

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

July 2025



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 16

Issue 4

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 16

Issue 4

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

“THE SANATANADHARMA

WHAT IS SANATANADHARMA?

(i) “There is a mighty law of life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the sanatana dharma, the eternal religion.” (CWSA 8: 24)

(ii) The Sanatanadharma is to realise God in our inner life and outer existence, in society no less than in the individual. It is the basis, permanent and always inherent in India, of the shifting mutable and multiform thing that has been termed Hinduism.

(iii) The foundation of Sanatanadharma is truth and courage. It is no sect or dogmatic creed, no bundle of formulas or social rules, but a mighty, universal and eternal truth. It has learned and practiced the secret of preparing man’s soul for the divine consummation of identity with the Infinite and Eternal existence of God. The rules of life and the formulas of belief are desirable and sacred only to the extent they serve this great end.

(iv) “Indian religion cannot be described by any of the definitions known to the occidental intelligence. In its totality it has been a free and tolerant synthesis of all spiritual worship and experience. Observing the one Truth from all its many sides, it shut out none. It gave itself no specific name and bound itself by no limiting distinction. Allowing separative designations for its constituting cults and divisions, it remained itself nameless, formless, universal, infinite, like the Brahman of its agelong seeking. Although strikingly distinguished from other creeds by its traditional scriptures, cults and symbols, it

is not in its essential character a credal religion at all but a vast and many-sided, an always unifying and always progressive and self-enlarging system of spiritual culture.” (CWSA 20: 193)

(v) “A religion.. which claims to be eternal, must not be content with satisfying the heart and imagination, it must answer to the satisfaction of the intellect the questions with which philosophy is preoccupied. A philosophy which professes to explain the world-problem once for all, must not be satisfied with logical consistency and comprehensiveness; it must like Science base its conclusions not merely on speculative logic, but on actual observation and its truths must always be capable of verification by experiment so that they may be not merely conceivable truth but ascertained truth; it must like religion seize on the heart & imagination and without sacrificing intellectual convincingness, comprehensiveness & accuracy impregnate with itself the springs of human activity; and it must have the power of bringing the human self into direct touch with the Eternal. The Vedantic religion claims to be the eternal religion because it satisfies all these demands. It is intellectually comprehensive in its explanation of all the problems that perplex the human mind; it brings the contradictions of the world into harmony by a single luminous law of being; it has developed in Yoga a process of spiritual experience by which its assertions can be tested and confirmed; the law of being it has discovered seizes not only on the intellect but on the deepest emotions of man and calls into activity his highest ethical instincts; and its whole aim and end is to bring the individual self into a perfect and intimate union with the Eternal.” (CWSA 18: 412)

(vi) At the foundation of the Sanatana Dharma lies the idea of the One without a second who is the Eternal, the Infinite and ineffable and unthinkable Existence (or Non-

Existence) or, in other words, the Absolute. The world and all that is existent or non-existent is nothing but that Supreme and Absolute Reality. All the many theories and philosophies about the nature of the world are therefore nothing but so many ways of looking at it; each revealing something – an aspect or a facet – of the Supreme Reality. Sri Aurobindo takes an evolutionary view of terrestrial existence because it seems to him to best explain the terrestrial phenomena. According to Sri Aurobindo, a spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter is the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence. The consciousness first houses herself in forms of Matter which appear to be altogether unconscious. It struggles towards mentality in the guise of living Matter and attains to it imperfectly in the conscious animal. It slowly develops further and reaches its climax in Man, the thinking animal. Man, although carrying the burden of his inconscient and animal origin, is yet destined to evolve out of himself the fully conscious being, a divine manhood or a supramental or spiritual supermanhood which shall be the next product of the evolution. Religion has an important role to play in this evolution. The true work of the religious instinct in man is to lead him towards the Divine Reality by providing each human being, whatever his position in life or stage in evolution, a mould of spiritual discipline, a way of seeking the Divine Truth – a way proper to the potentialities of his nature. The development of religion in India has been entirely in consonance with the true work of the religious instinct. It has followed a course which, preserving the true intention of the religious seeking of the human being, not only allowed but encouraged any number of religious formulations, cults and disciplines to exist side by side and left each man free to accept and follow that which was congenial to his thought, feeling, temperament, build of the nature. It is the failure to understand

the process of terrestrial evolution and the true intention of the religious seeking in man that is at the root of the secular westernized mind's misunderstanding of Sanatana Dharma. Hinduism is the form that Sanatana Dharma assumed during the development of religion in India.

