



Building Viksit Bharat: The Human Rights Agenda for 2047

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Research Note

Abstract

As India approaches its centennial year of independence in 2047, the vision of Viksit Bharat—a developed, inclusive, and equitable nation—requires a paradigm shift in developmental priorities, with human rights as the cornerstone. This paper examines how a rights-based approach can effectively address systemic inequalities and foster sustainable growth, emphasizing the interplay between human rights and critical developmental domains such as education, healthcare, economic equity, and gender justice.

The paper's primary objective is to analyze the current state of human rights in India while identifying actionable strategies to integrate these rights into policy frameworks and governance structures. By bridging the domains of human rights and development, the study provides a comprehensive blueprint for achieving Viksit Bharat 2047. Unlike existing works that address these aspects in isolation, this paper adopts a holistic perspective, linking constitutional principles, global frameworks, and scholarly insights to argue that human rights are both a means and an end to development.

The findings underscore the importance of participatory governance, institutional accountability, and inclusive policy-making in realizing a just and equitable society. This study contributes to academic and policy discourse by offering practical recommendations for aligning India's developmental aspirations with its commitment to human rights. By placing human rights at the center of development, the paper envisions a future where equity, dignity, and justice become lived realities for all citizens of India.

Keywords: Viksit Bharat 2047; Human Rights; Inclusive Development; Social Justice; Participatory Governance.

1. Introduction

India, a nation with a rich historical and cultural heritage, has traversed a remarkable journey since gaining independence in 1947. As it approaches its centennial year in 2047, the country stands at a critical juncture to redefine its developmental priorities under the vision of *Viksit Bharat*. This vision encapsulates the aspiration of a developed India—an inclusive, equitable, and prosperous society where economic growth harmonizes with social justice, human dignity, and sustainable development.

At the core of this vision lies the principle of human rights, which are universal entitlements ensuring equality, dignity, and justice for every individual. These rights are enshrined in the Indian Constitution through the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy and are aligned with global frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, despite these foundational commitments, India continues to face systemic barriers that hinder the realization of human rights across various sectors.

The primary objective of this paper is to explore the critical role of human rights as a cornerstone for achieving *Viksit Bharat 2047*. By examining key developmental domains—education, healthcare, economic

equity, and gender justice—the paper seeks to demonstrate how a rights-based approach can address systemic inequalities and foster inclusive growth. This study is unique in its holistic perspective, bridging the domains of human rights and development, and providing actionable strategies to integrate these principles into policy and governance frameworks.

The paper argues that achieving *Viksit Bharat 2047* requires not only economic progress but also the creation of a society where the principles of justice, equality, and dignity are actively operationalized. By placing human rights at the center of its developmental agenda, India can build a future that is equitable, inclusive, and sustainable, aligning with its constitutional values and global commitments. This exploration contributes to the academic discourse on human rights and development while offering a pragmatic blueprint for policymakers and stakeholders to realize the vision of a truly developed India by 2047.

This paper examines the pivotal role that human rights must play in realizing the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047*, a roadmap for India's development as it approaches its centennial anniversary of independence. The discussion begins with an overview of India's rich constitutional and policy commitments to human rights, acknowledging the progress made thus far while also highlighting the persistent inequalities that impede truly inclusive growth. Drawing upon theoretical insights from scholars such as Amartya Sen and empirical evidence from international frameworks (e.g., the Sustainable Development Goals), the paper contends that fostering an equitable, rights-based society is essential not only for moral and constitutional reasons but also for ensuring sustainable development and social justice. Throughout, it emphasizes how aligning human rights considerations with national policies, governance structures, and grassroots initiatives can bridge systemic gaps—particularly in education, healthcare, economic equity, and gender justice—and pave the way for an inclusive and prosperous India by 2047.

In essence, the paper unfolds from foundational theories and global commitments to human rights, examines the current gaps in India's context, and culminates with a set of targeted practical recommendations. Organizing the discussion in a step-by-step manner—moving from conceptual groundwork through empirical challenges and concluding with actionable strategies—provides a clear roadmap for integrating human rights into India's development agenda for 2047.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The integration of human rights into the developmental paradigm has been extensively debated in scholarly discourse. This section reviews key theoretical and empirical studies to establish a robust academic foundation for understanding the interplay between human rights and development within the context of India's Vision 2047.

