

# PR SENSE

Spreading Positive Vibrations  
Issue No. 227 – Jan 2026  
Published by Prime Point Foundation

## Cover Story



**Navodaya Schools in India**

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**Spreading Positive Vibrations**  
**Issue No 227 – Jan 20266**

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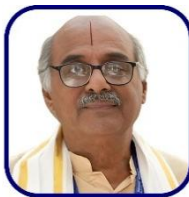
Education Loan Task Force

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## From the Desk of Managing Editor

Dear Reader,



On behalf of the Editorial Board, I am pleased to present the 227th (Jan 2026) edition of *PreSense*, featuring another rich array of meaningful content.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I extend warm Greetings to all our readers for the 77<sup>th</sup> Republic Day. *PreSense* rededicates its services to the Nation and to provide positive journalism for building our nation.

As concerned Citizens of this great nation, we are worried about the weakening opposition. In a vibrant democracy, both ruling and opposition parties should be strong for better accountability and governance. We are writing an editorial on the weakening Congress and the urgent need for the party to resurrect itself to serve the nation.

Navodaya Schools, started 40 years back to provide residential high-class education to the rural poor children, has silently revolutionised with significant achievements. The cover story elaborates on their great success story.

From this edition, we are introducing a new column, "Visionary Titans". We will be interviewing visionary personalities in society and sharing their achievements and views. This month, we are publishing an exclusive interview with Prof. Arunansu Halder, President of Suresh Gyan Vihar University at Jaipur.

Other Highlights:

Prince Cartoon

Freedom Fighter Pherozechah Mehta

Review of the Jan 2011 edition of *PreSense*

As always, we value your feedback at [editor@corpezine.com](mailto:editor@corpezine.com) and encourage you to share *PreSense* with your network.

See you next month with more inspiring content.

**Jai Hind!**

*K. Srinivasan*

*Publisher & Managing Editor*

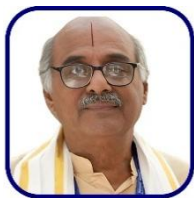
*PreSense*



# PRINCE

By Triambak Sharma





## Editorial

# Indian Democracy Needs Its Strong Opposition: The Urgent Call for Congress's Resurrection



*By Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor, and Ramesh Sundaram, Joint Managing Editor*

*(Congress's decline threatens Indian democracy. Family control, weak leadership, and disconnection from people have diminished the party. India urgently needs a strong, reformed opposition for democratic balance.)*



The Indian National Congress was once the beating heart of our democracy. Founded in 1885, it led our freedom struggle. It governed our nation for over 50 years after Independence. It gave us many visionary leaders who shaped modern India. Today, that grand old party stands diminished. This is not just the Congress's loss. It is India's loss.

We write this not as critics, but as concerned citizens. A democracy cannot thrive with a weak opposition. When one side grows too strong and the other too feeble, the balance that protects our freedom begins to tilt. Today, we stand at that dangerous edge.

### ***The Fall from Grace***

The numbers tell a sobering story. During Rajiv Gandhi's era, Congress commanded over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha. Today, it struggles to cross 100. In the 16th and 17th Lok Sabha, it



could not even claim the status of main Opposition, falling short of the required 10 per cent threshold.

Before 2014, Congress governed more than 10 States. Now, it rules only three. It once controlled numerous municipalities and corporations along the length and breadth of the country. Today, it has been swept away from most local bodies. Even in the recent Maharashtra local body elections, the party's performance was very dismal.

Yes, the country wanted a strong Government. We got one. But in the process, we have lost something equally vital - a strong Opposition.

### ***The Leadership Question***

A rapid survey of common citizens conducted online by *PreSense*, reveals a very painful truth. Nearly two-thirds of respondents, including many well-wishers of the Congress, expressed deep concern about the party's leadership. Private conversations with Congress leaders echoed the same anxiety.

The party today functions under the control of the Nehru-Gandhi family - Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi, all Members of Parliament. Mallikarjuna Kharge may hold the title of President, but he neither wields power nor authority. The real decisions flow from the family.

Rahul Gandhi holds the position of the Opposition Leader, a role equivalent to a Cabinet Minister. Yet during crucial Parliament sessions, he frequently disappears. Reports suggest foreign travel, but the nation receives no explanation. Is this the behaviour of a serious Opposition Leader? Can a part-time politician lead a full-time struggle?

Many see him as a non-serious player. His advisers, disconnected from ground realities, lead him astray. There is no collective leadership. There is no cohesive strategy. There is only drift.

### ***Lost in Narratives, Losing the Nation***

India faces genuine challenges. Unemployment. Inflation. Agrarian distress. Rural development. These are the issues that keep ordinary Indians awake at night. These are the issues that deserve attention in Parliament.

Instead, Congress pursues phantom controversies. Adani. Ambani. Vote theft. Pegasus. The electoral rolls revision. Each narrative crumbles under scrutiny. Each accusation lacks evidence. Each controversy leads nowhere.

Parliament sessions are disrupted. No bills are debated. No government actions are scrutinised. The Opposition Leader ensures that Parliament remains paralysed. Is this accountability? Is this governance?

Take the electoral rolls revision. The Election Commission successfully completed the process. Voters expressed satisfaction. Dead persons' names were removed. Migrated citizens were accounted for. Yet Congress cried foul. For whom were they fighting? For the deceased? For the departed?

The people are not convinced. When you lose an election, do you introspect? Or do you blame the Election Commission? Do you question your strategy? Or do you attack Electronic Voting Machines? Congress chooses the easier path - denial over diagnosis.



### ***The Perception Problem: Alienating the Majority***

Though Congress practised secularism throughout its history, in the past 15 years, it has been increasingly accused of minority appeasement. This perception, whether fair or not, has cost the party dearly.

Following the 2014 poll debacle, A.K. Antony, a veteran Congress leader from Kerala, cautioned the party against exhibiting minority appeasement. He warned again in 2022 that Congress's stance was pushing soft Hindus towards the BJP. His words were prophetic.

In 2025, the tacit support - or rather, the failure to object - to the 'Sanatana Dharma' comment by their DMK ally Udhayanidhi Stalin severely eroded Congress's vote base in North India. This silence contributed to the loss of two State Governments. What A.K. Antony feared has come to pass.

Secularism does not mean ignoring the sentiments of the majority. True secularism means respecting all faiths equally. When Congress appears to take sides, it loses its claim to being a truly national party. The electorate notices. The electorate remembers. The electorate votes accordingly.

### ***The Exodus of Excellence***

Talented leaders do not stay where they are humiliated. They leave. And they have left Congress in droves.

Ghulam Nabi Azad. Hemant Biswa Sharma. Jyotiraditya Scindia. Captain Amarinder Singh. Ashok Chavan. Milind Deora. These were not ordinary workers. They were senior, seasoned leaders with mass appeal. They departed because they could not tolerate the disrespect.

Some joined the BJP and are flourishing there. They found recognition. They found purpose. They found respect. Congress lost them through sheer arrogance.

Even now, capable leaders remain within Congress. They sit idle. Unused. Unheard. Wasted. Is this how you build a party? Is this how you rebuild trust?

