

Mains Master

Why India needs deep industrialisation

Context:

- **Globalization Retreat:** The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global supply chains, leading to a resurgence of protectionism and a shift towards self-reliance. This trend presents both challenges and opportunities for India.
- **India's Growth Trajectory:** While India's economy has bounced back from the pandemic, concerns remain regarding:
 - **Premature Deindustrialization:** Manufacturing's share in GDP and employment has been stagnant, leading to job losses and missed opportunities.
 - **Unequal Growth:** High-end products see strong demand, while essential goods experience price hikes, highlighting an uneven distribution of benefits from growth.
 - **High Unemployment:** Both open unemployment and disguised unemployment (underemployment in agriculture) pose significant challenges.

Background:

- **Stagnant Industrialization:** Despite decades of efforts, India hasn't achieved the level of industrialization seen in other developing nations. Manufacturing's share remains below 20%, except for a brief period between 2003-2008.
- **Limitations of Services-Led Growth:** The service sector, particularly IT, has seen impressive growth, but it hasn't addressed:
 - **Employment Absorption:** Services haven't generated enough jobs to absorb the workforce exiting agriculture, leading to high unemployment.
 - **Skill Mismatch:** The sector demands highly skilled workers, which India struggles to supply adequately, creating disparities and inequalities.
 - **Inequality Amplification:** Wages in the service sector, especially for highly skilled roles, are significantly higher than in manufacturing, widening the income gap between different sections of society.

Deep Industrialization:

- **Beyond Output Growth:** Deep industrialization goes beyond simply increasing manufacturing output. It aims to:
 - **Create Mass Employment:** Generate sustainable and well-paying jobs for a large segment of the population, particularly those leaving agriculture.
 - **Drive Innovation and Technology:** Foster a culture of innovation and technological advancements across various industries, boosting overall productivity and competitiveness.
 - **Transform the Society:** Cultivate a social shift that values production, labor, and technical skills, leading to a more inclusive and dynamic economy.

Need for Deep Industrialization:

- **Address Unemployment Crisis:** High unemployment and underemployment pose major social and economic challenges. Deep industrialization can create millions of new jobs, contributing to a more stable and prosperous society.
- **Reduce Trade Deficit:** India's dependence on imported goods, especially manufactured items, contributes to a widening trade deficit. Domestic production through deep industrialization can help bridge this gap.
- **Promote Inclusive Growth:** By creating employment opportunities across various skill levels and regions, deep industrialization can foster a more equitable distribution of wealth and reduce income inequality.

India's Preparedness:

Challenges:

- **Mass Education Gap:** The quality of mass education remains inadequate, hindering the development of a skilled workforce needed for advanced manufacturing.
- **Unequal Higher Education:** While access to higher education has improved, disparities in quality persist, particularly between rural and urban institutions, limiting opportunities for many.
- **Cultural Dissonance:** Societal attitudes towards certain manual and vocational jobs are often negative, creating a hurdle in attracting and retaining talent in these crucial sectors.
- **Needed Actions:**
 - **Invest in Mass and Vocational Education:** Upgrade the quality of primary and secondary education, while also focusing on developing relevant vocational skills in line with industrial needs.
 - **Promote Social Change:** Create awareness and appreciation for blue-collar jobs, highlighting their importance and contribution to society.
 - **Bridge the Education Divide:** Improve the quality of rural and small-town schools and colleges, ensuring equal access to quality education for all.

Way Forward:

- **Focus on Manufacturing Integration:** Deep industrialization doesn't imply neglecting the service sector. Instead, it emphasizes the development of a robust manufacturing base that can integrate with and support the growth of services.
- **Address Key Barriers:** Prioritize overcoming educational and cultural roadblocks to create a conducive environment for deep industrialization to flourish.
- **Embrace Long-Term Vision:** Deep industrialization is a transformative undertaking requiring a long-term vision, sustained commitment, and collaborative efforts from policymakers, industry leaders, and educational institutions.

