

Viksit Bharat – A Deceptive Slogan...!

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ABSTRACT

This article critically examines the concept called “Viksit Bharat” and argues that it is nothing more than a deceptive slogan. In the present economic system, growth is measured primarily based on the prosperity of wealthy capitalists. While capitalists are provided protection and incentives by the economic system, the poor are subjected to insecurity, exploitation, and social instability. In the current context, what is called “development” is essentially a structure built upon the labour of the poor. An increase in assets or capital accumulation means that wealth is created by extracting and appropriating the labour of the poor and workers. Merely hearing the word “development” creates a sense of excitement, but in reality, it has turned into an unnatural and harmful concept. Development is often defined as something that leads to environmental destruction, loss of biodiversity, and ecological imbalance. Today, villages are being transformed into towns. Western models are being imposed on our country through various external influences. Concepts such as liberty, equality, fraternity, secularism, and caste-neutral ideals, which are fundamental to Indian society, find no place in the idea of “Viksit Bharat”.

Unless Buddhist philosophical principles are adopted, it is impossible for India to truly become a developed nation. As long as social inequality and blind beliefs dominate societal behaviour, the concept of “Viksit Bharat” remains merely a hollow slogan. Only when the nation nurtures a mindset of equality and social harmony can real liberation be achieved. Buddhist principles alone can provide liberation and true development to the nation. Therefore, before repeatedly using the term “Viksit Bharat”, it is essential to deeply reflect on its meaning.

Keywords: Development, Equality, Inequality, Economic Growth and Liberation.

INTRODUCTION

In the present era, the concept of development is understood largely through the perspective of the capitalist class. Economic growth is measured based on the prosperity and expansion of wealth among capitalists. However, this model of development ensures safety and stability only for the rich, while it creates uncertainty, exploitation, and instability in the lives of the poor. In today's context, development has become a fortress constructed by capitalists, and the foundation of this fortress is built on the labour of the poor. Any increase in wealth or capital accumulation necessarily means that the labour power of workers and marginalised communities has been extracted. Thus, development is not a neutral process; it is deeply rooted in class exploitation. The term “development” itself has become frightening. It has transformed into something unnatural and destructive. Development is now identified with activities that cause environmental destruction, displacement of people, loss of livelihoods, and ecological imbalance. In the name of development, forests are destroyed, rivers are polluted, and agricultural lands are converted into industrial zones.

Villages are being systematically dismantled and converted into urban spaces. As a result, rural populations are forced to migrate to cities, where they end up living in slums with inhuman conditions. This process destroys traditional occupations, rural self-sufficiency, and community-based living systems. Employment opportunities created through development are also structured around caste hierarchies. Certain communities are confined to menial and hazardous work, while others enjoy administrative and managerial positions. This caste-based division of labour continues to dominate even in modern economic structures, making true liberation impossible.

Generally, the word “developed” means growth, advancement, or progress. However, in contemporary political discourse, the phrase “Viksit Bharat” has been reduced to a mere slogan. It is repeatedly used to create an illusion of progress without addressing structural inequalities.

The idea of “Viksit Bharat” claims that the nation is moving towards modern infrastructure, technological advancement, economic prosperity, social progress, and good governance. But in reality, these claims remain limited to paper, speeches, and advertisements. Development is portrayed as a grand vision that promises prosperity to all, yet its benefits are enjoyed only by a small section of society. The majority of the population remains excluded from the fruits of development. Thus, the claim that development benefits everyone equally is fundamentally false.

Today’s world has become completely technology-oriented. Individuals without access to technology or technical knowledge are considered backward or uneducated. Technology dominates every aspect of life, from education and employment to communication and governance. However, excessive dependence on technology has led to a hollowing of human intellect and sensitivity. Human beings are increasingly reduced to mechanical entities, functioning according to market demands rather than human values.

Globalisation has spread across the world at an unprecedented pace. Goods, services, capital, and information move freely across borders. While this has created convenience and efficiency, it has also resulted in deep economic and social inequality. Human relationships have weakened significantly. Life has become mechanical, competitive, and profit-oriented. The ideology of development has destroyed human compassion, social bonds, and collective responsibility.