### ***The Illusion of 2024***

Congress secured 99 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Some celebrated this as a revival. Let us speak the uncomfortable truth. Those seats did not come from the Congress's strength, but from the BJP's overconfidence. In several constituencies, the RSS withdrew support. The opposition exploited that gap.

The moment the BJP recognised its mistake, it began corrective action. Today, while Congress has a President in his eighties, the BJP has elected a dynamic leader in his forties. After their 2024 setback, the BJP launched micro-management of its election machinery. They are reaching the grassroots. They are rebuilding booth-level committees.

What is Congress doing? Nothing. It has no booth committees in many areas. It has lost touch with the ground. It lives in distant drawing rooms, not in dusty villages.



### ***Learning from Your Opponent***

BJP knows how to learn from defeat. When Atal Bihari Vajpayee lost in 2004, they changed leadership. They projected L.K. Advani in 2009. When that did not succeed, they turned to Narendra Modi in 2014. Victory followed.

Congress, by contrast, repeats the same mistakes. Election after election, Rahul Gandhi is projected as the Prime Ministerial candidate. Election after election, it helps the BJP more than Congress. The electorate has spoken clearly. Yet the message is not heard.

Repetition without reflection is not persistence. It is stubbornness. It is not courage. It is a delusion.

### ***The Legacy Betrayed***

Congress gave India transformative programmes and policies. But more than policies, it gave us statesmanship. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru maintained cordial relations with opposition leaders. Indira Gandhi, despite her strong personality, respected parliamentary traditions. P.V. Narasimha Rao elevated bipartisanship to an art form.

During 1991, when the nation faced a severe financial crisis, Narasimha Rao brought liberalisation. Vajpayee and Advani supported him to help the country emerge from that crisis. They put nation before party.

In 1971, during Indira Gandhi's regime, when Pakistan surrendered before India in the war, Vajpayee spoke in Parliament with these memorable words: 'This is not the victory of a party, but the victory of the entire nation. The Prime Minister has led the country with great determination and courage in this difficult hour. In this moment of triumph, the whole country stands behind her.' That was statesmanship. That was national unity.

When India needed to present its case on Pakistan at the United Nations, Narasimha Rao sent Atal Bihari Vajpayee - an opposition leader - as the government's representative. He trusted Vajpayee to put the nation before party. That trust was well-placed.

Contrast this with today. Some of Rahul Gandhi's controversial statements during the Surgical Strike in 2016 and Operation Sindoor in 2025 were used by Pakistan to their advantage to condemn India. When the nation faces security threats from enemy countries, the entire political system should stand together, not issue divisive political statements.

Today, we see Rahul Gandhi criticising the Indian Government on foreign soil. His statements are quoted by Pakistan to undermine India. Can any Government today send him to represent India at international forums? Can any Prime Minister trust him with our nation's voice?

The legacy has been betrayed. The tradition has been abandoned. The statesmanship has vanished.

### ***A Family Firm or a National Party?***

The Indian National Congress was never meant to be a family enterprise. It was built by millions. It was nurtured by martyrs. It was sustained by collective leadership.

Two-thirds of the respondents in the PreSense survey perceive that the party has come under dynastic control. Three members of one family hold all the power. Others watch helplessly.



Talented leaders are sidelined. Loyal workers are ignored. The party high command is not a committee. It is a bloodline now.

This is not sustainable. This is not democratic. This is not what our freedom fighters envisioned. The party must belong to the people, not to a dynasty.

### ***The Path Forward***

Time is running short. But it is not too late. Congress leaders must gather courage. They must speak honestly amongst themselves. They must acknowledge their failures.

Stop chasing manufactured controversies. Focus on real issues that affect real people. Unemployment. Healthcare. Education. Rural distress. These resonate with voters. These matter to families.

Rebuild from the ground up. Re-establish booth-level committees. Connect with ordinary citizens. Listen to their struggles. Understand their aspirations. Politics is not conducted from air-conditioned offices. It is won in dusty lanes and in crowded marketplaces.

Respect your experienced leaders. Use their wisdom. Value their loyalty. Stop the humiliation that drives talent away. A party that cannot respect itself cannot earn respect from others.

Address the perception problems honestly. Practise genuine secularism that respects all faiths equally. Do not appear to favour one community over another. India is a diverse nation. Your policies must reflect that diversity.

Most importantly, democratise the party. Leadership must be earned, not inherited. Positions must be won through merit, not birth. The Congress must become the party of the people once again, not the property of a family.

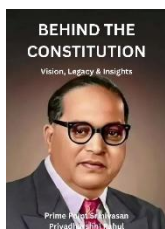
### ***For the Sake of Democracy***

PreSense writes this with genuine concern, not partisan malice. We write as those who believe in the principle that democracy requires balance. A strong government needs an equally strong opposition. Without it, power becomes unchecked. Without it, accountability becomes optional. Without it, democracy becomes mere theatre.

Congress must rise not for its own sake, but for India's sake. The nation needs you as a strong party. Not as a family business. Not as a fading memory. But as a vibrant, principled, and purposeful opposition that holds the mirror of accountability to those in power.

Will you answer that call? Or will you continue drifting into irrelevance? The choice is yours. But the consequences are ours - all of India's.

***The clock is ticking. History is watching. And so is a worried nation.***



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**<https://tinyurl.com/behind-constitution>**

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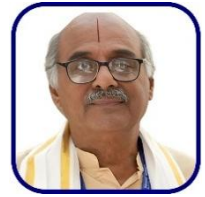
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## Cover Story

# The Silent Revolution: How India's Navodaya Schools Are Transforming Rural Dreams Into Reality



*By Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor*

***(Navodaya Vidyalayas provide free, world-class residential education to gifted rural Indian children. Despite national success in social mobility, Tamil Nadu remains the only State excluding them due to language policies.)***



### A Handful of Sacred Soil

The man bent down and scooped up some sand from the school ground. His hands were shaking. Tears rolled down his cheeks. He carefully put the sand in a small bag and placed it in his pocket.

P Ravi, former Principal of Navodaya Vidyalaya, watched silently as the alumnus carefully packed the sand into a small bag at the Puducherry Navodaya Alumni meet. Around them, 1,500 former students had gathered, but this moment held something profound.

"Sir," the man's voice cracked with emotion, tears streaming down his cheeks, "I grew up in this soil for seven years, from 6th standard till I completed 12th standard. I came from a poor nearby village. Today, I hold a senior position in a multinational company in the United States. But this campus—this is my temple. I want to keep this sand in my Pooja Room."

Ravi paused while sharing this story - his own eyes moist. "This is only the tip of the iceberg," he told us. "There are lakhs of such emotional success stories hidden across our nation."

Yet Tamil Nadu, our own State, has no such Navodaya Vidyalayas. Not a single one.

This realisation stirred something in our PreSense team. The very next day, we visited Puducherry Navodaya Vidyalaya with Ravi. Though our visit was unannounced, Principal Kannadasan and his team welcomed us warmly, walking us through every corner of the campus. They even gathered senior alumni at short notice so we could hear their stories firsthand. What we discovered left us deeply moved—and troubled by what Tamil Nadu's children are missing.