To sum up, if a culture starting at the same point of time and exactly similar to the ancient Indian culture were to set for itself the most sublime spiritual goal and intensely strive to move its whole body – individual and collective – towards the goal as effectively (swiftly and integrally) as possible, then during the course of its pursuit of the desired goal the edifice of spiritual culture that will get built up will be the same as the Sanatana Dharma. Or, in other words, the Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism is the most perfect and efficient vehicle yet developed by humanity for its journey towards the spiritual perfection.

(vii) “Christianity, Mahomedanism, Buddhism and the creeds of China and Japan are all offshoots of one great and eternal religion of which India has the keeping.” (CWSA 7: 890)

SANATANADHARMA – THE RELIGION OF VEDANTA

“If it were asked by anyone what is this multitudinous, shifting, expanding, apparently amorphous or at all events multimorphous sea of religious thought, feeling, philosophy, spiritual experience we call Hinduism, what it is characteristically and essentially, we might answer in one word, the religion of Vedanta. And if it were asked what are the Hindus with their unique and persistent difference from all other races, we might again answer, the children of Vedanta. For at the root of all that we Hindus have done, thought and

said through these thousands of years of our race-history, behind all we are and seek to be, there lies concealed, the fount of our philosophies, the bedrock of our religions, the kernel of our thought, the explanation of our ethics and society, the summary of our civilisation, the rivet of our nationality, this one marvellous inheritance of ours, the Vedanta. Nor is it only to Hindu streams that this great source has given of its life-giving waters. Buddhism, the teacher of one third of humanity, drank from its inspiration. Christianity, the offspring of Buddhism, derived its ethics and esoteric teaching at second-hand from the same source. Through Persia Vedanta put its stamp on Judaism, through Judaism, Christianity and Sufism on Islam, through Buddha on Confucianism,..." (CWSA 18: 413)

"Vedanta's final & single answer to all the questions of philosophy is contained in a single mighty & ever-memorable phrase, So 'ham. I am He or more explicitly or to the question of the inquirer अहं ब्रह्मास्मि, I am Brahman. Cutting through all tremors & hesitations, scorning all doubt or reserve it announces with a hardy & daring incisiveness the complete identity of man & God. This is its gospel that the individual Self who seems so limited, thwarted, befouled, shamed & obscured with the bonds & shackles, the mud & stains of earthly life and the pure, perfect and illimitable Being who possesses & supports all existence, to Whom this vast and majestic Universe is but an inconsiderable corner of His mind and infinite Time cannot end and infinite Space cannot confine and the infinite net of cause and effect is powerless to trammel are equal, are of one nature, power, splendour, bliss, are One. It seems the very madness of megalomania, the very delirium of egoism. And yet if it be true?

And it is true. Reason can come to no other conclusion, Yoga ends in no less an experience, the voices of a hundred

holy witnesses who have seen God face to face, bring to us no less wonderful a message.” (CWSA 18: 337)

SANATANADHARMA – THE ONLY TRUE NATIONALISM

(i) “I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism.” (CWSA 8: 12)

(ii) “When you go forth, speak to your nation always this word that it is for the Sanatana Dharma that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise. I am giving them freedom for the service of the world. When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall expand and extend itself over the world. It is for the *dharma* and by the *dharma* that India exists. To magnify the religion means to magnify the country.” (CWSA 8: 10)

(iii) “Other religions are preponderatingly religions of faith and profession, but the Sanatana Dharma is life itself; it is a thing that has not so much to be believed as lived. This is the *dharma* that for the salvation of humanity was cherished in the seclusion of this peninsula from of old. It is to give this religion that India is rising. She does not rise as other countries do, for self or when she is strong, to trample on the weak. She is rising to shed the eternal light entrusted to her over the world.

