

PRESENSE

Spreading Positive Vibrations
Issue No. 233 – July 2026
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Cover Story



Jantar Mantar Stir

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From the Desk of Managing Editor

Dear Reader,



On behalf of the Editorial Board, I am pleased to present the 233rd (July 2026) edition of *PreSense*, featuring another rich array of meaningful content.

I am very happy that this month, we are also releasing this edition with an audio version.

The ancient scriptures have been misinterpreted from British days to divide people. Right from the Vedas and Bhagavad Gita era, people are to be treated based on Guna and Karma. The editorial deals elaborately with this.

The recent Jantar Mantar stir has raised a lot of questions. The Cover Story deals with the lessons to be learnt by all political parties from this stir.

Other Highlights:

Prince cartoon

Exclusive interview with T S Krishna Murthy, Former Chief Election Commissioner of India

Freedom Fighter: Jagannatha Iyer

Review of the July 2006 edition of *PreSense*

Guest column on the talent gaps in India

As always, we value your valuable feedback at 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

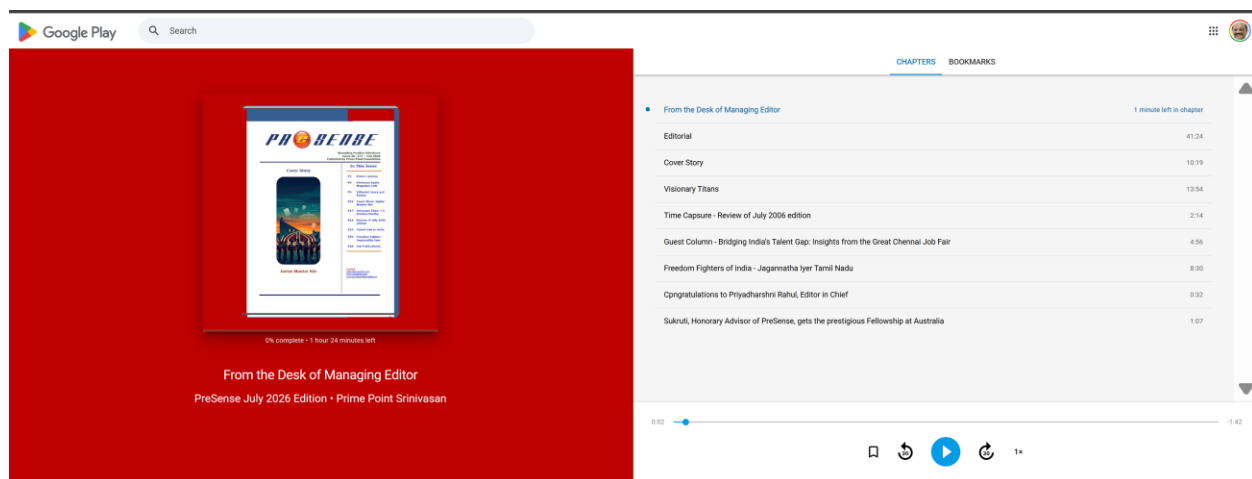


PRINCE

by Triambak Sharma



Triambak Sharma



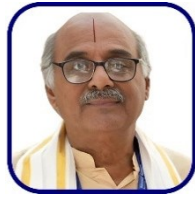
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Editorial

Guṇa and Karma, Not Lineage: Ancient Scriptures Reject Birth-Based Hierarchy



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

(This editorial debunks the myth of birth-based caste discrimination, proving through ancient scriptures, saints, and sages that Varna was originally a fluid, meritocratic system based strictly on aptitude and actions (Guṇa and Karma)).

The Truth of Varna: A Merit-Based Social Framework

Debunking the myth of birth-based hierarchy by explaining the original scriptural intent of Varna as a fluid system based on aptitude and action.

GUNA & KARMA: Merit Over Lineage

APTITUDE (Guna) **ACTION (Karma)**

Aptitude and Action: The Bhagavad Gita defines social roles by psychological temperament and chosen professional activities.

Universal Equality by Birth: The Thirukkural explicitly rejects birth-based hierarchies, asserting all living beings are born equal.

Historical Social Fluidity: Dr Ambedkar noted that ancient Shudra kings exercised supreme power and employed Brahmin ministers.

The Anatomy of a Functional Society

Cosmic Being

- INTELLECTUALS (Mouth)** - Sages, Scholars, Teachers
- PROTECTORS (Arms)** - Warriors, Administrators, Guardians
- WEALTH-CREATORS (Thighs)** - Merchants, Agriculturists, Traders
- SKILLED FOUNDATION-BUILDERS (Feet)** - Artisans, Labourers, Service Providers

EQUALITY OF THE 'FEET': Just as feet support the body, the Shudra workforce provided society's vital foundation, equal in dignity to all other roles.

LIVING PROOF OF MERITOCRACY

Sages Beyond Lineage: Sage Vaimiki and Maharishi Veda Vyasa attained the highest status through intellectual brilliance.

The Sainly Tradition: Most Nayanmar and Azhwar saints came from ordinary backgrounds, including weavers and hunters.

Concept	Original Scriptural Intent	Modern Misinterpretation
Basis of Status	Guna (Aptitude) & Karma (Action)	Jaati (Hereditary Birth)
Social Mobility	Fluid and meritocratic	Rigid and permanent
Relationship	Mutual respect and interdependence	Vertical hierarchy and discrimination

NotebookLM

Every modern society naturally categorises its citizens depending upon their professions. We recognise and classify individuals as doctors, lawyers, chartered accountants, teachers, administrators, and entrepreneurs. In modern civil society, these professions are viewed as complementary components of a functional economy—a doctor is not intrinsically superior to a chartered accountant, nor is an advocate superior to a teacher. Each professional contributes a vital service, and all are accorded equal dignity and respect under the law.

Yet, when examining ancient Indian social structures, many mistakenly believe that the original classification system was inherently discriminatory, hierarchical, and permanently fixed by birth. To uncover the truth and dispel these prevailing myths, we must journey back to our foundational texts—the *Rig Veda*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Thirukkural*. A dispassionate examination reveals a highly sophisticated, merit-based system of professional division that was tragically mutilated over millennia into a rigid, hereditary caste system.

The Rig Veda and Purusha Suktham: A Scientific, Anatomical Metaphor

To understand the earliest description of social structure, we must refer to the *Purusha Suktham* from the *Rig Veda* (Mandala 10, Hymn 90, Verses 11 and 12). These verses describe the cosmic organism (*Purusha*) and illustrate how different functional roles form the collective body of society:

Rig Veda 10.90.11:

यत्पुरुषं व्यदधुः कतिधा व्यकल्पयन् ।
मुखं किमस्य कौ बाहू कावूरू पादावुच्येते ॥ ११ ॥

Transliteration:

yat puruṣam vyadadhuḥ katidhā vyakalpayan |
mukham kimasya kau bāhū kāvūrū pādāvucyete || 11 ||

Meaning:

"When they contemplated the Cosmic Being, into how many parts did they divide Him? What was His mouth called? What were His arms, His thighs, and His feet called?"

