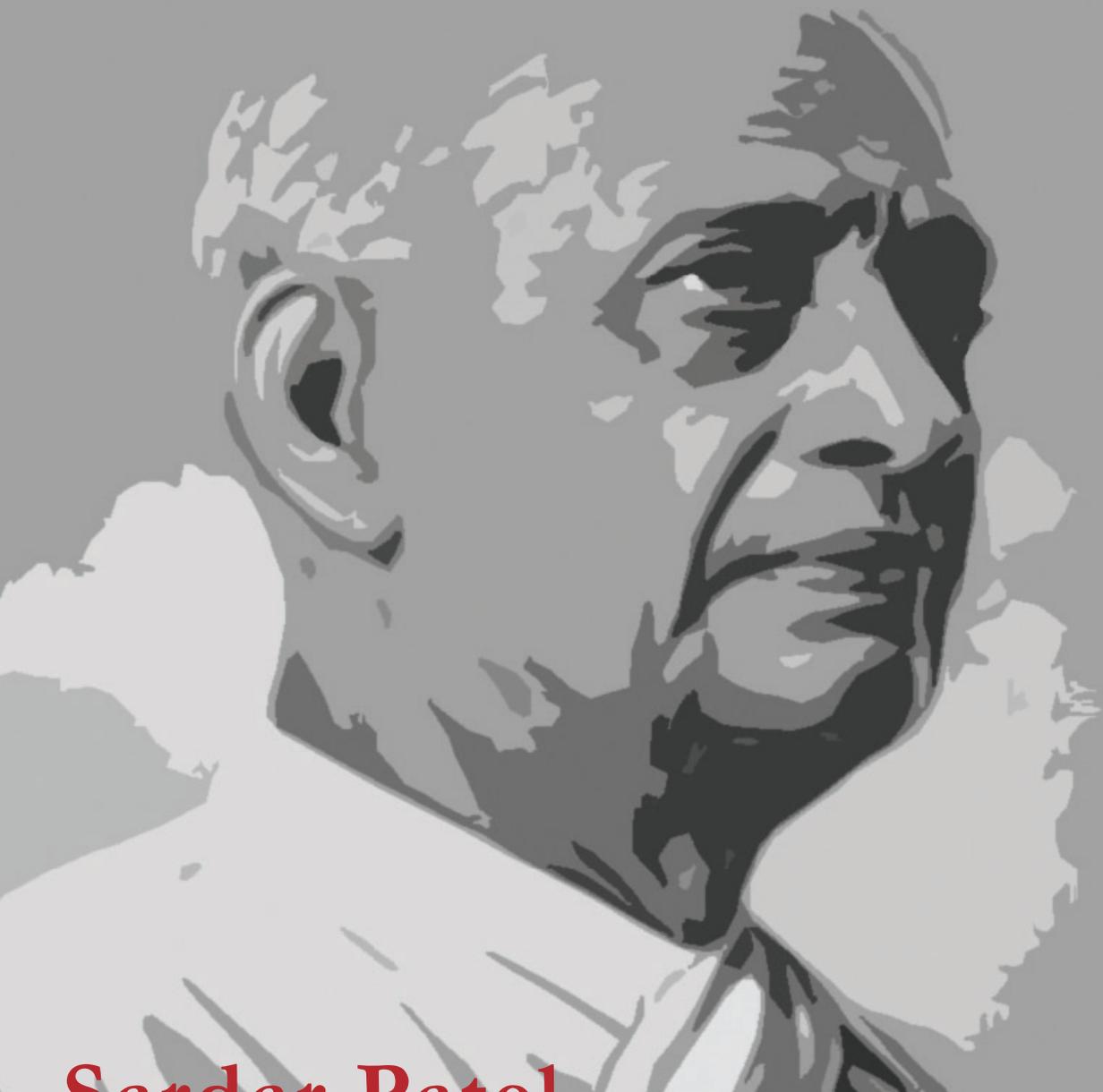




IC Centre for Governance



Sardar Patel
Lecture on Governance

October 5, 2024 | New Delhi

5



IC Centre for Governance

The IC Centre for Governance has been set up with the objective of collective thinking and acting on important issues of governance. It believes that public governance is too serious a matter to be left entirely to the state and that the involvement of the Civil Society is not only desirable but also essential. The Centre seeks to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society and government for ensuring good governance.