### **A Promise made to Dust**

January 1985. A young Prime Minister sat across from his Minister for Education. PM Rajiv Gandhi, himself an alumnus of the prestigious Doon School, carried a vision that burned bright with purpose. He had seen how excellence flourished in residential schools—but only for children of the super-rich. What about the brilliant child in the remotest village, whose genius lay buried under layers of poverty?

"We must create high-class residential schools," he told Narasimha Rao, then Education Minister, "where identified poor rural children can study absolutely free of cost. Everything—education, food, boarding, books, uniforms—everything free."

When Rajiv Gandhi announced this initiative, he made it a solemn promise: "The brilliance of the child in the remotest villages will no longer be buried in the dust of poverty. It will be polished in the halls of excellence."

That promise became the foundation of Navodaya Vidyalayas.

Two "pace-setting schools" began in temporary premises in 1985—one at Jhajjar in Haryana and another at Amaravati in Maharashtra. They were experiments in hope. Within a year, the National Education Policy of 1986 gave this vision a solid framework, focusing sharply on rural education and establishing Navodaya Vidyalayas across India.

On 13th April 1986, the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) was officially born. Every year since, students and alumni celebrate this date as Navodaya Day—a day of gratitude, remembering where they came from and how far they've travelled.

From 1989, these schools were renamed "Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya" (JNV) to honour the birth centenary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The name carried forward the dreams of two Prime Ministers—one for an independent India, another for an India where every child could dream without limits.

### **The Architecture of Dreams**

Today, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas operate in 666 districts across India. Out of 689 sanctioned schools, 658 are functional. The remaining are under construction.

Tamil Nadu stands alone in its absence.



Each school stands on 30 acres of land provided by the State Governments. The Central Government then builds world-class infrastructure at a cost of nearly Rs 100 crores per school. These aren't ordinary school buildings—they are campuses designed to nurture excellence, equipped with everything the finest residential schools offer.

The Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, an autonomous body headed by the Education Minister himself, manages this vast network through eight regional offices (soon to be 13). Around 28,000 teaching and non-teaching staff pour their hearts into these schools daily. Each school operates under a management committee headed by the District Collector, ensuring accountability and local connection.

But what truly makes these schools extraordinary isn't the infrastructure—it's the children.

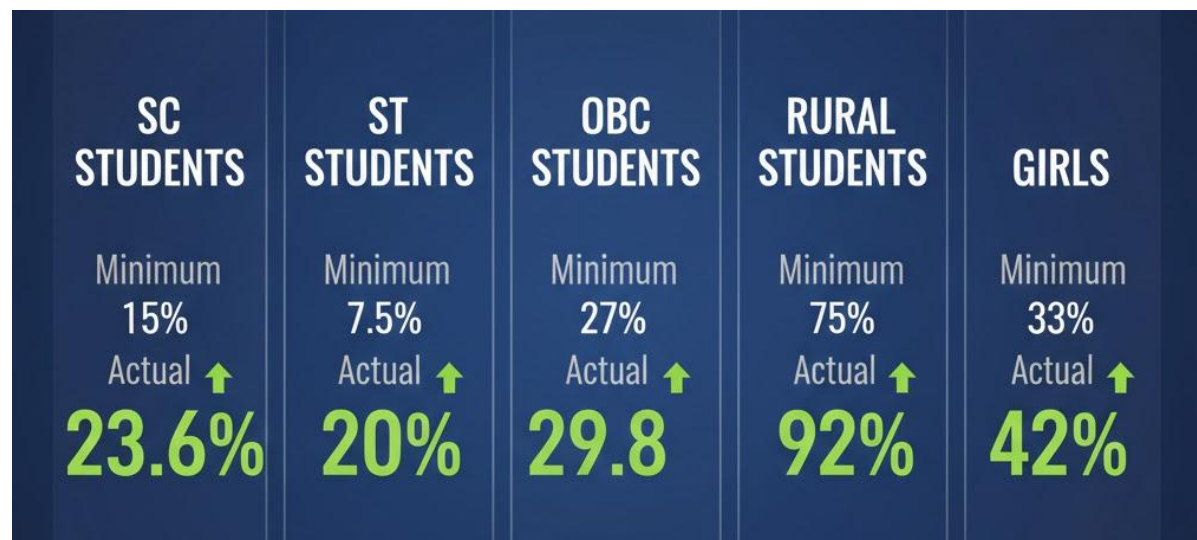
### **Finding Diamonds in the Dust**

Every September, hope stirs in villages across India. The Navodaya Selection Test announcement arrives, and families gather around children with dreams larger than their circumstances.

The Central Board of Secondary Education conducts the "Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Selection Test" for admission to Class 6. In December, results are announced. In recent years, around 20 lakh children have appeared for this test. From this vast ocean of aspirants, approximately 49,000 are selected—the brightest rural minds, identified and rescued from the limitations that poverty might have imposed on them.

Each school has just 80 seats, distributed block-wise to ensure fair representation from every corner of the district. Three seats are reserved for physically challenged children—because no disability should dim a bright mind.

What's remarkable is how these schools have exceeded even the mandatory reservation requirements: (as on Dec 2025)



These aren't just numbers. Each percentage point represents hundreds of children who would have remained invisible, their potential untapped.

Currently, 2,87,385 students study across all JNV units nationwide. The Government of India invests around Rs 5,500 crores annually in their future. Per student, the expenditure exceeds Rs 2 lakhs. Private residential schools charge upwards of Rs 5 lakhs per annum for similar education—amounts these families could never dream of affording. Many couldn't even pay

fees at local private schools as day scholars. Hence, all JNV students come from government schools.

The investment is in more than education. It's in dignity.

### **A Home Where Dreams Are Nurtured**

"They gave me everything," says one student quietly. "Everything. I never had to ask my parents for even one rupee."

Inside JNV campuses, children discover a world they'd only glimpsed from afar. Free accommodation in clean, safe dormitories. Uniforms are provided so that no child feels less than another. Even bed sheets, blankets, and toiletries—everything taken care of.

The mess serves nutritious, high-quality meals prepared by experts with catering qualifications. The children receive night milk, ensuring proper nutrition during crucial growing years. We tasted the food during our Puducherry visit—it was genuinely excellent.

Medical facilities are always available. Women nurses and wardens care for girl children with extraordinary attentiveness, handling even sensitive matters like puberty with more gentleness than many parents manage.

Principals and staff reside in furnished quarters within the campus. They're required to stay on-site, creating a true residential community. The message is clear: these children are never alone, never unprotected.

Sports facilities rival those of elite schools. Under the PM SHRI programme, modern laboratories now provide education in cutting-edge technology, including artificial intelligence. Every school has a Centre of Excellence where students receive coaching for competitive examinations like IIT entrance (JEE) and NEET.

The results speak volumes. On average, 40% of JNV students appearing for IIT JEE successfully clear the examination. For NEET, the success rate soars to 78%.

All JNV schools follow CBSE syllabus. Last year, 44,307 students appeared for Class X Board examinations—99.40% passed, with 86% scoring first division.