India has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be great.” (CWSA 8: 6)

(iv) “If anyone thinks that we are merely intellectual beings, he is not a Hindu. Hinduism leaves the glorification of intellectuality to those who have never seen God. She is commissioned by Him to speak only of His greatness and majesty and she has so spoken for thousands of years. When we first received a European education, we allowed ourselves to be misled by the light of science. Science is a light within a limited room, not the sun which illumines the world. The Aparā Vidya is the sum of science but there is a higher Vidya, a mightier knowledge. When we are under the influence of the lower knowledge, we imagine that we are doing everything and try to reason out the situation we find ourselves in, as if our intellect were sovereign and omnipotent. But this is an attitude of delusion and Maya. Whoever has once felt the glory of God within him can never again believe that the intellect is supreme. There is a higher voice, there is a more unfailing oracle. It is in the heart where God resides. He works through the brain, but the brain is only one of His instruments. Whatever the brain may plan, the heart knows first and whoever can go beyond the brain to the heart, will hear the voice of the Eternal.” (CWSA 7: 891-92)

(v) “Spirituality is India’s only politics, the fulfilment of the Sanatan Dharma its only Swaraj. I have no doubt we shall have to go through our Parliamentary period in order to get rid of the notion of Western democracy by seeing in practice how helpless it is to make nations blessed.” 13 July, 1919 (CWSA 36: 170)” **(The Evolutionary Crisis Before Humanity: Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Trust, Khetan Mohalla, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan 2025: PP. 9-14)**

THE TERRESTRIAL EVOLUTION AND SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION OF DIVINE LIFE

““A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
His nature we must put on as he put ours;
We are sons of God and must be even as he:
His human portion, we must grow divine.
Our life is a paradox with God for key.” (CWSA 33: 67)

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

“The universe is an objectivisation of the Supreme, as if He had objectivised himself outside of himself in order to see himself, to live himself, to know himself, and so that there might be an existence and a consciousness capable of recognising him as their origin and uniting consciously with him to manifest him in the becoming. There is no other reason for the universe. The earth is a kind of symbolic crystallisation of universal life, a reduction, a concentration, so that the work of evolution may be easier to do and follow. And if we see the history of the earth, we can understand why the universe has been created. It is the Supreme growing aware of himself in an eternal Becoming; and the goal is the union of the created with the Creator, a union that is conscious, willing and free, in the Manifestation.

“That is the secret of Nature. Nature is the executive Force, it is she who does the work.” 7 May 1958 (CWM 9: 321)

SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION OF A DIVINE LIFE FOR HUMANITY UPON THE EARTH

“There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from

the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but with the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it.” 24 July, 1951 (CWM 12: 116)

The February 29, 1956 manifestation of the Supramental in the subtle physical layer of the Earth brought about by the Mother marks an important and most crucial milestone in the evolutionary march on earth. The above manifestation – the manifestation of a divine dynamism far greater than any that had ever before manifested in the terrestrial nature – makes the eventual realization of Sri Aurobindo’s vision a certainty. Speaking about it the Mother said, “...what has happened, the really new thing, is that a new world is *born, born, born*. It is not

the old one transforming itself, it is a *new* world which is *born*. And we are right in the midst of this period of transition where the two are entangled – where the other still persists all-powerful and entirely dominating the ordinary consciousness, but where the new one is quietly slipping in, still very modest, unnoticed – unnoticed to the extent that outwardly it doesn't disturb anything very much, for the time being, and that in the consciousness of most people it is even altogether imperceptible. And yet it is working, growing – until it is strong enough to assert itself visibly.” (CWM 9: 150)

“The descent of the supramental is an inevitable necessity in the logic of things and is therefore sure. It is because people do not understand what the supermind is or realise the significance of the emergence of consciousness in a world of “inconscious” Matter that they are unable to realise this inevitability. I suppose a matter-of-fact observer if there had been one at the time of the unrelieved reign of inanimate Matter in the earth's beginning would have criticised any promise of the emergence of life in a world of dead earth and rock and mineral as an absurdity and a chimaera; so too afterwards he would have repeated his mistake and regarded the emergence of thought and reason in an animal world as an absurdity and a chimaera. It is the same now with the appearance of supermind in the stumbling mentality of this world of human consciousness and its reasoning ignorance.” (CWSA 28: 287)