2.1. Human Rights and Development: A Conceptual Nexus

Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* (1999) provides a seminal framework, asserting that freedoms—political, social, and economic—are both the means and ends of development. Sen emphasizes that a society's progress should not be measured solely by economic growth but also by the expansion of substantive freedoms, including education, healthcare, and social equity. This perspective aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which integrate human rights into a comprehensive agenda for eradicating poverty and ensuring inclusive development (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

Uvin (2004) further advances this discourse by proposing a rights-based approach to development. He argues that integrating human rights into development policies ensures that marginalized populations are empowered, systemic inequities are addressed, and economic growth becomes more inclusive. These theoretical underpinnings provide a lens to analyze India's developmental framework and its alignment with human rights principles.

2.2 Empirical Evidence on the Human Rights-Development Link

Empirical studies underscore the critical role of human rights in fostering sustainable development. For instance, studies by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2020) demonstrate that nations with robust human rights protections tend to achieve higher Human Development Index (HDI) rankings. Norway and Finland, with strong commitments to education, healthcare, and gender equality, exemplify this correlation, ranking consistently at the top of HDI metrics (UNDP, 2021).

India's trajectory reflects a mixed picture. While the Right to Education Act (2009) has improved school enrollment rates, significant challenges remain in terms of learning outcomes and quality education for marginalized groups (ASER, 2022). Similarly, healthcare access has expanded under schemes like Ayushman Bharat, yet high out-of-pocket expenses continue to undermine the right to health, particularly for low-income households (World Bank, 2021a).

2.3 Challenges in the Indian Context

India's human rights landscape is shaped by unique socio-political and economic challenges. Deshpande (2017) highlights that caste-based discrimination, deeply entrenched in Indian society, perpetuates systemic inequities in access to education, employment, and healthcare. Similarly, patriarchal norms continue to restrict women's participation in the workforce and decision-making processes, as reflected in India's low ranking (127th out of 146) in the Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Furthermore, institutional weaknesses hinder the effective implementation of rights-based policies. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), while instrumental in addressing human rights violations, often faces criticism for its limited autonomy and resource constraints (Human Rights Watch, 2023). These structural barriers necessitate a critical evaluation of how institutional reforms can align with India's developmental aspirations.

2.4 Towards a Rights-Based Vision for 2047

The theoretical insights of Sen and Uvin, combined with empirical evidence from global and national contexts, underline the importance of embedding human rights into India's Vision 2047. A rights-based approach offers a transformative framework for addressing systemic inequities and fostering inclusive growth. By integrating these principles into policies and governance models, India can ensure that its developmental achievements are equitable, sustainable, and aligned with its constitutional mandates and international commitments.

3. Conceptual Understanding of Viksit Bharat and Human Rights

3.1 Defining Viksit Bharat

The term *Viksit Bharat* reflects the aspirational vision of a developed India by 2047, marking the centenary of its independence. This vision encompasses multifaceted dimensions, including economic prosperity, technological advancements, environmental sustainability, social inclusivity, and equitable access to basic rights. According to the *Vision 2047* document by NITI Aayog, achieving this goal requires a holistic approach that integrates inclusive governance, robust infrastructure, and human capital development (Mohapatra et al. 2024). Key indicators include raising per capita income, achieving a high Human Development Index (HDI) ranking, and eradicating extreme poverty, all of which align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2015).

3.2 Human Rights Framework

Human rights are universal and inalienable, rooted in dignity, equality, and freedom, forming the cornerstone of democratic societies. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) defines these rights, asserting their fundamental role in achieving human flourishing. India's commitment to human

rights is codified in its Constitution, particularly in the Fundamental Rights (Articles 12–35), which guarantee rights to equality, freedom, protection from exploitation, and cultural and educational rights (Bakshi, 2018). Additionally, Directive Principles of State Policy (Articles 36–51) emphasize the state’s obligation to promote social and economic justice, further cementing the human rights-development nexus. Globally, studies have shown a direct correlation between the protection of human rights and a nation’s developmental progress. Sen (1999) argues that freedoms, including political liberties and economic facilities, are not only goals of development but also essential instruments for achieving them. For instance, countries with strong human rights frameworks often score higher on indicators such as HDI and Gross National Happiness (World Bank, 2021b).