For Class XII, 33,773 students appeared—99.3% passed, with 94% securing first division.

These aren't children of privilege. These are children who were meant to remain invisible. Yet here they stand, securing admissions to top colleges, including international universities.

### **The Beautiful Exchange: Migration and Unity**

Perhaps the most touching aspect of JNV is the migration programme—a brilliant experiment in national integration.

Each JNV is linked with another JNV, preferably from a different linguistic State. A Hindi-speaking State's school links with a non-Hindi State's school. Through a voluntary selection process, 30 students from Class 9 migrate to the linked school for one year, all expenses borne by the government.

Imagine a child from a Kerala village living in Uttar Pradesh for a year, learning Hindi, experiencing a completely different culture. Simultaneously, a child from UP discovers Kerala, learns Malayalam, tastes different food, and celebrates different festivals.

The linked schools teach each other's languages. Children return home transformed—not just educated, but enlightened. They become cultural ambassadors, carrying respect and understanding across India's beautiful diversity.

"This migration programme broke all the walls we didn't even know existed," an alumna told us. "We returned as Indians in the truest sense."





## **Voices from the Campus**

During our Puducherry visit, we spoke with current students. Their eyes shone with something unmistakable—hope.

"My father works as a labourer in a tile company," a young girl told us matter-of-factly. Then her voice grew stronger. "I want to become a Naval Medical Officer."

The specificity stunned us. Not just a doctor—a Naval Medical Officer. Principal Kannadasan smiled. "We encourage students to dream precisely," he explained. "Then we provide the coaching to make those specific dreams real."

Initially, many students experience homesickness. "The first few months were hard," several admitted. "But now, this campus feels like home. Actually, more than home—it feels like the place we were always meant to be."

## **The Alumni: Walking Testimonies of Transformation**

The alumni we met carried their JNV experience like a sacred flame.

Dr N. Vijayakumar, now an Associate Professor in a Government College, said something that stopped us cold: "We came to know about caste and religion only when we left the campus."

Think about that. For seven years, children lived, ate, studied, played together—without the poison of discrimination. They discovered their identities as human beings first, scholars second. Everything else was irrelevant.

Dr Revathy, now Dean of Puducherry Engineering College, wiped her eyes as she spoke. "I came from a poor family. My parents couldn't afford the fees at a private School. I cleared the test and joined JNV at Class 6. Today, I'm a Dean now. I've authored a book prescribed by universities across India. I owe everything to JNV." She paused, her voice fierce with emotion. "As a woman, I want to say this clearly—girls are completely safe in these campuses. Safer than anywhere else."

Dr Arulmurugan, HOD of Commerce at Karaikal, leaned forward intensely. "My father was a temporary watchman in Puducherry. Temporary—meaning we never knew if tomorrow would bring income. I joined JNV in Class 6. JNV didn't just educate me—it sharpened every skill I possessed. Today, I'm not just a professor—I'm active in the Alumni Association. Our alumni are everywhere—civil services, politics, medicine, engineering, business, education, etc. Everywhere."

He smiled with quiet pride. "Now I create awareness about JNV among students. I help prepare them for the entrance test. Because every child deserves the chance I got."

PreSense spoke to Dr. Vijayabhaskar Narayanamurthy, working as a Senior Scientist in Grade G of DRDO, Government of India, and presently on deputation at Indian Embassy in Washington, UA. He hails from a poor family in a village. He got educated in Navodaya. "Navodaya nurtured in me a deep sense of patriotism and self-discipline. The languages I learnt there helped me to work with everyone in India and abroad", said with his choking voice emotionally.

## **The Painful Exception: Tamil Nadu's Absence**

Across 40 years, across 666 districts, across 28 States and Union Territories, Navodaya schools have silently transformed lakhs of rural children into doctors, engineers, civil servants, professors, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

Everywhere... except in Tamil Nadu.





For four decades, successive Tamil Nadu Governments have maintained one position: they will not permit Navodaya schools because these schools promote the three-language formula, while Tamil Nadu follows a two-language policy.

Yet the same Governments have issued No Objection Certificates to 1,500 CBSE schools across Tamil Nadu—all of which follow the three-language formula. Elite private schools teach three languages freely. But Navodaya—which would benefit the poorest rural children, particularly Dalit and girl children—is rejected.

The irony cuts deep.

Recently, the Supreme Court directed the Tamil Nadu Government to discuss with the Central Government and establish Navodaya schools in all 38 districts. The highest court in the land has recognised what should have been obvious: Tamil Nadu's rural children deserve the same opportunities as children everywhere else in India.

### **A Question for the Living Generation**

In November 1949, Dr B.R. Ambedkar presented the draft Constitution to the Constituent Assembly. In his closing speech, he said something that echoes powerfully today:

"What I do say is that the principles embodied in the Constitution are the views of the present generation... I admit that what Jefferson has said is not merely true, but is absolutely true. There can be no question about it... The earth belongs always to the living generation."

*The earth belongs to the living generation.*

Babasaheb Ambedkar fought his entire life against discrimination. He championed education as the path to liberation. He understood better than anyone how poverty imprisons talent.

If he were alive today, he would have felt immense joy seeing Navodaya schools across India. He would have smiled seeing poor rural children becoming doctors, engineers, and civil servants. He would have been proud.

But then someone would have told him about Tamil Nadu... that this State alone has no Navodaya schools. That lakhs of poor children here are denied this opportunity. That a 40-year-old policy is blocking their dreams.

His joy would have turned into sorrow. His heart would have broken.

The two-language policy was formulated in a different era, with different challenges, for different reasons. But should the children of 2026 pay the price for decisions made in the 1970s? Should the daughter of an agricultural labourer in Ramanathapuram be denied world-class free education because of linguistic politics she doesn't understand?

Babasaheb would ask: Does policy exist to serve ideology, or to serve children?

Every year, thousands of Tamil Nadu's brightest rural children—children who could become doctors, scientists, civil servants, professors—remain trapped in underfunded government schools. Not because they lack merit. Not because they lack dreams. But because the State that prides itself on social justice has shut the door to one of India's most powerful instruments of social mobility.

Meanwhile, just across the border in Puducherry, Kerala, Andhra, and Karnataka, children study in a JNV, their futures transformed. Some of these students are from Tamil families. Some speak Tamil at home. The irony is unbearable.

While more than 1500 CBSE schools are operating with three or more languages for affluent students, the poor rural children from backward communities are denied a world-class residential education. R Nurullah, a Senior respectable Journalist from Chennai, who is an ardent supporter of Navodaya schools, says, "If Tamil Nadu had permitted the Central



Government to establish Navodaya Schools, by now more than one lakh families, mostly from Dalit and Other Backward Communities, would have availed the world-class education."

### **An Appeal to Conscience**

This isn't about politics. This isn't about language pride. This is about a weeping mother in a village who watches her brilliant son work in the fields because she cannot afford even government school expenses. This is about a girl in Dharmapuri who dreams of becoming a naval officer but has nowhere to nurture that dream. This is about ten-year-olds across Tamil Nadu who possess the same potential as children in Kerala, Karnataka, or Puducherry—but are denied the same chance.

