

## **Re-centring India's Political Imagination: *From Hegemonic Modernity to Civilisational Self-Renewal***

India stands at a pivotal civilisational moment. In recent years, the government has made commendable efforts to revive cultural pride, re-centre Indic traditions, and project India's heritage onto the global stage. These steps have expanded national confidence and opened new possibilities for articulating an Indian voice in an evolving world order where the influence of older Western frameworks is gradually receding.

At the same time, India increasingly operates within a global narrative that equates progress with technological supremacy, rapid centralisation, and heightened militarisation. While often necessary in today's geopolitical environment, these tendencies risk drawing India into a competitive global paradigm shaped by Western historical experience rather than India's own civilisational path. A more balanced political imagination—one that builds on the government's cultural initiatives while gently reorienting national aspiration—can help India project strength without losing its moral distinctiveness.

India's civilisational heritage, affirmed by **Gandhi and, inspired by him, Dharampal (1922-2006)**, offers a deeper grammar for statecraft: *swaraj*, self-restraint, decentralised governance, ecological balance, and social cohesion rooted in shared ethical values. These principles do not reject modernity; they humanise and anchor it.

The **TRIVENI Initiative**, shaped by the Gandhian ethos, Dharampal's civilisational recovery, and the integrative wisdom of Indian Knowledge Systems—and guided by the foundational vision of **Shri Bhawarlal Jain (1937-2016)**, whose leadership defines the initiative's direction—offers a constructive framework for articulating this alternative political imagination.

A gentle reframing at the highest levels of national leadership can affirm India not merely as another 'superpower', but as a **civilisational guide**—modern, confident, and globally engaged, yet firmly rooted in its ethical and ecological heritage. Such a shift would strengthen internal cohesion, enhance soft power, revitalise local capacities, and present the world with a humane alternative to the dominant development models of the West and China.

India now has the rare opportunity to lead not only through economic and military capability, but through the **moral and civilisational clarity** that has always distinguished her. The moment is ripe for a national narrative that harmonises modern aspiration with timeless wisdom—progressive without being derivative, powerful without aggression, and modern without losing the soul of India.

*(Drafted by Prof. Gita Dharampal, GRF Research Dean, on behalf of the TRIVENI Initiative)*