Rig Veda 10.90.12:

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः ।
ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥ १२ ॥

Transliteration:

brāhmaṇo'sya mukhamāsīd bāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtaḥ |
ūrū tadasya yadvaiśyaḥ padbhyām śūdro ajāyata || 12 ||

Meaning:

"The *Brahmana* was His mouth; the *Rājanya* (Kshatriya) became His arms; His thighs became the *Vaishya*; and from His feet, the *Shudra* was born."

Deconstructing the Misinterpretation

In modern political discourse, these verses are frequently misinterpreted and exploited to demean the scriptures, falsely claiming that they introduced vertical hierarchy and subjugation. Critics often point to the reference to the "feet" to argue that the *Shudra* was relegated to an inferior or degraded status.



This is a complete distortion of the allegory. The *Purusha Suktham* uses the human body as a holistic metaphor to explain the interdependence of society:

- **The Mouth (*Brahmana*):** Represents intellectual pursuits, teaching, philosophy, and spiritual guidance. A scholar or teacher must cultivate clarity of expression, wisdom, and a bright, radiant countenance.
- **The Arms (*Kshatriya*):** Represents governance, protection, and defence. A leader or defender requires strong arms and shoulders to protect society from harm and preserve order.
- **The Thighs (*Vaishya*):** Represents commerce, agriculture, trade, and wealth generation. The thighs support the torso and facilitate movement, symbolising the economic pillars that carry the weight of societal prosperity.
- **The Feet (*Shudra*):** Represents service, craftsmanship, physical labour, and foundational support. The feet carry the entire body; without strong feet, the entire organism will collapse.

Far from being a tool of degradation, the feet are revered in Indian tradition as sacred foundations. Just as no human being can consider their feet inferior to their hands or mouth—since all organs are essential for survival—no functional class in society was considered superior or inferior. The feet have never been regarded as an inferior part of body. In fact all the devotees touch and pray at the Lotus Feet of Gods with reverence only and seek His/Her blessings. People younger in age touch the feet of elders they meet to seek their blessings. The text outlines a scientific division of physical and mental capabilities needed to maintain societal health.

Furthermore, in contemporary political rhetoric, the term *Shudra* is often incorrectly weaponized to denote an inferior or subjugated rank. In the original Vedic framework, *Shudra* referred to the essential workforce, artisans, service providers, and craftsmen whose skilled labour sustained civilised life. It carried no connotation of low status or indignity. All four groups were equal in status, each carrying out their adopted profession with mutual respect.

The Bhagavad Gita: Aptitude and Action (4500 Years Ago)

The *Bhagavad Gita* builds directly upon this Vedic foundation, explicitly defining how an individual aligns with a particular functional role. In Chapter 4, Verse 13, Lord Krishna clarifies:

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 4 Verse 13

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥

Transliteration:

cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ

tasya kartāram api mām viddhy akartāram avyayam



Meaning:

"The fourfold system was created by Me according to people's qualities (attributes) and activities (professions). Although I am the creator of this system, know Me to be the non-doer and changeless."

Lord Krishna explicitly anchors social classification to two parameters: **Guna** (inherent temperament and psychological aptitude) and **Karma** (one's chosen actions and profession). The text does not refer to *Janma* (birth). A person's role was determined by his personal abilities and conduct—much like modern professional specialization—rather than their lineage.

The Thirukkural: Universal Equality (2,000 Years Ago)

Roughly 2,000 years ago, the Tamil poet-philosopher Thiruvalluvar reaffirmed this exact egalitarian philosophy in the *Thirukkural*. In Kural 972, he writes:

Thirukkural : 972

பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும்
சிறப்பொவ்வா
செய்தொழில் வேற்றுமை யான்.

Transliteration:

*Pirappokkum ella uyirkkum sirappovva
seydhozhil vaetrumai yaan.*

Meaning:

"All living beings are equal by birth; distinctions arise only through the differing qualities of their actions and occupations."

Thiruvalluvar explicitly rejects birth-based hierarchies, asserting that every individual enters the world with identical moral worth. Distinction (*sirappu*) is not inherited; it is earned solely through the integrity, character, and excellence one demonstrates in their work (*seydhozhil*).

Saint Ramanuja: The Practical Reformer (1,000 Years Ago)

This scriptural principle of equal worth based on character was put into practice by visionary reformers. A stellar historical example is **Saint Ramanuja** (1017–1137 CE).

Adhering to the true spirit of the *Gita* and the *Thirukkural*, Ramanuja actively broke down birth-based barriers. He invited individuals from all communities—regardless of lineage—into temple administration, initiated them into spiritual practices, and declared them equal in the eyes of the Divine. By referring to marginalized groups as *Thirukkulathar* (people of divine lineage), he demonstrated that human dignity and spiritual standing depend entirely on devotion and character (*Guna* and *Karma*), forcefully rejecting hereditary discrimination.

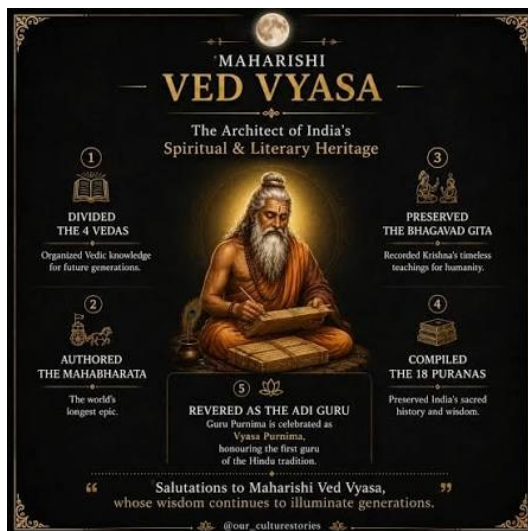




Proof in Our Spiritual Masters: Exalted by Character, Not Birth

If Sanatana Dharma were truly a system of birth-based privilege, how could its most sacred, revered pillars come from families far outside any privileged lineage?

Consider **Sage Valmiki**, who composed the timeless epic *Ramayana*. He was not born into an elite priestly household; yet, by virtue of his profound transformation, penance, and literary brilliance (*Guṇa* and *Karma*), he became Maharishi Valmiki—revered across millions of homes as the *Adi Kavi* (the First Poet).



Consider **Maharishi Veda Vyasa**, who classified the four Vedas, authored the *Mahabharata*, and penned the *Puranas*. He was born to Satyawati, a fisherwoman. Yet, his monumental intellect and spiritual realization elevated him to the status of *Maha Guru* (Guru of Gurus). To this day, the entire nation celebrates *Guru Purnima* in his honour!

Look at the Supreme Divinities themselves. **Lord Krishna** was born into a family of cowherds in the Yadava lineage. **Lord Rama** was born a Kshatriya prince. Yet both are worshipped universally across all strata of society as Supreme Avatars, adored not for their lineage, but for their divine consciousness, righteousness, and service to humanity.

In the sacred land of Tamil Nadu, spiritual devotion transcended all societal divisions. The vast majority of the **63 Nayanmars** (the legendary Shaivite saints) and the **12 Azhwars** (the exalted Vaishnavite saints) belonged to diverse, ordinary families—weavers, potters, hunters, kings, fishermen, and farmers. Only a tiny handful came from priestly backgrounds. Yet today, their

idols are sanctified, worshipped, and housed inside the sanctum sanctorum of grand Shiva and Vishnu temples!