Though this initiative was started by a Congress Prime Minister, successive non-Congress Governments at the Centre have also improved the scheme every year. They have provided more opportunities to rural children. They have made this initiative world-class. This shows that when it comes to children's future, political differences can be set aside.

Every political party in Tamil Nadu claims to follow Dr Ambedkar's principles. His portrait adorns government offices. Leaders garland his statues. But what would truly honour him?

Honouring Dr Ambedkar means recognising that the earth belongs to the living generation—today's children, not yesterday's policies.

**Honouring Dr Ambedkar means choosing children over politics, opportunity over ideology, and future over past. Honouring Dr Ambedkar means asking ourselves: If these schools are transforming lives in 666 districts across India, why should Tamil Nadu's 38 districts remain in darkness?**

Honouring Dr Ambedkar means choosing children over politics, opportunity over ideology, and future over past.

Honouring Dr Ambedkar means asking ourselves: If these schools are transforming lives in 666 districts across India, why should Tamil Nadu's 38 districts remain in darkness?

The Supreme Court has shown the way. The door is open. All that's needed is the moral courage to walk through it.

PreSense believes—and hopes—that Tamil Nadu's leadership will look beyond political considerations to the faces of village children whose brilliance is currently being buried in the dust of poverty. We hope they will remember that policies must serve the present generation, not bind them to decisions made before they were born.

We hope they will remember that every year of delay is another year of lost potential, another cohort of children denied their rightful chance.

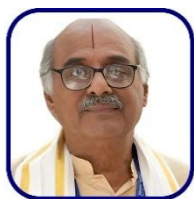
And we hope that soon—very soon—the story of Tamil Nadu's Navodaya schools will begin. So that one day, a child from Thanjavur or Tirunelveli can also scoop soil from their JNV campus with tears of gratitude, remembering the place where their impossible dreams became possible.

Because every child deserves that temple. Every child deserves that sacred soil. Every child deserves the chance to fly.

***The earth belongs to the living generation. And they are waiting.***

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**Nation**

## **Top Performers of 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha up to Winter Session**



*By Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor and Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor*



Now that the Budget Session 2026 has started, PreSense brings out the analysis of the performance of Members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha for the period from June 2024 till the end of the Winter Session 2025. Performance of Members of Parliament is evaluated as to how they participate in the proceedings, viz. Initiated debates, Private Members' Bills, Questions, and Supplementary Questions. A Quick Review of the performances of MPs:

Data courtesy: PRS Legislative Research

This analysis is based on the performance of all MPs from June 2024 till the end of the Winter Session 2025 (coinciding with the 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha)

Top performers for Total Tally (Initiated debates + Private Members Bills + Questions + Supplementary Questions)

### Lok Sabha

Rank	Name	State	Total Tally
1	Praveen Patel	Uttar Pradesh	252
2	Smita Uday Wagh	Maharashtra	250
3	Bidyut Baran Mahato	Jharkhand	240

### Rajya Sabha

Rank	Name	State	Total Tally
1	Medha Vishram Kulkarni	Maharashtra	348
2	Brijlal	Uttar Pradesh	311
3	Narayana Koragappa	Karnataka	311

### Top Performers for Initiated Debates

#### Lok Sabha

Rank	Name	State	Initiated Debates
1	N K Premachandran	Kerala	68
2	Hanuman Beniwal	Rajasthan	55
3	Jagdambika Pal	Uttar Pradesh	53

(Note: Sougata Ray from West Bengal also initiated 53 debates.)

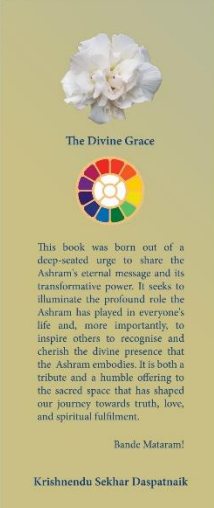
#### Rajya Sabha

Rank	Name	State	Debates Initiated
1	M. Thambidurai	Tamil Nadu	51
2	Fauzia Tahseen Ahmed Khan	Maharashtra	49
3	Sandosh Kumar	Kerala	45

Congratulations to the top performers.

In the February edition, we will analyse the performance of Parliamentary Standing Committees.

## Book Launch



**The Divine Grace**

This book was born out of a deep-seated urge to share the Ashram's eternal message and its transformative power. It seeks to illuminate the profound role the Ashram has played in everyone's life and, more importantly, to inspire others to recognise and cherish the divine presence that the Ashram embodies. It is both a tribute and a humble offering to the sacred space that has shaped our journey towards truth, love, and spiritual fulfilment.

Bande Mataram!

Krishnendu Sekhar Daspatnaik

If you want to know what the future of man and the earth is, and if you want to know the true spiritual life, go to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry or - in case it is not in India - Sri Aurobindo will tell you in his books.

CWAT, 20.7.46, 1944

*The Mother*

Our call is to young India. It is the young who must be the builders of the new world—not those who accept the competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as India's future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all who are free in mind and heart to accept a complexer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an exceeding of their lives self to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the nation and for humanity. This ideal can be as yet only a little seed and the life that embodies it a small nucleus, but it is our fixed hope that the seed will grow into a great tree and the nucleus be the heart of an ever-extending formation. It is with a confident trust in the spirit that inspires us that we take our place among the standard-bearers of the new humanity that is struggling to be born amidst the chaos of a world in dissolution and of the future India, the greater India of the rebirth that is to regenerate the mighty-outworn body of the ancient Mother.

— Sri Aurobindo

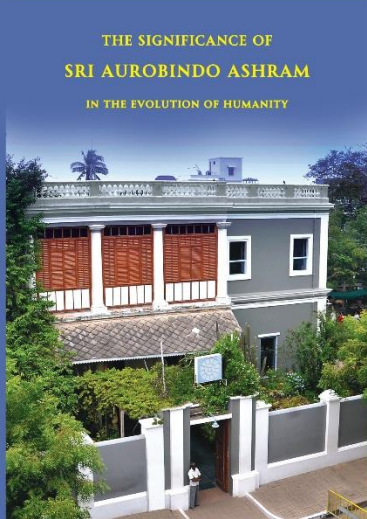
CWAT Vol. 1A, Essays in Philosophy and Yoga from the Standard Series (1930), P. 11

As a sacred laboratory of transformation, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram inaugurates humanity's ascent from the darkness of ignorance to the radiant, supramental Light and Ananda. With Sri Aurobindo as its precursor, the Ashram pioneers the transmutation of man into the new Race — the Superman — marking a decisive turning point in human evolution.