3.3 Interconnection: Human Rights as a Pillar of Development

The interplay between human rights and development is critical for achieving *Viksit Bharat*. Research indicates that ensuring rights such as education, health, and gender equality leads to improved economic outcomes and enhanced social cohesion (UNDP, 2020). In India, disparities in these areas remain a significant challenge. For instance, despite progress under the Right to Education Act (2009), nearly 25% of children aged 6–14 are out of school in some states, highlighting the gaps in educational access (Ministry of Education, 2022).

Similarly, healthcare accessibility is deeply intertwined with the right to health. According to the National Health Profile (2021), India’s doctor-patient ratio is 1:1456, below the WHO recommendation of 1:1000. This inadequacy disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, underscoring the need for a rights-based approach to healthcare.

Moreover, the integration of gender equality into the developmental framework is vital. Women’s participation in the workforce stands at only 22.8% in India, compared to the global average of 47% (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2022). Gender disparities in access to education, healthcare, and employment not only undermine human rights but also constrain national growth.

3.4 Alignment with International Frameworks

India’s vision for *Viksit Bharat* aligns closely with global human rights and development frameworks, including the SDGs, particularly Goals 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Reports suggest that integrating these goals with national policies can accelerate India’s progress toward becoming a developed nation by 2047 (UNDP, 2020). For example, countries such as Norway and Finland, which consistently rank high on HDI, have achieved these outcomes through robust rights-based governance models (UNDP, 2021).

3.5 Factual Data to Support Vision 2047

As of 2021, approximately 10.2% of India’s population lives below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day (World Bank, 2021b). Efforts under schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana aim to reduce this significantly by 2047. The literacy rate in India stands at 77.7% (Census of India, 2021). Achieving universal literacy by 2047 will require significant investments in educational infrastructure and policy reforms. The healthcare expenditure in India is 3.6% of GDP, compared to the global average of 9.8% (World Health Organization, 2022). Bridging this gap is essential to uphold the right to health.

The conceptual framework of *Viksit Bharat* is inherently tied to the realization of human rights. Ensuring these rights is not merely a moral obligation but a strategic imperative for sustainable development. By adopting a rights-based approach, India can address systemic inequities and create a just and inclusive society by 2047.

4. Current Status of Human Rights in India

Human rights are fundamental to the development of any nation, providing a framework to ensure equality, dignity, and justice for all. In the context of India, a nation marked by its diversity and complexity, the realization of human rights is essential for achieving the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047*. Despite constitutional guarantees and progressive legislation, the current status of human rights reveals significant challenges across various domains, including education, healthcare, economic equity, gender equality, and social inclusion.

4.1 Education

Education is a fundamental human right, enshrined under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 (Government of India, 1950). While India has made commendable progress in improving literacy rates—rising from 18.33% in 1951 to 77.7% in 2021 (National Statistical Office, 2021)—challenges persist. Reports highlight disparities in access to quality education, particularly among rural, tribal, and economically disadvantaged communities (UNESCO, 2021). Additionally, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022 revealed that 28.5% of Class 5 students in rural India could not read basic texts in their local language, reflecting systemic gaps in learning outcomes (Pratham Foundation, 2022).

4.2 Healthcare

The right to health, though not explicitly stated in the Constitution, has been recognized as a fundamental right under Article 21 by the Supreme Court of India (*Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity vs State of West Bengal*, 1996). Despite significant strides in healthcare infrastructure, India faces critical gaps in access and affordability. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021), 36% of children under five are stunted, indicating chronic malnutrition (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2021). Moreover, out-of-pocket expenditure remains alarmingly high at 55.5% of total health expenditure in 2018, disproportionately impacting low-income households (World Bank, 2021c).

4.3 Economic Equity

Economic equity remains a pressing concern in India's developmental trajectory. The country exhibits stark income inequality, with the top 10% of the population holding 57.1% of the national income, while the bottom 50% owns merely 13.1% (World Inequality Report, 2022). Programs like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) have provided a safety net for rural populations; however, implementation challenges and budgetary constraints limit their effectiveness (Dreze & Khera, 2017). Women and marginalized communities continue to face structural barriers to economic opportunities, further perpetuating inequality (ILO, 2022).

