the highest levels of politics. His ability to understand and articulate the problems of common people was remarkable.

Sri Shailendra Mahato demonstrated the power of consistent advocacy and never giving up on principles. These mentors taught me that politics is not about personal gain but about serving the people who trust you with their hopes and aspirations. Their influence shaped my belief that a leader must always remain accessible to the people and should never forget their roots.

Looking back at your political journey, what were some of the biggest challenges you faced, and how did you overcome them?

During the Jharkhand separate State movement, as well as movements for many local issues like strikes of workers, movements of farmers, and movements against land acquisition, and student movements. At one point of time, there were about 50 cases filed against me, though I belong to a very simple family. These legal challenges were meant to intimidate and discourage me from continuing the struggle.

The biggest challenge was maintaining faith in the system while fighting against its injustices. There were times when it seemed impossible to achieve our goals, especially during the long struggle for separate statehood. However, with the blessing of Bharat Ratna Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Jharkhand became a separate State in the year 2000. Personally, it was the highest achievement for me and for all of us who had struggled for this cause.

After losing two MLA elections, I won the MLA election from Bahragora constituency in 2009 by defeating the then Health Minister of Jharkhand. This victory taught me that consistent effort and always remaining in the public domain were the key to my success. I never gave up hope and continued to work for the people even during my defeats.

As a Member of Parliament, what do you consider your most significant achievements, both for your constituency and at the national level?

At our constituency level, there are many significant achievements like the reconstruction of National Highway 33, the reopening of UCIL and HCL mines,

the opening of many railway trains from Tatanagar to various cities of the country, and the opening of a Passport Centre, among others.

At the national level, I achieved the stoppage of the Durgam Cheruvu Express at all technical stoppages, which was a long-pending demand of the people. Most significantly, the reduction in the price of stents at the all-India level was raised by me in Parliament under a starred question. At that time, Shri J.P.Nadda was the Union Health Minister. Earlier, the price of stents was about 4 to 5 lakhs. Now, after my intervention through parliamentary questions, it has been reduced to 40 to 50 thousand rupees.

This achievement has directly benefited millions of heart patients across the country. When I think about the number of lives that have been saved and the financial burden that has been lifted from families, I feel that this single intervention justifies my entire political career. It demonstrates how one MP's persistent advocacy can create a nationwide impact and bring relief to countless people.

How have you contributed to the development of Jharkhand, and what initiatives are you most proud of implementing for your State?

With the blessings of honourable Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi Ji, honourable Home Minister Bhai Amit Shah Ji, and honourable Defence Minister Sri Rajnath Singh Ji, I got the ticket from Jamshedpur Lok Sabha constituency in 2014. I won the election three times consecutively. Many developmental schemes were implemented in Jharkhand, including reconstruction of the Tata to Bahragora NH-33 highway, construction of dozens of roads with funds from CRIF in ultra-Naxal affected areas, construction of power grids, and implementation of many irrigation projects.

The development of infrastructure in Naxal-affected areas has been particularly challenging but rewarding. These areas were previously neglected, and the lack of basic infrastructure made them vulnerable to extremist influences. By ensuring proper roads, electricity, and water facilities, we have not only improved the quality of life but also helped in bringing these areas into the mainstream of development.

The irrigation projects have been game-changers for our farmers. Jharkhand's agricultural potential was never fully realised due to inadequate water management. The projects we implemented have

transformed agriculture in many districts and provided sustainable livelihoods to thousands of farming families.

How have you utilised your MPLAD funds in the current Lok Sabha and earlier also? Which are the projects you focus on for MPLAD?

The main projects that were focused on through MPLAD include the installation of high-mast lights, the construction of school buildings, the construction of small village roads, the installation of deep boring with submersible pumps for farmers, borewells for drinking water in remote areas of the constituency, and purchase of ambulances for the entire constituency. Specifically, 21 ambulances were purchased at a time during the Corona period.

The ambulance initiative during COVID-19 was particularly close to my heart. When the pandemic struck, I realised that our remote areas would be worst affected due to a lack of emergency medical transportation. The 21 ambulances we provided became lifelines for many families. These ambulances continue to serve the people even after the pandemic, handling medical emergencies and ensuring that distance is not a barrier to healthcare.

The focus on water and sanitation projects through MPLAD has been consistent throughout my tenure. Access to clean drinking water remains a challenge in many parts of my constituency, and the borewells have provided relief to thousands of families. Similarly, the high-mast lights have improved safety and extended productive hours in rural areas.

The Sansad Ratna Award 2025 is a prestigious recognition. How does receiving this award motivate you further, and what does it mean to your constituents?

The Sansad Ratna Award is a highly prestigious award that was founded on the inspiration of our ex-President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The awardees' committee is constituted of many highly honourable personalities. The selection is made among members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. This is the third time I have been selected for this prestigious award, and it really motivates me to perform better for our constituency.

It gives me extra motivation and energy to perform my duties with even greater dedication. It also reflects that there is a third eye that monitors all aspects of parliamentarians' work. This recognition

is not just personal; it belongs to all the people of my constituency who have supported me throughout my journey.

For my constituents, this award represents validation of their choice and trust in me. It shows that their representative is being recognised at the national level for his work. This motivates them to participate more actively in developmental programmes and gives them pride in their democratic choice. The award also brings additional attention to our constituency's needs and achievements.

According to you, what are the biggest opportunities and challenges for young people, especially women, in Indian politics today? What advice would you offer to those aspiring to enter public service?

There are many opportunities for young people and women in politics today. Many young parliamentarians are being elected nowadays. Young people from the youth wings of parties and student organisations are coming into politics. We also promote youth leaders in our party forums and social sectors.

The biggest challenge is that youth leaders have to struggle with many social and political issues simultaneously. They need to understand that politics is not a quick-fix solution but requires patience, persistence, and genuine commitment to public service. As far as women are concerned, our honourable Prime Minister Modi Ji has already made provision for 33% reservation in the legislature, which will significantly increase women's participation in politics.

My advice to aspiring public servants is to start at the grassroots level. Understand the real problems of people before thinking about solutions. Build your credibility through consistent service rather than seeking shortcuts to power. Politics should be seen as a means to serve society, not as a career for personal advancement. Most importantly, never lose touch with the common people who are the real source of political power in a democracy.

How do you engage with the youth in your constituency, and what steps do you take to encourage their active participation in politics and governance?

In social and political issues, we actively engage the youth of the constituency. On the party forum, there is a Yuva Morcha through which we involve all interested youth. Many social and political activities are carried out by them. Similarly, they are also engaged through student organisations.

Many health camps, cleanliness drives, and sports competitions are organised by them. These activities are fully monitored and supported by us. We believe that youth engagement should not be limited to election periods but should be a continuous process throughout the year.

We have created platforms where young people can directly interact with me and share their ideas for constituency development. Most of the innovative solutions we have implemented have come from these youth interactions. We also provide mentorship to young people who show interest in public service, helping them understand the complexities of governance and the importance of ethical politics.

The youth of today are our future leaders, and investing in their political education and civic engagement is investing in the future of our

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

democracy. Through various programmes and initiatives, we ensure that they are not just participants but active contributors to the democratic process.

Arvind Sawant: From Trade Union Leader to Parliamentary Stalwart



In this exclusive interview for the special Sansad Ratna edition of eMagazine PreSense, we present the remarkable journey of Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant MP, the 2025 Sansad Ratna Award winner. A three-term Member of Parliament representing Mumbai South, Sawant's path from a telecommunications employee and trade union leader to becoming one of India's most dedicated parliamentarians and Union Minister exemplifies service with unwavering integrity. His exceptional parliamentary performance, including 100% attendance and tireless advocacy for workers' rights, urban development, and cultural preservation, has earned him this prestigious recognition amongst his peers. Excerpts:

Could you share with us some memories from your early days in Sindhudurg and Mumbai that shaped your values and inspired your journey towards public service?



My birth took place at my mother's native place, though I was brought up in Mumbai. I love my native place, Konkan, which is the beauty of South Maharashtra. It's the district of festivals like Ganpati, Navratri, and Holi, all celebrated with tremendous enthusiasm. The village atmosphere always gives you inspiration and energy.

My school education started in a Marathi school in Mumbai. By 1960, the movement for Independent Maharashtra had started. I used to hear about it as a small child, reading in newspapers about the movement for forming a state for Marathi-speaking people.

From the eighth to the eleventh standard, I studied at Chhatra Kulotpan Maratha Samaj Shirodkar High School in Parel. During this period, after the formation of Maharashtra State in 1960, Vandaniya Balasaheb Thackeray took up the issues of locals, the sons of the soil, who were deprived of legitimate rights to jobs. Particular communities had captured certain institutions. If you went to Baroda Bank, everyone would be Gujarati; Indian Bank had all Parsis;

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Vijaya Bank had all South Indians. In airlines, nobody used to allow Marathi people, thinking they didn't know English or typing.

Being a youngster, hardly 15-16 years old, I was attracted to Balasaheb's speeches. In 1966, Shiv Sena was formed, and in 1968, the first agitation took place for Marathi-speaking people in Karnataka's Belgaum, Karwar, Nipani, Bhalki, and Bidar areas.

That was the turning point of my life. One incident occurred during my SSC year. We were selected scholars studying after school hours, when a Congress party meeting was being held in our hall during the 1968 municipal elections. We shouted "Shiv Sena Zindabad! Balasaheb Thackeray Zindabad!" The next day, the principal beat us severely. We became stronger, knowing we were Shiv Sainiks. That's when this loyal Shiv Sainik was born.s

Before entering active politics, you had a significant career at Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited and were deeply involved in trade union activities. What motivated you to make the transition from a professional and union leader to a full-time politician?

Shiv Sena was initially focused on social work - Balasaheb used to say 80% social work and 20% politics. We were not keen on elections initially, but we realised that without power, we couldn't deliver service to the common man.

After college, I got a job through the employment exchange in the telecom department as an inspector in 1976. I went for training to Nashik, where I stood first in the training centre whilst continuing to fight for Shiv Sena.

In 1986, the government unilaterally formed MTNL without union consent, carving out Delhi and Mumbai telephone circles. We were treated as "deemed deputation" to MTNL, a term that doesn't exist in law. We had huge profits but were neither corporate employees nor government servants. This was an injustice.

I started fighting for the people, uniting all existing unions from different political backgrounds. With Balasaheb Thackeray's blessings, we formed Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Kamgar Sangh. I led the union whilst remaining an employee, not as a professional leader, but standing for justice as Balasaheb taught us: "Do not tolerate injustice."

From 1986 to 1998, we fought for 12 years. Finally, when Sushma Swaraj was the caretaker minister, I explained the injustice being done. She made a decision, and later Ram Vilas Paswan supported it. Though Atal ji was initially against it, we convinced him and got absorbed into MTNL.

Who were the mentors or key influences in your life who guided you during your formative years in politics?

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

The base of our union was the Sthaniya Lokadhikar Samiti, founded by Balasaheb Thackeray to get employment for sons of the soil. It trained unemployed youth in written tests, interviews, and overcoming English language difficulties.

Sudhir Joshi, who later became a minister and was president of Sthaniya Lokadhikar Samiti Mahasangha, and Gajanan Kirtikar, who was general secretary, were key leaders who inculcated the fight against injustice.