C Raja Mohan writes: In closer ties with the Gulf, a significant win for Indian diplomacy

Context:

- **Prime Minister Modi's visit to UAE and Qatar:** This visit underscores the growing significance of India's relationship with the Gulf region, marked by two significant events:
 - **Inauguration of Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi:** This symbolizes a landmark achievement in religious tolerance and cultural acceptance in the Islamic world.
 - **Release of detained Indian personnel:** This highlights a new level of trust and cooperation in addressing sensitive issues.

Background:

- **Historically limited engagement:** While trade existed, India's political and diplomatic engagement with the Gulf was primarily limited to oil imports, labor exports, and remittances.
- **Rise of "Khaleeji capital":** The accumulation of wealth from oil reserves created powerful financial centers in the Gulf, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE, with growing global influence.
- **India's economic ambitions:** India's aspirations for economic growth demanded diversification of its partners and sources of capital.



Evolution of India-Gulf Relations:

Diplomatic Shift:

- **Frequent visits and personal connections:** Prime Minister Modi's numerous visits to the region and focus on building personal relationships with Gulf leaders have facilitated trust and understanding.
- **Change in focus:** Moving beyond mere support for "Arab causes", India has embraced broader strategic partnerships, evident in initiatives like:
 - **I2U2 group:** Bringing together India, Israel, the US, and the UAE for cooperation in critical areas like technology and trade.
 - **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor:** Fostering economic linkages between India, the Gulf, and Europe.

Political Reorientation:

- **Overcoming the "Pakistan obsession":** India has moved beyond historical baggage and built strong ties with Gulf nations, despite past alignments with Pakistan.
- **Pragmatism over religion:** Recognizing the shared interests and economic opportunities beyond religious differences has fostered closer cooperation.

Economic Transformation:

- **From transactional to strategic:** The relationship has evolved beyond simple oil purchases and remittances to encompass investments, joint ventures, and knowledge sharing in diverse sectors like:
 - **Green energy:** India and the Gulf can collaborate on renewable energy solutions to address climate change and energy security.
 - **Space exploration:** Sharing expertise and resources in space technology can benefit both regions.
 - **Semiconductors and AI:** Investing in these cutting-edge industries holds immense potential for mutual growth.

Counter-Terror Cooperation:

- **Collaboration against extremism:** While progress has been made, there's room for further strengthening intelligence sharing and coordinated action against terrorist threats.
- **Underdeveloped defense partnership:** Despite recent increases in military exchanges, joint development of defense technologies and expanded military cooperation offer significant untapped potential.

Converging Realities:

- **Diversifying defense partnerships:** Gulf nations, amidst regional uncertainties, are looking beyond traditional partners and see India as a potential collaborator in regional security.
- **Emerging geopolitical players:** Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE are increasingly influential in the Western Indian Ocean, Middle East, and Mediterranean, aligning with India's strategic interests.

The Great Turmoil Impacting Relations:

- **Ukraine war and global ramifications:** India faces a delicate balancing act, maintaining strong ties with the Gulf while upholding its strategic partnerships with the West in the face of the Ukraine conflict.

Need for a Cautious Approach:

- **Navigating complex regional dynamics:** The Gulf region experiences various conflicts and interventions, and India must carefully navigate these complexities to avoid entanglement.
- **Balancing partnerships:** Maintaining cordial relations with both the Gulf and other key partners like the US and Israel requires skillful diplomacy.

Way Forward:

- **Promote regional security and prosperity:** Deepen cooperation with the Gulf in areas like maritime security, trade facilitation, and infrastructure development in the Western Indian Ocean.
- **Expand defense cooperation:** Explore joint development of defense technologies and equipment, and conduct regular military exercises to enhance interoperability.
- **Bold agenda in Modi's third term:** Pursue a comprehensive and ambitious agenda with the Gulf region, focusing on areas of mutual benefit, strategic partnerships, and long-term collaboration.