4.4 Gender Equality

Gender equality, a cornerstone of human rights, remains an area of concern in India. Although there have been improvements in female literacy and labor force participation, patriarchal norms and systemic discrimination persist. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022, India ranked 135th out of 146 countries, indicating significant gender disparities in economic participation, political empowerment, and health outcomes (World Economic Forum, 2022). Gender-based violence remains prevalent, with National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data reporting 31,878 cases of rape in 2021, underscoring the urgent need for systemic reform (NCRB, 2022).

4.5 Social Inclusion

India's rich diversity is often accompanied by social stratification, resulting in exclusionary practices. Marginalized groups, including Dalits, Adivasis, and religious minorities, continue to face discrimination

in education, employment, and access to basic services. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data from 2020 revealed that Dalits and Adivasis experienced higher unemployment rates at 6.6% and 7.3%, respectively, compared to the national average of 5.8% (NSSO, 2020). Despite affirmative action policies, social mobility for these groups remains limited (Deshpande, 2017).

The current status of human rights in India reflects a paradox of progress and persistent challenges. While legislative frameworks and policy initiatives demonstrate the country's commitment to human rights, systemic barriers, and implementation deficits hinder their realization. Addressing these challenges is imperative for India to achieve its aspiration of becoming a developed nation by 2047. Ensuring human rights for all citizens will not only fulfill ethical and constitutional mandates but also lay the foundation for sustainable and inclusive development.

5. Challenges to Achieving Human Rights Goals

The path to achieving the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047* through the lens of human rights is fraught with several challenges. These barriers, deeply rooted in systemic, institutional, and policy-level inadequacies, require thorough analysis and strategic interventions.

5.1 Policy Gaps

Policy frameworks aimed at safeguarding human rights in India often fail in implementation due to a lack of coherence and accountability mechanisms. Despite landmark initiatives such as the Right to Education Act (2009), the *Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022* highlights that only 20% of Indian children in Grade 5 could read a Grade 2 text in their native language (Pratham, 2022). This statistic reflects the gap between legislative intent and ground realities.

Further, while the National Health Policy (2017) aims to provide universal health coverage, a study by Baru et al. (2018) found that out-of-pocket expenditures on healthcare remain alarmingly high, comprising 58.7% of total health expenditure in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). These figures underscore the inadequacy of policies to effectively address healthcare inequities.

5.2 Institutional Weaknesses

Institutions tasked with upholding human rights, such as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), often lack the autonomy and resources needed for effective functioning. According to the *Human Rights Watch World Report 2023*, the NHRC frequently faces criticism for its inability to hold government authorities accountable in cases of human rights violations (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Similarly, the judiciary, despite its pivotal role, is hindered by a backlog of over 49 million pending cases in Indian courts as of 2023 (National Judicial Data Grid, 2023), delaying justice for countless individuals.

5.3 Structural Barriers

Deeply entrenched social inequalities based on caste, religion, and gender continue to impede human rights advancements. The *India Inequality Report 2022* by Oxfam revealed that the top 10% of India's population holds 77% of the national wealth, while the bottom 50% owns only 13%. This economic disparity is mirrored in social and political arenas, perpetuating exclusion and marginalization (Oxfam, 2022).

Gender inequality, particularly in rural India, remains a significant challenge. According to the *Global Gender Gap Report 2023*, India ranks 127th out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity (World Economic Forum, 2023). Women's limited access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities exacerbates their vulnerability and hinders national progress.

5.4 Global and Regional Pressures

India's human rights landscape is also influenced by external factors such as globalization and climate change. The *UNICEF India Climate Report 2023* highlights that over 600 million Indians are at risk of water stress by 2030 due to climate-related challenges (UNICEF, 2023). Such crises disproportionately affect marginalized communities, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities.

Moreover, regional conflicts and geopolitical tensions have a direct impact on the enforcement of human rights. The refugee crisis in South Asia, compounded by the Rohingya influx, has strained India's resources and raised questions about its commitment to international human rights obligations (Chowdhury, 2022).

