

Democratic Opinion on the Budget 2023 of India

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Abstract

India is a Democratic Country; we are blessed with numerous of freedom opportunities and facilities. The whole country runs with a set of predefined processes mentioned in the Indian Constitution. As per Article 112 of the Indian Constitution, the Union Budget of a year, commonly known as the annual financial statement, is a declaration of the estimated receipts and expenditures of the government for that specific year. The government's financial records are kept by the Union Budget for the fiscal year, which runs from 1 April to 31 March. The estimated government payables and receivables for a given fiscal year are described in detail in the Union Budget. Capital budget and revenue budget are the two main sections of this budget statement. Likewise, the Article 10 of the Constitution guarantees us with the freedom to express our opinion freely. One of the fundamental tenets of a democratic society is freedom of expression. These rights are a part of both our ancient Indian culture and the India of today. The freedom to live and express one's thoughts in a variety of contexts, including our political structure, is something that has been discussed by numerous ancient scholars and epics. This paper aims to draw comparisons between our nation's political system at the time it was written and the laws and freedoms that exist today.

Keywords- Democratic, freedom, Constitution, Union Budget, fundamental, political structure.

Objectives-

- To study about the Union Budget of 2023 and the Democracy system in Ancient Indian Culture.
- To discuss about the criticism of the 2023 Union Budget.

Literature Review-

In the article written by Prof. Sachchidanand Joshi in newspaper daily pioneer titled **“Democratic mindset is rooted in our culture”** discusses about today’s political system to the ancient Indian Culture of Politics. Since ancient times, this Democratic philosophy has been ingrained in our culture.

In the newspaper article of THE HINDU titled **“Union Budget 2023-24 Highlights”** gives the full overview of the Union Budget 2023 which was presented on 1st February 2023 by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Methodology-

It is a Descriptive Research. Only the results of secondary sources of information were used in this descriptive analysis. The study was thoroughly examined while keeping the specific objectives in mind.

Introduction about Union Budget

India being the Union of States, so the phrase "Union Budget" came to be. The federal system of government in India has been established by the Indian Constitution. As a result, it is known as the Union of States. The yearly budget of the Republic of India is known as the Union Budget of India, also known as the Annual Financial Statement under Article 112 of the Indian Constitution.

The French term "bougette," which meaning a leather briefcase, is where the word "budget" first appeared. In the past, finance ministers have presented the budget in leather bags. When Sitharaman delivered her first budget in 2019, she opted to use the "bahi khata" instead of the budget briefcase.

To forge a new identity as an economic superpower, the nation has shed its colonial heritage. The Union Budget also offers the necessary framework for the government to implement new laws and reforms for the benefit of regular taxpaying citizens. The Union Budget is not merely a financial statement. It also acts as a foundation for financial reforms and reveals the government's broad policy stances.

The overall goal of the Union Budget is to promote social justice and equality while also fostering quick and balanced economic growth in our nation. The goal is to assure effective resource

allocation, lower unemployment and the rate of poverty, minimise wealth and income disparities, keep a lid on pricing, and alter the tax system.

Articles 112-117 of the Indian Constitution establish the role of parliament in enacting the budget. Any request for a grant and any suggestion for expenditures must be submitted only on the President's recommendation, according to Articles 112-117. Article 112 of the Indian Constitution states that the President is in charge of delivering the budget to the Lok Sabha. According to Article 77(3), the President has given the Union Finance Minister responsibility for preparing the budget, commonly known as the yearly financial statement, and guiding it through the legislature.

Plans are developed by Ministries, Bodies, Union Territories, and States and presented to the finance minister for consideration before being introduced in the Parliament.

Union Budget 2023 of India in Brief

The fifth budget under Modi 2.0 was unveiled on Wednesday by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The Indian economy is on the right track and is poised for a bright future, according to Nirmala Sitharaman, who made this statement in the final comprehensive budget before the general elections next year. Sitharaman highlighted significant modifications to the tax slabs under the new tax regime as well as a significant increase in funding for railways and capital expenditures, which will greatly benefit taxpayers and the economy.