Read more about the Centre at <https://centreforgovernance.com/>

The 'Sardar Patel Lecture on Governance' is printed and published
by Mahesh Kapoor on behalf of the
IC Centre for Governance. New Delhi- 110057

Publication Coordinator - Vinod K. Maurya

Printed at Rakmo Press Pvt. Ltd.
C-59, Okhla Industrial Area,
Phase I, New Delhi-110020

Please address all correspondence to

IC Centre for Governance
3, Palam Marg, 3rd Floor, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi – 110057
Tel: +91-40809939, +91- 9315606289
E-mail: info.iccfcg@gmail.com, iccfcg@yahoo.co.in
Website: <https://centreforgovernance.com/>



Dr. S. Jaishankar

Minister of External Affairs, Govt. of India

PROGRAMME

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. About the Lecture | 3 |
| 2. Welcome Address Shri Mahesh Kapoor, Former Advisor, Planning Commission and Vice President, IC Centre for Governance | 4 |
| 3. Opening Remarks Shri Prabhat Kumar, Former Cabinet Secretary & First Governor of Jharkhand, and President, IC Centre for Governance. | 6 |
| 4. Presidential Address Dr. Harivansh, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha | 8 |
| 5. Keynote Address Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, Govt. of India..... | 10 |
| 6. Question and Answer Session | 19 |
| 7. Vote of Thanks Shri Shanti Narain, Former Member, Traffic Railway Board and Secretary General, IC Centre for Governance | 26 |

About the Lecture

“In a tough time the cowards find excuses, the brave people find the way”.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

In every programme on *Ethics in Governance* conducted by IC Centre for Governance since 2005, the participating members of the All India Services are being reminded of the stirring words and inspiring actions of Sardar Patel, the tallest among nation builders of India. His address to the first batch of the Indian Administrative Services is circulated to them to act as a veritable guide in their career.

Sardar Patel was a true nationalist, who placed the interests of the country above everything else. Nothing else except the country mattered to him. It would be apt to describe him as the unifier of India and what was achieved by him during the turbulent days of partition remains unparalleled in modern history.

In our view, it is necessary to reiterate the work and principles of the Sardar—loyalty to the motherland, unshakeable commitment to nationalism and unflinching service to the Nation – so that the new generations do not forget the great legacy.

The Centre has, therefore, decided to pay its humble tribute to the great leader by institutionalizing an annual lecture on the theme of Governance in his name. This small initiative is aimed at keeping his fire of nationalism alive in our hearts and reiterating his principles of governance to motivate those in government and those who observe the governments from outside.

The first ICCfG Sardar Patel Lecture on Governance was delivered by Shri M Venkaiah Naidu, the Vice President of India on 24 January 2020. The second lecture was delivered by Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Former Chairman, ISRO, MP (Rajya Sabha) on February 19, 2022. The third lecture was delivered by Shri Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala on October 31, 2022. The fourth lecture was delivered by Dr. Karan Singh, Statesman, Philosopher & Thinker on November 17, 2023. The fifth lecture was delivered by Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, Government of India on October 05, 2024

Prabhat Kumar

President, IC Centre for Governance



Welcome Address - Shri Mahesh Kapoor, Vice President, IC Centre for Governance



Namaskaar, good morning. On behalf of the IC Centre for Governance, I have great pleasure this morning in welcoming you all to the 5th Sardar Patel Lecture on Governance. In the IC Centre for Governance, when the word governance comes, we think of the greatest man in this country who handled governance and who else but Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Getting 560 princely states together was a huge task. He used diplomacy, he used persuasion. He even occasionally used threat of force, all elements of governance. He was the man who brought this country, the modern shape it is in, from the colonial to the modern republic. We have had four lectures before. The first one was by the then Vice President, Shri Venkaiah Naidu followed by Dr. Kasturirangan, Scientist, Governor Arif Mohammad Khan and last year, Dr. Karan Singh. We are very fortunate this morning to have Dr. Jaishankar, Hon'ble Minister of External



Affairs, Government of India to be present with us, to deliver this address. I can really say he is a busy man because earlier in the week, he was in the United States. Yesterday, he was in Sri Lanka and he has found time to be with us today. We are grateful. I will not take much of your time and request Shri Prabhat Kumar for his Opening Remarks and to introduce the speakers on the dais. I request everybody in the auditorium to kindly switch off their mobile phones or put them on silent mode. Thank you.