5.5 Systemic Cultural Norms

Cultural norms and biases often serve as invisible barriers to the realization of human rights. Practices such as child marriage and honor killings persist in certain regions despite legal prohibitions, reflecting a gap between societal attitudes and constitutional mandates. A report by the *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)* found that 23.3% of women aged 20-24 were married before the legal age of 18 (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2021).

The challenges outlined above highlight the multifaceted and deeply interconnected barriers to achieving a human rights-based vision for *Viksit Bharat 2047*. Addressing these challenges requires not only robust policies but also transformative societal and institutional reforms. Future efforts must focus on bridging policy gaps, strengthening institutions, addressing structural inequities, and mitigating the effects of external pressures to ensure that human rights remain at the core of India's developmental aspirations.

6. Vision 2047: Integrating Human Rights into Development

Achieving the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047* requires embedding human rights principles into every facet of India's developmental framework. Human rights serve as both ethical imperatives and practical tools for creating an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable society. This section explores how human rights can be effectively integrated into development policies, governance models, technological advancements, and initiatives targeting marginalized communities.

6.1 Policy Integration: Ensuring Development Initiatives Align with Human Rights Principles

Policy alignment with human rights is essential to ensure equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. India's commitment to global human rights standards, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), can be leveraged to shape domestic policies (United Nations, 1948). For instance, Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, has been interpreted to include the right to live with dignity (Supreme Court of India, *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, 1978).

The World Bank (2021a) highlights that inclusive policy frameworks lead to better socio-economic outcomes, particularly in education and healthcare. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 exemplifies this integration by promoting universal access to quality education, thereby contributing to human development while aligning with the Right to Education Act, 2009 (Ministry of Education, 2020).

6.2 Governance Models: Advocating for Participatory and Inclusive Governance

Participatory governance ensures that marginalized voices are represented in decision-making processes. According to Sen (1999), development is not merely an economic goal but a process of expanding freedoms, including political and social participation. Strengthening institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) can enhance accountability and transparency in governance.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2020) emphasizes that participatory governance leads to improved public trust and more effective policy implementation. As of 2022, only 16.7% of India's

elected representatives in Parliament were women, underscoring the need for greater representation to ensure inclusive governance (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2022).

6.3 Technological and Economic Growth: Addressing Human Rights Challenges

Technological advancements can play a transformative role in addressing human rights challenges. Digital India initiatives, such as Aadhaar, have facilitated access to welfare schemes for over 1.3 billion citizens, addressing issues of identity and inclusion (UIDAI, 2021). However, concerns around data privacy and surveillance must be addressed to ensure that technology upholds human rights principles (Bhatia, 2021). Economic growth must also prioritize equitable wealth distribution. According to Oxfam India (2023), the top 1% of India's population owns more than 40% of its total wealth, highlighting significant income disparities. Integrating policies such as progressive taxation and universal basic income can help address these inequalities (Piketty, 2014).

6.4 Focus on Marginalized Communities: Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Resources

Targeting marginalized communities is crucial for bridging systemic inequities. Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) continue to face significant socio-economic disparities. For instance, literacy rates among SCs (66.1%) and STs (58.9%) lag behind the national average of 74% (Census of India, 2011). Policies must be designed to address these gaps, such as the implementation of special scholarships and affirmative action in education and employment.

Gender disparities also remain a critical issue. The Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2023) ranks India 127th out of 146 countries, indicating persistent inequalities in health, education, and political representation. Programs like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have shown promise in improving gender parity in education but require stronger monitoring mechanisms to ensure effectiveness (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2022).

Integrating human rights into India's developmental framework for 2047 demands a multi-faceted approach involving policy alignment, participatory governance, technological inclusivity, and targeted interventions for marginalized groups. By prioritizing these strategies, India can advance toward the vision of *Viksit Bharat* while ensuring that its developmental achievements are inclusive, equitable, and sustainable.

7. Policy Recommendations

Human rights serve as a cornerstone for equitable development and social justice, making their integration into policy frameworks essential for achieving *Viksit Bharat 2047*. This section outlines key policy recommendations across critical sectors such as education, healthcare, economic policies, gender justice, and legal and institutional reforms to ensure a rights-based approach to governance and development.