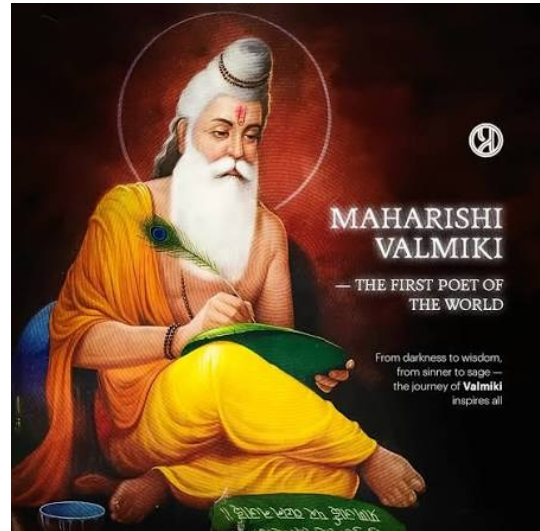
Ancient Bharat never judged or worshipped an individual by the accident of their birth. It bowed in awe to their *Guṇa* and *Karma*.

Colonial Divide-and-Rule and Modern Vote-Bank Politics

How, then, did such an open, merit-based civilisational heritage become tainted and inherently discriminatory?

The systematic weaponisation of caste was the classic strategy perfected by British colonial rulers. To consolidate their administrative grip over a vast, culturally unified nation, the British instituted rigid census categorisations, converting fluid, professional occupational guilds into unyielding, competitive socio-legal castes. By sowing deep division along caste and religious lines, the empire successfully fractured Indian societal solidarity.

Tragically, this colonial legacy did not end with independence. In modern times, political parties routinely resurrect distorted interpretations of *Varnasrama Dharma* for opportunistic vote-bank politics. They maliciously weaponise terms to falsely portray Sanatana Dharma as a tool of oppression and discrimination. By misrepresenting ancient texts, political cartels intentionally keep society divided to secure short-term electoral gains, undermining our collective heritage.



Restoring the Authentic Perspective



Scholars and social architects, including Dr B.R. Ambedkar, rightly criticized the corrupted social reality. Dr Ambedkar opposed the entrenched caste system (*Jaati*) precisely because it had abandoned merit and aptitude, trapping individuals in rigid compartments based purely on birth. His critique targeted the degenerated practice, which stood in direct contradiction to the egalitarian principles of our ancient texts.

In his seminal historical research '*Who Were the Shudras?*', Dr B.R. Ambedkar thoroughly dismantled the myth that lower functional classes were historically barred from governance. Citing ancient classical texts, Dr Ambedkar demonstrated that early Indian monarchs—such as King Paijavana—were Shudras who conducted great Vedic sacrifices and employed learned

Brahmins as their court priests and ministers. He highlighted that in ancient Bharat, social status was fluid, enabling Shudra rulers to exercise supreme sovereign power while Brahmins served under them as advisers. Dr Ambedkar asserted that this degradation occurred only in later centuries when flexible social roles calcified into rigid, hereditary castes. This historical analysis by Dr Ambedkar further reinforces that ancient Indian governance was determined by capability and administrative merit, never by birthright.

Just as modern civil society respects lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, and teachers without declaring one superior to another, our ancient foundational texts envisioned a society where every profession was respected as essential to the social whole.

Our ancient wisdom does not pray for a select few, nor does it sanction the exclusion of any human soul. The sacred rituals of Sanatana Dharma culminate with universal blessings for all living beings:

Sanskrit Mantra:
 सर्वे जनाः सुखिनो भवन्तु ।
 समस्त मङ्गलानि सन्तु ॥

Transliteration:

Sarve Janāḥ Sukhino Bhavantu |

Samasta Maṅgalāni Santu ||

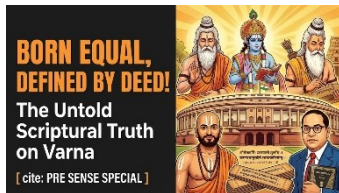
Meaning:

"May all people everywhere be happy and prosperous. May all auspiciousness and well-being prevail across the universe."

By correctly understanding the *Rig Veda*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Thirukkural*, the revolutionary acts of Saint Ramanuja, and the exalted lives of our great sages, we dismantle the persistent myths surrounding *Varna*. True human worth has never been a matter of birth—it remains, as it always was, a matter of character, conduct, and contribution to society.

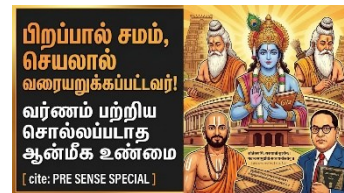
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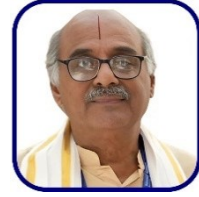


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Cover Story

The Jantar Mantar Stir: A Time for National Introspection

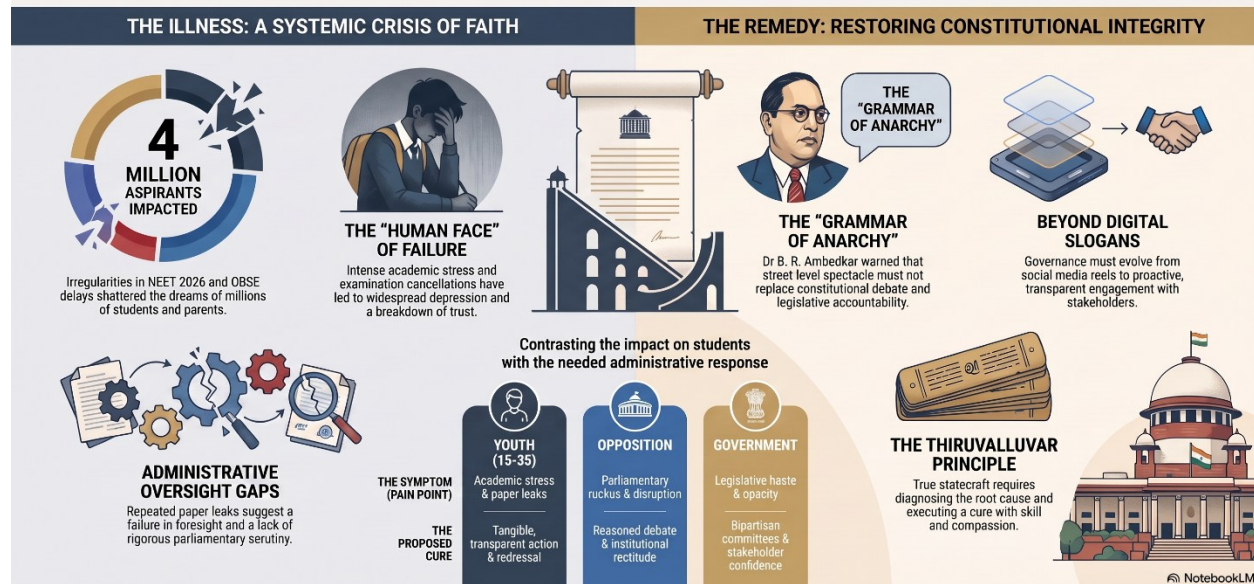


By Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor

(This cover story urges the government and opposition to stop political confrontation and introspect, addressing the root causes of youth anguish over exam leaks through empathy, transparency, and constitutional methods.)