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**SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM**

On the occasion of the Centenary year (1926-2026) of Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry

This book is a tribute to Sri Aurobindo & The Mother

A Handbook on making India the Spiritual Guru of the World

To get this book titled "Significance of Aurobindo Ashram" authored by Shri Krishnendu Sekhar Daspatnaik, contact through

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eMail: krishnendusriaurobindoashram@gmail.com





## Visionary Titans

### From Industry to Academia: Forging India's Innovation-Driven Future



*By Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor*

**(Prof. Arunansu Haldar envisions transforming Indian education through industry-integrated curricula, democratized research funding, and "team science" to drive national innovation.)**



Prof. Arunansu Haldar, President (Vice-Chancellor) of Suresh Gyan Vihar University, brings over 32 years of distinguished industrial experience from Tata Steel Ltd, where he led product development and research across India and Europe. Holding a PhD in Metallurgical Engineering from IIT Kanpur, he has received the "Metallurgist of the Year" award from the



Ministry of Steel and holds several national and international patents with over 100 research publications. In this exclusive interview with Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor of PreSense, he shares his vision for transforming Indian higher education.

**Q1. You moved from a distinguished R&D career at Tata Steel to leading a university. How do you plan to leverage industrial expertise to reshape curriculum and research nationwide?**

My transition from over three decades in industrial R&D to university leadership is guided by one conviction: India cannot become a knowledge and innovation-driven economy unless our education system is tightly integrated with real industrial practice. My approach rests on five strategic pillars. First, I'm creating a blended curriculum where 30–40% focusses on application-driven learning, including process mapping, case studies, and field immersion linked to actual industrial scenarios. Second, I'm establishing Academic and Industry Advisory Boards with 40–50% industry representation to ensure programmes evolve continuously with technological changes. Third, I'm embedding industry experts as co-creators of learning through expert-led sessions and co-taught modules to strengthen contextual learning. Fourth, I'm promoting jointly supervised research where all capstone projects involve industry, with 50% of Master's research based on industrial datasets and PhD themes addressing emerging areas like hydrogen reduction, AI, and sustainability. Fifth, I'm ensuring deep industrial exposure through mandatory internships and faculty immersion programmes. My national vision includes creating multi-university, multi-industry centres of excellence addressing India's strategic needs. We need a structured, outcome-driven approach that blends intellectual depth with industrial relevance, preparing students to contribute meaningfully to India's technological future.

**Q2. How can India move beyond token MoUs and create a truly outcome-based R&D ecosystem?**

India signs hundreds of MoUs annually, yet few deliver real impact. We must shift from intent-driven partnerships to accountability-driven ecosystems. Every MoU must be strictly outcome-based with quantified deliverables—joint projects within 12–18 months, co-supervised theses, prototypes, and measurable IP outputs. Each must carry clear timelines and responsibility matrices, with the provision that non-performing MoUs are cancelled without hesitation. Strong review mechanisms are essential—quarterly progress checks, annual impact audits, and KPI-linked renewal decisions. Monitoring, not signing, creates meaningful collaboration. Industry-academia engagement must be continuous, not ceremonial, with regular technical meetings and joint workshops converting ideas into solutions. Research agendas must be co-created around national priorities such as green manufacturing, hydrogen metallurgy, AI-driven automation, and healthcare technologies. Both sides must be incentivised for outcomes—patents, prototypes, technology transfer, start-ups, and employment outcomes, not by the number of MoUs signed. India will succeed only when collaboration becomes disciplined, monitored, and outcome-focused.

**Q3. India has a historic legacy in metallurgy. How can India re-establish global leadership in advanced materials?**

India has the raw materials, talent, industry scale, and market size to reclaim global leadership in advanced materials. What we need now is focus, integration, and speed of execution. First, India must launch a mission-driven National Advanced Materials Programme focused on advanced steels, hydrogen-compatible materials, lightweight alloys, composites, and high-entropy materials. Like space and semiconductors, materials leadership requires long-term national commitment with industry at the centre. Second, we must build regional metallurgical innovation clusters that align with mineral geography. Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh are uniquely positioned to become national centres for advanced steel and materials engineering, integrating universities, R&D labs, pilot plants, start-ups, and



testing facilities. Third, India must shift from a resource exporter to a technology exporter, moving up the value chain to proprietary alloys and engineered materials for EVs, defence, hydrogen, and energy systems. Fourth, academia-industry collaboration must move from parallel efforts to co-creation through joint labs, shared funding, and co-supervised research. Finally, we must support deep-tech materials start-ups with pilot-scale infrastructure and risk capital. With mission focus, regional clusters, and disciplined execution, India can re-emerge as a global leader.

#### **Q4. What are the top three metallurgical research areas India must prioritise?**

India's transition to a high-tech, sustainable economy depends on breakthroughs in materials science. This should be a joint national consortium incorporating all relevant industries, universities, research labs, and government funding to ensure directional, focused development. India must focus on three high-impact domains. First, decarbonised iron and steel production—steel is India's industrial backbone, but also our largest source of industrial CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. We must lead in hydrogen-based ironmaking, low-carbon DRI-EAF routes, biomass, and circular steel technologies. Leadership in green steel is both an environmental necessity and a major export opportunity. Second, new-generation advanced functional materials—future technologies will be materials-driven. We must focus on 2D materials beyond graphene, high-entropy alloys, nano-structured steels, advanced coatings, battery materials, and rare-earth-efficient systems. This is critical for building strategic materials sovereignty and reducing import dependence. Third, materials for clean energy, circular economy, and sustainable infrastructure, including materials for renewable energy systems, hydrogen storage, recycling of critical metals, and lightweight alloys for mobility.

#### **Q5. Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam emphasised innovation. Why do many young Indians still prefer services over core R&D?**

Dr. Kalam urged India to become a nation of creators, yet many young Indians prefer services over core R&D. This isn't due to a lack of talent but systemic disincentives. First, industry is largely not serious about deep R&D—most companies prefer buying technology rather than developing it, treating R&D as a cost centre, not a value creator. Second, reward and promotion systems are skewed. Operations are prioritised over innovation, and outstanding researchers and non-performers are often treated similarly, discouraging excellence and risk-taking. Third, innovation in India is person-driven, not system-driven. There's no strong mission-mode national push where policy, funding, and industry are tightly aligned. Finally, services offer faster growth and predictability, whilst R&D demands patience with uncertain outcomes. We must bring private universities into fast-track research funding based on merit—research funding must not be restricted to elite institutes. We need to embed innovation early through mandatory hands-on projects, paid R&D internships, exposure to real industrial problems, maker labs, and national online access to high-end instrumentation. The way forward is clear: a national innovation mission, performance-linked rewards for R&D, serious industry-academia co-creation, wider research funding access, and early hands-on innovation exposure.

#### **Q6. What structural or cultural changes can institutions adopt to convert ideas into deep-tech start-ups?**

Deep-tech start-ups are where India can truly leapfrog because this space carries no legacy baggage, and the probability of breakthrough success amongst young innovators is significantly higher. But we must make systemic changes at three levels. Structurally, universities must create Technology Innovation Hubs where faculty, students, and industry co-develop prototypes, with shared advanced facilities, flexible academic policies including credit-based start-up projects, and dedicated seed funding to take ideas beyond the lab. Culturally, we must shift from producing jobseekers to technology creators. Failure must be normalised, interdisciplinary teams encouraged, and faculty rewards linked to patents,



technology transfer, and start-up mentorship, not only publications. Ecosystem-wise, early industry validation and investor engagement are critical through co-creation with industry mentors, real-world testbeds, strong incubation support, and regular demo days, ensuring technologies reach the market. If supported correctly, young innovators can rapidly convert ideas into patents, start-ups, and national technological capability.