While the complete realization of the vision of a divine life may be looked upon as something of the distant future, the decisive turning of the collective human mind – leaving aside all narrowness of the traditional religious mind,

philosophical intelligence and politico-economic “isms” – towards the integral spiritual ideal which aims at the perfection of life in matter – something that all the above narrowness have miserably failed to accomplish – by the power of the Spirit has become imperative for the safety of the human race; for it alone can form the basis for the realization of human unity in a rich and organized diversity. Human Unity has become indispensable for the solution of some of the most dangerous collective problems facing humanity – especially problems such as the race for ever more potent and dangerous arms, the extension of national and individual human rivalries to outer space, and a looming ecological and environmental disaster.” **(The Evolutionary Crisis Before Humanity: Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Trust, Khetan Mohalla, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan 2025: PP. 15-17)**

HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

The Continued Failure of Diplomacy:

The third round of Russia-Ukraine negotiations in Turkey, held towards the end of July, have predictably not yielded any substantive outcome. The two sides only agreed to maintain further communication and continue the release of prisoners from both the sides. Ukraine's request to initiate a direct meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy was rejected outright by Russia, despite Trump's pressure.

One of the key reasons for the failure of these meetings is the widespread perception that Zelenskyy merely amplifies the stance of key European states, mainly Germany and the United Kingdom, which are firmly set on continuing the war, so speaking with him makes little sense. That is why Russia has repeatedly rejected a possible Putin-Zelenskyy summit. On the other hand, Russia believes that rather than Europe, it will be the stand the US takes which will be decisive to the outcome of the war. This makes Russia keen to have a direct summit between Trump and Putin, through which Russia believes it can secure a more favourable peace deal by representing itself from a position of strength.

Russia's Projection of Strength:

This position of strength has been difficult to project, considering Russia's steady economic downturn and strained resources due to the ongoing war. On the one hand, the Russian economy is facing the burden of a lack of investment and

serious over taxation, thereby generating domestic suffering and discontent along with repression. On the other hand, the Russian regime has continued to allocate resources to further pump the country's military-industrial complex which is crucial to sustaining its war against Ukraine. The regime has used both these outlets to project a part-illusion of strength.

In terms of the economy, Russia has continued to maintain that successive sanctions since the last three years has not damaged the Russian economy to the extent that was expected, and that Russia has been able to bypass these sanctions. Interestingly, the latest data now reveals that this was not only because China¹ and India continued to buy oil from Russia (with China being the biggest buyer of Russian oil), or because Iran and other countries of the Global South continue to engage in Russian partnerships (for example, consider Kazakhstan's decision to award the tender for its nuclear power plant construction to Russia's Rosatom instead of China, while awarding the tender for the next power plant to China), but also because the western countries have themselves continued to do business with Russia. Consider the fact that in 2024, approximately 35 percent of U.S. uranium imports (used for nuclear fuel) came from Russia. In 2024, US's total trade with Russia was an estimated USD 5.2 billion.² Furthermore, in 2024, total trade in goods between the EU and Russia amounted to USD 78 billion.³

¹ In 2024, the total trade volume between China and Russia reached a record high of USD 244.8 billion. For India it was USD 69 billion.

² Office of the United States Trade Representative. <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/europe-middle-east/russia-and-eurasia/russia#:~:text=U.S.%20goods%20and%20services%20trade,estimated%20%243.5%20billion%20in%202024.>

³ European Commission. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/russia_en

In terms of military, Russia has continued to upgrade its military industrial complex despite the strain it puts on its resources. This has particularly taken place in the direction of enhancing nuclear capabilities. The most recent indicator of this was the inauguration of the newly built strategic submarine Knyaz Pozharsky, the eighth of the Borei-class submarines. Despite the state budget's difficulties, funding for the costly program of constructing two classes of nuclear submarines was provided without delays or cuts. Russia's expansion of arsenal also includes what it calls the "wonder-weapons" such as the nuclear-propelled Poseidon underwater drone. Further, Russia's overall geostrategic position continues to be bolstered by the fact that alongside China and Australia, it controls major production and export chains of several critical minerals. Alongside China, it leads in mineral processing infrastructure and capabilities. In 2022, Russia was the source of 40 percent of global uranium enrichment.