National Introspection: Finding a Cure for India's Youth Crisis

To advocate for a transition from political confrontation to systemic reform in response to national examination irregularities and youth unrest.



Over two thousand years ago, the immortal Tamil philosopher Saint Thiruvalluvar outlined the foundational principle of crisis management in Kural 948:

Thirukkural 948

நோய்நாடி நோய்முதல் நாடி அதுதணிக்கும்
வாய்நாடி வாய்ப்பச் செயல்.

Transliteration:

Nōynāṭi nōymutal nāṭi atutaṇikkum

vāynāṭi vāyppac ceyal.

Translation:

"Diagnose the illness, trace its root cause, seek the appropriate remedy, and execute the cure with skill."

Though placed under the treatise on medicine, this timeless wisdom applies directly to statecraft, governance, and public administration. The recent Gen Z demonstrations at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, have sparked intense national debate. Beyond the legal ramifications, the political sparring, and the ongoing judicial proceedings, this agitation leaves a profound question lingering in the national consciousness: **Are we addressing the symptoms, or are we truly seeking a cure for the root cause?**

The Human Face Behind the Agitation



The demonstration at Jantar Mantar was initially spearheaded by climate activist Sonam Wangchuk (59) and social media coordinator Abhijeet Dipke (30). As the movement gradually gathered national attention, thousands of genuine students and anxious parents across India began participating spontaneously, largely unconcerned with the background or political affiliations of the organisers. They were driven by an overwhelming, collective grief.

To comprehend why everyday citizens poured onto the streets, one must step away from political television studios and enter the homes of middle-class India.

Gopika (name changed on request), the mother of an aspiring medical student, shared her heartbreaking ordeal with *PreSense*:

"My son Karthik (name changed) wrote the NEET examination in 2025 after months of gruelling, relentless preparation. Falling short by a narrow margin, he dedicated an entire year of his youth to re-studying for the May 2026 attempt. When news broke regarding the examination irregularities and subsequent cancellation, he fell into deep depression. He was

utterly broken and refused to sit for the re-examination. My husband and I spent sleepless nights motivating him. He reluctantly appeared again, but the emotional trauma had taken its toll—his score plummeted. His dream of serving as a doctor was shattered."

Nearly 2.5 million aspirants appeared for NEET in May 2026. Millions of parents like Gopika and children like Karthik suffered in silence. Their anguish was further exacerbated by subsequent processing delays in CBSE results affecting another 1.5 million students. With reports of recurring examination paper leaks across national and state-level tests in recent years, the dreams of an entire generation seemed to be crumbling under systemic failure.

It was this deep-seated, unspoken frustration that drove everyday citizens to Jantar Mantar. Regrettably, whenever public anguish spills into the open, anti-social elements and opportunistic groups inevitably seek to exploit the chaos. While law enforcement agencies and the Judiciary deal with instances of violence, the nation must not lose sight of the "loud, painful message" sent by our youth. Statutory bills alone cannot heal a broken heart; only empathy, accountability, and absolute transparency can restore lost faith.

Dr B. R. Ambedkar on Constitutional Integrity

"If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing, in my judgement, we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha. Where constitutional means are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the 'Grammar of Anarchy' and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us."

— Dr B. R. Ambedkar

(Final Address to the Constituent Assembly, 25th November 1949)

Opposition Accountability: Abandoning Ruckus for Responsible Statecraft

In any healthy democracy, a robust Opposition is the vital custodian of public interest. When a government stumbles, the Opposition has a sacred duty to hold the executive accountable through reasoned debate and institutional rectitude. However, in the 18th Lok Sabha, a troubling trend has taken firm root: the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, routinely initiates Parliamentary sessions by constructing contentious narratives that stall legislative proceedings. Continuously creating a ruckus in the highest temple of democracy, forcing frequent adjournments, and weaponising unverified claims do not serve the nation's interest.

During the height of the Jantar Mantar protests, senior Opposition leaders chose to lead an unannounced march towards the official residence of the Prime Minister. Marching unannounced into a premier, high-security zone presents severe security risks. Bypassing structured debate in Parliament in favour of street-level spectacle, combined with the use of uncivilised rhetoric against sitting Union Ministers and distinguished academic leaders—such as the Director of IIT Madras—severely degrades our democratic culture.

Holding up a copy of the Constitution or displaying portraits of Dr B. R. Ambedkar remains purely symbolic if one ignores his core teachings. As Dr Ambedkar warned in 1949, when constitutional remedies are readily available, replacing legislative debate with perpetual disruption creates what he termed the "*Grammar of Anarchy*".

India's parliamentary history offers far nobler precedents. During the severe economic crisis of the early 1990s, Opposition stalwarts like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L. K. Advani demonstrated statesmanlike dignity. They vehemently opposed the ruling Congress on policy grounds, yet worked constructively with Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao to ensure national stability. They proved that an Opposition can be fierce without being adversarial to the state, earning the trust of the electorate through responsible leadership.

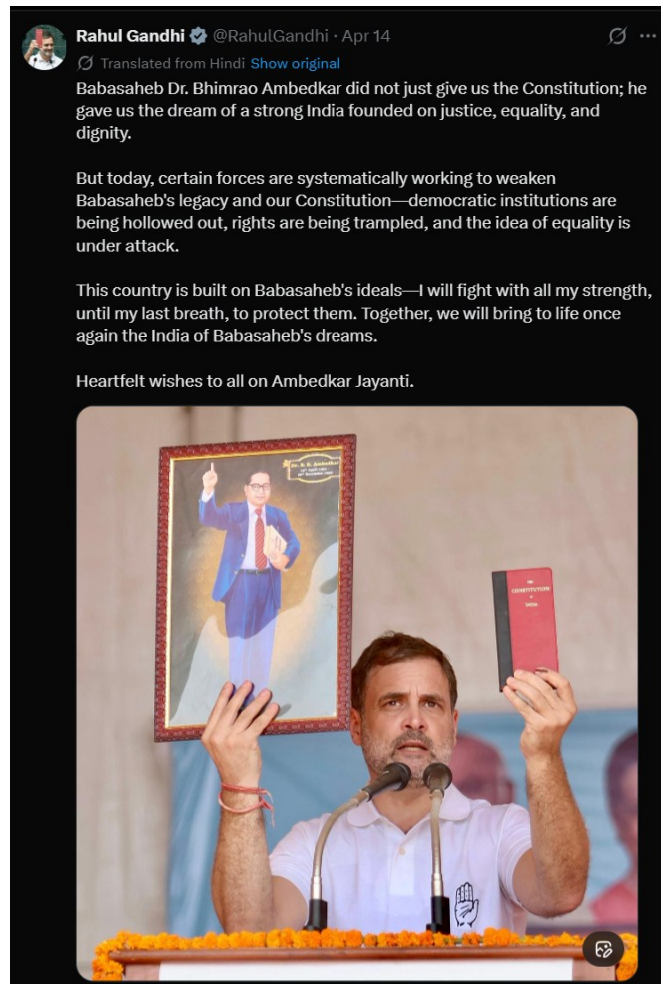
Governance in the Instagram Age: Beyond Slogans and Legislative Haste

Equally, the ruling dispensation must engage in deep, unvarnished self-reflection. After being in power for over twelve years, any administration is naturally bound to generate a degree of public fatigue. Pointing to political opportunism cannot absolve administrative machinery of its core duties. When competitive examination paper leaks recur, a failure of administrative foresight and oversight cannot be denied.

