

Cultural Nationalism and the Vision of Viksit Bharat 2047: A Conceptual and Analytical Study

Research Scholar - Aditi Malviya

School of Social Sciences (Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore)"

Supervisor - Dr. J.C Sinha

(Shahid Chandrashekhar Azad Govt. P.G. College, Jhabua (M.P))

Abstract - The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 represents an ambitious national project aimed at transforming India into a developed, self-reliant, inclusive, technologically advanced and culturally confident nation by the centenary of its independence. While economic growth, technological innovation, infrastructure development and institutional reforms constitute important dimensions of this vision, its deeper foundations may also be located in India's civilizational and cultural traditions. In this context, cultural nationalism provides an important conceptual framework for understanding how national development can be connected with historical consciousness, cultural diversity, civilizational values and a shared sense of national identity. Indian cultural nationalism differs from narrowly ethnic or racial forms of nationalism because Indian civilization has historically accommodated diversity through ideas such as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Sarva Dharma Sambhava, pluralism, coexistence and the unity of diversity.

This paper examines the relationship between cultural nationalism and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 through a conceptual and analytical approach. It explores the historical evolution of Indian cultural consciousness, the philosophical foundations of cultural nationalism, and its possible contribution to national development. The study argues that cultural confidence can strengthen social cohesion, civic responsibility, indigenous knowledge, heritage conservation, educational transformation and India's global cultural influence. At the same time, cultural nationalism must remain inclusive, constitutional and compatible with India's plural social structure. Excessive politicisation of culture, exclusionary interpretations of national identity, social inequality and the tension between tradition and modernity may create challenges for the realization of Viksit Bharat 2047. The paper concludes that India's developmental aspirations can be strengthened when cultural heritage and modern scientific temper are treated not as opposing forces but as complementary dimensions of nation-building.

Keywords: Cultural Nationalism, Viksit Bharat 2047, Indian Civilization, National Identity, Cultural Heritage, Indian Knowledge Systems, Development, Pluralism, Nation Building, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

India entered the twenty-first century with significant economic, technological and demographic potential. Over the last few decades, the country has experienced substantial transformation in infrastructure, education, information technology, space research, digital services, entrepreneurship and global diplomacy. The aspiration to transform this potential into a comprehensive developmental model has gained particular importance with the emergence of the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, which envisages India as a developed nation by the centenary of its independence.

Development, however, cannot be understood merely in terms of Gross Domestic Product, physical infrastructure or technological advancement. A nation is also shaped by its collective memory, values, cultural institutions, social relationships and historical consciousness. Development becomes sustainable when economic progress is accompanied by social cohesion, cultural confidence, ethical responsibility and institutional capacity. Therefore, the cultural dimension of nation-building deserves systematic academic attention. The concept of cultural nationalism occupies an important position in discussions concerning Indian national identity. In the Indian context, culture cannot be reduced to a single language, religion, region, community or historical experience. Indian civilization has developed through continuous interaction among different philosophical traditions, languages, ethnic groups, religious communities, regional cultures and social institutions. The resulting cultural landscape is characterized by both diversity and underlying civilizational continuities.

The idea of India as a civilizational entity has deep historical roots. Concepts such as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world as one family, reflect an outward-looking cultural philosophy. Similarly, Sarva Dharma Sambhava, pluralism, coexistence and the pursuit of knowledge have historically contributed to India's intellectual traditions. These values can potentially provide a cultural foundation for contemporary nation-building.

The central argument of this paper is that cultural nationalism, when understood in an inclusive, constitutional and pluralistic sense, can contribute to the realization of Viksit Bharat 2047. It can strengthen national confidence, encourage preservation of heritage, promote Indian knowledge traditions, support cultural industries and reinforce social responsibility. However, it must avoid exclusionary interpretations that create divisions among citizens. The challenge before India is therefore not to choose between culture and modernity but to develop a synthesis in which cultural heritage supports scientific, technological and socio-economic advancement.

● Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the conceptual and historical foundations of Cultural Nationalism in the Indian context and its relevance to contemporary nation-building.
2. To analyse the role of cultural heritage, Indian Knowledge Systems and education in developing cultural confidence, social cohesion and responsible citizenship.
3. To examine the relationship between cultural nationalism and the economic dimensions of Viksit Bharat 2047, particularly innovation, entrepreneurship, employment and knowledge-based development.
4. To analyse how an inclusive, constitutional and scientifically informed approach to Cultural Nationalism can contribute to the realisation of Viksit Bharat 2047.