Subhash Desai stood firmly with me. He guided me! He is a great mentor who inspired me tremendously during difficult times when I would stumble and wonder what to do.

Later, Honourable Uddhav ji Thackeray stood firmly with me like anything. He trusted me completely - in elections, when I recommended names for the legislative assembly, he believed in me. People who were loyal and could win were recommended by Sampark Pramukhs like me.

My family's support was crucial. My parents were happy when I became MLC - they never thought it possible. My wife was shocked seeing her government employee husband become an MLC. This is Balasaheb Thackeray's charisma - people without a political legacy became MLCs, MLAs, ministers, and mayors.

You have served as a Member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, a spokesperson for Shiv Sena, and

now as a three-term Member of Parliament. How has your political journey evolved over the decades?

After becoming MLC, I took up issues of unemployed youth and sons of the soil. I placed a resolution with supportive data demanding a law for justice for Maharashtra's unemployed youth. That debate was overwhelmingly supported, and I received the Best Speech Award from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 1996-97.

I'm the man who first brought the solar energy resolution in the Maharashtra Assembly. Everyone discarded it then – everyone, including the ministry and the opposition, said it wasn't viable. Today, I'm happy that everybody talks about solar energy. You can check my 1999 speech about conserving hydraulic and coal power by using solar energy for farmers.

I raised numerous issues: Belgaum-Karwar border disputes, women's education, and injustice to women. After my first term, I got another tenure from 2004-2010. In 2014, Uddhav ji Thackeray gave me the honour to contest Parliament after Balasaheb's demise.

My parliamentary performance speaks for itself—100% attendance in sessions except once or twice during unavoidable crises. I've raised numerous issues during zero hour, fighting for Mumbai's development, NTC revival,

MTNL-BSNL revival, coastal line development, women's issues, students, railway commuters, and senior citizens.

Some of my notable achievements are: representing India in the United Nations, establishing gyms and playgrounds, distributing 2 lakh environment-friendly bags, distributing three-wheelers for differently abled people, adopting malnourished children, and celebrating Diwali with Adivasis.

As a trade union leader, you were instrumental in improving thousands of workers' lives. Could you elaborate on your key achievements and how they influenced your parliamentary approach?

After winning the union election, we negotiated and reached the best agreement ever made in workers' trading union history. Today, our employees get good salaries because of that agreement.

We also fought for pension rights. In 2020, the government changed stance, saying we wouldn't get a pension, but we continued fighting and finally achieved a government pension for MTNL employees - both higher salaries and good pension.

Honourable Uddhav ji Thackeray showed faith by making me as President of Bharatiya Kamgar Sena from February 2021. I'm working to deliver justice to workers across various sectors.

Representing Mumbai South, what do you consider your most significant contributions to your constituency and Maharashtra?

Mumbai South is truly diverse - the richest and poorest people live in my constituency. Thousands of hutment dwellers stay in shanties on government land, private areas, and Mumbai port areas.

I've repeatedly requested the Prime Minister to rehabilitate these hutment dwellers. Honourable Nitin Gadkari gave a positive response - more than 15,000 huts would have been rehabilitated, affecting 60,000 people. Though Gadkari supported it, it remains pending for Prime Minister's approval.

Through MPLAD funds, I've done exemplary work - constructing toilets with commodes, sprays, and water tanks for Swachhata Abhiyan, so poor people needn't carry buckets. I've provided cardiac ambulances to JJ Hospital and other hospitals.

I played important roles in railway bridge construction. The Parel railway bridge - initially neglected until 27 people died in an accident - has now been constructed. I'm pursuing end-to-end bridges at Shivdi and Elphinstone-Parel.

I was the first to demand Classical Status for Marathi language in Parliament in 2014 - fulfilled after 10 years' continuous pursuance in 2024. I've repeatedly asked for

renaming British-era railway stations; many accepted, but still awaiting Nana Jagannath Shankar Sheth ji's name for Mumbai Central.

What does winning the 2025 Sansad Ratna Award mean to you personally?

Getting 'Sansad Ratna' - Ratna means diamond, jewel - is a really proud moment. I'm genuinely happy that the organisers have given me this. It's become a jewel in my life, giving me inspiration, energy, and more responsibility. "You are Sansad Ratna - now how should Sansad Ratna behave, act, speak, help?" These responsibilities come with the award, and I will fulfil them! I'm truly inspired by this recognition.

Can you share major challenges you've faced in your political career and how you overcame them?

Pollution in Politics is the Real Challenge! Politics is really polluted now, and I feel sorry about current affairs. People should be loyal to their thoughts and organisation. Today you're in one party, tomorrow in another - exactly opposite to your principles and ideology. You may win because money has become more important, but I'm worried about democracy.

I dared speak in Parliament: "Can you dare say that whether you get elected within the spending limits prescribed by the Election Commission?"

If you come into politics, come with principles to make positive change in society. Developing society doesn't mean destroying its culture. Are we developing or destroying nature and forests? Then we say "Sabka Vikas" - Vikas at what cost? Is this Vikas or Vidhvans? Both start with V!

What are your views on encouraging youngsters, especially women, to participate in politics?

For the young generation, I will say, certain parties like Shiv Sena remain loyal to their thoughts. We never change our thoughts and keep working hard, whether we win or lose. Our social work never stops — like ambulance services, blood donation camps. Consistency in work is more important. People emerge like mushrooms during elections, saying "I want a ticket because I have money" - that won't survive democracy.

As far as women are concerned, Maharashtra has different culture. We had Jijamata, Jhansi ki Rani, Tararani, Sawitribai Phule, Mrinal Gore. In Maharashtra, women aren't deprived of rights. Sharad Pawar ji gave the first reservation for women, and now women are in the

Assemblies and municipal corporations.

Shiv Sena is proud that the number of our female mayors is higher than any other party in the country. No woman will ever fear in Shiv Sena - she'll always be protected. We call

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

our Mahila Wing 'Tigress' - they can go anywhere, come on roads, and serve with equal quality, love, and affection.

What advice would you offer to young political aspirants who wish to serve the nation with integrity?

For Young Political Aspirants, I'll advise them to look at Visionary Courageous Young Leader Aaditya ji Thackery - how he's fighting against all odds, corrupt practices, fighting for the city, State, and country!

You can have dreams - nothing wrong with keeping dreams - but don't say that for fulfilling those dreams, you'll adopt corrupt, illegal, unethical ways. I'm proud to say I never adopted such means in my life and remained loyal to my party.

Be Loyal! Be Ethical!! Be Patriotic!!!

Ravi Kishan: From Silver Screen to Sansad



Ravindra Kishan Shukla, popularly known as Ravi Kishan, represents a rare breed in Indian public life — a successful entertainer who has seamlessly transitioned into a respected parliamentarian. The well-known actor has been nominated for the Sansad Ratna Awards 2025 for his outstanding performance in the Lok Sabha during the 18th Lok Sabha, marking, what is perhaps, the first time a prominent actor has proven himself equally effective as a parliamentarian.

In this exclusive conversation with PreSense, Ravi Kishan opens up about his extraordinary journey from the heartlands of Uttar Pradesh to the corridors of Parliament,

sharing intimate moments and insights with PreSense readers. Excerpts:

You've had a remarkable journey from the heartlands of Uttar Pradesh to the Silver Screen, and now to Parliament. Could you take us back to your early days — what were your dreams as a young boy, and what first drew you to the world of cinema?



I was born in a small village in Jaunpur, UP, where life was genuinely tough. But my dreams were always bigger than my circumstances. I was absolutely mesmerised by Amitabh Bachchan ji — I desperately wanted to be like him. At just 17, with merely ₹500 and my mother's blessings, I left for Mumbai. I had no contacts, no backup plans — just unwavering faith.

Cinema wasn't merely an ambition for me; it was survival. It gave me an identity, a voice that I'd never had before. That transformative journey shaped everything that came after — every decision, every choice, every dream.

From acting in over 750 films to becoming a respected voice in the Lok Sabha—what inspired you to make such a bold transition from the entertainment industry to political life? Was there a defining moment that triggered this shift?

Yes, I've acted in over 750 films, but there came a pivotal point where I felt deeply that it was time to serve beyond the screen. The defining moment was witnessing how disconnected the system sometimes becomes from the real struggles of ordinary people, especially in rural India.

And it was Narendra Modi ji's extraordinary leadership that truly inspired me. He demonstrated that if you possess vision and willpower, you can genuinely transform the nation. I wanted to be part of that monumental change, not as a mere bystander, but as an active contributor to India's growth story. I took an active role in politics with the blessings of Modi ji and Yogi ji.

Your name is synonymous with Bhojpuri cinema, yet you've also left an indelible mark on Bollywood and South Indian films. How do you view your role in promoting regional cinema and giving it a national identity?

Bhojpuri isn't just a language — It's an emotion, the authentic voice of millions of Indians. When I started, Bhojpuri cinema wasn't considered glamorous or mainstream, but I made it my personal mission to give it the respect and reach it deserved.

I've worked extensively in Bollywood and South Indian films, but my heart belongs unequivocally to regional

cinema. When Bhojpuri gains recognition — in Parliament, on OTT platforms, across India — I feel I've truly honoured my roots and given voice to the voiceless. I am grateful to popular Tamil Director T Rajendar, who introduced me to South films as a hero and brought out my hidden talents.

The Sansad Ratna Award 2025 recognises outstanding performance in Parliament. How did you react when you learnt about this honour, and what does this award mean to you personally and professionally?

When I heard I had been chosen for the Sansad Ratna Award, I was genuinely emotional. I've received numerous awards for acting, but this one was different — it was for real work, real impact on people's lives.

It meant that the sleepless nights, the 100% attendance record, and the issues I consistently raised were all seen and valued. Personally, it gave me tremendous strength. Professionally, it reminded me that Parliament isn't merely a platform — it's a profound responsibility. And I plan to honour that responsibility every single day.

You're known to be an active voice in the Lok Sabha, speaking on diverse issues. What key causes or policies are closest to your heart, and how do you plan to push them forward?

For me, youth employment, drug awareness, and the inclusion of Bhojpuri in the 8th Schedule are absolute top

priorities. I come from the grassroots, and I've witnessed firsthand what unemployment does to young potential.

I regularly raise these critical issues in the House. I continuously push for comprehensive skill development programmes, improved rural connectivity, and accessible digital education. And I will continue relentlessly until these causes transform into concrete policies. Because I don't want to just speak eloquently — I want to see real, tangible change on the ground.

Many still view entertainers as outsiders in politics. What challenges did you face when entering public life, and how have you earned credibility as a serious and committed parliamentarian?

There were inevitable whispers — "He's just an actor, not a politician." And I don't blame them for their scepticism. The industry had seen many celebrities come and go without making meaningful contributions.

But I knew I couldn't prove myself with bare words, but only through dedicated work. I focused rigorously on attendance, thorough research, and raising genuine and relevant issues — from youth unemployment and drug addiction to local infrastructure development. Slowly but surely, the perception changed.

Today, I'm not viewed merely as an actor dabbling in politics — I'm recognised as a working parliamentarian. And I've

earned that respect not through legacy or connections, but through unwavering commitment and consistent performance.