**Q7. As President of SGVU, what is your long-term vision for the institution?**

My vision is to create universities that are future-ready, innovation-driven, globally connected, and socially responsive. Universities must evolve beyond traditional teaching models into engines of national capability-building. My aim is to transform universities into innovation-centric ecosystems with advanced research clusters in green hydrogen, AI/ML, and advanced materials, creating interdisciplinary problem-solving studios and promoting student-led innovation challenges. Curriculum reforms must deeply integrate industry through blended curricula combining fundamentals with industrial case studies, with 20–30% credits linked to hands-on industrial exposure. My vision is to build a culture of research, patents, and deep-tech start-ups by doubling research output, accelerating patent filings, creating Deep-Tech Incubation Centres, and strengthening collaborations with national labs and global universities. Faculty empowerment through continuous development programmes, transparent evaluation systems, and mechanisms for industry collaboration will prepare students not just for employment but for leadership in global society.

**Q8. NEP 2020 emphasises multidisciplinary learning. How will you break down departmental silos?**

Breaking departmental silos requires structured implementation beyond symbolic course mixing. First, we need clear multidisciplinary frameworks with common foundational courses, structured cross-listed electives, and interdisciplinary minors, with 15–25% credits from outside parent disciplines, ensuring breadth without diluting core depth. Second, multidisciplinary learning must extend beyond classrooms. I strongly believe in creating interdisciplinary problem-solving studios where students from engineering, sciences, management, agriculture, and humanities jointly work on industry, rural, and societal challenges. Real problems naturally dissolve silos. Third, faculty collaboration is critical through team-taught courses, co-supervised projects, and industry professionals as co-instructors, with incentives rewarding interdisciplinary teaching and research. Finally, large thematic programmes addressing smart agriculture, rural health, sustainability, and digital manufacturing should anchor multidisciplinary learning. We don't break silos by dismantling departments but by building structured, purpose-driven bridges between them.

**Q9. What top three policy suggestions would you offer to the Government of India for strengthening applied research, enhancing faculty capabilities, and attracting global talent?**

India stands at an inflection point with enormous talent, yet our research output still falls short. First, we must democratise research funding. Currently, 80–90% of competitive funding concentrates amongst elite institutions, excluding thousands of private and state universities where enormous talent remains underutilised. I recommend a unified national research fund where any institute can apply purely on merit, blind peer-review, removing institutional identity, dedicated 20–30% funding quotas for emerging private universities, and transparent scoring rubrics. Unless research funding is democratised, India will never create a broad-based innovation culture. Second, build national shared research facilities—Regional Advanced Research Centres every 200–300 kilometres with open-access infrastructure at nominal cost and centralised funding for maintenance, thus enabling thousands of researchers to participate in cutting-edge work. Third, reform the R&D ecosystem with performance-linked funding tied to prototypes, patents, and industry partnerships with strict timelines; global talent mobility through visiting scientist programmes and competitive fellowships; and



incentivised industry-academia co-development through joint labs, co-guided doctoral fellows, and tax incentives. These reforms will shift India from concentrated excellence to nationwide innovation at scale.

**Q10. How do you view the role of 'team science' in accelerating India's technological progress?**

India's future technological leadership will be driven by team science—collaborative, cross-disciplinary problem solving. The world's most transformative technologies have emerged from team science ecosystems where multiple disciplines, institutions, and countries co-create solutions. Challenges in energy transition, advanced materials, AI, health, and climate are too complex for isolated efforts. Educational institutions must introduce team-based, multidisciplinary projects, joint capstones, and problem-driven learning linked to real industrial and societal challenges from the undergraduate level. Faculty evaluation systems should reward collaborative research, joint patents, and co-supervised projects alongside individual publications. Students must shift from passive consumption to active creation by using digital tools, AI platforms, and global networks to build skills, showcase projects, collaborate with peers, and learn from global experts. Team science combined with digitally empowered youth can become India's strongest engine for innovation and national progress.

**Q11. What would be the impact of AI on education and innovation in the future?**

Artificial Intelligence will fundamentally reshape education and innovation by augmenting human intelligence, not replacing it. Its impact will be overwhelmingly positive if used thoughtfully and ethically. AI enables personalised learning through adaptive paths, allowing students to learn at their own pace with real-time feedback. Education will shift from information delivery to problem-solving, thus moving away from rote memorisation towards critical thinking, application, and creativity. Faculty roles will evolve from content deliverers to mentors and problem-solvers. AI reduces routine academic workload, allowing faculty to focus on research, innovation, and mentorship. It democratises access, bringing high-quality education to rural and underserved regions. For innovation, AI dramatically shortens research cycles through simulation and data-driven discovery, enables rapid prototyping, and lowers entry barriers for young innovators. The key is AI-assisted learning, not AI-dependent learning. Institutions must teach how to think with AI, not outsource thinking to it, redesigning assessment towards projects, reasoning, and originality, whilst training faculty and students in ethical AI use. AI won't replace teachers, researchers, or innovators, but those using AI effectively will replace those who don't.

There is a need to bring a paradigm shift in the classrooms, making it student-focused and interactive, bringing the students into the centre of the learning process, giving them ownership of their education to cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. AI and technologies will be immensely helpful for this.

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**OBITUARY**



With profound sorrow, PreSense mourns the sudden passing of Shri N V Kannan (73) on 15th January 2026. For fifteen years, he served Prime Point Foundation and our initiatives with unwavering dedication. A devoted worker of the Indian National Congress, he earned the respect of leaders across all parties. His loss leaves an irreplaceable void in our team.



May his Atma find eternal peace at the feet of Lord Sri Krishna.

Om Shanthi





## Podcasts



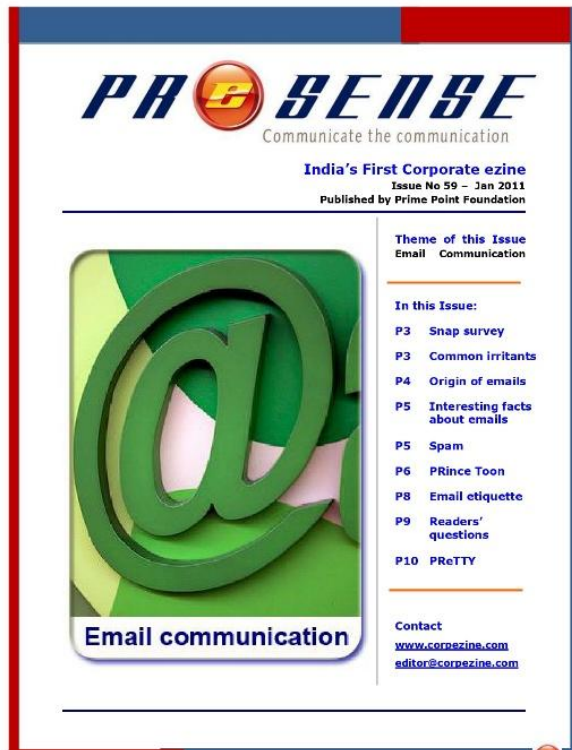
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**Visionary Titans: Audio Podcast on Prof. Arunansu Halder (in Hindi)**  
<https://youtu.be/8ITGWTZYhb0>



## Time Capsule Chronicles: Revisiting PreSense - 15 Years Ago – Jan 2011 “Email Communication”



Fifteen years on, this edition remains remarkably relevant. The focus on email etiquette and communication challenges demonstrates how little has changed in our digital behaviour, despite significant technological evolution.