● Hypotheses

H₁: Cultural heritage and Indian Knowledge Systems positively contribute to cultural confidence and knowledge-based national development.

H₂: Culturally rooted and value-based education strengthens social cohesion, responsible citizenship and youth participation in nation-building.

H3: Cultural nationalism, when connected with innovation, entrepreneurship and cultural industries, can contribute to the economic objectives of Viksit Bharat 2047.

H4: An inclusive, constitutional and scientifically informed form of Cultural Nationalism can strengthen social integration and contribute to the long-term vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

2. Conceptual Understanding of Cultural Nationalism

Nationalism is generally associated with the development of a shared consciousness among people who identify themselves as members of a nation. Cultural nationalism emphasizes the role of common cultural memories, traditions, symbols, historical experiences, values, literature, language and collective heritage in creating national consciousness. Cultural nationalism differs from political nationalism in emphasis. Political nationalism primarily focuses on the political sovereignty of the nation, whereas cultural nationalism highlights the cultural and civilizational foundations of collective identity. In a multicultural society such as India, however, cultural nationalism cannot reasonably be based upon cultural uniformity.

Indian cultural nationalism may therefore be conceptualized as a shared civilizational consciousness that accommodates cultural plurality while recognizing a broad historical and ethical continuity. It does not necessarily require every citizen to possess identical cultural practices. Rather, it may encourage citizens to recognize different traditions as components of a larger national cultural framework.

This distinction is important because India is characterized by extraordinary diversity. Hundreds of languages and dialects, numerous religious traditions, regional cultures, tribal communities, folk traditions, architectural styles, artistic practices and culinary cultures contribute to Indian civilization. Consequently, cultural nationalism in India must be capable of accommodating diversity rather than suppressing it.

From this perspective, cultural nationalism can perform three major functions:-

1. **Identity formation:** It provides individuals with a sense of historical and cultural belonging.
2. **Social integration:** It creates common symbols and values capable of connecting diverse communities.
3. **Civilizational confidence:** It encourages society to value indigenous intellectual, artistic and scientific contributions.

3. Historical Evolution of Indian Cultural Consciousness

Indian cultural consciousness has developed through a long historical process. The ancient Indian intellectual tradition produced important contributions to philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, literature and political thought. Institutions of learning such as Takshashila and Nalanda became associated with international intellectual exchange.

The intellectual traditions associated with the Vedas, Upanishads, Buddhist and Jain philosophies, classical Sanskrit literature, Tamil literary traditions and numerous regional knowledge systems demonstrate that Indian civilization developed through multiple intellectual streams.

The medieval period further enriched Indian culture through interactions among Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, Sikh and other traditions. The Bhakti and Sufi movements contributed significantly to social and cultural interaction. Regional languages and literatures flourished, creating a cultural landscape that was simultaneously local and civilizational.

During the colonial period, Indian cultural consciousness acquired a new political dimension. Intellectuals and social reformers sought to reinterpret Indian civilization in response to colonial claims of cultural superiority. Thinkers such as Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and others contributed differently to debates about Indian identity, modernity, civilization and nationalism.

The freedom movement transformed cultural consciousness into a significant component of anti-colonial nationalism. Symbols, literature, indigenous industries, educational movements and historical narratives contributed to the development of national consciousness.

After independence, the Constitution provided a political framework that recognized equality, liberty, justice, fraternity and pluralism. Thus, contemporary Indian national identity developed through the interaction of civilizational traditions and constitutional citizenship.

4. Viksit Bharat 2047: The Developmental Vision

The idea of Viksit Bharat 2047 is connected with India's aspiration to become a developed nation by 2047, the hundredth anniversary of independence. The vision encompasses multiple dimensions of national development, including economic growth, technological advancement, infrastructure, education, health, social welfare, innovation, sustainability and institutional strengthening. A developed nation cannot be defined exclusively through per-capita income. Development must also involve: -



Consequently, the cultural dimension of development becomes relevant. A society that possesses economic resources but experiences cultural alienation, social fragmentation or loss of historical consciousness may face difficulties in creating sustainable national development.

Viksit Bharat therefore requires not only economic capital and technological capital but also social and cultural capital.

5. Relationship Between Cultural Nationalism and Viksit Bharat 2047

The relationship between cultural nationalism and Viksit Bharat can be examined through several dimensions.

