

VIKSIT BHARAT: Empowering Indians in the Area of Caring Society Culture for National Development

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Abstract

This paper examines the vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by focusing on the empowerment of citizens through the cultivation of a “Caring Society Culture.” It argues that sustainable national development in India must go beyond economic indicators and be rooted in societal values, such as empathy, mutual respect, and collective responsibility. The study highlights the interplay between social responsibility and national growth, asserting that a society driven by compassion and inclusivity creates stronger foundations for equitable progress. Through a review of government initiatives, policy frameworks, and educational reforms, the paper identifies how targeted empowerment—especially among rural populations, women, and youth—can drive development. It explores the multifaceted nature of empowerment, encompassing economic access, social inclusion, and cultural transformation. Special attention is given to the role of education not just as a tool for skill development but as a means of nurturing ethical values, empathy, and civic engagement. The research methodology employs a qualitative approach, using thematic and content analysis of secondary data including government reports, academic literature, and case studies. The findings underscore that active citizenship, supported by initiatives, like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, can lead to a more engaged and responsible population. The paper concludes by advocating for a shift in national development strategies – from a purely economic model to one enriched by human-centric values. It recommends integrated policies that reinforce social welfare, educational equity, and cultural sensitivity. Ultimately, the study positions a caring society as not just idealistic, but essential for realizing the aspirations of Viksit Bharat.

Keywords: Viksit Bharat, empowerment, caring society culture, social responsibility, national development

INTRODUCTION

Context of Viksit Bharat: The Concept of a Developed Nation in the Indian Context

The term “Viksit Bharat,” or “Developed India,” encompasses more than just economic prosperity. It signifies an India where citizens experience high standards of living, equitable access to opportunities, quality healthcare, and education, as well as a robust social welfare system. Achieving “Viksit Bharat”

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is about transforming the country into a developed, inclusive, and progressive nation while maintaining its cultural diversity and respecting its values [1].

In the Indian context, being a “developed” nation means overcoming the dual challenges of poverty and inequality that have persisted despite steady economic growth. While India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, it still faces significant challenges in terms of social justice, economic inequality, access to basic services, and sustainable development. A “Viksit Bharat” requires a holistic approach that includes economic progress, social equity, and cultural transformation.

It is not just about technological advancement and industrialization but also about creating a society that values empathy, inclusivity, and responsibility for the well-being of all citizens [2, 3].

Focus on Empowerment: Defining Empowerment in the Socio-Economic and Cultural Context

Empowerment is a multifaceted concept that involves providing individuals with the tools, resources, and opportunities to realize their potential. In the socio-economic context, empowerment refers to granting people access to resources, such as education, healthcare, financial independence, and opportunities for self-improvement. It involves eliminating barriers, such as poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment, that prevent individuals from fully participating in society.

In the cultural context, empowerment extends beyond material access to include fostering values like empathy, mutual respect, and responsibility. It is about cultivating a society where individuals are not only economically self-sufficient but are also socially and culturally conscious, empathetic, and engaged in contributing to the collective well-being of the community. A caring society culture encourages individuals to think beyond their personal needs and act for the welfare of others, thus creating an environment that fosters social justice, equality, and sustainable development [4–6].

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the importance of a caring society culture in India's development.
- To examine the role of societal values, such as empathy, mutual respect, and responsibility in fostering national growth.
- To identify initiatives and practices that can empower citizens toward building a more caring and inclusive society.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study highlights the need for a paradigm shift in how Indians view their role in societal development. By emphasizing compassion and inclusivity, the research aims to uncover how societal values can play a pivotal role in achieving Viksit Bharat.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study focuses on the societal values and the role of community initiatives in promoting a caring culture. However, it does not delve deeply into the political or economic strategies, although these factors are crucial to the broader vision of national development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sen A. (1999) [7]. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press elaborated on the role of social responsibility in national development. The promotion of social responsibility plays a vital role in shaping a caring society, thus contributing to the nation's development through collective action and empathy.