7.1 Education: Strengthening Universal Access and Quality

Education is a fundamental right and a critical driver of socio-economic development. Despite progress under initiatives such as the Right to Education Act 2009, gaps in access and quality persist, particularly in rural and marginalized communities (Kaul, 2019). The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022 highlighted that while enrollment rates are above 95%, learning outcomes remain alarmingly low, with less than 25% of Grade 5 students able to read Grade 2 texts (Pratham Education Foundation, 2022). Some of the policy recommendations are:

- Increase public investment in education to reach the global benchmark of 6% of GDP (UNESCO, 2021).
- Prioritize teacher training programs to enhance pedagogical effectiveness, particularly in rural areas.

- Integrate digital education to bridge learning gaps, leveraging platforms like DIKSHA and PM eVIDYA.

7.2 Healthcare: Expanding Affordable Healthcare Facilities and Infrastructure

The right to health, as recognized under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, requires a robust healthcare system. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant weaknesses in India's healthcare infrastructure, with only 0.5 hospital beds per 1,000 people compared to the WHO recommendation of 5 beds per 1,000 people (World Health Organization, 2021). Some of the policy recommendations are:

- Increase healthcare expenditure from 1.8% to at least 3% of GDP to improve infrastructure and accessibility (NITI Aayog, 2021).
- Strengthen the Ayushman Bharat scheme to ensure universal health coverage, particularly for marginalized communities.
- Address disparities in healthcare access by expanding rural health centers and ensuring equitable distribution of resources.

7.3 Economic Policies: Promoting Job Creation, Fair Wages, and Social Security

Economic equity is central to ensuring human rights for all. According to Oxfam's *Inequality Report 2023*, the richest 1% of Indians own more than 40% of the nation's wealth, while the bottom 50% own only 3% (Oxfam, 2023). Some of the policy recommendations are:

- Implement progressive taxation to reduce income inequality and increase fiscal resources for social welfare programs (Piketty, 2020).
- Invest in skill development programs aligned with market demands, focusing on youth and women.
- Expand social security schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to cover urban informal workers.

7.4 Gender Justice: Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Policies and Programs

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, gender disparities remain pervasive in India. Women's labor force participation stands at 19%, one of the lowest globally (World Bank, 2021b). Additionally, issues such as gender-based violence, wage gaps, and limited political representation continue to hinder progress (Deshpande, 2021). Some of the policy recommendations are:

- Enforce equal pay legislation to address wage disparities and incentivize women's workforce participation.
- Strengthen laws and mechanisms to combat gender-based violence, including fast-track courts and victim support services.
- Implement targeted programs for women's empowerment, such as financial literacy campaigns and entrepreneurial initiatives under schemes like Stand-Up India.

7.5. Legal and Institutional Reforms: Enhancing Accountability and Capacity

Effective implementation of human rights requires robust legal and institutional frameworks. While India has progressive laws such as the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, enforcement remains inconsistent (Baxi, 2016). Some of the policy recommendations are:

- Establish independent human rights monitoring bodies at state and district levels to ensure accountability.
- Streamline judicial processes to reduce delays in human rights cases, ensuring timely justice.
- Build capacity within law enforcement agencies through regular training on human rights principles.

The recommendations outlined above are critical for embedding human rights into India's developmental agenda. By focusing on education, healthcare, economic equity, gender justice, and institutional reforms, India can create a strong foundation for achieving *Viksit Bharat 2047*. These policy

interventions are not only necessary to meet constitutional obligations but also to align India with global human rights standards, ensuring dignity and equality for all.

8. Theoretical and Practical Implications

8.1 Theoretical Implications

The integration of human rights into the developmental vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047* enriches the theoretical discourse on sustainable development and social justice. Human rights have been widely acknowledged as essential components of development, fostering equality and inclusion (Sen, 1999). Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* emphasizes that freedom, in its various dimensions—political, economic, and social—should be both the means and the end of development. This theoretical framework underpins the argument that human rights are not ancillary to development but are central to achieving a truly developed society.

The notion of rights-based development, as articulated by Uvin (2004), further supports this perspective. Uvin argues that a rights-based approach ensures that development transcends economic metrics to include the empowerment of marginalized communities and the realization of fundamental rights such as education, healthcare, and gender equality. This theoretical alignment underscores the importance of addressing structural inequalities through policies that are deeply embedded in human rights principles.