5.1 Cultural Confidence and National Development

A nation that possesses confidence in its intellectual and cultural heritage is more likely to approach globalization from a position of confidence rather than cultural insecurity. Cultural confidence does not mean rejecting foreign ideas. Instead, it means the ability to absorb external knowledge while retaining an independent intellectual identity.

India's historical experience demonstrates its capacity to assimilate external influences while producing distinctive cultural forms. This principle can be applied to contemporary development. India can adopt advanced technologies, management practices and scientific discoveries while simultaneously strengthening its own intellectual traditions.

5.2 Indian Knowledge Systems

The renewed emphasis on Indian Knowledge Systems creates an important connection between cultural heritage and contemporary education. Traditional Indian knowledge includes philosophical thought, mathematics, astronomy, Ayurveda, yoga, agriculture, architecture, metallurgy, linguistics, environmental practices and diverse systems of local knowledge.

The purpose should not be to romanticize every traditional claim or replace modern science with unverified ideas. Instead, Indian knowledge should be studied through critical, evidence-based and interdisciplinary research.

Such an approach can contribute to innovation by identifying historically valuable practices and examining their relevance to contemporary problems.

5.3 Education and Value Formation

Education is one of the most important instruments through which cultural nationalism can contribute to nation-building. Education can introduce students to India's diverse intellectual traditions, literature, art, architecture, freedom struggle and constitutional values.

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes holistic education, multidisciplinary learning, Indian languages and Indian knowledge traditions. These objectives provide a framework for connecting cultural awareness with contemporary education.

5.4 Heritage Conservation

India possesses a vast heritage of monuments, archaeological sites, manuscripts, museums, folk traditions, performing arts and intangible cultural heritage. Heritage conservation can generate employment, tourism and local economic development while strengthening cultural consciousness.

Digitization of manuscripts, virtual museums, archaeological documentation and technology-based conservation can make heritage accessible to younger generations.

6. Cultural Industries and the Economic Dimension

Cultural nationalism can also contribute to economic development through the expansion of India's creative and cultural industries.

Indian handicrafts, handlooms, textiles, music, cinema, literature, cuisine, traditional medicine, yoga, tourism and performing arts possess significant economic potential. Digital platforms have created new opportunities for artisans, writers, artists, musicians and entrepreneurs.

The integration of cultural industries with e-commerce, digital marketing, tourism and intellectual property protection can provide employment and strengthen local economies.

For example, traditional handicrafts can be connected with global markets through digital platforms. Similarly, cultural tourism can create opportunities for local communities surrounding historical and religious sites.

This suggests that cultural nationalism can acquire an economic dimension through the principle of local cultural resources for global economic participation.

S. No.	Economic Indicator	2022-23 (Base Year)	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (Provisional/SAE)
1	Real GDP Growth (%)	7.2	7.1	6.5	7.6
2	Per Capita GDP (₹, constant prices)	1,88,862	2,00,654	2,12,979	2,27,065
3	Per Capita NNI (₹, constant prices)	1,59,557	1,70,153	1,81,172	1,93,152
4	Private Final Consumption Expenditure – PFCE (₹ crore, constant prices)	1,49,22,828	1,57,85,257	1,66,99,851	1,79,81,520
5	Gross Fixed Capital Formation – GFCF (₹ crore, constant prices)	84,53,506	90,66,633	96,47,792	1,03,31,125
6	GFCF as % of GDP	32.4	32.4	32.2	32.0
7	Exports (₹ crore, constant prices)	62,78,722	63,23,241	67,37,996	71,73,104
8	Unemployment Rate (%) — Usual Status, age 15+	—	—	—	3.1

Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), National Accounts Statistics / GDP Estimates; MoSPI, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025.

The table indicates that India has maintained strong economic momentum, with real GDP growth estimated at 7.6% in 2025–26. At the same time, per-capita GDP increased from ₹1,88,862 in 2022–23 to ₹2,27,065 in 2025–26, indicating an improvement in average economic output per person.

A particularly important indicator is Gross Fixed Capital Formation, which increased from ₹84.53 lakh crore in 2022–23 to ₹103.31 lakh crore in 2025–26 at constant prices. This reflects continued investment in productive capacity and provides an important economic foundation for infrastructure, innovation and employment generation.

The rise in PFCE also demonstrates the strength of India's domestic demand. However, the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 requires that economic growth translate into higher-quality employment, rising household incomes, human-capital development and greater social inclusion. The PLFS 2025 reports an all-India unemployment rate of 3.1% under the usual-status measure for persons aged 15 years and above.