Ukraine's Gains:

Even though Russia continues to upgrade its military complex and continues to derive legitimacy and material help from its partnership with powerful allies like China, Ukraine has displayed a steady upgradation of capabilities on the battlefield. Some time back, the sophisticated 'Operation Spiderweb' against Russia shed light on Ukrainian successes. More recently, Ukraine has also displayed capabilities in degrading Russia's air power, including taking down Russian fighter jets and successfully targeting sophisticated Russian air defence systems. The Ukrainian Air Force's effectiveness has opened the ability to increasingly conduct combat missions in both Crimea, as well as Russian border areas. This is being

achieved by two primary means. First, a series of continuous strikes is being conducted on Russia's air defence systems, including radars and missile launchers. The Defence Intelligence of Ukraine (GUR) regularly reports on the destruction of expensive and increasingly rare Russian systems. Second, the Ukrainian Air Force continues to compromise the Russian military's production and supply lines with strikes on military and industrial facilities deep inside Russian territory.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE: CHINA'S DOMINANCE OF INTERNET OF THINGS (IoT)

China is presently close to perfecting the relationship between technology and politics by redefining the role of technology in everyday lives. China's increasing dominance of the IoT landscape reveals how technological dominance can be used not only for expanding the consumerist economy based on utility and business, but also to project power and control in the events of war. This heralds a new era wherein power will be increasingly 'implied in the structures' of networks rather than just military might. This underpins China's long-term strategy to become the world's leading manufacturer of the cyber-physical systems that increasingly underpin modern life. These systems blur the line between the digital and physical worlds, embedding connectivity into homes, factories, transportation networks, and utilities. China views the mastery of such systems not merely as an economic priority, but as a form of structural power, by enabling control over the technological environments in which individuals, organizations, and entire societies operate.

The IoT technological landscape spans a whole array of smart home technologies, infrastructure, business and offices

etc. that affect the daily lives of entire economies. This includes smart home devices – ranging from voice-activated assistants and connected appliances to security cameras and thermostats – and even critical infrastructure components such as traffic systems, electric vehicles, financial terminals, and smart grids. In recent times, Chinese companies – such as Haier, TCL and Hisense among others – have gained dominance across all these sectors all over the world. At the same time, while these IoT devices offer utility and convenience to the people in their daily lives, they also contain embedded vulnerabilities. For, China’s digital security laws – based on a non-reciprocal model – make it mandatory for companies to allow the state to access data, including personal user data, while restricting the outflow of Chinese data outside of China’s borders. This means that in foreign markets data exfiltration easily takes place, allowing the Chinese state to gain access to sensitive data from other countries. This is because devices generate real-time data on user behaviours, locations, and habits, potentially feeding into surveillance ecosystems. This allows China to harvest user data for training artificial intelligence (AI) models, economic intelligence, or even for exercising geopolitical leverage.

In terms of geopolitical leverage, the deeper connectivity could enable China to use economic coercion and issue cybersecurity threats to achieve political objectives, through state-engineered disruptions. These risks are increasingly being flagged by Western countries and their allies, through demonstrations of how the Chinese-made IoT devices are already serving as attack vectors infiltrating critical infrastructure across the United States, Europe, Japan, and allied nations. In a recent low-key incident, the “LapDogs” espionage campaign

hijacked over/ 1,000 routers and IoT devices across the United States, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, turning them into operational relay boxes with custom backdoors to maintain stealthy, persistent access and facilitate downstream infiltration into corporate networks. Similarly, recently, British intelligence officials have issued security assessments over Chinese cellular IoT modules embedded in traffic systems, electric vehicles, financial terminals, and smart grids, warning that these modules could allow Beijing to freeze traffic lights, immobilize vehicles, or cut power remotely. In the United States, Chinese government-linked groups have leveraged vulnerable IoT endpoints, open to attacks, and successfully compromised networks like Massachusetts water utilities and Guam infrastructure. Although these minor infiltrations were rectified, they still reveal China's deep penetration into critical infrastructure networks of other countries.