Behind the camera and beyond politics — what hidden talents or passions do you have that people may not know about? Are there any creative or social pursuits that still inspire you?

People see me as an actor or a politician, but at heart, I remain a small-town boy deeply rooted in simplicity. I'm profoundly spiritual — meditation and moments of silence keep me grounded amidst all the chaos.

I'm also passionately committed to youth welfare and drug awareness — I've witnessed too many promising dreams destroyed by addiction. That's precisely why I speak out so vocally, in Parliament and beyond. Behind all the spotlight, I basically believe in service, seva, and staying connected to something higher than myself.

Balancing fame, public expectations, and parliamentary duties must be extraordinarily demanding. How do you manage your time, energy, and focus between these very different worlds?

Balancing fame and public service certainly isn't easy, but when your purpose becomes crystal clear, everything else naturally aligns. I begin each day with meditation — it keeps me thoroughly grounded.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

In Parliament, I'm completely focused on my duties and responsibilities. In cinema, I now carefully choose roles that align with my available time and my values. Fame initially gave me recognition, but public service gives my life genuine meaning and purpose.

And I constantly remind myself that you're here because people believed in your struggle and sincerity. Make every moment count.

As someone living both the celebrity life and the grassroots political experience, what advice would you offer to young Indians who aspire to enter politics or public service?

To every young Indian who genuinely wants to enter politics or public service, I want to emphasise this: You don't need to be born into political families. You need to believe wholeheartedly in the cause.

Don't wait for a significant post or a party ticket. Start exactly where you are — in your village, your college, and your neighbourhood street. Help people actively and genuinely. Understand their real struggles intimately. Politics isn't about grand speeches and catchy slogans — it's fundamentally about solving people's problems.

Be patient, but be persistent. Be thoroughly informed. Stay completely grounded. Yes, the system can be incredibly tough and sometimes frustrating. But India is genuinely

changing — and if you are honest, consistent, and genuinely connected to the people, you will definitely be noticed.

I came from a small village with absolutely no political background or connections. But I came with clear intent, unwavering discipline, and fire in my heart. And today, I stand proudly in Parliament—not because of fame or celebrity status, but because people recognised and trusted my sincerity.

Looking ahead, what is your vision for the next ten years? Do you see yourself taking on larger responsibilities in public life, and what legacy would you ultimately like to leave behind?

Looking ahead, my vision is to serve with even greater depth, clarity, and unwavering commitment. Over the next decade, I want to focus intensively on youth empowerment, comprehensive rural development, and accessible skill education, ensuring that no child in India feels left behind because of where they happen to be born.

Yes, I'm open to taking on larger responsibilities — not for power or prestige, but to make a deeper, more significant national impact. I want to represent not just a single constituency, but the genuine aspirations of everyday Indians across the country.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

And if one day people say with conviction, 'He didn't just shine brilliantly on screen. He served his people faithfully, he stood his ground courageously, and he gave back with his entire heart' — that will be the legacy I'm truly proud to leave behind.

I remain profoundly grateful to Modi ji and Yogi ji for giving me unwavering support and invaluable guidance to be an effective 'sevak' to my people.

CN Annadurai: Champion of the Downtrodden and Voice of Tiruvannamalai



In an exclusive interview for the special Sansad Ratna edition of eMagazine PreSense, we present Thiru C.N. Annadurai MP, the distinguished representative of Tiruvannamalai constituency. Recently honoured with the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award 2025 for his exemplary parliamentary performance, Annadurai stands as a shining beacon of dedicated public service. His journey from a 16-year-old DMK Youth Wing member to a two-term Member of Parliament reflects his unwavering commitment to social justice and the upliftment of the downtrodden. This interview explores his political journey, achievements, and vision for transforming Tiruvannamalai into a Global spiritual destination.

What inspired you to join politics, and who would you consider as your political mentor or greatest influence in shaping your public life?



My interest in politics was kindled by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, who created in me the eagerness to serve the downtrodden and achieve social justice. My willingness to achieve social justice for the people of Tamil Nadu in general, and my parliamentary constituency Tiruvannamalai, in particular, encouraged and influenced me to join politics. The grand statesmanship and visionary leadership of Former Chief Minister Dr. M. Karunanidhi, who followed the principles of Periyar and Anna, and the glorious performance of present Chief Minister M.K. Stalin towards serving people of Tamil Nadu inspired me immensely.

I joined the DMK Youth Wing in 1989 at a very young age of 16, when M.K. Stalin was the Youth Wing's Secretary. I was identified and personally picked by PWD & Highways Minister E.V. Velu and made the Tiruvannamalai District organiser of the party in 2012 on the recommendations of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin is my political mentor without any doubt, and the greatest influencer in guiding my public life.

Entering politics is never easy. Could you share some of the key challenges you faced at the outset of your political career and how you overcame them?

Everyone will be surprised to know that I joined politics at the age of 16 years in 1989 when all doors of opportunity for career programmes in every field were thrown open. Entering politics is not difficult, but continuing in it is the most challenging part. My father, C.Natarajan, was the DMK Secretary for the Panchayat Union, which comprised 45 to 50 panchayats, so it was easier for me to enter politics through the DMK Youth Wing.

Being a young person, I had to participate in decision-making and day-to-day political activities of the DMK Youth Wing and had to settle all emerging issues amicably, which I did with practical resolutions and solutions. I served in my native village, Devanampattu panchayat, as DMK wing's Secretary for five years, then contested for election as a Panchayat Union member, got elected, and became the Panchayat Union's Vice Chairman.

For continuing in politics, we have to make unstinted efforts and fully dedicate ourselves. If we are selfish, people will not accept us. In each and every step, I gave my total dedication to the service of the people. DMK is a party that recognises anyone dedicated and hardworking, at any level.

As the elected representative of Tiruvannamalai, what do you consider your most significant contributions to the constituency, particularly in development and welfare?

As the elected representative of Tiruvannamalai Parliamentary Constituency, I have utilised Parliament to raise key issues and concerns of my constituency. In my first term as MP, I asked 507 questions and introduced 1 Private Members' Bills in the Lok Sabha, mainly about my Tiruvannamalai constituency. In my present term, I have asked 124 questions and introduced 3 Private Members' Bills, all pertaining to my constituency.

I have rationally allocated MPLADS funds only for projects that helped the downtrodden and the below-poverty-line people. Our constituency has many hill tribals living in Javadhu Hills, Yelagiri Hills, Paravathamalai Hills, etc. These areas did not have mobile phone connections. When I was in the Committee, I asked the Union Minister to provide 100 BSNL mobile towers in these areas. Based on my request, 33 towers have already been installed, and the remaining will be installed shortly. I have been repeatedly pressing in the Parliament for establishing an Airport in Tiruvannamalai, which will facilitate pilgrims across the Nation and Foreign visitors.

Under the Prime Minister's National Health Relief Fund (PMNRF), I have recommended many beneficiaries every year and had medical expenses aided for them.

During COVID-19 I installed 1000lit capacity Oxygen plant in Tiruvannamalai Government Medical College and Hospital under Government aided scheme.

For the development of my constituency I used State Government Scheme NNT (Namakku Namme Thittam) and I contributed even the 33% towards the beneficiary contribution from our personal fund for the most deserving cases to ensure they got 100% funding.

With repeated appeals to the Railway Ministry, I secured Rs. 36 crores to modernise three Railway Stations in my constituency — Tirupattur, Tiruvannamalai, and Jolarpettai.

Under the scheme for differently abled, we conducted camps in each Assembly Constituency, identified more than 3,000 persons, and distributed the suitable equipment's to the people with special needs.

Tiruvannamalai is renowned as a spiritual centre, attracting visitors from across the globe. What are your plans to elevate it further as an international spiritual destination, and how do you intend to enhance the experience for both domestic and foreign seekers?

Tiruvannamalai is the Agni Sthal, renowned internationally

as a spiritual centre due to Lord Arunachaleswarar Shiva Temple, where lakhs of people across the Globe visit and seeks the blessings of Lord Shiva. During Pournami days and Karthigai Deepam, earlier at the most one lakh people used to circumambulate the mountain and pray at the temple. Now, it has increased phenomenally, ranging from 5 lakhs to around 45 lakhs.

To develop the basic infrastructure of a Global standard is my cherished vision to facilitate Domestic as well as Foreign seekers. Having firm faith in the Tamil adage ‘Yaadhum Oorae Yaavarum Kelir’ (“Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam”), which means all the towns in the world are one, and all the people are our kin. I strongly believe that no spiritual seeker should face any problem during their visit to Tiruvannamalai.

I have asked many questions in the Parliament regarding improving Tiruvannamalai's infrastructure under the Tourism Development Scheme of the Union Government. Tiruvannamalai has now been included under the Prasad Scheme of the Union Government to develop spiritual places. PWD & Highways Minister E.V. Velu has developed roads in Tiruvannamalai, with about 90% of narrow two-way roads converted into four-way roads in the last four years to facilitate pilgrims.

With the growing interest of foreign visitors in Tiruvannamalai's spiritual heritage, what initiatives are

you undertaking to improve infrastructure, accessibility, and global outreach?

Tiruvannamalai enjoys a spiritual heritage for Domestic and Foreign visitors; therefore, I have taken several initiatives to ensure the visitors' comfort. I have ensured that road and rail connectivity are well integrated to make easy access for Domestic and Global visitors.

Regarding infrastructure, the laying of the Tindivanam-Tiruvannamalai railway line has been kept in abeyance for many years. I am pressing the Railways Ministry to lay it as early as possible. I have requested four times for an Airport for Tiruvannamalai. If the Railway scheme and Airport come into being, it will facilitate both locals and foreigners.

All initiatives are being taken to ensure that all necessary stay arrangements, availability of food, and on-the-spot medical facilities are made available without fail. The State Government has been releasing funds regularly for these developments.

You are known for your grounded and humble approach in your constituency. In your view, how important is it for a political leader to maintain direct and meaningful contact with the public, and how do you ensure this in your daily work?

In democratic politics, people are the embodiment of living Gods. Our leader, late Annadurai, believed that `Ezhaiyin

siripil Iraivanai Kaangiren' (I see God in the smiles of poor). The voices of the people are a blessing for politicians; therefore, a humble approach and cordial behaviour with the people of the constituency should be natural. My Parliamentary Constituency has 6 Assembly constituencies. It is really difficult to cover all the areas. Despite these challenges, I meet people from all constituencies regularly, hear their grievances, and take steps to solve them.

I make sincere efforts to listen to the current issues of the people of my constituency on a day-to-day basis and leave no stone unturned to resolve their concerns and address their grievances. I have public grievance redressal offices in Tirupattur and Tiruvannamalai with officials who receive grievances. If ministry-related grievances arise, we take them up with the Ministry concerned to solve them.

What advice would you offer to young men and women aspiring to enter politics, and what qualities do you believe are essential for them to face the inevitable challenges of public life?

Public service spirit and serving the nation with zeal should be the sole motto for young men and women aspiring to join politics. Young people should come into politics and carefully find out which party serves the people and does what they say, then join accordingly. More than anything,

they should put in hard work. Without hard work, no one can succeed in politics.

Visionary leadership, sharp and active communication skills, and the capability to understand the problems of the public and proficiency in resolving social conflicts should be part and parcel of a politician's personality. Their work should be positive and should be accepted by the common people. If you want to serve millions, the best tool is politics.