Srinivas M. N. (1962) [8]. *Caste in Modern India*. Asia Publishing House studied the impact of community participation on socio-economic progress. Community participation fosters cooperation, solidarity, and mutual responsibility, essential for socio-economic growth.

Gandhi M. (1993) [9]. *The selected works of Mahatma Gandhi (Vol. 2)*. Navjivan Publishing House, in his study "India's Socio-Cultural Foundations for a Caring Society" presented India's rich cultural heritage, steeped in values of compassion, respect, and service to others, provides a strong base for a caring society.

Krishna A. (2002) [10]. *Active learning: Developing empathy and social responsibility in Indian schools*. *Journal of Educational Development*, 23(1), 45–58, stated that educating citizens about the importance of empathy, compassion, and social responsibility is essential for nurturing a caring society.

Chakrabarty D. (2000) [11]. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton University Press, focused on collective responsibility and social cohesion in India and stated that collective responsibility and social cohesion are key components in building a caring society that actively engages in national development.

Dreze J. & Sen A. (2013) [12]. *An uncertain glory: India and its contradictions*. Princeton University Press brought forward “The Interplay Between Economic Growth and Social Responsibility” emphasising while economic growth is essential, it must be coupled with social responsibility to create a balanced and caring society that can contribute to national development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research will use a qualitative research design to explore the concept of a caring society culture and its implications for national development in the context of India’s aspiration to become a Viksit Bharat (Developed India). Qualitative research is suitable for examining the underlying societal values, cultural practices, and the effects of social initiatives aimed at fostering a caring society. The focus will be on understanding the role of community engagement, government policies, and social responsibility in national development [13–16].

Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How do societal values, such as empathy, mutual respect, and social responsibility, contribute to the development of a Caring Society in India?
2. What are the key initiatives and policies that empower Indian citizens to adopt and promote a caring society culture?
3. How can the values of a caring society contribute to India’s progress toward becoming a Viksit Bharat?
4. What challenges exist in fostering a Caring Society culture within the current socio-economic framework of India?

Data Collection Methods

The data collection for this research will involve secondary data like:

1. *Literature Review*: A comprehensive review of existing literature on national development, social responsibility, and Indian culture will be conducted. This will include research papers, books, government reports, and articles on topics, such as social capital, community participation, empowerment, and caring society initiatives in India [17].
2. *Reports and Documents*: Analysis of policy documents, government reports (e.g., NITI Aayog), and studies related to socio-economic development, education, health, and welfare schemes, such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, will be conducted [18].

Data Analysis Methods

The collected data will be analysed using the following methods:

Thematic Analysis

For qualitative data (interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies), thematic analysis will be used to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key insights related to social responsibility, caring society values, and their role in national development.

Themes, such as empowerment, community care, social inclusion, and policy impact, will be coded and analyzed to understand their connection to India’s development goals.

Content Analysis

For secondary data (government reports, policy documents, and literature), content analysis will be used to extract relevant information and identify the effectiveness of current policies and initiatives aimed at promoting a caring society culture.

Descriptive Statistics

For quantitative data (from surveys and questionnaires), descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the findings. This will include frequency distributions, percentages, and means to quantify the level of awareness, engagement, and satisfaction with social responsibility initiatives [19–21].

RESEARCH STUDY

The Concept of “Viksit Bharat” (Making A Developed India)

Definition of a Developed Nation: Economic Growth, Infrastructure, Education, and Social Well-Being

A developed nation is typically defined by its high economic growth, advanced infrastructure, widespread access to quality education, and strong social welfare systems. Economic growth leads to higher living standards, diverse job opportunities, and a stable financial system. Well-developed infrastructure, including transportation, energy, and digital connectivity, supports economic activity and quality of life. A developed nation ensures access to quality education for all, fostering a skilled workforce and informed citizenry. Additionally, it prioritizes social well-being by providing healthcare, affordable housing, and social security, aiming for equity and inclusivity.