Over the past decade, a concerning legislative pattern has emerged where major bills are passed in haste without adequate parliamentary discussion or detailed scrutiny by Parliamentary Standing Committees. Governance requires taking opposition parties and key stakeholders into confidence before enacting sweeping policy shifts.

When protests mounted, the Prime Minister released a selfie video message on Instagram acknowledging the aspirants' pain. While engaging directly with citizens on digital platforms is a modern necessity, a social media reel alone cannot resolve a systemic crisis.

Today's youth—living in a fast-paced, digital age—are completely immune to political jargon, grand speeches, and public relations exercises. They demand swift, tangible, and transparent action. Youngsters between the ages of 15 and 35 face immense academic stress, rising education costs, and intense career competition. When administrative channels appear distant or unapproachable, frustration inevitably boils over. The government must play a far more proactive role in bridging this gap, stepping away from administrative opacity, and rebuilding genuine, ground-level trust among our youth.



The Path Forward: A Unifying Call

Prime Minister Narendra Modi leads the nation at a complex juncture in global history. India faces delicate geopolitical challenges, external headwinds, and domestic polarization. At such a time, the nation cannot afford a permanent fault line between its government, its political opposition, and its youth.

The Jantar Mantar protest must be treated as a pivotal moment for national healing. *PreSense* humbly appeals to both the Government and the Opposition to step back from political confrontation and convene a high-level, bipartisan committee—inclusive of student representatives and educational experts—to completely overhaul India's examination and youth-redressal frameworks.

Let us diagnose the illness, trace its true root cause, and execute the cure with skill and compassion. For when India's youth succeed, Bharat flourishes.

Jai Hind. Vande Mataram.

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Congratulations to Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor-in-Chief

Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor-in-Chief of *PreSense*, was honoured with the prestigious "**NCC Achievers Award 2026**" by NCC Alumini Club. Lt. General Veerendra Vats, Director General of NCC, presented the Awards to her in Delhi on 15th July 2026 in the presence of the President and Members of NCC Alumini Club.

PreSense is proud of you, Priya!



தமிழ்நாடு நிர்देशலய கி பூர்வ சரிசரி கைடு Advocate
PRIYADHARSHNI RAHUL - Central Govt Counsel (Supreme Court) & Chairperson, Sansadratna Awards Committee கி
சரிசரி அபிவர்த்தன அவார்ட் 2026 கி சவன கி லிஃர் வுதூ-வுதூ வயாஃர்
2005, YEP UK 2005, First ever girl cadet from Tamil Nadu to go to YEP UK and be raised to the rank of Senior Captain, PLA Card Holder of contingent
Central Govt Counsel, Supreme Court
DMC Asst Standing Counsel
Chairman, Sansadratna Awards Committee
Editor in Chief, PreSense

Visionary Titans

T S Krishna Murthy

Safeguarding the Soul of Indian Democracy



Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor-in-Chief

Introduction

In this edition of *Visionary Titans* for *PreSense*, Editor-in-Chief **Priyadharshni Rahul** engages in a candid, stirring conversation with **Shri T S Krishna Murthy**, former Chief Election Commissioner of India. A former Indian Revenue Service officer who rose to the highest echelons of public administration, Shri Krishna Murthy etched his name in history by conducting the 2004 Lok Sabha elections entirely with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) across all 543 constituencies and introducing NOTA to empower the Indian voter.

In this interview, he reflects on his uncompromising administrative integrity, defends the technological credibility of EVMs, outlines urgent electoral reforms—including replacing the First-Past-The-Post system—and shares timeless principles for the nation's youth.



Priyadharshni Rahul: *Good day, Sir. It is an honour to have you on PreSense for our Visionary Titans series. You joined the civil services in 1963, rising from the Indian Revenue Service to Secretary to the Government of India, and ultimately Chief Election Commissioner. How has this extraordinary journey been for you?*

T S Krishna Murthy: Thank you very much for inviting me. In a nutshell, my journey began in 1961 when I was barely 19 and a half years old; I joined the Bank of India as a probationary officer. My intense desire, however, was to enter the civil services. I appeared for the exam in 1962 and joined the Indian Revenue Service. Initially, it felt like a disappointment not making it to the IAS, but thanks to my mother's motivation, I recovered quickly. Looking back across more than four decades in governance, I enjoyed every posting and have absolutely no regrets.

The civil service is perhaps the only career in which an officer is empowered with the right to be independent, to stand up for truth and integrity, and to differ with authority when necessary. Over the years, I worked with some exceptional superiors as well as some demanding political bosses, but the journey was extraordinarily fulfilling.

Priyadharshni Rahul: *You are widely admired for your fearlessness and grit in standing up to political pressure. In today's bureaucrat-politician dynamic, officers are often expected to be 'yes-masters'. How did you cultivate the strength to say 'no' to Ministers when ethics demanded it?*

T S Krishna Murthy: Although I had many confrontations with politicians, later in my career as Secretary of the Department of Company Affairs, I faced a very difficult political boss and felt so frustrated that I contemplated quitting the civil service altogether. At that crucial juncture, a senior retired IAS officer, Mr M. Ramakrishnayya, visited my office. Seeing my distress, he imparted a lesson that sounded like a modern *Bhagavad Gita* to me. He told me, "As a civil servant, you have no right to quit. You have a duty to fight for truth and integrity. Never give up; fight for what is right." That gave me immense moral clarity.

On one occasion, a Minister rang me up late at night demanding to know why I had not executed his verbal directive. I replied that I had submitted the official file with a detailed three-page note explaining why his directive was unviable and unethical. I added in my note: "If despite the above, the Minister desires this to be done, he may issue suitable written instructions, which will of course be implemented." The Minister asked how he could overrule such an extensive objection on record. I told him, "That is your decision. If you feel it is right, give the order in writing, and I shall obey." The file was returned the next morning unsigned, and the matter ended there. If an officer maintains absolute honesty, nobody can force them to compromise.

Priyadharshni Rahul: *Sir, 2004 was a historic watershed moment when India conducted the general elections across all 543 Lok Sabha constituencies using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). What inspired that monumental decision, and how did you overcome the administrative and logistical hurdles?*

T S Krishna Murthy: First, let me clarify that introducing EVMs was a collective triumph of the Election Commission and our engineers at Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL). While limited trials had been conducted by my distinguished predecessors in select State Assembly constituencies, taking the bold leap to deploy EVMs nationally across nearly 800,000 polling stations in 2004 was a mammoth undertaking.

To convince rural voters and build public trust, we devised creative outreach initiatives. We sent EVMs to remote villages on bullock carts. At village gatherings, we played popular film music to gather crowds, and then let citizens physically touch, press the buttons, and operate the machines themselves. Once people experienced the simplicity of pressing a button, their apprehensions evaporated. Before rolling them out, I also consulted a committee headed by former IIT Director Mr Indiresan. They had tasked 50 electronic engineers to try and hack or break the machine's internal logic, and not a single flaw could be found. That gave us supreme confidence.