Women are entering politics, and our party DMK, has a separate women's wing. Our party brought legislation to give women equal shares in properties, and we have implemented 50% reservation for women in Local Governments in Tamil Nadu for the first time. Educated women should enter politics, though it doesn't matter whether women are educated or not, it is their skill that counts.

How does it feel to be honoured with the Sansad Ratna Award 2025 for your top performance in Parliament, and in what ways does this recognition motivate you to continue striving for excellence?

Being awarded the Sansad Ratna Award 2025 is a great honour for me, and it will certainly inspire me to continue making all-out efforts to do better in the coming days. I am very happy to receive the award. More than happiness, I feel I have more responsibility now that I have received the

award. It is only after 11 years a Tamil Nadu MP is getting the award. We, the Tamil Nadu MPs, would strive to get the awards every year.

The pains of the people, cries of mothers and children, and voices of the poor and downtrodden people of my parliamentary constituency keep me active in raising their voice in Parliament and seeking redressal of their grievances from the government as soon as possible. People, our party members, and even Members of all party congratulated me on getting the award. I have always spoken for the downtrodden and against Corporates only.

Parliamentary performance is often measured by initiated debates, questions, and private members' bills. What drives your active participation in Parliament, and how do you select the issues to champion on behalf of your constituents?

In the present 18th Lok Sabha, I have asked 124 independent questions, and introduced 3 Private Members' Bills. For the past six years, no Private Members' bills were taken up for discussion. As an exception, my Bill on Information Technology was taken up for discussion in this Lok Sabha.

I give priority to poor people's needs only, in my questions. I always ask constituency-related questions like improving Infrastructure, Agriculture, improving the life of hill tribe

peoples & Farmers related to their basic amenities in my constituency, and questions of National importance that affect my constituency, like MGNREGS. This will be the future road map for my public service. My secretary and I sort out questions according to National interest, the State's interest, and my constituency's interest, ensuring that questions reflect the aspirations of my constituency's people.

Looking ahead, what is your vision for Tiruvannamalai and its people, and what message would you like to convey to your supporters and the wider community as you continue your public service journey?

To transform Tiruvannamalai into a Global centre of spiritual tourism and overall socio-economic development of the people of my constituency is my ultimate goal. I want young men and women to enter politics, and the new generation should strive to enter the political arena. I will support them to the maximum possible in this regard.

Ninety per cent of my constituency relies on agriculture only. Annamalai Temple in Tiruvannamalai also generates good revenue for people living in the town. There are no big industries here, and in the future, I will make efforts to

establish a SIPCOT industrial park, and other industries. There are about 1,50,000 hill tribe people here, and I will

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

strive to further improve the living conditions and economy of hill tribal people in my constituency.

Perform and reform for establishing a society with a true community and socialisation process would be the future roadmap for my public service journey. I will also develop Tourism and Spirituality whilst bringing pending Union Government's existing schemes, and also bringing in new schemes to my constituency.

Dilip Saikia: From RSS Shakha to Sansad Ratna



Shri Dilip Saikia, the distinguished Member of Parliament from Assam, exemplifies dedication to public service and national commitment. Recipient of the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award 2025, his journey from attending RSS Shakha in his village to becoming the first National General Secretary of his party from Assam reflects an unwavering commitment to democratic values. In this exclusive interview for the special Sansad Ratna edition of eMagazine PreSense, Shri Saikia shares his remarkable political odyssey, the challenges he had overcome, and his vision for India's youth and marginalised communities. His

experiences offer profound insights into contemporary Indian politics and governance.

Could you share with us some memorable experiences from your early days that helped shape your character and inspired your journey towards public service?



My father was a high school teacher, and my mother was a housewife. We are ten sisters and brothers. From class seven, I started to attend RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) "Shakha" at my village (Nalbari, Assam). I learned various disciplines in my early days, which inspired me to be a good citizen with strong moral character. Thereafter, in my school days, I also joined NCC (National Cadet Corps) and learned to serve the country. In 1991, when I was just eighteen years old, I started donating blood — I have donated thirty-six times to date.

What initially motivated you to enter the field of politics, and was there a particular event or individual who played a pivotal role in this decision?

I joined ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad) in my college days, and worked for the empowerment of students and the youth community by organising PDC (Personality Development Camp), career guidance programmes, and study circles regularly. I was also actively involved in

student politics, and my journey into mainstream politics started in 2002. One of my mentors, Late Shri Dipok Kumar Barthakur, a man of multidimensional capacity, inspired me to join party politics.

Who have been your mentors or role models throughout your political career, and how have they influenced your approach to leadership and governance?

Bharat Ratna Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Ji, Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherji Ji, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Ji, Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji, and Veer Savarkar Ji were the early role models in my political career. Later on, Late Sushma Swaraj Ji, Late Shri Pramod Mahajan Ji, Late Shri Arun Jaitley Ji, Shri Rajnath Singh Ji, Shri Amit Shah Ji, and the most popular leader of the world — our futuristic Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji — have influenced me in my political journey.

Looking back at your political journey so far, what do you consider your most significant achievements, both as a political leader and a Member of Parliament?

"Do good and serve the marginalised section of the society" was the tagline in my heart and soul, so I worked to fulfil the long-standing demands of my constituency, for example, construction of bypass roads, rail connectivity, setting up of ICU bed facilities, critical care blocks in hospitals, women's

college, medical college, and many more pro-people, pro-civilisation, and pro-development initiatives. I became the first National General Secretary of my party from Assam.

As a representative from Assam, how have you contributed to the development of your State, and what initiatives are you most proud of at the national level?

I strongly participated in various debates in Parliament, whether they were of national importance or the State's interests. When CAB (Citizenship Amendment Bill) was tabled in Parliament, I strongly supported the bill in the interest of the indigenous people of Assam and for national commitment and security. Over twelve peace agreements were signed with many insurgent groups for permanent peace in the northeastern region. In this process, I supported this move strongly, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Shri Amit Shah.

The path of politics is often fraught with challenges. Could you describe some of the major obstacles you have faced and how you overcame them?

There is a saying that "no pains, no gain". I faced various challenges in my life, whether economic or ideological. Insurgent groups always targeted the nationalist leaders and cadres in the past. In 1996, I was also badly beaten up by one insurgent group; fortunately, I came out alive. Thereafter, we organised major awareness campaigns

against insurgency and terrorism and started working from a national perspective.

In your view, what are the most pressing opportunities and challenges facing young political aspirants in India today, especially those from under-represented communities?

India is a very big and diverse country with a rich cultural heritage. The efforts to connect and channelise the youth's energy for building the most vibrant nation in the world is the need of the hour. The under-represented communities still have fewer opportunities in the mainstream development process. After sixty years of Indian independence, the process started, but miles to go. The need of the hour is to complete an inclusive census with exact numbers of castes and communities, and the young population, which will help to give more scope for the younger political population.

All political parties should come forward to provide more space both in party organisation and in the selection of public representative systems for the above categories.

What advice would you offer to youngsters, particularly women, who aspire to join politics? How can we create a more inclusive and motivating environment for them?

"The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023" will be one of the key instruments for more representation of women in

politics. The youth must think that politics is one of the most impactful and effective instruments in total systemic change.

Being honoured with the Sansad Ratna Award 2025 is a remarkable achievement. How does this recognition impact your motivation and sense of responsibility towards your constituents and the nation?

I feel good to receive the Sansad Ratna Award 2025. It will inspire me to think and work more for the democratic values of our country and simultaneously for the people of my beloved country.

How have the people of your constituency responded to your receiving the Sansad Ratna Award, and in what ways has it influenced your public image and credibility as their representative?

All sections of society responded well from the core of their hearts. Being honoured as "Sansad Ratna", wishes came from my mentors, my well-wishers, and my fellow party cadres. The visionary Chief Minister of Assam, Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, heartily wished me after I received this award.

Praveen Patel: From a Village Volunteer to Parliamentary Excellence Introduction



In this exclusive interview for the special Sansad Ratna edition of eMagazine PreSense, we speak with Praveen Patel MP, the distinguished representative of Phulpur constituency. Recipient of the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award 2025, Patel exemplifies parliamentary excellence through his exceptional attendance record, active legislative participation, and unwavering commitment to constituency development. Having served three terms as MLA for Jhusi and Phulpur before his current role as MP, his journey from rural grassroots activism to national Parliament reflects the transformative power of dedicated public service in contemporary Indian democracy. Excerpts:

Looking back at your early days, could you share some formative experiences or influences from your childhood and education in Prayagraj that helped shape your approach to public service and leadership?



I did my primary education in a Sangh-driven Saraswati School in a rural area and then graduated from Allahabad University. Having been educated in schools in both rural and urban areas, I have been fortunate enough to have a mixed experience of both, life in rural areas and life in urban areas. In the past, during my education, I learnt about the problems that prevail in deprived village areas. At the same time, I also felt very much inclined towards doing something good for society and the nation.

During my childhood, in my village, there was a group of volunteers called Yuvak Mangal Dal, which is primarily known for sponsoring and motivating others at a young age to contribute towards society and promote sports activities, education, debate, and volunteering. I believe these are the things that shaped my approach to public service. This organisation taught me the importance of community service from a very early age and instilled in me the values of working collectively for the betterment of society. The experience of seeing volunteers come together to address local issues and support community development created

a lasting impression on my mind about the power of grassroots activism and public service.

Coming from a family with a strong political legacy, with your father being a three-time MLA, what inspired you personally to enter politics, and how did your family background influence your journey?

My father had also started his journey through this Yuvak Mangal Dal and served from the block to the district level. I remember those days when roads near our villages were built through volunteering, and so many things were done in eradicating social evils. The spirit of community service and the dedication towards public welfare that I witnessed during those formative years left an indelible mark on my understanding of what true public service means.

Before my father, my grandfather, Late Shri Gulab Singh, had done a great deal for society, which inspired my father to do the same with the same spirit. My father also established many intercolleges to uplift the educational status in my area. His contribution to society and his thoughts have deeply affected me, and even today, they show in my way of politics and doing things towards the development of my area. The legacy of service that runs through our family is not just about holding political positions, but about genuinely working for the upliftment of people and addressing their real concerns and needs.

Who have been your mentors or guiding figures during your political career, and what are the key lessons you have learnt from them that continue to guide your work today?

My father is my powerhouse obviously, and guide during my entire career. All that I have learnt is from him only — be it dedication, integrity, or Sanskar — and these always guide me even today. The values he instilled in me about honest governance, transparent dealings with people, and maintaining integrity in all political activities continue to be the cornerstone of my political philosophy.

Beyond my father, I have also drawn inspiration from the leadership of our Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, whose vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' has provided a comprehensive framework for inclusive governance. His tireless dedication to public service and his approach of putting the nation first in every decision have been the source of constant motivation for me in my political journey.

Over the years, you have successfully represented both Jhusi and Phulpur constituencies, facing both victories and setbacks. What were the most significant challenges you encountered during these transitions, and how did you overcome them?

I have been blessed to serve my people of Jhusi and Phulpur for three terms. My leader, Shri Narendra Modi ji, always says, 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' — these are not mere Hindi lines but a spirit that helps us build trust amongst our people. This philosophy has been the guiding principle in all my interactions with constituents and in formulating policies for their welfare.