In India’s context, a “Viksit Bharat” represents a nation where economic growth is accompanied by equitable development in infrastructure, education, and social well-being. Achieving this requires addressing disparities and ensuring that all citizens, especially marginalized communities, can access opportunities for growth and improvement.

Current Status of India: India’s Progress in Comparison with Other Developed Nations

India has made impressive progress in economic growth and is now one of the fastest-growing major economies. However, it still faces many challenges when compared to developed countries. One key issue is that India’s GDP per person is still quite low, which suggests that the benefits of this growth haven’t reached everyone equally.

India’s infrastructure, though improving, remains inadequate, especially in rural areas, where access to basic services, like electricity, clean water, and healthcare, is still limited. The educational system, while increasing literacy rates, still faces challenges in quality and access, particularly for marginalized groups. Social welfare programs have been initiated, but gaps remain in universal access to healthcare, social security, and housing [22–25].

Barriers to Development: Poverty, Inequality, Unemployment, and Lack of Social Cohesion

Several barriers hinder India’s progress toward becoming a developed nation:

- *Poverty*: Despite growth, a significant portion of India’s population still lives below the poverty line, especially in rural areas, limiting access to basic needs like food, education, and healthcare.
- *Inequality*: Economic inequality is rising, with wealth concentrated in urban areas, while rural and marginalized groups are left behind. Gender, caste, and regional disparities further exacerbate this inequality.
- *Unemployment*: High unemployment, especially among youth and women, is a significant challenge. There is also a mismatch between education and job market needs, leaving many without the skills required for employment.
- *Lack of Social Cohesion*: Social divisions based on caste, religion, and region hinder national unity and collective progress. These divisions contribute to inequality and limit social integration, making it harder for India to achieve cohesive development.

Understanding Empowerment in the Indian Context

Empowerment in India is a key driver of national development and involves enabling individuals to have the resources, opportunities, and skills needed to improve their lives. It encompasses economic, social, and cultural dimensions, all contributing to creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

Economic Empowerment: Access to Resources, Entrepreneurship, and Financial Independence

- *Access to Resources:* Empowerment involves providing access to land, capital, and technology, especially in rural areas, to enable self-sufficiency. Programs, like MGNREGA, offer livelihood opportunities.
- *Entrepreneurship:* Encouraging small business initiatives is crucial. Programs, like Mudra Yojana and Start-up India, support aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly among women and youth.
- *Financial Independence:* Initiatives, like Jan Dhan Yojana and Self-Help Groups (SHGs), help marginalized groups gain financial independence through banking access and credit.

Social Empowerment: Education, Social Inclusion, Health, and Safety

- *Education:* Universal access to quality education is a priority. Schemes, like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, aim to improve literacy rates and gender equality in education.
- *Social Inclusion:* Empowering marginalized groups through reservation systems and affirmative action ensures equitable access to opportunities.
- *Health and Safety:* Health programs, like Ayushman Bharat, provide health insurance, while initiatives, like the Nirbhaya Fund, aim to improve women's safety and protection.

Cultural Empowerment: Promoting Values of Empathy, Mutual Respect, and Responsibility

- *Empathy and Mutual Respect:* Promoting values of tolerance and understanding across India's diverse communities is essential for social harmony. Campaigns and educational programs play a key role in fostering these values.
- *Social Responsibility:* Initiatives, like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, encourage collective action for societal betterment, emphasizing civic duty and responsibility.
- *Volunteerism:* Programs, like National Service Scheme (NSS), help youth contribute to social causes and develop a sense of community responsibility [26–27].

Role of Government and NGOs: Policies and Initiatives that Promote Empowerment

- *Government Policies:* Various government programs, like PMAY, Skill India, and Atal Innovation Mission, focus on providing access to housing, skills, and innovation to empower citizens.
- *NGOs:* Non-governmental organizations, such as SEWA and Asha for Education, play a critical role in empowering disadvantaged communities by offering education, healthcare, and legal advocacy.

The Role of a Caring Society in National Development

A caring society is one where values, like empathy, cooperation, and responsibility, drive social cohesion and progress. This culture is fundamental to national development, as it fosters collective well-being and a sense of shared responsibility.