Priyadharshni Rahul: *Despite their proven success over two decades, losing political parties frequently accuse EVMs of being tampered with and demand a return to paper ballots. How do you address these doubts?*

T S Krishna Murthy: Returning to paper ballots would be the single worst mistake Indian democracy could make. We must not forget the dark days of paper ballots—endless invalid votes, booth capturing, ballot box stuffing by musclemen, and days of anxious waiting for counting results. EVMs eliminated invalid votes in entirety, saved thousands of tonnes of paper, and brought absolute efficiency and speed to counting.

When senior leaders challenged the EVM before the Supreme Court, the apex court asked them to demonstrate how the EC's Standalone EVMs could give a wrong result. They failed to prove any flaw. Ironically, those very leaders went on to win subsequent elections conducted

on EVMs and became Chief Ministers! The Indian EVM is a standalone, battery-operated calculator-like device; it has no internet connectivity or wireless capability to be hacked. Doubting the machine when you lose and praising the system when you win is pure political rhetoric. By all means, refine technology with tools like VVPAT, but do not abandon progress.



(T S Krishna Murthy (first from left), Chief Election Commissioner, presenting the results of the 14th General Elections held in 2004 using EVMs in all the Constituencies to President Dr Abdul Kalam. N Gopalswamy (second from left) and B B Tandon (fourth from left), Election Commissioners looking on)

Priyadharshni Rahul: *You have been an outspoken advocate for structural electoral reforms. Why is there such a systemic delay in implementing reforms that are essential for robust democracy?*

T S Krishna Murthy: Political parties are comfortable with the status quo because it allows short-term electoral manipulations. The most critical reform needed today is reviewing our **First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)** voting system. Under FPTP, candidates often win elections by securing barely 25% or 30% of the polled votes in a fragmented contest. Can we truly claim that a representative speaks for the majority of their constituency when 70% of the electorate voted against him?

I have consistently proposed a **percentage threshold rule**. To be declared elected, a candidate must secure a minimum threshold—starting with at least 33.3% (one-third) of the valid votes polled, gradually moving towards 50% plus one vote. This single reform would force political parties to transcend narrow caste, religious, or regional vote-banks and seek broader consensus among the electorate.

Priyadharshni Rahul: India currently has over 2,000 registered political parties, yet only around 60 actively contest elections. How should we address this issue?

T S Krishna Murthy: Political parties in India are multiplying like mice in a barn! Hundreds of parties are registered not for legitimate political participation, but as tax-haven fronts, money-laundering tools, or lobbying centres to extract leverage.

We have comprehensive statutes governing public companies, Partnerships, trusts, and societies, yet India has no specific legislation regulating political parties. We urgently need a dedicated **Comprehensive Political Parties Act** that legally defines a political party, mandates internal organizational democracy, enforces strict auditing of party finances, and deregisters any party that fails to contest elections over a prolonged period.

Priyadharshni Rahul: Another major bottleneck is the years-long delay in settling election petitions in courts. What solution do you propose?

T S Krishna Murthy: Election disputes currently pending before High Courts take three to five years to resolve—sometimes outlasting the full term of the legislature! This renders the legal remedy meaningless.

We should adopt a model similar to Brazil, where the Election Commission itself functions as a specialised court presided over by a sitting Supreme Court judge, for adjudicating all election petitions within a strict timeline of six months to one year. Fast-tracking election dispute resolution is vital to restoring public faith in the electoral verdict.

Priyadharshni Rahul: In your distinguished tenure, you interacted closely with five Prime Ministers. Could you share your personal impressions of them?

T S Krishna Murthy: I had the privilege of working during the Prime Ministerships of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda, Shri I.K. Gujral, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Dr Manmohan Singh. I had personal interactions with them. Each possessed distinct leadership qualities.

I held immense admiration for **P.V. Narasimha Rao**. In one of the Cabinet meetings, when a Minister engaged in prolonged rhetoric without substance, Shri Narasimha Rao would firmly interject, *"I am not interested in words; I want action!"* He was an exceptionally decisive administrator.

I also cherish my encounter with **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**. When I assumed office as Election Commissioner, I called on him and asked if he had any message for me. Shri Vajpayee gave me a memorable response: *"Governments and political parties will come and go, but the Election Commission must remain steadfast to safeguard and protect Indian democracy."*

Working with **Dr Manmohan Singh** during his tenure as Finance Minister was an equally enriching experience. He was an administrator of gentle humility and profound intellect who treated officers with deep affection. Unfortunately, he could not blossom as a Prime Minister because of very many challenges he faced.

Priyadharshni Rahul: Finally, Sir, as closing remarks for PreSense readers and the younger generation who aspire to serve India, what five fundamental principles should never be compromised?

T S Krishna Murthy: I offer five core values for the youth of our nation:

1. **Uncompromising Respect for the Rule of Law:** Democracy collapses the moment individuals or institutions consider themselves above the law. The rule of law must remain supreme.
2. **Earn Money Through Hard Work:** Never seek shortcuts for wealth. True wealth and lasting satisfaction come only through honest efforts and integrity.



3. **Empathy in Public Service:** Whether you become a civil servant, a professional, or a political leader, always evaluate your actions from the perspective of the common citizen. Ask yourself: *"How many lives will positively benefit from this decision?"*
4. **Punctuality and Respect for Time:** Time lost is national progress lost. Delays in decision-making and project execution have cost our country dearly. Respect time rigorously.
5. **Living by the Thirukkural:** Practice the immortal wisdom of Saint Thiruvalluvar, who identified four vices to be eliminated in toto: **Azhukkaru** (Jealousy), **Ava** (Greed/Avarice), **Veguli** (Anger), and **Inna Sol** (Harsh Words).

If young people shun these four evils and uphold integrity, they need not seek righteousness elsewhere—they are already practising true *Dharma* in service of the nation. I hold absolute faith that our vibrant youth will lead India toward a glorious future.

Please watch the full interview of Shri T S Krishnamurthy in YouTube

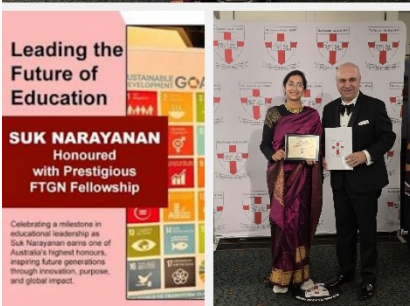


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGvIXKryHKw>

Sukruti, Hon. Advisor of PreSense, gets the prestigious Fellowship at Australia



Sukruti Narayanan is the youngest in the 134-year history of the Teachers' Guild of New South Wales to receive the fellowship. Founded in 1892, the Teachers' Guild of New South Wales is Australia's oldest professional association for educators. Fellowship is the Guild's highest professional recognition, awarded to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding and sustained contributions to education and educational leadership.



The FTGN Fellowship was presented to Sukruti Narayanan on 31st July 2026 by Dr Frederick Osman, President of the Guild. She is the only person of Indian origin to receive the Fellowship in the 2026 cohort, joining a distinguished community of Australia's leading education professionals and the 5th Asian to have ever received the Awards.

Congratulations Sukruti. You have made all of us proud!