The ideology driving this transformation is globalization. Under its influence, society has been reshaped to prioritize markets over people. Intellectuals and political leaders speak loudly about civil and political rights, but they remain largely silent when it comes to economic rights. They argue that economic inequality can be overcome through hard work and individual effort. However, they deliberately ignore the fact that all wealth accumulated by the rich is built upon the labour of the poor. Rights are structured in such a way that they protect wealth and privilege, while excluding those who produce it.

Research Methodology and objectives

This article is entirely based on secondary sources. Books, research articles, journals, government reports, newspapers, and magazines form the foundation of this study. The primary objective of this article is to contribute to the creation of a society in which all sections of people participate equally in production and social life. The article argues for the establishment of an egalitarian society and supports the idea of sustainable development. It attempts to expose the illusion embedded in the concept of “Viksit Bharat” and seeks to redirect attention towards human-centred development. True development must lead to the creation of a society that is free from exploitation, inequality, and injustice. Therefore, social democracy, political democracy, and economic democracy must form the foundation of the nation. Without these three pillars, the dream of a developed nation remains incomplete.

Globalisation and Economic Liberalisation

Globalisation and economic liberalisation have become dominant forces shaping the Indian economy. These policies are often portrayed as instruments that strengthen the national economy. However, in reality, they have largely contributed to the concentration of economic power in the hands of a small capitalist class. It is repeatedly claimed that capitalism creates employment opportunities and reduces poverty. But this claim does not reflect reality. While a small group of capitalists accumulate enormous wealth, workers, Dalits, Adivasis, and other marginalised communities continue to face exploitation and exclusion. The number of capitalists in society is extremely small, whereas the number of workers and labourers is vast. Despite this, society has been systematically conditioned to accept capitalist ideology as natural and inevitable. People are taught to believe that inequality is normal and unavoidable. The world’s wealth is enjoyed by a tiny minority, while the majority struggle for basic survival. Elderly people, persons with disabilities, the homeless, and the unemployed are pushed to the margins of society. Their suffering remains invisible in official narratives of development.

Free-market ideology promised prosperity for all. It claimed that economic growth would automatically “trickle down” to the poor. However, instead of prosperity, it has resulted in poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and widening inequality. Small-scale industries have collapsed under the pressure of global competition. Traditional artisans have lost their livelihoods. Informal workers are forced into unstable and insecure employment, with no social protection or dignity. Globalisation has transformed citizens into consumers. Human beings are valued not for their humanity, but for their purchasing power. Those who cannot participate in the market are treated as disposable. Economic policies are designed to favour corporate interests. Laws are amended to protect capital, while labour rights are weakened. Trade unions are suppressed, and workers are discouraged from collective bargaining. Thus, globalisation does not promote equality; instead, it institutionalises inequality. It creates a system in which the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. In such a system, the claim of building a “Viksit Bharat” is deeply misleading.

Democracy and Caste System

Democracy and caste system are often projected as complementary concepts. However, in reality, caste and communal politics have deeply undermined democratic values. Although India claims to be the world’s largest democracy, democratic principles remain fragile and superficial. In the Indian context, caste plays a decisive role in politics. Elections are rarely contested based on development, public welfare, or policy. Instead, they are fought on the basis of caste identity, religion, money power, and personality cults.

Voters are systematically manipulated using caste loyalties, religious sentiments, and financial inducements. Political parties distribute money, liquor, and material goods during elections, thereby reducing democracy to a transactional process. As a result, elections fail to represent the true will of the people. Instead of serving as a mechanism for social transformation, electoral politics reinforces existing power structures and social hierarchies. Even after more than seventy-five years of independence, the country has not been able to produce leadership committed to democratic ideals. Many elected representatives abandon constitutional values once they come to power and begin to function in an authoritarian and self-serving manner.