Opening Remarks - Shri Prabhat Kumar, President, IC Centre for Governance



Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. As Shri Mahesh Kapoor just said, we in the IC Centre for Governance are privileged to organise this 5th Sardar Patel Lecture on Governance. It is our great pleasure that we have Dr. Jaishankar with us to deliver the lecture. I don't think Dr. Jaishankar needs any introduction here. We all know that he is our Minister of External Affairs and that he has had an illustrious diplomatic career spanning over 38 years, during which he had very important assignments like our Ambassador in Beijing and in Washington and as India's Foreign Secretary. He is a thinker and he is a great advocate of India's unique place in global community. He is a candid writer and a very, very bold speaker who does not mince his words.

Friends, Dr. Jaishankar has been navigating our foreign policy with the doctrine which he calls as 'strategic autonomy' and according to him, there are three elements which define a sound foreign policy of a country. They are: designing strategic goals, recognising optional outcomes and appreciating the interplay of politics and policy. I think the same principle applies largely to public governance. We should



not continue to benchmark ourselves with our past and we should continuously explore new pathways for better governance. There is much about governance that we know and there is much that we do not know. Sardar Patel, as Mahesh ji just said, defined governance for an emerging nation and he visualised the future of governance of the country. Once in the Constituent Assembly, he said that one could depend, one could rely upon future leaders of the country to develop healthy conventions. I think our experience of the last seven decades has been quite different. I think we are still waiting for a mature governance ecosystem fit for the largest democracy of the world. In the beginning of the 21st century, Francis Fukuyama identified two main dimensions of state building – scope and strength. Scope means the range of subjects, the responsibility for which is taken by the state and strength means the capacity of the state to discharge that responsibility. Francis Fukuyama said that the essence of stateness is enforcement and what is the enforcement? Enforcement in the ultimate analysis is the ability of the state to send a man in uniform with a gun to force people to adhere to the laws. Like many other countries, India has also invested in expanding the scope of the state. But unfortunately, and I am saying this with 40 years experience in governance that we have not invested adequately in the capacity of the state to enforce the laws and rules. In his Independence Day address only a couple of months ago, our Prime Minister said that his government has an unwavering commitment to governance reforms. He said that in the last one decade, the governance has shifted to a new gear. While earlier, the citizen used to plead for what was rightfully his and now he gets it on his doorstep. Friends, in the IC Centre for Governance, we are looking forward to unfolding next generation of reforms.

Ladies and gentlemen, we also have the good fortune today of the presence of Dr. Harivansh, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Like Dr. Jaishankar, he needs no introduction. He has been conducting the proceedings of the house and we see it on the TV in a very exemplary manner, right since he took over. He is a renowned journalist who has worked with several media houses during his long career. He was also the media advisor to the then Prime Minister Shri Chandrashekhar with whom he enjoyed a very good relationship. During his student days, he came under the influence of Jayaprakash Narayan and he joined the JP movement in 1974 if I am right and till today, he shares JP's philosophy and ideology. Personally, I have learnt so much from Dr. Harivansh during my very frequent interactions with him when I was in Jharkhand. With these words, I conclude my address and I welcome you all to this lecture. I request Dr. Harivansh to deliver his Presidential Address. Thank you.



Presidential Address - Dr. Harivansh, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha



देश के विदेश मंत्री माननीय श्री जय शंकर जी, आदरणीय प्रभात कुमार जी, पूर्व गवर्नर एवं कैबिनेट सचिव, श्री महेश कपूर जी, Vice President, IC Centre for Governance. उपस्थित सभी विशिष्ट अतिथि गण, लौह पुरुष सरदार पटेल के सम्मान में IC Centre for Governance द्वारा आयोजित इस lecture में आने का मौका मिला, इसके लिए डा. प्रभात कुमार जी का आभार। आप सभी की तरह मैं भी आज के मुख्य वक्ता श्री जयशंकर जी को सुनने के लिए उत्सुक हूँ। वे बहुआयामी व्यक्तित्व के धनी हैं— एक राजनयिक से राजनेता बने, एक सफल वार्ताकार, बेहतरीन वक्ता, लेखक और भी बहुत कुछ। प्रधानमंत्री के मार्गदर्शन में उन्होंने प्रमुख वैश्विक शक्तियों के साथ भारत के संबंधों को गहरा करने के लिए सफलतापूर्वक काम किया है। उन्हें “ Chief Executor of India's assertive foreign policy” के रूप में describe किया जाता है। माननीय जयशंकर जी ने, ऐसे समय में जबकि दुनिया कुछ गंभीर चुनौतियों का सामना कर रही है, हमारी विदेश नीति को skilfully navigate करने और विश्व में भारत का मान बढ़ाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है।