The government concentrated on a number of initiatives that increased capital expenditure expenditures and linked together several themes, including inclusive development, green growth, and youth power. Major tax announcements for the salaried class, including modifications to tax slabs and a stated desire to transition to the new tax regime, were also made at the same time.

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According to the Union Finance Minister, the current year's economic growth is expected to be the greatest of all the major economies at 7%. Last but not least, she maintained the fiscal deficit at the target level of 6.4% in the updated forecast for FY2022-23 and decreased it to 5.9% for the next year. By 2025–2026, the fiscal deficit would be reduced to under 4.5%, according to Ms. Sitharaman.

Important notifications:

- Nirmala Sitharaman, the minister of finance, increased the annual refund cap for paying income taxes to Rs. 7 lakhs. This would be made easier by the new tax system, which would become the standard system.
- The new personal income tax system's income slabs have been changed from six to five. The threshold for tax exemption has been raised to Rs 3 lakh.
- The new applicable tax rates hold zero taxes for those earning upto ₹3 lakh, 5% for ₹3-6 lakh, 10% for ₹6-9 lakh, 15% for ₹9-12 lakh, 20% for ₹12-15 lakh and 30% for ₹15 lakh and beyond.
- Railways received their largest capital investment ever: The capital expenditure for railroads reached its highest level ever with the newly released budget, totaling 2.40 lakh crore. According to Ms. Sitharaman, this was nine times the amount allocated in 2013–14.
- In FY 2023–24, the budget deficit is anticipated to reach 5.9% of GDP.
- Estimated net borrowing to cover the fiscal shortfall is Rs 11.8 lakh billion. The balance financing is anticipated to come from small savings and other sources, according to the finance minister.
- For the third year in a row, the capital investment spending climbed by 33% to 10 lakh crores. 3.3% of the GDP is accounted for by this.

Agriculture

- The goal for agricultural finance would be increased to ₹20 lakh crore, with a concentration on fisheries and animal husbandry.
- Establishing an agriculture accelerator fund to support young entrepreneurs' agri-startups in rural areas.

For small, medium-sized, and microbusinesses:

- The first-of-its-kind package of aid, according to PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PM VIKAS), aims to raise the calibre, scope, and accessibility of the goods produced by traditional artists and craftspeople. The plan's components would offer advanced skill training, understanding of cutting-edge digital methods and effective green technology, digital payments, and social security in addition to financial assistance.
- Vivad se Vishwas I: If MSMEs failed to complete contracts during the pandemic period, the government or its undertakings would reimburse 95% of the forfeited amount related to bid or performance security to them.
- Credit Guarantee: With an addition of 9,000 crore to the corpus, the MSMEs scheme has been redesigned. It will come into effect on April 1st, 2023. This would provide for an additional Rs 2 lakh crore of collateral-free guaranteed loans.

Green energy

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas was given ₹35,000 crore in the budget to make priority capital expenditures that will help the ministry achieve its goals of energy security, net-zero energy use, and energy transition.

Announcements about Savings Plans

- The Senior Citizen Savings Scheme's maximum deposit amount would increase from Rs. 15 lakhs to Rs. 30 lakhs.
- Increased to Rs. 9 lakh and Rs. 15 lakhs for joint accounts, the Monthly Income Scheme limit.
- Mahila Samman Saving Certificate, a one-time new saving programme for women, will be made available for 2 years, through March 2025.
- It will provide a deposit facility of up to Rs 2 lakh for a 2-year term at a set interest rate in the name of women or girls.

Increase in Defense Budget of 13%

- From Rs. 5.25 lakh crore last year, the defense budget jumped to Rs. 5.94 lakh crore this year.
- For capital expenses, including the procurement of new weapons, aircraft, warships, and other military equipment, Rs 1.62 lakh crore has been set aside.
- The budgetary allotment for capital outlay for 2022–2023 was Rs. 1.52 lakh crore.
- The Border Roads Organization's capital budget increased to Rs 5,000 crore.
- The Indian Air Force incurred the largest capital expenditure, totaling Rs 57,137.09 crore.
- The Indian Navy received a capital outlay budget of Rs 52,804 crore (BUREAU).