Research implication: These economic indicators support the argument that cultural nationalism and Viksit Bharat should not be viewed only through the lens of cultural identity. Cultural confidence must be connected with economic productivity, entrepreneurship, innovation, employment, human capital and inclusive growth. In this sense, the economic transformation of India provides the material foundation upon which the broader cultural and civilizational vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 can be realised.

7. Cultural Nationalism and Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is essential for long-term national development. Economic policies alone cannot create social trust. Citizens must possess a sense of belonging to a common national community.

India's diversity makes social cohesion particularly important. Cultural nationalism can potentially provide a framework for recognizing common civilizational values while respecting regional and community identities.

The principle of unity in diversity is especially relevant. Unity does not require cultural uniformity. Instead, it requires a willingness to accept differences within a shared constitutional framework.

The values of fraternity, equality and justice articulated in the Indian Constitution should therefore remain central to any contemporary interpretation of cultural nationalism.

8. Cultural Nationalism, Globalization and India's Global Role

Globalization has created both opportunities and challenges for cultural identity. Digital communication enables cultural products to cross national borders rapidly. At the same time, global cultural industries can sometimes create homogenization.

India's response should not be isolationism. Rather, India can participate actively in global cultural exchange by presenting its literature, philosophy, yoga, music, cinema, cuisine, crafts and knowledge traditions to the world.

The concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam can provide a philosophical basis for India's global cultural engagement. It emphasizes the idea of humanity as an interconnected family and can support an international identity based on cooperation rather than domination.

9. Cultural Nationalism and Scientific Temper

One of the major challenges in discussions of cultural nationalism is the relationship between tradition and science. Cultural heritage should not be treated as automatically correct simply because it is ancient. Similarly, modernization should not require rejection of traditional knowledge. The appropriate approach is critical synthesis. Traditional knowledge systems can be investigated using modern scientific methods. Practices that demonstrate empirical value can be preserved, improved and integrated into contemporary systems, while historically significant but scientifically unsupported claims should be studied as cultural or intellectual history rather than presented as established scientific facts.

This balance is essential because the Constitution encourages the development of scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.

10. Gender and Inclusive Development

The vision of Viksit Bharat cannot be achieved without women's participation in economic, political, educational and cultural development. Indian history contains numerous examples of women who contributed to intellectual, political and cultural life. However, historical representation should not be limited to symbolic celebration. Contemporary development requires concrete measures for women's education, employment, entrepreneurship, leadership and political participation.

Cultural nationalism can contribute positively when it recognizes women as active agents of national development rather than merely as symbols of cultural tradition. The empowerment of women, marginalized communities, tribal populations and economically disadvantaged groups must therefore be treated as essential components of a culturally rooted but modern India.

Table 1. Dimensions of Cultural Nationalism and Their Contribution to Viksit Bharat 2047

S. No.	Dimension of Cultural Nationalism	Key Elements	Contribution to Viksit Bharat 2047
1	 Cultural Heritage	Monuments, literature, art, traditions	Strengthening cultural identity and promoting tourism
2	 Indian Knowledge Systems	Philosophy, Yoga, Ayurveda, mathematics, traditional knowledge	Promoting research, innovation and knowledge-based development
3	 Education	Indian languages, history and value-based education	Developing cultural awareness, skills and responsible citizenship
4	 Social Cohesion	Unity in diversity, coexistence and mutual respect	Strengthening national integration and social harmony
5	 Cultural Economy	Handicrafts, handlooms, performing arts and tourism	Generating employment and promoting local entrepreneurship
6	 Youth Participation	Cultural activities, digital platforms and innovation	Engaging youth in nation-building
7	 Indian Languages	Hindi and other regional languages	Preserving indigenous knowledge and cultural expression
8	 Global Cultural Engagement	Yoga, philosophy, literature, art and cinema	Enhancing India's soft power and global cultural influence
9	 Scientific Temper	Critical evaluation of traditional knowledge	Integrating valuable traditional knowledge with modern science
10	 Constitutional Values	Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity	Promoting inclusive and democratic national development

11. Youth and Cultural Nationalism

India's demographic structure provides a major opportunity. Young people will play a decisive role in determining whether the Viksit Bharat vision becomes a reality. Young Indians are increasingly connected to global culture through social media, digital entertainment and international education. Cultural nationalism can provide them with historical awareness and a sense of belonging without restricting their global outlook.