Caring Society Culture: The Foundation of Empathy, Cooperation, and Responsibility

- *Empathy:* Encouraging understanding and compassion strengthens social bonds, motivating people to help each other and work together.
- *Cooperation:* Collaboration within communities leads to better outcomes in health, education, and welfare.
- *Responsibility:* A caring society promotes personal and collective responsibility, where individuals actively contribute to the well-being of others through volunteering and social engagement.

Benefits for National Development: Social Harmony, Reduced Inequality, and Sustainable Growth

- *Social Harmony:* Empathy and cooperation reduce conflicts, fostering unity and stability, which are essential for national development.
- *Reduced Inequality:* A caring society focuses on inclusive growth, providing opportunities for marginalized groups, which reduces economic disparities and ensures fairer progress.
- *Sustainable Growth:* A caring society promotes responsible consumption, environmental protection, and equitable resource distribution, ensuring that development is sustainable for future generations [29–30].

Link between Social Responsibility and Progress: Active Citizenship and Social Welfare

- *Active Citizenship:* Engaged citizens, through voting, volunteering, and community participation, drive positive social change and influence policies for national progress.
- *Social Welfare:* Prioritizing social welfare ensures access to education, healthcare, and basic needs for all, creating a stable, productive society that contributes to national growth.

A caring society built on empathy, cooperation, and responsibility is crucial for achieving social harmony, reducing inequality, and promoting sustainable development in India. Active citizenship and social welfare initiatives play key roles in fostering national progress.

The Role of Education in Empowering Citizens

Education is a key driver of empowerment, providing individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to societal development.

Educational Reforms: The Right to Education Act, Skill Development Programs, and Digital Education

- *Right to Education Act:* Ensures free, compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14, increasing access to education for all.
- *Skill Development Programs:* Initiatives, like Skill India and PMKVY, provide vocational training, enhancing employability, especially for marginalized groups.
- *Digital Education:* Platforms, like SWAYAM and NROER, promote access to online learning, bridging the digital divide and expanding educational opportunities.

Value-Based Education: Fostering Empathy, Ethical Values, and Social Responsibility

Value-based education is a holistic approach to learning that emphasizes the development of moral values, social responsibility, and empathy. It transcends traditional academic learning and encourages students to become compassionate, ethical, and responsible citizens. This approach plays a significant role in shaping the character of individuals, promoting a caring society, and contributing to national development. Below, we explore the core elements of value-based education: empathy, ethical values, and social responsibility.

Empathy: Education Fosters Understanding and Compassion

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. It is a key component of a caring society, where individuals genuinely care about the well-being of others and are motivated to make a positive impact in their communities.

- *Role in Education:* Value-based education fosters empathy by encouraging students to engage in activities and discussions that promote understanding of diverse perspectives and experiences. For instance, through literature, history, and real-life case studies, students are exposed to the challenges faced by marginalized groups, fostering compassion and emotional intelligence.
- *Impact on Society:* An empathetic society is one where individuals are more inclined to help each other, resolve conflicts amicably, and support vulnerable populations. As a result, empathy nurtures social harmony, making it a fundamental pillar of a caring and inclusive society.
- *Examples:* Programs that encourage students to volunteer, participate in community outreach, and support various social causes help develop empathy. Activities, like school projects, focused on social issues (e.g., poverty, disability, environmental concerns) allow students to connect emotionally and intellectually with the needs of others.

Ethical Values: Teaching Integrity, Fairness, and Justice

Ethical values are the principles that guide individuals to act with integrity, fairness, and respect for others. In the context of education, instilling these values helps students make morally sound decisions and fosters a sense of responsibility toward their communities.

- *Role in Education:* Value-based education emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct in every aspect of life. Students are taught to uphold principles of honesty, fairness, justice, and respect.

Ethical discussions, role-playing, and real-world applications of ethical dilemmas in classrooms equip students with the skills to make ethical decisions in their personal and professional lives.