By navigating the evolving geopolitical landscape with a well-defined strategy and a commitment to mutual benefit, India and the Gulf can forge a truly transformative partnership that secures their shared interests and contributes to regional stability and prosperity.

The many lows of the 17th Lok Sabha

Firsts in 17th Lok Sabha:

- **No Deputy Speaker:** This crucial position, meant to share the burden of presiding over the house and ensure fair representation, remained vacant throughout the term, undermining checks and balances.
- **Lowest Number of Sittings:** With only 274 sittings, the 17th Lok Sabha had significantly less time for legislative work and deliberation compared to previous terms, severely limiting its overall output.
- **Legislation Passed with Minimal Opposition:** Important bills like criminal reforms were pushed through despite over 70% of opposition MPs being suspended, raising concerns about democratic processes and transparency.

Chart 2: The chart shows the number of sittings in days (left axis) and sitting hours (right axis) per Lok Sabha

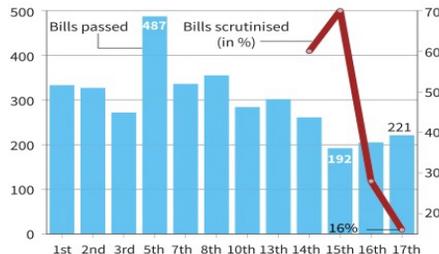


- **Limited Prime Ministerial Interaction:** With only one written question answered by the Prime Minister, the 17th Lok Sabha witnessed a stark absence of direct accountability and dialogue between the highest executive authority and the legislative body.

Long-term Trends:

- **Decline in Bill Passage:** The average number of bills passed per Lok Sabha has dipped from 65 in the 1952-1990 period to 48 in 1991-2023, indicating a potential slowdown in legislative productivity.

Chart 1: This shows the number of Bills passed (left axis) by the Lok Sabha and the % of bills scrutinised (right axis)



- **Reduced Scrutiny by Committees:** The practice of sending bills to committees for detailed examination has dwindled, with the 17th Lok Sabha sending only 16% of bills for scrutiny, raising concerns about thoroughness and potential loopholes.

- **Limited Debate and Participation:** Shorter sessions and fewer sitting hours restrict opportunities for comprehensive debates and meaningful participation by MPs, diminishing the quality of legislative engagement.

Curtailed Parliamentary Tools:

- **Half-Hour Discussions:** These discussions allow MPs to delve deeper into responses to questions, but their frequency has plummeted from an average of 88 per Lok Sabha before 1990 to just 11 post-1990, highlighting a decline in accountability mechanisms.

aurora borealis

The aurora borealis, also known as the northern lights, is a mesmerizing celestial ballet performed across the Arctic sky, captivating audiences with its vibrant colors, dynamic dance, and scientific grandeur, arising from a cosmic collaboration between our sun and Earth's atmosphere.

Shades of the north



West camera: Aurora borealis, commonly called the northern lights, illuminate the sky above the village of Akasompolo in Kolari, beyond the Arctic Circle, in Finland on Sunday. AP

- The sun continuously emits a stream of charged particles, known as the solar wind, which, when encountering Earth's magnetic field, gets diverted towards the poles, leading to the magic of the aurora borealis in the high-latitude regions.
- As the charged particles collide with gas molecules in the atmosphere, primarily oxygen and nitrogen, they excite the molecules, causing them to release excess energy in the form of light, creating the dazzling aurora with its vibrant green, red, blue, and violet hues, each telling a story about the specific gases and energy levels involved in the celestial dance.
- Auroras are dynamic displays, constantly shifting and evolving, forming curtains, arcs, spirals, and rays that paint the sky with their brilliance, influenced by the strength of the solar wind and the Earth's magnetic field, resulting in an ever-changing spectacle.
- While the aurora borealis primarily paints the Arctic sky, its southern counterpart, the aurora australis, illuminates the Antarctic region, both originating from the same solar wind interaction, offering a similar visual feast in the southern hemisphere.
- The aurora borealis holds valuable scientific insights, helping us understand solar activity, its impact on Earth's atmosphere, and potential threats to technological infrastructure, serving as a reminder of the interconnectedness of our planet and the sun, showcasing the grand forces at play in our cosmic neighborhood.