Time Capsule Chronicles: Revisiting PreSense - 20 Years Ago – July 2006 “Websites”



Twenty years ago, when the digital landscape was still taking shape, the July 2006 edition of *PreSense* (Vol. 1, Issue 5) delivered a remarkably visionary exploration of corporate web communication and e-governance.

The edition's centrepiece featured an exclusive interview with Dr N. Vijayaditya, Director General of the National Informatics Centre (NIC), detailing the newly launched National Portal of India (india.gov.in). Remarkably, the interview was conducted via videophone—a cutting-edge feat for its time. Dr Vijayaditya outlined a citizen-centric vision for digital governance, making acts, Supreme Court judgments, and parliamentary proceedings accessible in a single click.

In a parallel interview, leading web consultant Kiron Kasbekar made a compelling case for treating corporate websites as strategic, 24/7 global campaigns rather than mere technical projects, urging Indian firms to employ 'website consultants' over simple graphic designers.

The issue also highlighted an empirical survey evaluating responsiveness across 15 leading corporates, revealing a stark gap where only two companies responded within 24 hours. Expert insights from industry figures like HR Mohan (*The Hindu*) further reinforced web usability, advocating the "KISS" (Keep It Short and Simple) principle long before it became standard practice. The edition concluded with an objective evaluation of major corporate websites including IBM, TCS, Infosys, and Reliance.

Looking back two decades later, this edition stands as a pioneering record of India's early digital transition, demonstrating *PreSense's* enduring commitment to forward-thinking communication journalism.

<https://www.prpoint.com/ezine/presense0706.pdf>

Review by Gemini AI

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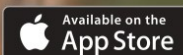
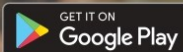
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Guest Column

Bridging India's Talent Gap: Insights from the Great Chennai Job Fair

By Rehana Ameer, London

Introduction

On 11 July 2026, I attended the Great Chennai Job Fair — not in the role of keynote speaker or panellist, but as an observer intent on listening and learning. The event, which brought together tens of thousands of job seekers and employers under one roof, provided a unique vantage point into the realities of India's employment landscape. What emerged were lessons that hold significance for educators, employers, policymakers, and HR leaders alike.

Ground Reality: Listening to Job Seekers and Employers

Employment challenges are often discussed in terms of reports, statistics, and boardroom analyses. While these are valuable, they only capture part of the picture. The true insights come from conversations with those directly engaged in the process: students searching for their first opportunity, graduates striving to build meaningful careers, and employers seeking talent that could drive organisational growth.



The Skills Gap Challenge

In conversations with job seekers, the question "What is stopping you from securing the job you want?" revealed consistent themes. Graduates most often cited:

- Lack of skills that employers demand
- Uncertainty about where opportunities exist
- Difficulty in positioning themselves effectively

Employers, on the other hand, revealed that attracting applicants was not the issue. Their challenge lay in finding truly job-ready candidates. The most common gaps included:

- English communication skills
- Problem-solving ability
- Confidence and adaptability
- Overall workplace readiness

India's Opportunity vs Talent Readiness

India remains one of the fastest-growing major economies, with immense potential through its digital economy, startup ecosystem, and expanding industries. The challenge lies in ensuring that talent development keeps pace with opportunity. Bridging this gap requires stronger collaboration between education, industry, and policymakers.

Rethinking Career Aspirations

A striking observation was the preference of many graduates to work exclusively for multinational corporations (MNCs). Few considered startups or MSMEs, despite their enormous contribution:

- Over 63 million MSMEs
- 30% of GDP
- Nearly half of exports
- Employment for over 280 million people

Startups and MSMEs often provide broader responsibilities, faster learning, closer access to leadership, and accelerated professional growth — opportunities graduates should not overlook.

Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work

Artificial intelligence emerged as a recurring theme in discussions with job seekers. Many voiced concerns about the potential for technology to displace human roles. The perspective shared was that AI is more likely to reshape and enhance the nature of work than to eliminate it. Those who can integrate critical thinking, effective communication, creativity, and sound judgement alongside AI tools will be best positioned to thrive in the workplace of the future.

SMAART Institute's Commitment

As Founder of SMAART Institute UK, now expanding into India, I reaffirmed our mission: to strengthen English communication, AI literacy, industry-led skills, stackable micro-credentials, and personalised learning pathways. Our goal is not simply to help learners secure their first job, but to equip them with the capabilities to build successful, future-ready careers.

Conclusion

India does not lack talent or ambition. What it requires is stronger alignment between education, industry, and the future of work. The opportunity before us is clear: to co-create an ecosystem where graduates are job-ready, employers are supported, and innovation thrives. That is the future worth building together.

(The author of this article Rehana Ameer, is a resident of London. She is the Former Councillor of "City of London Corporation" (2017-2025). Presently, she is the Chair of CoLA – London Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She is also the Founder of SMAART Institute in the UK)





Freedom Fighters of India

Jagannatha Iyer (Tamil Nadu)



By C. Badri, Joint Managing Editor

(Jagannatha Iyer, an unsung 18th-century freedom fighter from Tamil Nadu, valiantly organized armed resistance, survived brutal British torture, and was exiled to Penang for his selfless patriotic sacrifices.)

The history of India's freedom movement is often narrated through the lives of celebrated national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bhagat Singh. Yet long before the emergence of an organised national movement, numerous local heroes across the country courageously resisted foreign domination. Tamil Nadu occupies a distinguished place in this early resistance, producing many fearless patriots who challenged the expanding authority of the British East India Company. Among these early revolutionaries was Jagannatha Iyer, also known as Niyogi Jagannatha Iyer, whose extraordinary courage and sacrifice deserve a prominent place in India's history.