In politics, there are challenges, but when you work honestly and with utter dedication, your people are always with you and bless you. The key is to remain connected with the grassroots, understand the real issues facing people, and work tirelessly to address them. During my tenure as MLA or now as MP, I have always made it a point to be accessible to people and to ensure that their voices reach the appropriate forums where decisions are made.

As someone who has served as an MLA multiple times and is now an MP, what do you consider your most unique or impactful achievements for your constituency, both in the Assembly and now in Parliament?

As I said, I have been blessed by the people of Jhusi and Phulpur for three terms to serve them as their MLA. During that time, I left no stone unturned to develop my constituency. Now, my entire people of Phulpur Lok Sabha constituency have given me the chance to serve five

Assembly constituencies altogether, which is both an honour and a great responsibility.

I believe the recent event that took place in Prayagraj — the Mahakumbh — was one of the most successful achievements where so much infrastructural work was done, and the whole credit goes to my leader, Honourable PM saheb, and my CM Yogi ji. The transformation of Prayagraj for this mega event showcased our capability to organise world-class events. It has also left behind a legacy of improved infrastructure that will benefit people for generations to come. The roads, drainage systems, beautification projects, and various facilities created for the Mahakumbh have permanently enhanced the quality of life in our region.

Could you highlight a few key projects you have implemented under the MPLAD Scheme, and explain how these initiatives have directly benefited the people of Phulpur?

There are many projects, but recently I proposed a gaushala project in my constituency, which I believe is the most effective step towards protecting cows. This initiative addresses not only the cultural and religious sentiments of our people but also contributes to the rural economy through various cow-based products and organic farming initiatives.

Other than this, MPLADS has some restrictions and guidelines through which we have to work. Mostly, requests from so many other places in my constituency have been received for roads, sewers, and complexes, and I am happy to share with you that these have been done in large numbers. The focus has been on creating basic infrastructure that directly impacts people's daily lives and improves their living standards.

Additionally, we are also conducting health camps, distributing poshan kits, constructing some smart classes for schools, and installing solar panels through CSR initiatives. These projects represent a holistic approach to development that addresses the health, education, nutrition, and sustainable energy needs of our constituents. The health camps have been particularly beneficial in reaching remote areas where medical facilities are limited, whilst the smart classes are preparing our children for the digital age.

Your parliamentary record shows high attendance and active participation in debates and questions. What drives your commitment to legislative work, and how do you ensure that the issues of your constituency are effectively raised in Parliament?

It comes from your leadership. As my leader, Honourable PM Modiji, never takes leave and puts every bit of his life's moments towards public service, I am inspired to follow the

same path of dedication. His commitment to the nation and his tireless work schedule serve as a constant reminder of what true public service means.

I also try my best to stand up to the aspirations of people who trusted me and gave me the chance to voice their concerns whenever it is needed. The trust that people have placed in me is sacred, and I consider it my duty to ensure that their issues, problems, and aspirations are effectively communicated in the highest forums of our democracy.

Therefore, I have in mind that I should at least be a strong voice for my people. No matter how big or small the issue is, I have to make the most of every bit of time I get in Parliament. Every question I raise, every debate I participate in, and every intervention I make is guided by the real concerns and needs of my constituents.

How do you balance the demands of parliamentary work with staying connected to your grassroots constituency, and what strategies do you employ to remain accessible to your voters?

As I previously said, in politics, there are challenges, but when you work honestly and with utter dedication, your people are always with you and bless you. The key is to maintain that connection with people regardless of the position you hold or the responsibilities you carry.

I have always tried my best to maintain the learning I got from my father towards my people, which I believe always helps, no matter what comes. The values of humility, accessibility, and genuine concern for people's welfare that my father taught me continue to guide my approach to public service. Regular visits to the constituency, meeting people in their environments, and maintaining an open-door policy for anyone who wants to share their concerns or suggestions are some of the strategies I employ to stay connected with my roots.

What are your views on encouraging more youngsters, especially women, to enter politics? What advice would you offer to aspiring youth who wish to contribute to public life and nation-building?

The 21st century is the century for women. Hence, our PM has also ensured through reservation in politics for women so that they can enter politics and contribute their part towards a healthy democracy and society. This historic step of providing 33% reservation for women in legislative bodies will transform the landscape of Indian politics and bring fresh perspectives to governance.

I would advise the youths aspiring for politics to have a good education, be grounded, and try to understand the principles of villages, society, and the prevailing problems, so that they can help in treating them when an opportunity arises. Education provides the foundation for

understanding complex issues, whilst being grounded ensures that you remain connected with the real concerns of people rather than getting lost in the theoretical aspects of governance.

Young people should also develop patience, as meaningful change in society takes time, and they should be prepared for the long journey that public service represents. They should also cultivate the ability to listen to people, understand their needs, and work collaboratively to find solutions that benefit the larger community.

Having received the Sansad Ratna Award 2025, how do you feel about this recognition, and in what ways has it motivated you to serve your constituency and the nation with renewed vigour?

I am truly honoured to have been chosen as Sansad Ratna, and the whole credit goes to my people of Phulpur constituency. This award is not just a personal recognition but a reflection of the trust and support that my constituents have provided me throughout my political journey.

When I look at my people, it triggers me to work tirelessly and put every bit of my time and energy towards their betterment. This recognition has further strengthened my resolve to serve with even greater dedication and to ensure that the faith people have shown in me is justified through concrete results and meaningful development.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

I am also thankful to the whole team of your organisation who keep their eyes on us, and obviously it motivates us to push a little harder. Such recognition and monitoring by civil society organisations help in maintaining the standards of public service and encourage elected representatives to perform better. It creates a system of accountability that ultimately benefits democracy and ensures that people's representatives remain committed to their duties and responsibilities.

Naresh Mhaske: From Slum to Sansad Ratna in Maiden Term



Shri Naresh Ganpat Mhaske, first-term Member of Parliament for Thane, rose from student activism in the Bharatiya Vidyarthi Sena to civic leadership as Mayor of Thane before entering the Lok Sabha in 2024. In his maiden year as Member of Parliament itself, he secured the coveted Sansad Ratna Award 2025 for his prolific parliamentary interventions and tireless constituency work, earning 7,34,000 votes on the strength of his grassroots rapport. In this exclusive PreSense conversation, the commerce graduate reflects on his journey, the hurdles he overcame, and his vision for addressing urban challenges across Thane, Navi Mumbai and Mira-Bhayandar. Excerpts:

What inspired you to join politics, and were there any pivotal moments or influences that led you to dedicate yourself to public service?



While studying at college, I began helping fellow students resolve their everyday problems, which drew me into the Bharatiya Vidyarthi Sena and, through it, into active politics. My greatest inspiration was my mentor, Dharmaveer Anand Dighe Saheb — a tireless champion of Thane's citizens whose dedication deeply influenced me. I grew up in a slum where residents struggled with basics such as water, electricity, roads, drainage, toilets, health, and cleanliness, and I made it my mission to tackle these challenges. Whenever required, I led protests on behalf of local people and students, and that journey steadily deepened my engagement in public life.

Every political journey has challenges. Could you share the key difficulties you faced and how you overcame them?

While serving the public, I faced constant opposition from rival parties: some adversaries had criminal backgrounds, others possessed great wealth or inherited political influence, and all were keen to criticise and target me. Yet I never allowed fear or discouragement to take hold of me. I worked with unwavering dedication and consistency, remained closely connected to citizens, and patiently

addressed their problems. I also forged strong ties with cultural and social organisations. Staying totally focused, maintaining public contact, and working tirelessly, I overcame those political challenges.

As the Member of Parliament for Thane, what do you regard as your most impactful contributions, both in Parliament and in your constituency?

Although only a year has passed since my election, I have already raised numerous important issues in Parliament, especially the people's long-pending railway demands, and have pursued them with sustained follow-up. Thane Lok Sabha constituency is entirely urban, covering Thane, Navi Mumbai, and Mira-Bhayandar. I concentrate on matters within those municipal areas and keep in constant dialogue with residents to understand and address their concerns and problems.

How do you balance party responsibilities with commitment to voters' welfare, and what keeps you motivated?

Though elected on a party ticket, I maintain direct personal contact with constituents and strive to balance party duties with public welfare. Solving citizens' problems is my priority. Fulfilling promises, staying accessible and witnessing the positive results of our efforts continually motivate me to push for further change.

You received the Sansad Ratna Award in 2025. How did that recognition feel, and what does it mean to you?

I was delighted to receive the Sansad Ratna Award. Being honoured in my very first year makes it especially meaningful and has strengthened my positive image among voters. Parliamentary speaking time is limited, but I seized each opportunity to raise significant public issues. That proactive engagement earned me the reputation of an active MP who champions people's rights. The award has boosted my confidence and motivates me to work even harder.

In your view, what are the most pressing problems facing Thane today, and how are you addressing them in Parliament?

Thane is a fully urban constituency, so many issues come under the State Government and Municipal Corporations, requiring constant follow-up. The most serious concern is the railways: passenger numbers have soared, necessitating more trains, and there is an urgent need for modernised stations and better facilities. I have raised these demands vigorously in Parliament, and improvement works have already begun at many stations.

What advice would you offer young people wishing to build a career in politics and create meaningful change?

More young citizens should step forward. Politics offers a powerful platform for public service, and the greater the number of educated youth participating, the better the changes we can bring for society, helping curb the commercialisation of politics and strengthening democracy.

Women's representation is vital. Why should more women enter politics, and how can they be supported?

Women are always welcome in politics, but must not become mere figureheads. Some enter through reservation yet remain controlled by others. Women should come forward with their ideas and have independence in their thoughts, refusing to be managed like puppets.

Reflecting on your journey to the Sansad Ratna Award, which values and principles have guided you?

Consistency, honesty, and prioritising ordinary citizens have guided me. I never tried to project myself as a leader; instead, I worked as a common karyakarta. That approach earned me 7,34,000 votes and, more importantly, the community's trust.

Your background is in commerce. How has education shaped your approach to policy-making, and does diverse academic exposure enrich parliamentary debate?

Education equips us to study precedent, understand policy, and act with a disciplined mindset. It undeniably improves

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

performance in Parliament. Diversity of educational backgrounds enhances debate and decision-making, so I strongly advocate higher learning for all aspiring public representatives.

Smita Uday Wagh: Grassroots Grit, National Vision



Smita Uday Wagh, Member of Parliament for Jalgaon, has traversed a remarkable path from student activist to Sansad Ratna laureate. Raised in a family rooted in panchayat service, she blended entrepreneurship with grassroots mobilisation before becoming the first woman President of Jalgaon Zilla Parishad. Her parliamentary record — spanning high attendance, incisive debates, and people-centric Private Member's Bills — reflects a steadfast commitment to rural advancement, women's empowerment, and educational reform. In this exclusive interview for the special Sansad Ratna edition of eMagazine PreSense, she discusses the influences,

initiatives, and ideals that drive her resolutely people-oriented public life every day inside and outside Parliament. Excerpts:

Could you share some memories from your early days in Jalgaon and how your involvement with student movements, particularly the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, shaped your outlook and leadership skills?