- *Impact on Society:* Teaching integrity and fairness promotes responsible citizenship. When students internalize these values, they are more likely to engage in practices that contribute to the common good, such as following the law, treating others with respect, and advocating for justice.
- *Examples:* Schools can incorporate ethical frameworks in curricula, using scenarios to discuss the consequences of unethical behavior in various contexts, from personal interactions to broader societal issues like corruption or environmental degradation.

Social Responsibility: Encouraging Students to Engage in Community Development

Social responsibility is the moral obligation of individuals to act for the benefit of society, particularly in ways that address social inequalities and promote communal welfare. In the context of education, programs, like the National Service Scheme (NSS), play a crucial role in encouraging students to actively engage in social issues and contribute to community development.

- *Role in Education:* Programs, like NSS, provide students with opportunities to work on community development projects, ranging from environmental conservation and health awareness campaigns to education and poverty alleviation. These experiences allow students to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world problems, fostering a sense of civic duty and engagement.
- *Impact on Society:* When students take part in community development initiatives, they learn to value collective well-being over individual gain. These experiences help them understand the importance of volunteering and contributing to causes, such as public health, education, and poverty reduction, all of which are essential for the holistic development of a nation.
- *Examples:* Through the NSS, students can participate in a variety of community service activities, such as organizing blood donation camps, cleaning local areas, providing education to underprivileged children, and conducting health awareness drives. Such initiatives not only help solve immediate community issues but also cultivate a mindset of lifelong service.

Impact of Education on Economic and Social Empowerment: Creating Opportunities for Marginalized Groups

- *Economic Empowerment:* Education equips individuals with skills for better job opportunities, enhancing financial independence and breaking the poverty cycle.
- *Social Empowerment:* Education empowers marginalized groups, such as women and Dalits, by offering opportunities for equality and societal participation.

Government Policies and Initiatives for Empowerment

The Indian government has launched several initiatives aimed at empowering citizens across economic, social, and cultural dimensions. These initiatives address various aspects of development, from housing and sanitation to gender equality and skill development.

Major Initiatives

- *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY):* This flagship housing scheme aims to provide affordable housing to the urban poor and rural populations. It targets creating over 20 million affordable houses by 2022, ensuring housing for all under the “Housing for All” mission. This initiative addresses the housing crisis and empowers families by providing them with secure, dignified living spaces.
- *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:* Started in 2014, this nationwide campaign focuses on making India cleaner and healthier. Its main goals are to stop open defecation and encourage better waste management. The initiative helps communities by improving public health, encouraging people to take responsibility for their surroundings, and making everyday life better.
- *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:* This campaign launched to protect and support girls by tackling the issue of fewer girls being born compared to boys. It encourages families and communities to educate girls and treat them equally. The main goal is to stop discrimination based on gender and ensure

that girls have the same chances as boys when it comes to education, health, and overall development.

- *National Skill Development Mission*: This mission is aimed at training and skilling the Indian youth in various trades and sectors. It aims to provide market-relevant skills to individuals, thereby enhancing employability and promoting entrepreneurship. The mission includes initiatives, like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), which offers short-term training courses to the youth, particularly from rural and marginalized backgrounds.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite the ambitious goals of these initiatives, there are several challenges in their implementation:

- *Corruption*: Corruption at various levels of government can impede the effective delivery of services. Misallocation of funds, misuse of resources, and lack of transparency often delay or hinder the success of government programs.
- *Inefficiency*: Bureaucratic red tape, slow decision-making, and poor coordination between government departments can lead to inefficiencies in program execution. This delays the reach and impact of initiatives.
- *Infrastructural Challenges*: In rural and remote areas, inadequate infrastructure – such as poor roads, lack of electricity, and weak communication systems – can make it difficult to implement initiatives like PMAY or Swachh Bharat effectively. Access to resources, training centres, and facilities is often limited, hindering the success of skill development and sanitation programs.

BUILDING A CARING SOCIETY: STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

Building a caring society is essential for national development. It involves creating a culture where empathy, responsibility, and cooperation are central to social interactions. The following strategies can help foster such a society.