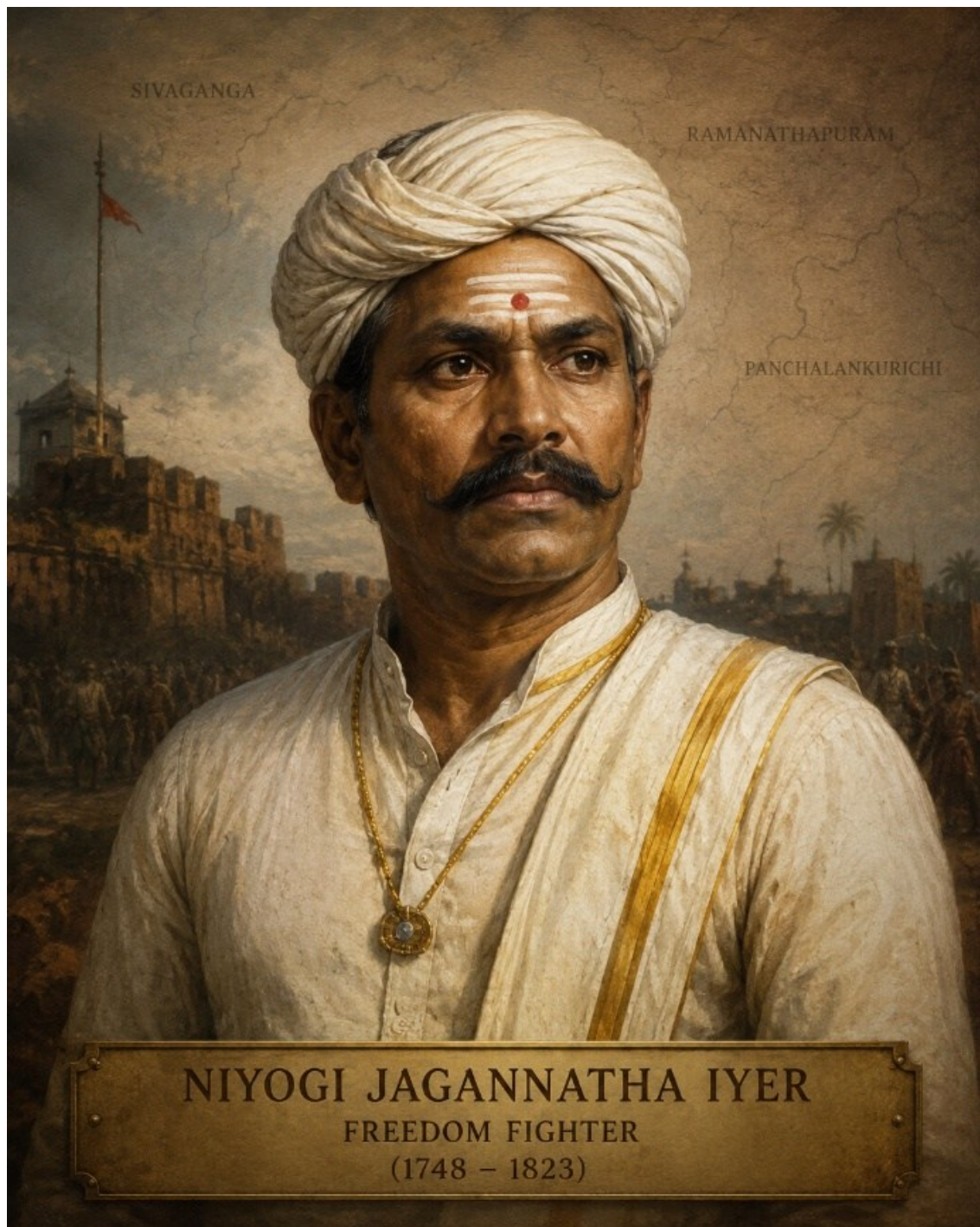
Although historical records about Jagannatha Iyer are limited, available accounts indicate that he hailed from the Niyogi community and was associated with Rajasingamangalam in the present-day Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu. He is believed to have lived during the closing years of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century—a period marked by widespread resistance to British expansion in South India. This was an era when the British East India Company sought to consolidate its political and military control over the region, often disregarding the rights and sovereignty of local rulers and communities.

The Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga regions became strongholds of resistance against colonial rule. Patriotic leaders such as the Marudu Brothers, Maveerar Mayilappan, Muthu Karuppa Thevar, and supporters of Muthuramalinga Sethupathi mobilised the people to defend their homeland. Jagannatha Iyer joined this patriotic movement with determination and conviction. Unlike later leaders who relied on constitutional methods, public meetings and political campaigns, he belonged to a generation that believed armed resistance was the only effective response to colonial oppression.

Jagannatha Iyer actively participated in organising resistance against the East India Company. Historical accounts associate him with the struggles in Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, and Panchalankurichi, where local chieftains and freedom fighters united to defend their territories. His role extended beyond the battlefield. He reportedly helped coordinate the movement of men, medicines, and essential supplies to the resistance forces, demonstrating that successful struggles require not only brave soldiers but also capable organisers and committed supporters. One account records that carts loaded with medicines and provisions, accompanied by thousands of fighters, were dispatched to Panchalankurichi in support of the anti-British campaign. Such cooperation illustrates the remarkable unity displayed by the people of Tamil Nadu in opposing foreign rule.

Jagannatha Iyer's patriotism was matched by his personal courage. He is said to have taken part in direct attacks on Company forces and to have refused to surrender despite relentless

British military operations. When several centres of resistance eventually fell, he was captured along with many of his fellow patriots. During interrogation, British officials reportedly accused him of attempting to kill one of their officers. Even under such grave circumstances, Jagannatha Iyer remained steadfast and unrepentant. His fearless conduct reflected the spirit of countless freedom fighters who preferred suffering and death to submission before an unjust foreign power.



The punishment imposed on him was exceptionally harsh. Contemporary accounts describe Jagannatha Iyer enduring one thousand lashes, an unimaginably cruel form of corporal

punishment inflicted by the colonial authorities. While several of his companions reportedly succumbed to similar torture, Jagannatha Iyer survived this brutal ordeal, demonstrating extraordinary physical endurance and mental strength. His survival itself became a symbol of indomitable courage and unwavering commitment to the cause of freedom.

After this punishment, Jagannatha Iyer was deported by ship to Penang, where political prisoners and rebels from across India were exiled and compelled to perform hard labour. Exile was intended not merely as punishment but as a means of permanently removing influential patriots from their homeland and discouraging future resistance. Life in exile was marked by physical hardship, emotional suffering and complete separation from family and community. Although the precise details of Jagannatha Iyer's final years remain uncertain, he is believed to have endured immense suffering in distant lands, far removed from the soil for which he had sacrificed everything.

The incomplete historical record surrounding Jagannatha Iyer reflects a broader reality of India's freedom struggle. Many early revolutionaries were ordinary men and women whose sacrifices were never systematically documented. Colonial records often portrayed them merely as rebels or insurgents, while later historical narratives understandably focused on nationally prominent leaders. As a result, countless regional heroes faded from public memory despite their invaluable contributions. Remembering Jagannatha Iyer therefore honours not only one individual but also acknowledges the many forgotten patriots who laid the foundations for India's eventual independence.

Jagannatha Iyer's life also reminds us that the Indian freedom movement was not a single event but a long, continuous struggle encompassing diverse forms of resistance. Decades before the Indian National Congress launched nationwide campaigns, courageous individuals in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere had already begun challenging foreign domination. Their sacrifices inspired subsequent generations and showed that the desire for freedom was deeply rooted among the people of India.

His story offers enduring lessons for modern India. It teaches us the importance of courage in defending justice, unity in adversity, and unwavering commitment to principles even in the face of overwhelming odds. It also reminds us that true patriotism is measured not by words but by selfless service and sacrifice for the greater good. Jagannatha Iyer neither sought fame nor expected recognition; his actions were guided solely by love for his motherland.

Today, as India continues to celebrate the achievements of its freedom fighters, it is equally important to bring the lives of lesser-known heroes into the national consciousness. Schools, colleges, researchers and historians should make greater efforts to document and disseminate their stories. Memorials, publications and educational programmes dedicated to these forgotten patriots would enrich our understanding of the freedom movement and inspire future generations.

In conclusion, Jagannatha Iyer stands as a shining example of Tamil Nadu's rich tradition of courage and resistance. Though history has not accorded him the prominence he deserves, his life embodies the highest ideals of patriotism, sacrifice and unwavering devotion to the cause of freedom. By remembering and honouring heroes like Jagannatha Iyer, we pay tribute not only to one remarkable individual but also to the countless unnamed men and women whose sacrifices ultimately paved the way for India's independence. Their legacy remains a priceless inheritance, reminding every Indian that freedom was won through extraordinary courage, immeasurable suffering and an unshakable belief in the nation's destiny.

JAI HIND





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