China's strategy in the domain of IoT has been evolving since 2009-10, over successive five-year plans, and has accelerated under Xi Jinping. These developments herald new and more precarious future of technological development where the repercussions of state control over technology will not only change the landscape of geopolitics, by leading to less integration, more distrust, greater competition and more likelihood of wars, but also change the very nature of technology itself, wherein technology is utilized to exploit people's greed and desire for utilitarian fulfilment.

BIHAR SIR EXERCISE

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar by the Election Commission (EC) has been hijacked by the din of political mudslinging, raising several questions about

the exercise. The exercise was undertaken as part of the EC's constitutional mandate to review voters across constituencies and weed out fake voters. However, political mudslinging has led to allegations that the exercise will lead to disenfranchisement of even valid voters. More significantly, a section of intellectuals and opposition leaders have sought to tie this exercise to something akin to the National Register of Citizens (NRC) which was stalled few years back due to widespread protests by Muslims. A constitutionally mandated exercise like the SIR is now being painted as an anti-minority exercise, with the EC accused of being in cahoots with the BJP.

The effect of the opposition accusations and obstructions boils down to the position that citizenship should not be verified. Such a position becomes particularly problematic in a country where the problem of illegal immigration, especially from Bangladesh to India's border areas is particularly acute. Not only this, but the challenge of people manufacturing fake Aadhar cards and voter ID cards is also very common. It is quite commonplace to see one person possessing more than one voter ID card with different addresses/locations. Under such conditions, a periodic revision of electoral rolls on the part of the EC is not only much needed from a security point of view and it does not only constitute a power that the EC can legally exercise but is also its constitutional obligation, under Article 324, which it should be discharging regularly considering the Indian conditions under which the challenge of fake citizenship is rampant.

The Opposition's attempts to politicize this issue proved to be futile and the issues raised point, in fact, to a deeper malaise plaguing the system:

First, the issue of documents that were being accepted by the EC as ‘valid’ documents for voter authenticity proved to be a major sticking point. Here, even though the Supreme Court refused to halt the exercise, it issued advise to the EC to broaden the scope of identity documents being considered for voter eligibility. In particular, the Court – supporting the Opposition’s contention – advised that other identity documents like Aadhar Card, Elector’s Photo Identity Card (EPIC) and ration cards should also be considered. This was particularly contentious.

It was refuted by the EC on the grounds that none of these cards can act as proof of citizenship. The Aadhar Act, 2016, under Section 9, clearly states that, “Aadhar Number or the Authentication thereof, shall not, by itself, confer any right of, or be proof of, citizenship or domicile in respect of the Aadhar number holder.” Similarly, ration cards are merely to claim welfare benefits. Furthermore, these cards can easily be made in a fake or duplicate format, resulting in the presence of foreigners on electoral rolls.

Second, these attempts by the Opposition – and to a certain extent by the Court through its ambivalent approach – point to a revival of the controversy surrounding citizenship. For, the Opposition, along other intellectual detractors, have sought to use this exercise to accuse the EC of conducting a citizenship survey akin to the NRC. However, what these detractors do not take into account is that it is the EC’s constitutional mandate to ensure that only citizens of India vote in elections. Article 326 clearly states that, “the Elections to the House of People and the Legislature of every State shall be on the basis of adult suffrage, that is to say, every person who is a citizen of India and who is not less than 18 years of age in such State, as

may be fixed in that behalf, by or under any law made by the appropriate legislature and is not otherwise disqualified under this Constitution or any Law made by the appropriate legislature” would be eligible to vote. Therefore, citizenship indeed becomes a requirement to exercise the right to vote. This is also reinforced by the Representation of People’s Act (RPA), 1950 which, under Section 16(1)(a), provides that a person who is not a citizen of India will be disqualified for being registered as a voter.