The role of X chromosome in auto-immune diseases

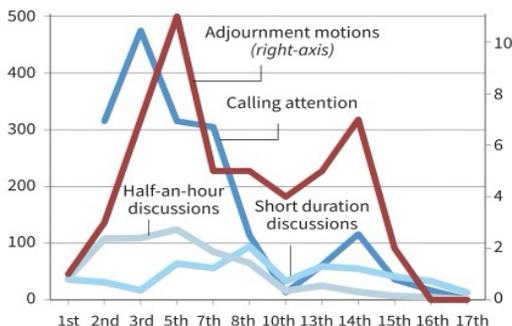
- Women are more susceptible to autoimmune diseases due to the molecular coating of the X chromosome.
- The X chromosome inactivation process is crucial in females to ensure one set of X chromosomes remains active and functional in all cells of the body while the other is muted.
- Genes that escape the X inactivation process are thought to be the cause of autoimmune diseases, and the XIST molecule has been known to elicit inflammatory immune responses.
- Proteins attracted to the XIST molecule induce the response of autoantibodies, which react with self-antigens.
- Bioengineered male mice producing a modified version of XIST showed higher levels of autoantibodies and immune cells on higher alert, suggesting a proneness to autoimmune attacks.
- XIST is expressed only in cells with two X chromosomes, making women more susceptible to autoimmune diseases and attacks.

- Short Duration Discussions:** Opportunities for MPs to initiate short discussions on pressing issues have also declined, from an average of 46 per Lok Sabha pre-1990 to 39 post-1990, further restricting their ability to raise relevant concern.

- Calling Attention Notices:** This vital tool for drawing attention to urgent matters has seen a drastic drop in usage, with an average of 300 notices allowed per Lok Sabha before 1990 compared to a mere 40 post-1990, indicating a potential stifling of dissent and problem-solving.

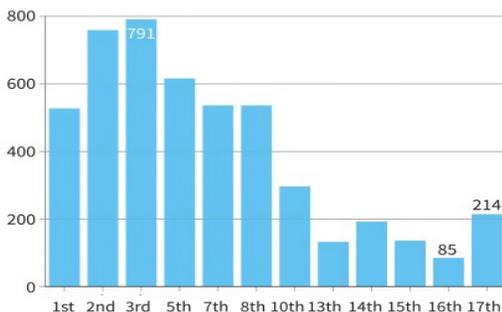
- Adjournment Motions:** The ability to express strong disagreement with government policies through adjournment motions has almost vanished, with no such motions allowed in the 16th and 17th Lok Sabhas, raising concerns about the erosion of legislative checks and balances.

Chart 3: The chart shows the usage of various parliamentary tools per Lok Sabha



- Budget and Finance Bill Scrutiny:** Time dedicated to discussing the crucial Union Budget, ministry demands, and Finance Bill has significantly shrunk, from around 120 hours annually before 1990 to a mere 35 hours post-1990, potentially impacting the depth of financial scrutiny and oversight.

Chart 4: The chart shows the time spent on discussing the Union Budget (in hours)



- Ministry-wise Demands Bypassed:** The worrisome trend of passing ministry-wise demands without discussion has occurred five times since 1952, all after 1999, raising concerns about accountability and transparency in resource allocation.

Expert Opinions:

- Scholars like Dr. Subhash C Kashyap, former Secretary-General of Lok Sabha, have long recognized this decline and advocated for urgent reforms.
- The need for a Parliamentary Reforms Commission or a "Study of Parliament Group" outside the confines of parliament highlights the urgency for independent and comprehensive assessment and action.