Some of the positive and negative opinions presented on this Budget of 2023 by various political leaders are; **“Nothing in the Budget for poor people and to control inflation”: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge**

The Budget 2023, according to Congress General Secretary K.C. Venugopal, does not adequately address issues including rising prices and unemployment. He added that the fulfilment of many of the extravagant announcements made in the Union Budget is in doubt.

“This budget is not addressing the real sentiment of the country that is unemployment and price rise. It only had fancy announcements that were made earlier too but what about implementation? Only insurance companies were benefited from PM Kisan Yojana not farmers,” said Mr. Venugopal.

The Union Budget 2023, according to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, is a start toward realising Amrit Kaal's vision and vows to rid the nation of sickle cell anaemia by the time India marks its 100th anniversary of independence.

“Budget, a step towards achieving ‘Amrit Kaal’ vision”: Health Minister Mansukh Mandivya

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah described the Union Budget 2023–24 as inclusive and visionary, adding that it will promote the Central Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of making India self-sufficient while bringing all segments along.

“Budget 2023 will give impetus to Modi govt’s self-reliant India vision taking every section along”: Amit Shah

K. Sudhakar, the health minister for Karnataka, praised the Union Budget on Wednesday, saying it is forward-looking, growth-oriented, and builds a solid platform for 2047, when India would commemorate 100 years of independence.

“CM Gehlot calls Union Budget ‘disappointing’ for Rajasthan”

Ashok Gehlot, the chief minister of Rajasthan, described the Union Budget on Wednesday as "disappointing" and noted that, despite increased funding being provided for a Karnataka irrigation project, the East Rajasthan Canal Project has not been awarded national status.

With the upcoming elections in mind, he alleged, the Budget allocated 5,300 crores to the Upper Bhadra Irrigation Project in Karnataka. He also accused the Centre of acting "step-motherly" toward his own State.

“Budget fulfils hopes, expectations of country’s poor, middle class”: Gujarat CM

Bhupendra Patel, the chief minister of Gujarat, asserted that by providing new chances for growth to the nation's poor, disadvantaged, and middle class, the Union Budget fulfils their hopes and expectations.

He claimed that the Budget "embodies" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of making India a developed country in the "Amrit Kaal," which the administration refers to as the 25 years leading up to India's 100th anniversary of independence. This budget will further India's development by giving special attention to seven areas, or "Saptarishi," including inclusive growth, last-mile delivery, infrastructure and investment, green growth, youth power, the financial sector, and maximising domestic talent.

“Budget has considered farmers, tribals, women, youth”: Fadnavis

Devendra Fadnavis, the deputy chief minister of Maharashtra, claimed that the Union Budget had taken into account the interests of all social groups, including farmers, tribal people, women, young people, and middle-class people.

Speaking to media in this location, Fadnavis, who is also the state's finance minister, described the budget as "Sarva Jan Hitai" (benefiting everyone), saying that it takes into account all market segments and industry sectors.

“It’s ‘Amrit Kaal’ for PM Modi, not for common people”: AAP hits out at Budget 2023

The Aam Aadmi Party disputed Ms. Sitharaman's assertion that per capita income has doubled since 2014, claiming that it is "Amrit Kaal" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi rather than for the country's average citizens.

"Neither the MSP of crops increased nor did the employment rate for young people. But for Modi ji, this is Amrit Kaal. Sanjay Singh, a Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson for the AAP, questioned "whose income" doubled in a response to Nirmala Ji's claim that per capita income has doubled. There isn't funding in the budget for anyone. The common folk's hunger for amrit (nectar) in the amrit kaal, according to Mr. Singh.

Kamal Nath calls it ‘cover up’ for old unkept promises

The finance minister's budget address, according to Kamal Nath, head of the Madhya Pradesh Congress, is an effort to "cover over old promises of the government with jumlas." We anticipated that the FM would clarify the announcements that were scheduled for completion in 2022.

