



*“India needs job oriented education, it needs to take pride in its culture and heritage and cleanse politics from corruption and malpractice. Honest citizens should take interest in social development.”*

## India: Born again at 60

In the Indian context, 60 years has a special significance. The cycle of 60 years is very important. Each year has a name. Like Chinese years are named after animals, Indian years are names after terrestrial and celestial phenomena. The first year is called Prabhava. In Sanskrit, it means the birth of the eternal or ever present. The last year in the cycle is the sixtieth year, which is called Akshaya, which means undying. In between, each year denotes a certain quality or phenomena. When one completes one such cycle (60 years), it is a new beginning again. And the new beginning is celebrated with pomp and show. When the husband turns 60, a married couple celebrates it by revisiting their marriage.

India is married to its principles: liberty, spirituality and a nationalism which honours universalism. One of the oldest civilisations on the planet earth, India contributed 38 per cent of GDP to the world. When America was not yet discovered and Europe was in its Dark Age, the glory of India was widespread. Art, architecture, spirituality and trade were all well known. A composite culture of non-aggressive nature, India has survived many challenges. Most humane in nature, yet it did have many inhuman practices such as sati. On one hand, India had reached the pinnacle of justice and equality, on the other hand, oppression of Dalits prevailed. It is very difficult to judge India. There is no midway: either people have high opinion or very low opinion about India because it is full of opposites.

For centuries, the bad image of India has been projected more than the good one. Fortunately, it is changing in the recent times. The changing phase of economy brings along with it a changed perception about the culture as well. As a country so divided by language and caste, and which has undergone centuries of humiliation, it continues to reel in low self esteem. Like an elephant which can uproot trees but get scared by a small stick of a mahut, India behaves very timid at times. Even the West has called it a sleeping giant.

Today, India needs job oriented education, it needs to take pride in its culture and heritage and cleanse politics from corruption and malpractice. Honest citizens, especially the educated and youth should take interest in social development. Businessmen should take interest in protecting the environment and hygiene of the poor. Politicians should leave the petty mindedness and take up the Gandhian principle of service and sacrifice. Business and industries should look outward and reach out to nations. Bureaucrats should take care of patent rights and not sleep over it and the government should play a more vibrant role in international politics. The media should leave prejudice and prototype imitation of the West and think original.

In a world ridden with religious conflict, spiritual leaders have to engage in bridging the gap and resolving the conflict and work towards resurrection of the ancient Indian ideal of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam or ‘One World Family’.