The Human Development Report (2022) reiterates that countries with higher human development indices often exhibit strong human rights protections, emphasizing the interdependence of these domains. For example, India's ranking of 132 out of 191 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2022 highlights the urgent need to improve health, education, and income indicators (United Nations Development Program, 2022).

8.2 Practical Implications

On a practical level, embedding human rights within the developmental agenda provides actionable insights for policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders. For instance, India's *Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009* has improved literacy rates, but challenges remain in ensuring quality education and reducing dropout rates, particularly among marginalized communities (Government of India, 2022). Strengthening policies like RTE by incorporating additional provisions for equitable access to technology and resources will enhance outcomes.

Healthcare is another critical area where practical implications are evident. India spends only about 2.1% of its GDP on healthcare (National Health Profile, 2021), which is significantly lower than the global average of 9.8% (World Bank, 2021a). Enhancing healthcare infrastructure and ensuring universal access to quality services will address disparities and promote public health as a fundamental right.

From an economic standpoint, policies promoting economic equity, such as the *Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana*, have expanded financial inclusion, with over 490 million accounts opened as of 2023 (Reserve Bank of India, 2023). However, further integration of human rights into economic policies can ensure fair wages, social security, and opportunities for skill development.

Gender justice also has significant practical implications. Despite progress through initiatives like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*, female labor force participation in India remains low, at 25.1% in 2022 (World Bank, 2023). Strengthening gender-responsive policies and addressing cultural barriers will be critical for ensuring that women play a central role in the developmental vision of *Viksit Bharat*.

Finally, institutional reforms to enhance accountability and transparency in governance are paramount. Reports by Transparency International (2022) show that corruption and inefficiency in public institutions continue to undermine human rights. Addressing these challenges through digital governance and citizen engagement platforms can significantly improve institutional effectiveness.

8.3 Bridging the Gap: Theory and Practice

The convergence of theoretical insights and practical applications underscores the necessity of a multi-stakeholder approach to development. Sen's capabilities framework can guide policy formulation, while Uvin's rights-based approach provides a lens for evaluating the effectiveness of these policies. At the same time, the inclusion of civil society and the active participation of youth will ensure that the developmental agenda is rooted in grassroots realities.

9. Conclusion

The journey toward realizing *Viksit Bharat 2047* necessitates a paradigm shift in how human rights are perceived and integrated into developmental frameworks. Human rights must be seen not merely as legal obligations but as foundational principles essential for building a just and equitable society. This paper underscores the vital role of human rights in addressing systemic inequalities, ensuring social justice, and fostering sustainable development.

India has made significant strides in advancing human rights, as evidenced by constitutional provisions such as Articles 14, 15, and 21, which guarantee equality, non-discrimination, and the right to life and personal liberty (India Const., 1950). However, critical challenges persist. For instance, according to the National Family Health Survey-5 (2021), 23% of children under five years in India are underweight, indicating persistent inequalities in access to basic healthcare (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2021).

To bridge these gaps, a rights-based approach must be at the core of policy-making and governance. Scholars such as Sen (1999) argue that human development and human rights are intrinsically linked, with rights serving as both the means and ends of development. This perspective aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize human rights in eradicating poverty, ensuring quality education, and achieving gender equality (UN General Assembly, 2015).

Furthermore, India's demographic advantage, with approximately 66% of its population under the age of 35 (United Nations Population Fund, 2022), presents a unique opportunity. Engaging this youth population in governance and development initiatives can catalyze progress toward *Viksit Bharat*. Scholars such as Kabeer (2005) highlight the transformative potential of inclusive participation in ensuring social justice and equitable resource distribution.

While policy frameworks like the National Education Policy (2020) and Ayushman Bharat (2018) represent steps in the right direction, their effective implementation remains a challenge due to institutional inefficiencies and regional disparities (Muralidharan, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders—government, civil society, and individuals—to create a participatory and accountable governance model.

In conclusion, achieving *Viksit Bharat 2047* demands a comprehensive and integrative approach where human rights are not peripheral but central to all developmental endeavors. As this paper has argued, fostering an inclusive society rooted in equality, dignity, and justice is not only a moral imperative but also a pragmatic necessity for sustainable growth. By committing to this vision, India can truly celebrate its centennial independence as a nation where development and human rights go hand in hand.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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