I was born in Andarsul, Taluka Yeola, District Nashik, and brought up in Jalgaon city, where an early exposure to public life and social service took root. Coming from a family steeped in grassroots leadership — my father served as President of the Panchayat Samiti in Yeola, while my father-in-law was Sarpanch of Dangar Bk. for 25 years — I naturally absorbed values of community service from a young age.

Alongside my social interests, I successfully ran a printing press in Jalgaon. The venture sharpened my organisational skills and earned me the district's Businesswoman of the Year award, boosting my confidence in both public and professional spheres.

My university years (1985 – 1990) were transformative. Being active in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, I developed ideological clarity, public-speaking confidence, and organisational ability. A highlight was leading the

campaign for a separate North Maharashtra University, a cause rooted in local aspiration and regional empowerment.

These experiences of service, activism, and enterprise laid a firm foundation for my lifelong commitment to grassroots development and public life.

What inspired you to enter active politics over three decades ago, and who were the mentors or role models who influenced your journey the most?

My entry into active politics was a natural progression, deeply rooted in a family tradition of social service and grassroots governance. I was fortunate to grow up in an environment where public service was not just encouraged, but lived every day. My father served as the President of the Panchayat Samiti in Yeola, and my father-in-law was the respected Sarpanch of Dangar Bk. for over 25 years. Their unwavering dedication to community welfare left an indelible mark on my values and aspirations.

After my marriage to Late Shri Uday Bhikanrao Wagh of Dangar Bk., Amalner Taluka, my political journey found even greater purpose and direction. He was not only my life partner but also my greatest mentor and motivator. His steadfast support and belief in my capabilities gave me the strength and confidence to step into public life with determination.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

Ideologically, I have always drawn strength from the values of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Their emphasis on nationalism, cultural pride, grassroots empowerment, and inclusive development deeply resonated with me. In 1992, I formally joined the BJP—a decision that marked the beginning of my active engagement in politics and public service.

Over the years, I have been inspired and guided by several remarkable leaders. I deeply admire Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, whose vision, dignity, and statesmanship continue to influence my thoughts. Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj was another towering figure who inspired me with her clarity, strength, and dedication, especially as a woman leader who broke many barriers.

At the state level, I had the privilege of working closely with Shri Devendra Fadnavis ji during his tenure as the State President of the BJP, while I served as the State President of BJP Mahila Morcha. Later, I continued my public service journey as a Member of the Legislative Council (MLC), gaining valuable experience in governance and legislative work.

I would also like to mention that since the time our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, I have deeply admired his hard work, vision, and

unwavering commitment to national development. His leadership—along with the strategic and determined approach of Shri Amit Shah ji—has been truly transformative. Today, serving under the dynamic leadership of Modi ji's government as a Member of Parliament from the Jalgaon Lok Sabha constituency feels like a dream fulfilled—a wish come true that motivates me every single day to work harder for my people and my country.

These personal, ideological, and leadership influences have shaped a political journey rooted in service, dedication, and a vision for a stronger and more empowered India.

You played a pivotal role in the campaign for a separate university for North Maharashtra during your college years. What challenges did you face, and how did this experience influence your future political path?

Between 1985 and 1990, I spearheaded the movement demanding a university for North Maharashtra — now Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University. We were confronted with many issues like bureaucratic indifference, limited political backing, and the difficulty of uniting diverse student groups. Organising rallies, negotiating with authorities, and sustaining motivation were daunting, especially when student voices were often dismissed.

These obstacles taught me persistence, disciplined organisation, and the power of a collective voice rooted in local aspirations. The struggle strengthened my resolve and shaped a political vision centred on youth empowerment, education, and regional self-reliance — a defining influence on my subsequent public life.

As the first woman President of the Jalgaon District Council, you broke significant gender barriers. What unique initiatives did you introduce, and how did you overcome resistance as a woman leader?

My 2009 – 2012 tenure as the first woman President of the Jalgaon Zilla Parishad proved that inclusive, accountable leadership delivers tangible changes. Priorities included rural infrastructure, sanitation, education and women's empowerment. A flagship initiative was capacity-building programmes for women sarpanchs and local representatives, equipping them with administrative knowledge, confidence, and access to schemes, thus creating a ripple effect of women's leadership district-wide.

Scepticism and gender bias were inevitable. I countered them through transparency, accessibility, and result-oriented work. Visible development outcomes and sustained public engagement earned trust and underscored the value of women's leadership in governance.

Your parliamentary record shows high attendance, active debates, and several Private Members' Bills. What drives this commitment, and how do you decide your focus areas?

I regard my parliamentary seat as a sacred trust. High attendance, rigorous questioning, and purposeful legislation are tools for voicing constituents' needs. My focus on rural development, farmers' welfare, women's empowerment, health, and education emerges from continuous ground-level interaction, party forums, and media inputs.

Questions ensure transparency while Private Members' Bills spotlight issues outside the immediate legislative agenda, yet are vital for inclusive growth. Staying rooted in people's struggles keeps my interventions timely and credible.

Could you highlight key projects implemented under the MPLAD Scheme and their impact, specifically on rural and agricultural development?

Under MPLADS, I prioritise impact-driven, sustainable initiatives:

- **Irrigation support:** check dams, farm ponds, and borewells improve water availability for climate-resilient farming.

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

- **Rural roads:** upgraded village roads enhance access to markets, schools, and health centres.
- **Educational infrastructure:** new classrooms, toilets, and boundary walls create safer, more inclusive schools, especially for girls.
- **Healthcare:** equipment, ambulances, and refurbished Primary Health Centres that extend basic services to remote areas.
- **Skill development and SHGs:** Vocational centres and Self-Help Group facilities empower women and youth towards entrepreneurship.

Together, these projects boost productivity, connectivity, and human development for thousands across my constituency.

Over your extensive career, what have been the most significant challenges at the grassroots and legislative levels, and how have you overcome them?

Gender-based resistance persists, particularly in rural areas where traditional mindsets question women's leadership. Patience, consistent delivery, and genuine engagement gradually build trust. Legislatively, bureaucratic delays and political roadblocks can slow development, yet constituents' needs are immediate.

I remain people-centred, transparent, and accessible by regularly meeting citizens, proactively liaising with departments, and focusing on solutions over the blame game. Leading by example and prioritising long-term impact over short-term popularity have strengthened both resolve and credibility.

Recognised for women's empowerment and rural upliftment, what steps have you taken to encourage young people, especially women, to enter politics, and what advice do you offer to aspirants from marginalised backgrounds?

Through the BJP Mahila Morcha, I conduct mentorship programmes, orientation workshops, and leadership camps for young women. I advocate their inclusion in Panchayati Raj bodies and district committees, creating pathways for representative governance.

My advice:

- Educate yourself — knowledge is power.
- Stay grounded in people's struggles.
- Lead with humility, consistency, and integrity.
- Never let background limit ambition; honesty and grassroots credibility forge political paths that transform society.

With your leadership roles in the BJP's women's wing, how do you see the evolving role of women in Indian politics, and what more is needed for greater representation and impact?

Women's participation is transcending from symbolic to substantive, but momentum must be institutionalised. I advocate reservations for women in legislative bodies, plus continuous leadership training. Policy changes alone are insufficient; societal attitudes must embrace women's political engagement as normal and necessary. Families, communities, and parties must actively support women leaders. Only when systemic support and social acceptance combine well can we achieve a truly inclusive political landscape.

Being honoured with the Sansad Ratna Award 2025 is a testament to your service. How does this recognition motivate you, and how has it influenced your bond with constituents?

The Sansad Ratna Award is both an honour and a reminder of constituents' trust. It reinforces my values of accountability and active participation, deepening bonds with voters who take pride in their national representation. The accolade energises me to pursue rural development, women's empowerment, youth leadership, and advocacy for underserved communities with renewed purpose,

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

setting ever higher standards of service, responsiveness, and integrity.

Varsha Eknath Gaikwad: From Dharavi's Streets to Parliament's Corridors



In an era where authentic leadership often feels elusive, Varsha Eknath Gaikwad shines as a beacon of principled public service. The Mumbai North Central MP, honoured with the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award 2025 in her maiden parliamentary term, embodies the transformative power of grassroots politics. From her formative years watching her father serve constituents to her groundbreaking tenure as a four-time MLA from Dharavi, Gaikwad's journey reflects the essence of democratic representation. In this exclusive interview for eMagazine PreSense's special Sansad Ratna edition, she shares insights into her remarkable political odyssey, shaped by

Phule-Ambedkarite ideology and an unwavering commitment to social justice.

You come from a distinguished political family, with your father being a veteran Congress leader and three-time MP. Could you share some memories from your early days that shaped your interest in public service and politics?



My early interest in public service and politics was profoundly shaped by the example set by my father, the late Eknath Gaikwadji, a veteran Congress leader and three-time Member of Parliament. Growing up in his shadow offered me a unique and invaluable perspective on the responsibilities and moral obligations of political life.

One of my enduring childhood memories is of him personally cutting my hair in a particular short style, which he humorously referred to as "Indira Gandhi's hairstyle." Whilst that memory brings a sense of warmth and nostalgia, the more significant influence came from observing his daily interactions with the public.

From as early as 7 a.m., people would queue outside our home seeking his help. My father would listen to every person with patience and empathy, often working late into

the night, sometimes until 10 p.m., to address their concerns. I had the opportunity to accompany him to community meetings in Dharavi, where I witnessed firsthand the deep trust and respect he commanded — earned not through position alone, but through consistent dedication and integrity.

These experiences taught me that politics, when practised sincerely, is a noble instrument of social justice. I learnt that true leadership lies in being present for people during their most vulnerable moments and using one's position to bring about meaningful changes. That early exposure instilled in me both a passion for public service and a clear understanding of the ethical responsibility entailed.

Before entering politics, you were actively involved with NGOs like Pratham Sanstha and Sneha Sanstha. How did these experiences influence your approach to leadership and social work?

My engagement with organisations such as Pratham Sanstha and Sneha Sanstha played a pivotal role in shaping my approach to leadership and public service. These experiences provided me with a grassroots-level understanding of the systemic challenges faced by marginalised communities, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and gender equity.

I worked extensively in the fields of child labour, malnutrition, and domestic violence — issues that require not only policy attention but also deep empathy and sustained community engagement. These formative years taught me the importance of compassion backed by evidence. They reinforced the value of listening, truly listening, to the voices that are often excluded from traditional policy discourse.

Working closely with civil society taught me the power of collaboration and the need to bridge the gap between policy formulation and on-the-ground realities. This foundation has deeply informed my political leadership, reminding me that effective governance must always be rooted in the lived experiences of the people it seeks to serve.

What motivated you to make the transition from social work to electoral politics, and what challenges did you face as a first-time candidate contesting from Dharavi in 2004?

My decision to transition from social work to electoral politics was driven by both personal conviction and ideological purpose. On one hand, I felt a deep responsibility to carry forward the legacy of my father, the late Eknath Gaikwad ji, who devoted his life to serving the people of Dharavi. On the other hand, I believed that to effect lasting, systemic change, it was essential to engage with governance from within the legislative framework.

Dharavi, though often misrepresented, is a vibrant and dynamic community defined by resilience, innovation, and hard work. Yet, it needed a strong, empathetic, and informed voice in the Assembly — someone who could advocate effectively for its unique needs and potential.