Democracy is reduced to a hollow ritual. The legislature, executive, and judiciary increasingly function under the influence of powerful elites. Public institutions are weakened, and dissenting voices are silenced. India is showcased globally as the world’s largest democracy. However, beneath this image lies the poison of caste discrimination, which continues to shape social and political relations. Caste-based exclusion and violence remain widespread, contradicting the democratic claims of the nation. Representatives elected by the people often transform politics into a business. Corruption becomes normalised, and public office is used for personal enrichment. The interests of marginalised communities are systematically ignored.

Nationalism is frequently invoked to suppress criticism. Those who question inequality, injustice, or state policies are branded as anti-national. This creates an atmosphere of fear and conformity, which is incompatible with democratic principles. True democracy requires not only the right to vote but also social equality, economic justice, and freedom of expression. Without these, democracy remains incomplete and deceptive. Thus, the claim that India is progressing towards a developed democratic nation stands contradicted by the realities of caste oppression, political corruption, and erosion of democratic institutions.

Poverty, Hunger, Malnutrition and Statistical Reality

Despite continuous claims of economic growth and development, hunger remains one of the most severe crises facing the country. Even today, a large section of the population struggles to secure two meals a day. This reality exposes the hollowness of the “Viksit Bharat” narrative. India ranks among the highest in the world in terms of child malnutrition. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), a significant percentage of children suffer from under nutrition, stunting, and wasting. This data clearly reveals the failure of development policies to ensure basic food security. Hunger does not exist only in the form of starvation deaths. It manifests in multiple forms such as chronic undernourishment, malnutrition, anaemia, food insecurity, and unequal access to nutrition. These forms of hunger are often ignored or concealed within official statistics. Although globalisation claims to ensure food availability through markets, millions continue to suffer from hunger. Deaths

caused by hunger are often recorded under medical terms such as illness or weakness, thereby masking the real cause. This allows the state to avoid moral and political responsibility.

Celebrating development while ignoring hunger and malnutrition is ethically unacceptable. Measuring development purely in terms of GDP growth, infrastructure expansion, or technological advancement is fundamentally flawed. True development must be evaluated based on the well-being of the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society. If economic growth benefits only a small minority, inequality inevitably increases. This widening inequality leads to social unrest, instability, and erosion of social harmony. Under such conditions, sustainable development becomes impossible. Therefore, governments must redesign economic and social policies to ensure inclusive participation. Development should not exclude those who produce wealth. Workers, farmers, and marginalised communities must be placed at the centre of development planning. Poverty signifies the absence of basic necessities required for survival, particularly food, shelter, healthcare, and education. Even today, a considerable percentage of India's population lives in multidimensional poverty.

Although poverty levels have marginally declined compared to earlier years, this decline is neither uniform nor sufficient. Millions continue to live without dignity, security, or opportunity. Regional, caste-based, and gender-based inequalities further intensify poverty.

Thus, poverty and hunger are not accidental outcomes; they are the direct consequences of structural inequality and unjust economic systems. As long as these structures remain unchanged, the promise of a developed nation will remain unfulfilled.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, the repeated assertions of a “Viksit Bharat” are largely illusory when measured against the lived realities of the majority. While economic indicators such as GDP growth, infrastructure projects, and industrial expansion are highlighted as achievements, the core indicators of human well-being—food security, health, education, and equality—remain deeply inadequate. The text argues that the government and policymakers often focus on numbers, statistics, and public relations exercises to showcase development, while ignoring systemic issues such as unemployment, income inequality, malnutrition, and rural deprivation.

The “Viksit Bharat” narrative relies heavily on symbolic projects, high-tech solutions, and urban-centric development, yet these benefits rarely trickle down to rural areas or vulnerable communities. Millions of people remain excluded from the so-called progress. True development requires a people-centered approach that prioritizes basic needs, equitable resource distribution, and social justice. Without addressing hunger, poverty, and inequality, any claim to development remains superficial and hollow. Ultimately, the text emphasizes that India's progress cannot be measured merely by material indicators or global rankings. The real measure of a nation's development is the well-being, dignity, and opportunities of its citizens, particularly those at the margins of society. Therefore, until development strategies are inclusive, equitable, and socially conscious, the vision of a “Viksit Bharat” remains more a political slogan than a social reality.

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