



Understanding Panch-Parivartan – ‘Civic Duties

Introductory Memo

India, the world's largest democracy, is also among the few ancient civilisations to have survived and evolved over millennia. Unlike the Sumerian or Egyptian cultures that faded, Indian civilisation has thrived by anchoring itself in a deep ethos of collective responsibility and moral discipline. At its core lies the principle of civic duty — the unwritten contract between citizen and society — that has historically sustained order and cohesion. This Info-Pack explores Civic Duties as a vital pillar of the Panch-Parivartan, arguing that restoring this ethic is essential not only for strengthening democratic institutions but for preserving the cultural and ethical fabric of the nation.

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1. News at Glance

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2. Analytical View

India recently marked 75 years of independence and has now entered the Amrit Kaal — a critical phase leading up to its centenary in 2047, with the vision of becoming a developed nation. While the government is undertaking necessary policy reforms to create an enabling environment, this national aspiration cannot be fulfilled by governance alone. It demands active participation from the people. Citizens must rise to the occasion by embracing a mindset rooted in responsibility, as civic consciousness is fundamental to the health of both society and democracy.

In ancient India, this concept of duties of a citizen was deeply intertwined with the overarching philosophical and the social principle of Dharma. It was far more comprehensive than a mere set of rules, which encompassed righteousness, moral conduct, ethical obligations, and one's appropriate role in society and cosmos. It was believed that fulfilling one's dharma led to individual well-being and societal harmony.

The righteous conduct included moral and ethical living, exhibiting qualities like truthfulness, non-violence, compassion, self-restraint, purity, purity and honesty. It also contributed to maintaining a social order. The belief that good Karma led to a better future, including rebirth also reinforced the importance of duties. Then there were duties based on one's occupation (King, Teacher, Priest, Soldier, Farmer, etc.)

Similarly, a person's dharma also evolved through the four stages of life, i.e. Ashramas (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa). Then there were duties such as Community and State Responsibilities, which included respect for parents, elders, teachers, hospitality (Atithi Devo Bhava), safeguarding public property, participating in assemblies (Sabha and Samiti) for collective decision making and consensus building, loyalty towards the State and protecting the environment, to name a few. It is crucial to note that the concept of duties in ancient India was often more emphasised than rights in the modern sense. Rights were often seen as flowing naturally from the proper performance of one's duties. This is a fundamental difference from the Western legal traditions that prioritise individual rights.

The duties of a citizen in ancient India were deeply rooted in the concept of Dharma, encompassing moral, social, occupational, and spiritual obligations, all contributing to the well-being of the individual and the harmony of the cosmic and social order. These can be found in our ancient texts like Vedas and Upanishads, Dharmashastras, Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Arthashastra, even in the Buddhist and Jain texts like Jataka Tales, Tripitaka and the Agama.

In modern times, though the discourse is more focused on the Fundamental Rights of the citizens, the Fundamental Duties of the citizens, which are equally important, are

mostly overlooked. The Fundamental Duties of an individual as a citizen of India are enshrined in the Article 51A of the Constitution of India. The duties of an individual as a citizens include

to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;

to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom; to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;

to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;

to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women; to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;

to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures;

to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform; to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;

to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.

who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

These duties enshrined in the Constitution are recommendatory in nature. Some core civic duties though not part of our Constitution or any other legal statute, but expected to be performed by every citizen include obeying the laws of the land, like paying taxes, following traffic rules, maintaining cleanliness, especially in the public places, optimum use of natural resources like water, electricity etc., rendering voluntary and community services during emergency situations like natural disasters. While voting is often referred to as a right, in a participatory democracy like India, it is also a significant responsibility. It allows citizens to participate in shaping their government and holding the leaders accountable. Taking care of one's elders and senior citizens is also a social responsibility of each individual.

In essence, the duties of an individual as a citizen involve a balance between individual rights and responsibilities towards the larger society and the nation. Though these fundamental duties are not enforceable in a court of law, there is a need for wider discussion on the duties of every citizen to instill a sense of duty towards the society and nation in every citizen. As Swami Vivekananda had rightly observed, "it is the duty of every person to contribute to the development and progress of India". At this juncture, when India is the fourth largest economy of the world, and every Indian dreams to revive India's position as Vishwaguru with the ideals of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam at its core, it is even more important for every citizen to instill the constitutional philosophy in one's daily life, revive the ancient

Hindu concepts of 'Dharma as Duty' in which are relevant in modern civic life and develop an entrepreneurial mindset for India's progress.

3. By The Numbers

Fundamental Duties: The Constitution of India lists 11 Fundamental Duties under Article 51A.

Income Tax Filers (2023–24): Only 6.68% of India's population filed income tax returns in the fiscal year 2023–24. Source: YourStory; The Economic Times

Cases Disposed via Lok Adalats: Since their inception, E-Lok Adalats have disposed of approximately 96.90 lakh cases across 28 States and Union Territories. Press Information Bureau

NCC Cadets: As per available data, there are 14,09,571 enrolled NCC cadets across India. Press Information Bureau

NYKS Volunteers: The Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan has a network of over 9.36 lakh volunteers participating in various youth programs. Press Information Bureau

Swachh Bharat Mission Participation: The "Swachhata Hi Seva" campaign in 2024 saw participation from over 30 crore individuals. Press Information Bureau

MyGov Platform Users: As of recent reports, the MyGov platform has over 5.34 crore registered users.

Swachh Survekshan Awareness: Specific data on urban household awareness for Swachh Survekshan 2023 is not readily available

4. Academic Insight

1. Fundamental Duties – Indian Constitution (BYJU'S)
2. Ramayana: The Legacy of Good Governance and Sustainable Peace
3. Analyzing the Role of Dharma in Shaping Ancient Indian Political Thought (PDF)
4. Dharma and the Indian Constitution

5. Social Media Pulse

हमारे संविधान में सभी नागरिकों के लिए कुछ Fundamental duties का उल्लेख किया गया है।

उनमें से एक है, 'scientific temper, spirit of inquiry and reform' की भावना को विकसित करना। यह आप सबका कर्तव्य है कि आप जागरूक समाज के निर्माण में अपना योगदान दें।
pic.twitter.com/7WpuOJJrbC

— President of India (@rashtrapatibhvn) November 29, 2022

पंच परिवर्तन से समाज होगा जागृत

- डॉ. चिन्मय पंड्या जी #PanchParivartan pic.twitter.com/fmc10Mvl1L

— शंखनाद (@ShankhnaadRSS) November 24, 2024

Dr. Ambedkar recognized that freedom requires responsibility. That is why we have in our Constitution both Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties.

We must always give precedence to our duties above our rights, because this nation is ours.

Nationalism requires a commitment... pic.twitter.com/9oOUkWX1cf

— Vice-President of India (@VPIndia) April 22, 2025

Article 51(A) of Indian constitution.

The fundamental duties were incorporated in Part IV-A of the Constitution by The Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976, during Indira Gandhi's Emergency.

Article 51(A) describes 11 fundamental duties-
10 came with the 42nd Amendment; pic.twitter.com/XMY6p7FLB4

— Civil Learning (@CivilLearning1) December 10, 2024

6. On Our Reading List

1. Samanya Dharma – Ethical Duties Common to All by Nithin Sridhar