Mr. Nath stated that the BJP-led Central government had made "unfulfilled promises," such that "the income of farmers was to be doubled by 2022, housing was to be provided to every poor person by 2022, and the bullet train was to run in the country by 2022." But the finance minister neither provided an explanation for the failure to fulfil these announcements nor extended an apology to the nation's citizens.

“Not a people-friendly budget”: Mehbooba Mufti

Mehbooba Mufti, the leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), claimed on Wednesday that the Union Budget was not populist since it had been created with the interests of a select group of businesspeople in mind.

The former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir told reporters in Srinagar that the budget is identical to those that the BJP-led government has presented for the previous 89 years. "Taxes

have gone up, and there are no longer any subsidies or welfare programmes. Their crony capitalists are collecting taxes. The people should have benefited from the taxes imposed, but instead their backs have been broken by them.

“Delhi gets step-motherly treatment”: CM Arvind Kejriwal

Arvind Kejriwal, the chief minister of Delhi, claimed that after paying more than 1.75 lakh crore in income tax the previous year, the city received just 325 crores in funding from the Union Budget for 2023–24.

He claimed that the budget had provided no relief from the twin issues of inflation and unemployment, accusing the Centre of treating the national capital like a stepmother. "Stepmotherly treatment once more among Delhi's populace. Over 1.75 lakh crore in income tax was paid by Delhi residents last year. Only 325 crores were allocated for Delhi's development out of that total. The people of Delhi are being treated with a blatant unfairness, Mr. Kejriwal said.

Since India is a democratic country, everyone has the right to express their opinions freely. It is strictly mentioned in the **Article 10** of Indian Constitution that every Indian citizen has the right to express themselves freely. This freedom must include the ability to express ideas freely across national boundaries, without intervention from the government, and to hold opinions. The freedom of speech and of association upholds each person's dignity and value as a contributing member of the society and it enables each person to reach their full potential. Because it is an end in and of itself, freedom of expression requires the strongest defense from society.

Since ancient times, this Democratic philosophy has been ingrained in our culture. Sachchidanand Joshi mentions this in his article titled **Democratic mindset is rooted in our culture** that, when we examine history closely, we discover that calling India "the mother of democracy" is not overstating the case. Instead of being the outcome of a single historical event, our contemporary democratic institutions have evolved over thousands of years of cultural development. Only a few of the many sources we have to understand the early Indian social systems infused with democratic elements include the Vedic literature, the Smritis, the Epics, the Purana literature, the Sutra literature, the theatre, the poetry, and the various folk tales.

Early India used a variety of terminology to describe this collective structure starting in the Vedic era. It is also true that many thinkers gave these expressions diverse definitions, making it difficult to pinpoint their exact meaning. Naturally, some of these interpretations were created with the intention of distorting history. The samiti, sabha, kula, gana, Jati, puga, vrata, sreni, samgha, samudaya, sambhuya-samutthana, charana, and parisat were the political and social institutions that governed early India.

One of India's most distinctive characteristics is the continuing and gradual development of numerous systems of governance that are distributed among various institutions. The government's role as a source of dharma and artha was rightly acknowledged by Somadeva Sri in his seminal work Nitivakyamitra from the 10th century, "*atha dharmarthaphalaya rajyaya namah.*" This idealization is what makes Indian culture unique. These systems were created to accommodate her typical social needs.

The words "coming together" or "assembly" are frequently used in the Vedas to describe gatherings where both political and non-political topics were discussed. They show a democratic body that has the power to restore an elected official. A very curious fact about the sabha is that "its determination, which has been made by many, cannot be broken," according to the eminent Vedic scholar Sayana. The Atharvaveda makes use of the word "sansad" for gatherings that are analogous to today's Parliament.