Contesting from Dharavi in 2004 as a young Dalit woman came with significant challenges. I faced scepticism, deeply entrenched stereotypes, and numerous logistical hurdles. However, the people of Dharavi placed their faith in me. Their trust and support were transformative. What began as a daunting journey for a first-time candidate ultimately led to my being elected as a four-time Member of the Legislative Assembly. Their belief in me reaffirmed my commitment to inclusive, people-centric leadership.

You have held several significant ministerial portfolios in Maharashtra, including School Education, Women and Child Development, and Medical Education. Which of these roles was the most challenging, and what unique achievements are you most proud of from your tenure?

Each ministerial role presented its own distinct challenges and responsibilities. However, serving as the Minister for School Education during the COVID-19 pandemic was particularly demanding. Ensuring the continuity of learning for millions of children in the face of unprecedented disruption required swift, innovative, and inclusive

measures. We launched digital education platforms, facilitated the distribution of textbooks across slums and rural areas, and prioritised mental health support for students and teachers alike.

One of the most impactful initiatives during this period was the introduction of Pahile Paul, a school readiness programme designed to bridge early learning gaps caused by prolonged school closures. The programme has significantly enhanced early childhood education outcomes and continues to benefit students today. We also introduced a Happiness Curriculum, daily reading of the Preamble to the Constitution in schools, and several other programmes aimed at holistic and values-based education.

In my tenure as Minister for Women and Child Development, I focused on structural reforms such as gender budgeting and strengthening Anganwadi infrastructure. Notably, we formulated Maharashtra's Third State Policy for Women and the Second State Policy for Children, both of which were the result of extensive consultations with stakeholders across sectors. I take particular pride in the fact that, for the first time, the Women's Policy included a dedicated chapter on the LGBTQIA+ community, recognising their rights and needs. Furthermore, we introduced a crucial reform allowing children to use their mother's name on official documents, a significant step towards gender equity and inclusion.

As a proud Dalit woman politician inspired by Phule-Ambedkarite ideology, what barriers did you encounter in your political journey, and how did you overcome them to emerge as a leader for marginalised communities?

Caste and gender continue to be deeply entrenched barriers in our society, and the political arena is no exception. Throughout my journey, I have encountered various forms of discrimination — some subtle, others overt. There were instances where my credibility was questioned, and I was subjected to exclusion based solely on my identity. However, I have never allowed these challenges to define or deter me.

I draw strength and direction from the Phule-Ambedkarite ideology, which emphasises the transformative power of knowledge, assertion, and collective solidarity. This philosophy has been both my moral compass and my political foundation. I remained rooted in the lived experiences and struggles of the people I represent. I chose to respond to prejudice with performance through diligent work, policy innovation, and unwavering commitment to social justice.

Rather than allowing my identity to be used as a limitation, I embraced it as a source of strength — a means to amplify the voices of those who are too often unheard in our systems. I have always believed that representation must

lead to empowerment, not just symbolically, but through tangible changes.

I must also acknowledge the unwavering support and guidance I have received from leaders such as Mallikarjun Kharge ji, Sonia Gandhi ji, and Rahul Gandhi ji. Their belief in my capabilities and commitment to inclusive leadership has been instrumental in my growth and in reinforcing my resolve to serve as a voice for the marginalised.

You have been recognised for your articulate and data-driven interventions in Parliament, especially on issues like urban infrastructure, education, and women's welfare. Could you highlight a few key contributions you have made as an MP that have had a lasting impact on your constituency and the nation?

As a Member of Parliament, I have sought to use my platform to raise critical issues that affect both my constituency and urban India at large. My interventions have consistently focused on areas such as slum rehabilitation, water supply, housing, and public transportation — issues that are particularly pressing for cities like Mumbai.

One of my key priorities has been advocating for more effective and humane approaches to slum redevelopment, ensuring that policies reflect the lived realities of informal settlements and prioritise residents' dignity. I have also

spoken extensively on the urgent need to upgrade the urban infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on the challenges faced by the urban poor.

In the area of education, I have called for stronger implementation of the Right to Education Act, improved support for Anganwadi systems, and greater investment in early childhood care and learning. I have highlighted the widening digital divide that became especially stark during the pandemic, and I have advocated for a more inclusive and equitable approach to the National Education Policy.

Having served as an MLA from Dharavi for four consecutive terms and now as an MP from Mumbai North Central, how do you balance the expectations of your constituents with the broader responsibilities of national legislation?

My political grounding in Dharavi instilled in me a core belief: every policy decision ultimately impacts individual lives. Whilst my responsibilities as a Member of Parliament are national in scope, my compass remains firmly rooted in the local realities of my constituents.

I make it a priority to maintain a strong and active connection with the people I represent. This includes holding jan sabhas, conducting regular grievance redressal camps, and engaging in consistent field visits to understand emerging issues on the ground. These interactions are

essential not just for accountability, but for shaping my legislative work in Parliament.

The balance lies in translating grassroots voices into meaningful national policy. I see it as my duty to ensure that the people's concerns — whether related to infrastructure, public services, social justice, or economic opportunity — are brought to the national stage.

What is your message to young people, especially women, who aspire to join politics? What steps do you believe are necessary to encourage greater youth and women's participation in public life?

To young women: your voice matters. Politics is not merely about elections; it is about shaping society and influencing the direction of our collective future. Do not wait for permission, validation, or the perfect moment. Step in, speak up, and most importantly, stay the course. Your presence is essential to building a more representative and inclusive democracy.

To encourage greater participation of youth and women in public life, structural reforms are essential. This includes the implementation of reservations for women in legislatures, the creation of safer and more inclusive political spaces, investment in civic education, and the development of mentorship networks that support emerging leaders.

You have been selected for the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award 2025 in your very first term as MP. How does this recognition inspire you, and how have your constituents responded to this honour?

Being selected for the Sansad Ratna Award in my first term as a Member of Parliament is both a humbling and motivating experience. It is an affirmation not only of my efforts but also of the collective dedication of my team, the guidance of my mentors, and above all, the resilience and aspirations of my constituents, whose everyday struggles fuel my commitment to public service.

This recognition has undoubtedly raised expectations, but it has also deepened my resolve. I see it as a reminder that the real measure of leadership lies in consistent, transparent, and empathetic engagement. I remain committed to being a voice for the voiceless, advocating for inclusive and evidence-based policies, and working tirelessly to deliver results on the ground.

Medha Kulkarni: Champion of Women's Empowerment and Cultural Heritage



Hon. MP Medha Kulkarni represents the epitome of principled leadership and grassroots empowerment in Indian politics. A distinguished educator-turned-politician, she has served as Corporator, MLA, and now Rajya Sabha MP whilst simultaneously holding the position of National Vice President of BJP Mahila Morcha. Her unwavering commitment to women's rights, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation has earned her the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award in her debut parliamentary year. This exclusive interview for eMagazine PreSense's special Sansad Ratna edition explores her remarkable journey from academia to Parliament, her transformative initiatives for women's empowerment, and her vision for India's future development. Excerpts:

You began your career as an academic before entering politics in 1998. Could you share what inspired your transition from the classroom to public service, and what challenges you faced during those early years in politics?



I entered electoral politics in 2002 through municipal corporation elections, but the roots of my public life go much deeper. I grew up in a household where service to the nation and society wasn't just talked about — it was lived day in and day out. My father, Dr Madhukar Patankar, a freedom fighter, was jailed for two years during the Goa Liberation Movement. Later, as a practising doctor, I saw him routinely treat patients who couldn't afford care, often without charging a single rupee. That kind of selflessness left a deep impression on me.

My husband, Shri Vishram Kulkarni, was also deeply involved in social work, particularly with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). I too was involved in many social and Sangh activities. As a teacher and professor, my core belief has always been to bring about positive change in society and contribute to nation-building. While education and instilling good values in classrooms can create lasting change, I realised that politics offers a broader platform for transformation. I believe that Good politicians can build a nation through development and social service

This conviction led me to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) through the women's wing in Pune. I was tasked with leading the Annyaay Nivaran Samiti, a cell focused on reducing injustice and atrocities against women. In 2002, the party urged me to contest the municipal elections in my residential area, and I won the election for Corporator from a reserved seat for women. This marked my entry into electoral politics

In those early years, the primary challenges I faced were societal and bureaucratic. People, especially men, weren't accustomed to a woman independently taking on a leadership role. However, I personally handled all tasks, decisions, meetings, speeches, research, and interactions with officials from the very beginning. In fact, being a woman turned out to be an advantage; I could connect directly with women in their homes and organise them effectively.

Another challenge was the bureaucratic mindset. Officials often resist any public representative, but when a woman representative approached them, their first thought was outright dismissal. Women are expected to be agreeable by default, which is difficult when you're elected to fight for people's issues.

Reflecting on your time as a corporator in Pune and later as an MLA, what do you consider your most

significant achievements prior to your election to the Rajya Sabha?

I served three terms as Corporator (2002-2014) and one term as MLA (2014-2019). Being a public representative allows me to contribute more effectively due to the officiality of the position and the ability to allocate necessary funds.

I established study centres and gymnasiums and set up anganwadis during my tenure. I believe anganwadis are especially crucial institutions impacting early childhood education. I organised various training programmes for women, including vocational training and free courses to help them achieve self-reliance. I initiated literacy classes for women who primarily earned their living through small household chores, teaching them basic literacy, which significantly boosted their confidence.

For children in slum areas, I set up free study centres and libraries. Another significant achievement was creating a grand memorial at the site where Veer Savarkar had famously burnt foreign clothes during the freedom struggle. The memorial includes a museum and library.

I contributed to the PMC's hawkers' policy and played a vital role in AIDS awareness programmes. I established free clinics in slum areas and spearheaded initiatives for people with disabilities, including providing free prosthetics and

distributing wheelchairs. I set up free gymnasiums primarily for women, along with yoga classes.

Being passionate about the environment, I organise large-scale cycle rallies every year on the Honourable Prime Minister Modi's birthday. As an MLA, I funded rainwater harvesting projects in many housing societies within my constituency and commissioned audits providing before-and-after groundwater level reports to demonstrate effectiveness.

One of my most significant contributions was addressing severe traffic congestion at Chandni Chowk. I collaborated with the Honourable Minister Nitin Gadkari to develop a major six-lane integrated plan under the NHAI, costing 900 crore rupees. I also played a major role in implementing the Metro city development plan and took initiative on projects like the Pashan Lake and Ram Nadi project. I also established free legal aid centres and career guidance centres

Your political journey has been shaped by your family's legacy and your association with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Who have been your key mentors or sources of inspiration, and how have they influenced your approach to leadership?

My political journey has been deeply shaped by RSS ideology, instilling profound respect for the thoughts of

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Veer Savarkar in me. I believe in dedicating one's life to larger national goals and considering the individual secondary to the nation.

Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee was an inclusive personality with exceptional oratory skills. His ability to articulate and explain a point was remarkable, deeply influencing my political style. Shri Lal Krishna Advani was a principled politician whose Rath Yatra provided the strong inspiration for staunch Hindutva. Late Pramod Mahajan was a true perfectionist who demanded meticulous planning and execution in every task.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat, demonstrated how a leader could be accessible to anyone, even ordinary citizens. He set an example of transparent governance and accessibility that greatly influenced my commitment to good governance.