Third, the Opposition’s sensational claim that the EC is conducting this exercise just before the Bihar elections to influence the election result and disqualify potential Opposition voters, also does not stand up to scrutiny, and failed to cut much leverage in the Court. For the RPA, 1950, under Section 23(3), clearly states that the only period during which no amendment, transposition, inclusion or deletion of rolls is permitted is after the last date for making the nominations for an election in that constituency.

Fourth, it has been argued by the Opposition groups that ‘ordinary residence’ in a constituency is a valid criterion for inclusion in the electoral rolls. However, here, it is notable that the Court had, in one of its previous judgements (*Dr. Yogesh Bharadwaj vs State of U.P And Ors, 1990 3 SCC 355*) already provided clarity on this count. It had stated that it is only lawful residence that can be considered for certain purposes, and if a person stays in a country in breach of immigration laws, that person’s presence there does not constitute ordinary residence. Therefore, illegal immigrants cannot flout the citizenship criterion and claim voting rights merely based on ordinary residence.

Fifth, the Opposition has argued that voters already registered were also added through a ‘due process’ by the EC in the earlier years through summary revision of electoral rolls, and that in the absence of concrete complains against specific voters proving the existence of illegal immigrants, the EC could not undertake such an exercise. However, it is notable here that the EC has argued that a ‘special intensive revision’ (under Section 21(3) of the RPA, 1950) had more validity than just ‘summary’ revisions. Now this is based on interpretation, with the Opposition arguing that the Constitution does not anywhere make one type of revision more important than the other. However, it is notable that the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 were amended in 1987 to introduce two separate categories of electoral roll revisions, summary and intensive. The fact that such an amendment was made to distinguish the types of revisions lays waste the Opposition’s argument that summary revisions alone are enough or the Opposition’s attempts to conflate the two types of revisions to delegitimize intensive revision.

Sixth, the EC has also provided avenue for inclusion into electoral rolls in the SIR for those people who were already registered during the last such exercise conducted in Bihar in 2003. The EC guidelines for the present SIR clearly state that those included in the 2003 electoral rolls, and their children, would be exempted from furnishing any of the citizenship documents required in the 2025 SIR. It is also notable that the requirements for voter registration during the 2003 revision were mainly four – NRC Register where available, citizenship certificate, valid passport, or birth certificate. None of these requirements mention EPIC card or ration card.

Through all of these contentions, the weak but insidious nature of the opposition to the SIR becomes clearly visible. By raising questions about citizenship, the exercise points to the deeper malaise of illegal immigration plaguing the Indian system. The population, mobility and political vote banks constitute a mix that further makes it logistically and politically difficult to smoothly undertake such much needed exercises. Further, the manner in which the exercise is being conducted – through manipulations, or corruption – also reveals the negative role played by bureaucratic entrenchment and inertia which spoils the execution of even well-intended and much needed initiatives, thereby hampering state capacity to conduct such exercises.

THE GREAT EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT AND INDIA

“If we take in its general results in India the great intellectual movement of humanity, we see that it broke up & scattered about in fragments the ancient catholic tradition & knowledge, placed its stamp on much that yet remains, destroyed a great deal which it could not assimilate, left a little surviving under veils & in our remote & secret places. **On the mental temperament of our people, the long struggle had a disastrous effect; for it has deprived all except the few of the higher supraintellectual inner life of our forefathers, it has made impossible any general resort to that discipline which gave them the use to a certain extent, at least, of the higher intuitive mentality, the satyadrishti, the direct sight, and has driven the many to be content rather with the irregular intuitions of the heart, the aesthetic faculties & the senses; we have kept those faculties which receive the actual touch of the higher truth obscurely, with the eyes of the intellect closed but lost those which receive them directly, with the eyes of the intellect open and luminously transmitting them to the mind imprisoned in matter. We have therefore neither been able to organise the intellectual efficiency of the Europeans, nor retain the principles of inner greatness known to our forefathers.**”

— Sri Aurobindo
(CWSA 17: 564)