Youth-oriented cultural programmes, heritage walks, museum education, historical research, digital archives, folk-art initiatives and entrepreneurship can connect younger generations with cultural heritage.

12. Challenges and Critical Perspectives

Although cultural nationalism can make a positive contribution to Viksit Bharat, several challenges require careful consideration.

12.1 Risk of Cultural Exclusivism

If cultural nationalism is interpreted as the dominance of one religious, linguistic or regional identity, it can undermine India's plural character. Therefore, cultural nationalism must remain inclusive.

12.2 Politicization of History

History can become politically controversial when historical narratives are used primarily for contemporary political purposes. Academic history requires evidence, critical methods and openness to multiple perspectives.

12.3 Romanticization of the Past

A developed nation cannot be created by idealizing the past. Historical achievements deserve recognition, but historical limitations must also be studied objectively.

12.4 Tradition versus Modernity

An artificial opposition between tradition and modernity can create intellectual difficulties. India needs a synthesis in which useful traditional knowledge is examined through modern scientific methods.

12.5 Cultural Diversity

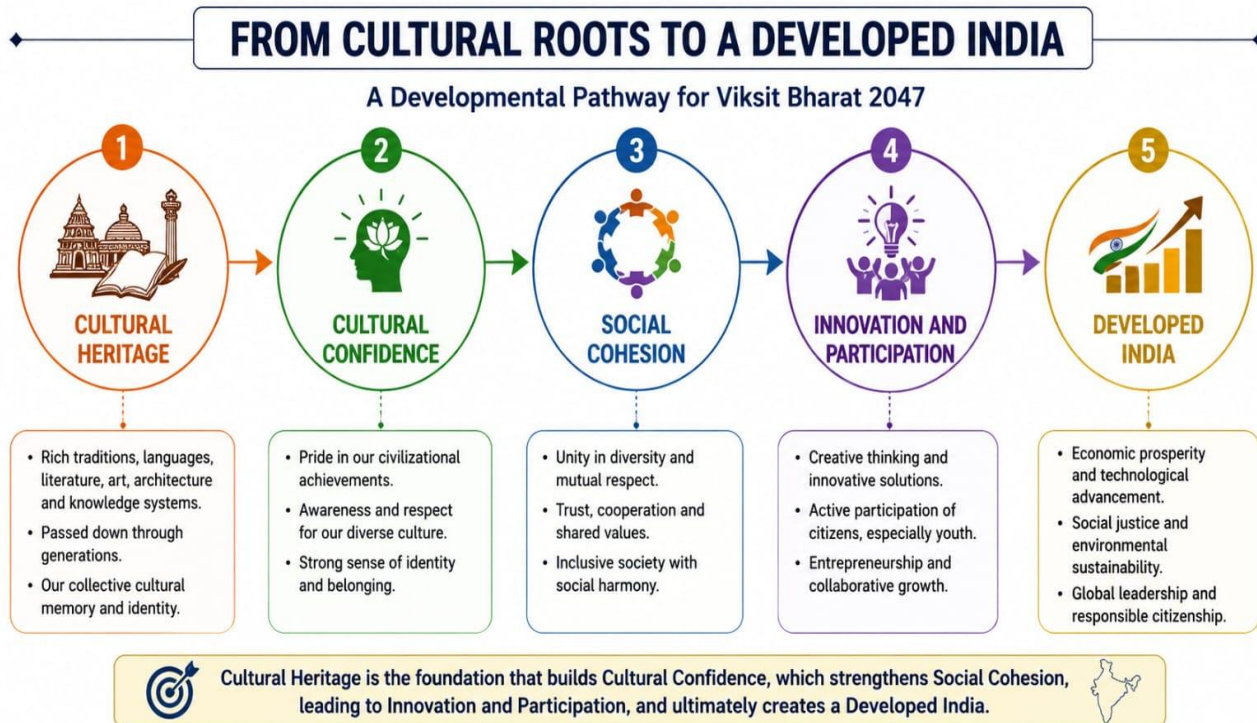
India's cultural diversity is both an asset and a challenge. A national cultural framework must avoid homogenizing India's regional and community-specific traditions.

12.6 Inequality and Development

Cultural pride cannot substitute for economic development. Poverty, unemployment, educational inequality, gender disparities and regional imbalances must be addressed through effective public policy.

13. Analytical Framework

The relationship between cultural nationalism and Viksit Bharat 2047 can be represented through a five-dimensional framework:



First, preservation of cultural heritage creates historical awareness. Second, historical awareness can generate cultural confidence. Third, shared cultural confidence may contribute to social cohesion when interpreted inclusively. Fourth, social cohesion can support innovation, entrepreneurship and civic participation. Finally, these processes contribute to broader national development.