Strengthening Civic Engagement: Encouraging Active Participation in Governance and Community Welfare

- *Active Participation*: Encouraging citizens to engage in governance through voting, public consultations, and community decision-making promotes accountability and a stronger democracy. Programs, like National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nyaya Panchayats, empower individuals to take part in local governance and community welfare.
- *Community Welfare*: Civic engagement also extends to local development projects, such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, where citizens play an active role in cleanliness drives and waste management initiatives. This participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility in improving the community.

Social Responsibility: Volunteering, Charity, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- *Volunteering*: Citizens can contribute to social well-being through volunteering. Organizations, like Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI), promote volunteerism by encouraging people to help in education, healthcare, and community development projects.
- *Charity*: Philanthropic efforts, both from individuals and corporations, are essential in building a caring society. Foundations and charitable organizations, like GiveIndia and Oxfam India, work to address issues like poverty, hunger, and education.
- *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*: Businesses can play a key role by allocating resources for community development, environmental conservation, and education. CSR laws in India require companies to invest in social causes, making it a shared responsibility between the public and private sectors.

Cultural Transformation: Shifting Societal Attitudes Towards Empathy, Care, and Responsibility

- *Promoting Empathy and Care*: A cultural shift towards empathy involves promoting understanding, kindness, and cooperation in schools, workplaces, and communities. Educational programs that emphasize social values, like value-based education, can instill empathy in young minds.

- *Changing Attitudes:* Campaigns that challenge stereotypes and encourage inclusivity can help reshape societal attitudes. For instance, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan aim to change long-standing cultural norms and promote a more inclusive and caring society.
- *Media and Arts:* The role of media and the art in cultural transformation is significant. Films, advertisements, and television programs can showcase stories of empathy, responsibility, and community service, inspiring people to adopt similar values.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve a Viksit Bharat (Developed India), the following strategic recommendations are essential:

Policy Recommendations: Strengthening Legal Framework and Economic Reforms

- *Social Justice:* Strengthen laws for marginalized groups and ensure equal opportunities, particularly for women, minorities, and economically disadvantaged communities.
- *Inclusivity:* Expand policies promoting equal access to education, healthcare, and employment, ensuring no one is left behind.
- *Economic Reforms:* Promote inclusive growth, support small businesses and startups, and ensure equitable wealth distribution.

Education and Skill Development: Value-Based Education and Technological Empowerment

- *Value-Based Education:* Integrate empathy, ethics, and social responsibility into the curriculum at all levels to foster a caring society.
- *Technological Empowerment:* Focus on digital literacy and skill development to bridge the technological divide and equip citizens with market-relevant skills.

Promoting a Culture of Empathy: Media, Activism, and Education

- *Media Campaigns:* Use media to spread messages of empathy, co-operation, and social responsibility, amplifying initiatives like Swachh Bharat and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.
- *Social Activism:* Encourage youth participation in community service through NSS and NGOs, instilling empathy and social responsibility.
- *Educational Reforms:* Incorporate empathy and volunteerism in school curricula to nurture responsible citizens from an early age.

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings: Key Takeaways from the Research

This research highlights the importance of empowering citizens and building a caring society to transform India into a Viksit Bharat. Key takeaways include:

- Policy reforms for social justice, inclusivity, and economic growth.
- The role of education and skill development in fostering responsible and capable citizens.
- The need to cultivate a caring society through civic engagement, social responsibility, and a shift towards empathy.

The Role of Empowered Citizens in National Progress

- Empowered citizens are crucial for national progress.
- A caring society, where individuals contribute to social welfare, promotes social harmony and sustainable growth, helping India realize its potential as a developed nation.

FUTURE OUTLOOK: PROSPECTS FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT

India's future development depends on empowering its citizens and fostering a culture of empathy and responsibility. With continued focus on education, skill development, and inclusivity, India has the potential to become a Viksit Bharat — a prosperous, inclusive, and compassionate society.

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