

## Viksit Bharat 2047: Administration, Democratic Ethics, and the Search for Human-Centered Governance

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### ABSTRACT

*This essay examines Viksit Bharat 2047 not as a political slogan but as a fundamental question about India's governance and democratic development. It argues that while digital initiatives like Aadhaar and Direct Benefit Transfer have transformed state-citizen interactions, technology alone cannot substitute human-centered administration. The piece critically explores the tension between efficiency and empathy, questioning whether systems truly reduce citizen anxiety or merely relocate it online. Drawing on India's democratic tradition, the essay emphasizes that sustainable development requires participatory governance through Panchayati Raj institutions and local bodies, not top-down mandates. While acknowledging achievements in schemes like Ayushman Bharat and Jal Jeevan Mission, it highlights the need for better coordination that reflects citizens' lived experiences rather than isolated policy successes. The author contends that "developed" must mean more than GDP growth it demands narrowing inequality, creating dignified employment, and ensuring opportunities aren't predetermined by birth. Ultimately, the essay proposes that the path to 2047 requires administration grounded in empathy, data used for correction rather than control, strengthened democratic institutions, and genuine ground-level feedback. Viksit Bharat's success, it concludes, will be measured not by grand visions but by whether the last person feels included in the journey, not merely managed by it.*

Keywords: Viksit Bharat, Viksit Bharat 2047, Governance, Administration

### ARTICLE

When Viksit Bharat 2047: Administration, Democratic Ethics, and the Search for Human-Centered Governance -Dr Lalit Joshi

Development is never merely a catalogue of schemes. It is a lived process, uneven and often uncomfortable, shaped by the state, society, and citizens together. Seen from this angle, Viksit Bharat 2047 should not be read casually as a political slogan. Doing so would miss its deeper administrative and democratic weight. It is, perhaps, a long-term question posed to India's governance system, and the answer is still very much under construction.

The phrase points toward the centenary of India's independence. On the surface, the question appears simple. What kind of country will India be in 2047? Yet a more difficult question sits beneath it. Who will truly benefit from this development, and at what social and democratic cost? Administration stands at the center of this tension.

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### **Administration at the Crossroads: Citizens or Procedures?**

For a long time, Indian administration functioned as an administration of rules. Files moved. Citizens waited. Authority flowed downward. Over the last decade, something has clearly shifted. Initiatives such as Digital India, Jan Dhan Yojana, Aadhaar-based service delivery, and Direct Benefit Transfer have altered everyday interactions between the state and the citizen. When an old-age pension reaches a bank account directly, it is not only money that arrives. Trust arrives too. That matters.

Still, one must pause here. Has administration genuinely become human-centred, or has it merely become technology-centered? Technology, after all, is a tool, not a value. If a person at the margins still struggles to correct a digital error or navigate a helpline, the promise of efficiency begins to feel thin. Perhaps this is where governance needs self-doubt. Systems should reduce anxiety, not relocate it from physical counters to online portals.

The idea of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas acquires meaning precisely here. It is not a slogan meant for banners. It is an ethical test for administration. Does the system treat citizens as partners, or as data points?

### **Democracy and Development: A Relationship Full of Friction**

Democracy is often accused of being slow. There are debates, disagreements, delays, and, occasionally, chaos. Yet experience suggests that development imposed without democratic consent rarely sustains itself. India's democracy argues loudly, asks inconvenient questions, and sometimes appears messy. Perhaps that disorder is not a weakness, but a condition of durability.

If Viksit Bharat 2047 is to become more than an aspiration, development decisions cannot remain strictly top-down. Panchayati Raj institutions, urban local bodies, cooperative federalism, and participatory platforms are not administrative ornaments. They are democratic foundations. The real question is not how strong the central state appears, but how empowered the citizen feels at the local level.

It is tempting to equate speed with success. However, democratic governance trades speed for legitimacy. That trade-off, though frustrating, is often worth making.

### **Schemes Are Many. Direction Must Be Clear**

Ayushman Bharat, Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The list is long, and to be fair, several of these initiatives have produced visible change. Tap water in rural households. Housing titles in women's names. Access to cashless healthcare. These are not abstract achievements.

Yet a certain unease remains. Are these schemes speaking to each other, or merely coexisting? Administration does not end with launching programmes. It extends to coordination, feedback, and course correction. Ministries often report success in isolation, while citizens experience life.

Consider an elderly woman in a rural area. For her, pension, healthcare, and food security are not separate schemes. They are parts of a single survival ecosystem. Human-centred administration begins when policy design reflects this lived continuity.

### **What Does "Developed" Actually Mean**

Development is notoriously difficult to measure. GDP figures rise. Infrastructure expands. Global rankings improve. Still, uncomfortable questions persist. Is inequality narrowing or widening? Are jobs being created, and are they dignified? Do young people seek only employment, or meaningful participation in economic life?

If Viksit Bharat 2047 is reduced to economic power alone, it risks becoming an incomplete dream. A developed society is one where opportunities are not predetermined by birth, where administration listens to the weakest voice, and where democracy does not end at the polling booth.

Economic growth is essential. No serious scholar would deny that. But growth detached from social justice and democratic accountability eventually hollows itself out.

### **Questions That Refuse to Go Away**

Certain questions keep returning in this discussion and avoiding them helps no one.

Is our administration willing to take informed risks, or does it still find safety in rigid procedures?

Is citizen participation in policymaking substantive, or largely symbolic?

Do we see dissent as a threat to governance, or as a democratic condition of improvement?

These are not theoretical puzzles. They shape everyday governance. The road to 2047 will not be built by infrastructure alone. It will be built by trust, and trust is fragile.

### **Possible Directions, Not Perfect Answers**

No one possesses a complete blueprint for a developed India. That said, some directions seem reasonably clear.

First, administrative training must move beyond rules and efficiency. Sensitivity, empathy, and ethical reasoning deserve institutional space. Knowing the law is necessary. Understanding people is equally so.

Second, data should serve correction, not control. Numbers should illuminate gaps, not intimidate administrators or citizens. When data creates fear, learning stops.

Third, democratic institutions must be strengthened, even when they question authority. A strong government and strong institutions are not enemies. They depend on each other more than is often admitted.

Fourth, policy evaluation must travel beyond reports and presentations. Ground-level feedback is uncomfortable, yes, but indispensable. Governance improves only when it listens.

### **A Personal Reflection to Close**

It is easy to declare that India will be developed by 2047. It is harder to accept that development carries moral responsibility. Speaking as a teacher, and simply as a citizen, I believe the real meaning of Viksit Bharat will emerge only when the last person feels included in the journey, not managed by it.

This, after all, is the democratic ideal. Governance not merely for the people, but with the people. Administration not as a command machine, but as a listening institution.

2047 may appear distant. Yet administrative decisions are taken every single day. The question is not how grand the vision sounds. The question is whether the path toward it remains humane, democratic, and honest.

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