What lessons from their leadership have you applied in your political career?

From Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pramod Mahajan, I have learnt the importance of studying an issue thoroughly and articulating it effectively. From Advani Ji, I learned the lesson of being firm and principled in decisions when necessary.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's working style is very unique. He's taken on the monumental task of advancing

the nation in terms of development, preserving Indian culture, and ensuring national security. The significant developments under his tenure in such a short time are unparalleled. He brought in radical changes through initiatives like Make in India, Digital India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat. This inspires me to ensure that no issue concerning our citizens' needs goes unaddressed.

As National Vice President of the BJP Mahila Morcha, you have worked extensively to promote women's participation in politics. In your view, why is it essential for more women to join public life, and what barriers still need to be addressed?

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, numerous women-centric schemes have been launched nationwide, including Matru Vandana Yojana, Lakhpati Didi, Mudra Loan Yojana, Ujjwala Gas, and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. To ensure effective implementation at the grassroots level, a force of women activists is vital.

Through the BJP Mahila Morcha in various States, a large number of local women have benefited from these initiatives. Women activists and leaders are uniquely positioned to connect with local women, understand their needs, and bring about positive change. When a woman changes, it impacts her entire family and, by natural

extension, the whole society. Therefore, more and more women must enter politics and utilise their positions to advance women's progress. It is crucial for them specifically and for society as a whole.

Could you elaborate on specific initiatives you have championed to empower women at the grassroots level?

As National Vice President of BJP Mahila Morcha, I extensively toured the country studying how Anganwadi programmes were implemented in various States. This research culminated in a 100-page report, which I submitted to the central government, presenting it to Prime Minister Modi and other relevant officials. I'm pleased that some recommendations have been implemented in States like Maharashtra.

I compiled a book titled "Mahilanchya Hakkachi Sanad" (Charter of Women's Rights) during my time as Corporator and MLA. This comprehensive compilation of laws relevant to women makes crucial information accessible to ordinary women.

Your advocacy for recognising Marathi as a classical language and your emphasis on rainwater harvesting are notable. What drives your focus on cultural and environmental issues?

If a language survives, culture survives, and if culture survives, the nation survives. Marathi is an ancient and classical language enriched through its journey via Sanskrit and Prakrit. As head of the Marathi Language Committee, I actively sought its recognition as a classical language.

Regarding rainwater harvesting, it's predicted that the next global conflicts will be over water. Environmental imbalance due to climate change shows shifts in rainfall patterns and seasons. I initiated changes in the criteria for using MLA funds, implementing rainwater harvesting in hundreds of societies within my constituency when I was an MLA. This resulted in rising groundwater levels, allowing societies to access water during summer. If such programmes are implemented throughout Maharashtra, we can avoid the cycle of floods followed by drought.

As a Member of Parliament, what is your vision for your future political career, and which areas do you intend to prioritise?

My focus isn't on my political future, but on how I can use this position to benefit Pune city's future. Pune is an incredibly important city with rich culture and heritage — an educational hub, cultural city, and IT hub.

Currently, Pune is expanding rapidly and undergoing significant cultural changes. My priority is ensuring that whilst we develop the city, we also preserve its cultural

heritage. Issues like traffic congestion, unauthorised constructions, and encroachments have contributed to cities losing their original charm. My vision is to act as a link in creating a more law-abiding society and improving everyone's quality of life.

You were recently honoured with the Sansad Ratna Award. What does this recognition mean to you personally?

I'm incredibly grateful to the selection committee. The award is important to me. This recognition is a huge pat on the back and will undoubtedly motivate me to work even harder. When an individual receives an award, it's not just for them; it is for every team member.

This award truly emphasises my sense of responsibility. Even though I received it in my very first year, I know there's still so much to learn from my seniors. I intend to use this platform to master parliamentary procedures, ensure justice for the public, and address various national issues effectively.

For young Indians, especially women, who aspire to enter politics, what advice would you offer?

Our nation is young, and it's essential for this new generation to provide fresh direction to politics. My advice to anyone aspiring to public service is this: nothing is

The Journey of Sansad Ratnas

possible without thorough study. There's no shortcut to gaining knowledge.

You must study various subjects, understand the media, familiarise yourself with parliamentary tools and working procedures, and delve into the Constitution's various rules and articles. Beyond academic preparation, cultivate strong public speaking and communication skills, develop a genuine passion for social work, and maintain sensitivity towards the public's problems. If you possess these qualities, I believe you can overcome any challenges and truly contribute to society.

Madan Rathore – Champion of Rural Rajasthan in Parliament



Exclusive to this Sansad Ratna special edition of eMagazine PreSense, our conversation with Shri Madan Rathore reveals a farmer-activist's journey to become one of Rajasthan's most respected parliamentarians. A lifelong Swayamsevak of the RSS, Rathore's decades of grassroots advocacy culminated in repeated electoral victories. He speaks candidly about confronting rural hardship, dismantling caste barriers, championing water security, women's empowerment, and youth leadership. Readers will discover how steadfast integrity, relentless constituency outreach, and a vision of service before self continue to define his work within and beyond the Parliament today. Excerpts:

Can you share some insights about your early life and the formative experiences or hidden talents that shaped your journey before entering politics?



I was born into a modest farming household where tradition and values were regarded as our true wealth. Witnessing social inequality from an early age stirred a desire for change, so, alongside school, I involved into community activities. Associations with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, and local cultural forums taught me my first lessons in public speaking, leadership, and social engagement. These experiences, coupled with the hardships of rural life, forged an enduring commitment to serve the people.

What inspired you to enter public service? Was there any particular moment or mentor who played a significant role in guiding you toward a political career?

My decision to embrace public life was shaped by the RSS and by the struggles I saw in my village. When the administration ignored pleas during a severe water shortage, I led my first protest and realised that, unless citizens acted, nothing would change. Guruji M. S.

Golwalkar's writings, my years as an RSS *pracharak*, and a formative meeting with Shri Narendra Modi during the Emergency confirmed that politics must pursue transformation, not position. Those inspirations still guide me.

Looking back, what were the biggest challenges you faced at the beginning of your political journey, and how did you overcome them?

My greatest initial obstacle was the absence of caste dominance, political lineage, or material resources. Critics also dismissed me because of my RSS background. I overcame these gaps by being visible from dawn to dusk, listening sincerely, and acting promptly. Consistency and honest intent gradually turned scepticism into trust — once people are convinced of your integrity, that trust becomes a politician's strongest asset.

As a Member of Parliament representing Rajasthan, what do you consider your most significant contributions to your State?

Rajasthan's harsh geography demands constant advocacy for resources. I have helped secure drinking-water schemes, a medical college, and improved road and rail links. Youth training centres and women's self-employment programmes now offer broader opportunities, while the Jal Jeevan Mission supported through my Local Area

Development Fund is delivering household water connections to the remotest hamlets.

In your opinion, what are the key qualities that make an effective political leader in today's rapidly changing landscape?

Effective leadership now hinges on delivering measurable outcomes. Vision, empathy, commitment, and clear communication must replace rhetoric. Citizens are informed; they expect solutions, not slogans. A leader must read public sentiment, master technical details, and work collaboratively — Leadership should be about 'we' and not 'me'.

The Sansad Ratna Award is a prestigious recognition. How has receiving this award in 2025 influenced your outlook on inspiration and responsibility?

The 2025 Sansad Ratna Award, earned through selfless effort and the blessings of the people of Rajasthan, has deepened my resolve. It reminds me that parliamentary work is judged by active, results-oriented participation, not mere attendance. The honour pushes me to pursue my region's causes more vigorously and to contribute meaningfully to constitutional debate.

What has been the public response in your State to receiving the Sansad Ratna Award, and how has it impacted your relationships and public image?

The award filled my constituents with pride and strengthened our emotional bond. It assured them that their aspirations are being defended. Young people, in particular, see it as proof that honesty and hard work can earn respect in politics. Congratulations arrived from across the spectrum—evidence that when issues are championed with clarity and conviction, democratic support follows.

While working in Parliament, what major challenges have you faced, and can you share an example where you successfully managed a difficult situation?

Legislative work is often hampered by complex procedures and limited speaking opportunities. Whenever given the floor, I ensure that my interventions are concise and evidence-based. For instance, during a debate on West Bengal, I highlighted administrative failures and human sufferings. Although local members privately agreed and yet could not endorse me publicly, I felt vindicated in articulating the truth on behalf of affected communities, including the Bengali traders I met regularly in Rajasthan.

Young people and women are often encouraged to participate more actively in politics. What advice would you give to aspiring young leaders, especially women, who want to make a mark in public service?

Enter politics to effect change, not merely to be seen. Youth possess boundless energy, and women bring both empathy

and decisive leadership. Put the nation before party, and take charge from panchayat to Parliament. In today's environment, experience and innovation must coexist; young people and women are uniquely placed to drive that synergy.

As someone who has contributed significantly at both local and national levels, what is your vision for the future of Indian politics, and how do you plan to inspire the next generation of leaders?

I foresee politics will be defined by service, rigour, and transparent governance. To nurture such leadership, I plan to establish training programmes, open dialogues, and digital political-education campaigns that help young citizens understand public life correctly. Politics is not a pursuit of power and prestige but a pledge of public welfare; I want future leaders who will build a self-reliant, inclusive India that commands global respect.

Our Publications



Some of our Publications



Prime Point Foundation has published more than 80 books in digital and print format. All books are distributed free of cost. The books can be downloaded from the following link.

<https://tinyurl.com/PPFpublication>

Acknowledgements

With deep humility, we extend heartfelt thanks to all who made this book possible. We are especially grateful to the Hon'ble Members of Parliament and their dedicated Secretaries for their time, insights, and timely responses. Our sincere appreciation to Mr Ramesh Sundaram, Joint Managing Editor of *PreSense*, for his meticulous editing support, and to Ms Charumathy, Secretary of the Sansad Ratna Awards Committee, for her seamless coordination. We also thank the *PreSense* Editorial Team for their continued dedication and professionalism.

To each contributor—our deepest gratitude.

Jai Hind

About this Book

This book is a compilation of interviews with the Sansad Ratna Award 2025 winning Members of Parliament

About the Authors



K. Srinivasan (74), popularly known as Prime Point Srinivasan, is a former banker and Founder-Chairman of Prime Point Foundation. He is the Publisher and Managing Editor of PreSense, India's oldest eMagazine, operated by volunteers for positive journalism without commercial motive on the suggestion of Dr Abdul Kalam. He founded the Digital Journalists Association of India, Next Gen Political Leaders, Sansad Ratna Awards, and Education Loan Task Force. A prolific writer, he has authored several books and published over 50 titles in digital and print formats.



Priyadharshni Rahul, Supreme Court Advocate with dual degrees in Political Science and Law plus a Psychology master's, is Editor of PreSense and President of Prime Point Foundation, Digital Journalists Association of India, and Next Gen Political Leaders. A distinguished achiever from childhood—Duke of Edinburgh Award, President's Award, Prime Minister's Award for leading Tamil Nadu NCC at Republic Day 2005, and India's Youth Ambassador to UK—she has authored six books and received multiple recognitions, including the Dr Abdul Kalam Award of Excellence. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Indian Parliamentary democracy.