With the growth of urban centres in the post-Vedic civilization, India underwent a broad range of self-governing systems, where samiti and sabha opened the way for the construction of other systems like gana, samgha, and sreni. Throughout this Buddhist-Jain era, various ganas—republican forms of government—were created. During this time, numerous institutions with democratic leanings have been founded. At this point, the concepts of gana and samgha have developed. Gana is described as a group with a conscious mind that makes decisions in Jain teachings. According to this, a number is a gana, and a rule based on numbers is a gana-rajya. Back then, the governance of a body like a parliament or assembly was referred to as ganarajya.

The word samgha has the same meaning as gana, according to the influential work Astadhyayi by the Sanskrit grammarian Panini. In the third century B.C., Kautilya categorised samgha as sastropajivin and rajasabdopajivin; nevertheless, Panini referred to them as ayudhajivin.

Gana can be seen as a type of government, whereas Samgha can be seen as a group or state. One of the best analyses of the traits and behaviour of a gana as a political organisation may be found in the Mahabharata's Santi Parva. Confederacy or community living is what distinguishes the gana from other cultures (samghata vritti). A group of people working in a common craft or business is described as a sreni by thinkers like Panini, Kaiyata, Veda Vyasa, and Narada as "eken silpena panyena va ye jivanti tesam samuhah srenih." Sreni acts as though she is a standalone entity. Their head or chief is referred to as "sresthin." These guilds are well-known in the neighbourhood.

There were samghas, each of whose members practised the practise of military art, and each of which had a ruler who observed the practise of receiving the title of rajan word. The two viewpoints can be harmonised to demonstrate this. The Majjhima Nikaya uses the gana and samgha in the phrase "imesa pi hi, bho gotama, samghan ganana- seyyathida vajjina mallana" to identify 16 of its era's mahajanapadas. At routine Sreni meetings, the local government's policies were debated. These Srenis have the power to define the rules for their own social class, and the monarch is required to consult them before making any decisions that will have an impact on them.

A business structure with a distinct region of jurisdiction is likewise represented by the srenis. By selecting bhandagarika, the state takes control of these srenis. It is interesting that several guilds not only had internal business contacts but also had strong relationships with Tamraparni (Sri Lanka), Suvarnabhumi (Sumatra), and Baveru (Babylonia).

The terms samgha and sreni, which have been in continuous use for millennia, really refer to early governmental organisations. Significant improvements in the arts, manufacturing, and agriculture in early India inevitably led to the rise of the srenis. In the Vedas, Brahmana texts, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Pali literature, the phrases sresthin, sraisthya, and sreni are commonly employed. There are two names for the head of a guild: sresthin and sraisthaya.

In a fascinating scene from the Ramayana, Bharata is accompanied by a procession of citizens, including gem cutters, potters, weavers, armourers, ivory workers, renowned goldsmiths, merchants, washermen, tailors, actors, actresses, doctors, wool producers, perfume makers, and brahmanas of noble character. This episode prompts us to consider the role that these guilds had in helping the community create its own system of self-government.

The role and importance of these guilds in upholding the system were also covered in the Mahabharata. A wealthy Sresthin named Anatha Pindika of Sravasti gave Buddha the renowned Jetavana garden as a gift. According to Mahavamsa, the historical record of Ceylon, the five craft masters were entrusted with the duty of acting as messengers to transmit Kitti Srimegha's greeting to his son Parakrama. The skilled painters who attended a princess' wedding were mentioned in the Harsacarita of Bana. A number of royal families were present to watch Krishna and Balarama fight, according to the Harivamsa.

The same assertion is supported by several epigraphical cases. Numerous well-known guilds of oil millers, potters, hydraulic engine manufacturers, maize traders, bamboo craftsmen, weavers, and others are chronicled in the South Indian, Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Mathura, Junnar, and other inscriptions. There are also various inscriptions that show how the srenis and the royal power are related.

As a result, the founding culture of Sreni and Samgha was strongly rooted in a sense of self-governance. In order to give rising congregations and cooperatives an institutional perspective, the full framework was created. These social institutions were the first examples of democratically run community and social management in India.