However, this relationship is not automatic. It depends on institutions, education, constitutional values and public policy

14. Policy Suggestions

1. Strengthening Indian Knowledge Systems: Establish interdisciplinary research centres connecting traditional knowledge with contemporary science.
2. Heritage-Based Education: Integrate local history, monuments, folk traditions and regional literature into educational programmes.
3. Digital Cultural Infrastructure: Digitize manuscripts, archives, museums and intangible cultural heritage.
4. Cultural Entrepreneurship: Provide financial and technological support to artisans, craftspeople, artists and cultural entrepreneurs.
5. Promotion of Indian Languages: Encourage research, higher education and digital content in Indian languages while maintaining global linguistic competence.
6. Scientific Approach to Tradition: Evaluate traditional knowledge through evidence-based research rather than uncritical glorification.

7. Inclusive Cultural Policy: Ensure representation of tribal, regional, linguistic and minority traditions in national cultural programmes.
8. Youth Engagement: Develop heritage clubs, cultural innovation programmes and digital platforms for young people.
9. Cultural Tourism: Connect heritage conservation with sustainable tourism and local employment.
10. Constitutional Values: Link cultural education with liberty, equality, justice, fraternity and respect for diversity.

15. Conclusion

The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 is not merely an economic or technological project; it is a comprehensive project of national transformation. India's journey toward becoming a developed nation requires economic prosperity, technological capability, institutional effectiveness, social justice and environmental sustainability. Alongside these dimensions, cultural confidence and civilizational consciousness can provide an important foundation for national development.

Cultural nationalism, understood inclusively, can contribute to this process by strengthening historical awareness, social cohesion, cultural industries, heritage conservation, Indian knowledge systems and global cultural engagement. It can help create a developmental model in which modernization does not necessarily imply cultural alienation. At the same time, cultural nationalism must be approached critically. India's cultural identity cannot be reduced to a single tradition. The strength of Indian civilization has historically been its capacity to accommodate diversity, debate, interaction and adaptation. Therefore, the cultural foundation of Viksit Bharat should be based on pluralism rather than uniformity, confidence rather than superiority, critical inquiry rather than blind glorification, and constitutional citizenship rather than exclusion.

The most productive approach is to combine India's civilizational heritage with modern science, technology and democratic institutions. Indian knowledge traditions can inspire new research; heritage can support tourism and creative industries; cultural values can strengthen civic responsibility; and India's philosophical traditions can contribute to its global cultural diplomacy. The ultimate objective should therefore be to create a developed India that is not only prosperous and technologically advanced but also socially cohesive, environmentally responsible, culturally confident and intellectually open.

In this sense, Viksit Bharat 2047 can be understood as the convergence of development and civilizational confidence. Cultural nationalism, when interpreted through the principles of inclusiveness, constitutionalism, scientific temper and respect for diversity, can become one of the important intellectual and social resources for realizing this national vision.

● References

1. Aurobindo, Sri. The Foundations of Indian Culture. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.
2. Gandhi, M. K. Hind Swaraj. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.
3. Government of India. The Constitution of India. Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India.
4. Government of India. National Education Policy 2020. Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2020.
5. Government of India. India@2047: Vision and Development Perspectives. Government of India.
6. Habib, Irfan. Indian Economy, 1858–1914. Tulika Books, New Delhi.
7. Jha, D. N. Ancient India: An Introductory Outline. Manohar Publishers, New Delhi.

8. Kothari, Rajni. Politics in India. Orient Blackswan, New Delhi.
 9. Nussbaum, Martha C. The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India's Future. Harvard University Press, 2007.
 10. Panikkar, K. M. A Survey of Indian History. Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
 11. Sen, Amartya. The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
 12. Tagore, Rabindranath. Nationalism. Macmillan, London, 1917.
 13. Thapar, Romila. The Past as Present: Forging Contemporary Identities through History. Aleph Book Company, New Delhi, 2014.
 14. Vivekananda, Swami. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda. Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata.
 15. UNESCO. Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. UNESCO.
 16. UNESCO. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. UNESCO, 2003.
- https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
 - <https://www.education.gov.in/nep/iks>
 - <https://www.mospi.gov.in/>
 - <https://www.mygov.in/viksitbharat2047/>
 - <https://ich.unesco.org/>
-