The magazine effectively captures the email landscape of 2011—294 billion daily emails, 85% being spam—statistics that have only grown since. What's particularly striking is how the "common irritants" identified then persist today: unclear messages, poor subject lines, lack of courtesy, and the eternal frustration of unanswered emails. The advice to avoid "Reply All" abuse and unnecessary capital letters feels timeless.

The editorial's warning about password sharing presciently highlighted cybersecurity concerns that have become even more critical. Similarly, the emphasis on maintaining human touch in digital communication—something we still struggle with—shows genuine foresight.

Ray Tomlinson's email origin story, complete with that historic "QWERTYUIOP" message,

provides valuable historical context. The '@' symbol's adoption is a detail many take for granted today.

The practical email etiquette guide—18 points covering everything from proper spelling to avoiding chain letters—remains sound advice. The case study of Vicki Walker, dismissed for using capitals and red text, serves as an amusing cautionary tale about workplace communication norms.

However, the piece shows its age in certain aspects. Terms like "lingos" (rather than internet slang), references to discussion groups on Yahoo and Google, and the mention of Hotmail and AOL alongside Gmail reflect a different digital era.

The magazine's survey-driven approach and community engagement through the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan course demonstrate a commitment to practical, reader-focused content. Overall, this edition serves as both a useful time capsule and a reminder that fundamental communication principles transcend technological change.

**Review courtesy: Claude (Anthropic)**

**This edition can be downloaded from the link:**

**<https://www.prpoint.com/ezine/presense0111.pdf>**





## Freedom Fighters of India

### Ropuiliani (Mizoram)



*By C. Badri, Editor in Chief*

**(Queen Ropuiliani, the first Mizo female ruler, valiantly resisted British colonial expansion in the Lushai Hills, preserving indigenous autonomy through diplomacy and "tlawmngaihna" until her death.)**



Throughout the annals of India's colonial past, the stories of resistance are often dominated by names from the mainland. However, the remote and forested Lushai Hills—today's Mizoram—witnessed its saga of valour, etched into history by the indomitable Ropuiliani (1828–1895). As the first known Mizo Queen, Ropuiliani's courage and defiance against British rule stand as a testament to the strength and agency of women in the struggle for self-determination. This article delves deep into her life, the context of her reign, and her indelible legacy.

In the early 19th century, the Lushai Hills were inhabited by diverse Mizo tribes, each governed by chieftains or local rulers. Life revolved around jhum cultivation, clan loyalty, and intricate social customs. The British East India Company, having consolidated much of northeastern India, set its sights on the region, urging expansion for its

strategic and economic interests.

Colonial incursions began in earnest following a series of Mizo raids into the British-administered plains of Assam and Bengal. The British responded with punitive expeditions, aiming to curb local resistance and bring the hills under their administration. It was against this turbulent backdrop that Ropuiliani emerged as a leader.

Ropuiliani was born in 1828 into the royal family of the Lushai Hills, a lineage marked by both privilege and responsibility. Details of her early years are veiled in oral tradition, but she is remembered as a woman of intelligence, compassion, and steadfast resolve. Her marriage to a powerful local chief elevated her status, but it was the untimely death of her husband that thrust her into the unaccustomed role of regent and, eventually, the ruler.

At a time when leadership was predominantly a male prerogative, Ropuiliani's rise to power was exceptional. Assuming authority as the guardian of her minor son's chieftainship, she adeptly manoeuvred through court intrigues and external pressures. Her ability to negotiate, inspire loyalty, and command respect cemented her place as the first known Mizo Queen.

The British viewed the Lushai Hills as both a threat and an opportunity. The region's strategic position, coupled with its proximity to Burma and the tea-rich Brahmaputra Valley, made its pacification a colonial imperative. British officials, unfamiliar with the complex web of local allegiances, often resorted to coercion.

Ropuiliani, however, refused to submit meekly to British overlordship. She saw the encroachment not only as a threat to her own authority but also to the identity and autonomy of her people. By rallying local chiefs and warriors, she orchestrated a campaign of calculated resistance. Her leadership was marked by both diplomacy and defiance—she sent envoys to negotiate but refused to pay excessive tributes or accept the erasure of Mizo customs.

Unlike many rulers who capitulated in the face of overwhelming force, Ropuiliani personified a spirit of "tlawmngaihna", the Mizo ethic of selfless service and courage. She encouraged her people to unite, fortify their defences, and reject colonial dictates that sought to undermine their way of life.

Ropuiliani's resistance was not merely military; she wielded the tools of persuasion and diplomacy. She fostered alliances among neighbouring chiefs, creating a formidable network that frustrated British attempts at the divide-and-rule policy. Her court became a rallying point for opposition, a symbol of hope in a time of uncertainty.

Colonial records, though often biased, acknowledge the difficulty posed by Ropuiliani's opposition. When the British intensified their campaigns in the late 19th century, she stood firm. Skirmishes erupted as local warriors, under her influence, resisted British patrols and punitive forays into the hills.

Unable to win her submission through negotiation or intimidation, the British eventually resorted to a direct show of force. In a fateful encounter, Ropuiliani was captured by British troops. Even in captivity, she refused to compromise her dignity or betray her people's cause. Her steadfastness earned the grudging admiration of both friends and foes.

On January 3, 1895, Ropuiliani passed away, her death shrouded in the sorrow of a people who had lost their Queen but not her spirit. Though the colonial machinery would eventually subsume the Lushai Hills into the British Empire, Ropuiliani's legacy of resistance endured.

Ropuiliani's story is more than a footnote in the chronicles of resistance; it is a beacon of female leadership and indigenous agency. In an age when women rulers were rare, her assertiveness challenged not only colonial power but also patriarchal norms within Mizo society. She is remembered in folktales and songs, her name invoked as a symbol of courage and integrity.

Today, Ropuiliani occupies a cherished place in the collective memory of the Mizos. Statues, commemorative events, and literary works celebrate her life and sacrifice. Her legacy continues to inspire current movements for justice, equality, and self-determination, highlighting the cost of freedom and the importance of principled resistance.

The saga of Ropuiliani, the first known Mizo Queen, stands as a stirring chapter in the history of India's Northeast. Her defiance against British colonialism illuminated the path for future generations, proving that true leadership transcends gender and circumstance. As the hills she once ruled echo with the songs of her valour, Ropuiliani's story continues to inspire, a lasting tribute to the power of one woman's unwavering resolve in the face of empire.

## JAI HIND

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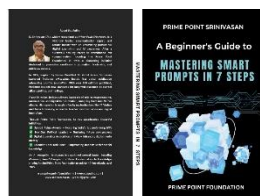




## Some of our Publications



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