The term "mother of democracy" is not overstated when we examine history carefully and make an effort to comprehend the facts. In recent years, there has been a growing push to reexamine our past and shastriya tradition, and the results have been nothing short of remarkable. We should be proud of the fact that "India, the mother of democracy" is one of these truths (Joshi).

Discussion

Democracy is a system that is governed by or for the people. As a result, it is a system in which the people elect their own representatives or rulers. It follows a pattern where the fundamental values are liberty, equality, and fraternity. Both the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda make reference to the Sabha and Samiti. After discussion with the king, ministers, and scholars present at the meetings, a resolution was reached. People used to come together and resolve the judgements of the Sabha and Samiti with sound judgement, which demonstrates how politics functioned at the time. Even those with differing ideas were divided up into distinct groups and forced to come to an agreement after discussion.

There was evidence of Democracy in Rig Veda. Some slokas from Rig Veda were to be sung in unison at the beginning of the republican assembly. They were:

sam sam id yuvase vr Sann ágne víshv Any aryá Á

iLás padé sám idhyase sá no vás Uny Á bhara ||

sám gachadhvam sám vadadhvamm sám vo mán amsi jAnatAm

deva bhagám yáthm pÚrve samjAn AnÁ up Ásate ||

sam Anó mántrah sámītih sam AnÍ sam Anám mánah sahá cittám esam

sam Anám mántram abhī mantraye vah sam Anéna vo haví SA juhomi ||

sam AnÍ va Ákutih sam AnÁ hRrday Ani vaH

sam Anám astu vo máno yátha vaH súsah Ásati || (GOYAL)

The world's first country to acknowledge free speech was ancient India. Speech, writing, and other forms of expression were all free. People like Nanga Sadhus and Digambar Jain Munis were even permitted to stroll and teach while nude. Shastrarth and public discussions on topics including the presence of God, the soul, the proper form of worship, and other philosophical and social questions were popular. Mahatma Gandhi was even prepared to give up his fight for India's freedom, but not for the right to free expression.

Additionally, the Ramayan offers crucial insights on traditional Indian political philosophy where everyone has their equal rights. From ancient times till the present, the Ramayan's depiction of an ideal state has been a significant part of Indian political thought. From the time of the Ramayan until the present, the ideal concept of Ram Rajya has been a continuing source of inspiration for Indian political philosophy. The Gita's most significant lesson is to be dedicated to one's own social obligations and volunteer work.

Conclusion

India is the world's largest democratic nation. As we know the democracy is a system of government in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among themselves to form

a governing body, such as a parliament. It is also referred as “rule of the majority”. Here the power can’t be inherited. People elect their leaders. Representatives stand in an election and the citizens vote for their representative. The representative with the greatest number of votes gets the power. The government now ruling is also elected by people themselves. One of the tenets of democracy is that all members of the society must be equal. For it to function, this equality must be present in the individual vote or opinion. Denying groups, the right to vote is contrary to the function of a democracy, a system of government where each individual’s vote has equal weight. India became a democratic nation post its independence in the year 1947. Thereafter, the citizens of India were given the right to vote and elect their leaders. In India, it gives its citizens the right to vote irrespective of their caste, color, creed, religion, and gender. It has five democratic principles – sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic and republic.

These facts allow us to conclude that all of the comments expressed regarding the budget for 2023 were valid because the Indian Political System has a long tradition of allowing individuals to express their own opinions. It has strong tradition of democracy from the ancient period itself. The above-mentioned practices from the early period from Vedic to contemporary Indian society. It is visible in the socio-political scenario of India, the great nation. Pluralist discourse is made possible by freedom of expression, which also provides a safe space for opposing viewpoints. Each government respects the opinions from the parties of opposition, because it can be considered as the signatures of the democratic system prevail in India. It makes sure that everyone has the right to look for, get and hold information regarding human rights and abuses of such rights. It is for the common people; thus, people must follow the government which was already elected by the people themselves. The Budget 2023 fulfill the nation’s intention to grow as per government’s will.

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