आज हम ऐसे समय में जी रहे हैं जब जीवन के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में अभूतपूर्व गति से परिवर्तन हो रहे हैं।

रे कुर्जवील, स्टीफन हॉकिंग, फ्रांसेस केयर्नक्रॉस जैसे प्रसिद्ध भविष्यवादियों और वैज्ञानिकों ने कुछ साल पहले जो भविष्यवाणी की थी, वह आज कुछ ही समय में वास्तविकता बन गई है।

उन्होंने कहा था कि भविष्य में तकनीकी परिवर्तन इतने तेज और गहरे होंगे कि these may rupture the fabric of human civilization विशेषज्ञ चेतावनी देते हैं कि आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस, मशीन लर्निंग और ऐसी अन्य तकनीकें double edged weapons हो सकती हैं।

ऐसे समय में, जब चीजें इतनी तेजी से बदल रही हैं, effective governance के आयामों को भी समय के साथ विकसित और समायोजित करने की आवश्यकता है ताकि यह सुनिश्चित हो सके कि परिवर्तन समाज को लाभान्वित करें और resulting challenges का समाधान करें।

मुझे यह देखकर खुशी हुई कि IC Centre for Governance पहले से ही उस रास्ते पर है। इसका विजन, स्वच्छ एवं प्रभावी governance practices को बढ़ाना रहा है जो technology & driven development के संदर्भ में भी प्रासंगिक हैं।

It offers capacity&building programs for improving service delivery and citizen engagement; for promoting inclusive and sustainable development and emphasizes on the importance of ethical governances.

इन योगदानों के माध्यम से, IC Centre for Governance अधिक प्रभावी, पारदर्शी और जवाबदेह शासन परिदृश्य बनाने में मदद कर रहा है।

मुझे ऐसे प्रतिष्ठित संगठन से जुड़ने पर गर्व है और इसका श्रेय आदरणीय प्रभात कुमार जी को जाता है। सौभाग्यशाली हूँ, मुझे उनका प्रेम और सानिध्य मिला।

उनके लंबे प्रशासनिक अनुभव एवं उल्लेखनीय योगदान के अलावा उनके सौम्य व्यक्तित्व ने मुझे प्रभावित किया।

झारखण्ड जैसे नए राज्य के प्रथम राज्यपाल के रूप में उनके मार्गदर्शन में वहां एक robust administrative framework की नींव रखी गई जिसके core elements थे inclusivity और social justice.

मुझे याद है उन्होंने विश्वविद्यालयों की परिक्षा में toppers की कॉपियों को सार्वजनिक करने का निर्णय लिया जो अत्यंत सराहनीय है।

मैं IC Centre of Governance के संस्थापकों को धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ, जिन्होंने हर साल सरदार पटेल की याद में उनके नाम पर वार्षिक व्याख्यान आयोजित करने का उचित निर्णय लिया।

यह पहल सरदार पटेल के विजन, निर्णय क्षमता, व्यक्तिगत त्याग और ईमानदारी को हमारे दिलों में जिंदा रखेगी। उनके principles of governance हमेशा इस क्षेत्र से जुड़े लोगों और आम जनता को प्रेरित और सक्षम बनाते रहेंगे। दुर्भाग्यवश हम उनके contributions को उचित सम्मान देने में लंबे समय तक असमर्थ रहे थे। उन्हें भारत रत्न देने में चार दशक (1991) से ज्यादा का समय लगा।

अधिक समय न लेते हुए, मैं सरदार पटेल की त्याग और इमानदारी से जुड़ी एक बात, जिसने मुझे बहुत प्रभावित किया है, कह कर अपनी बात खत्म करूंगा।

अंत में, एक बार पुनः आदरणीय श्री प्रभात कुमार जी का शुक्रिया मुझे यहां बुलाने के लिए।

धन्यवाद।

जय हिन्द।



Keynote Address - Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs



Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Harivansh, Shri Prabhat Kumar, Shri Mahesh Kapoor, Shri Shanti Narain, dear friends, it is a great pleasure to share some thoughts with all of you today on Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Governance. Indeed, for anyone who has studied his life, good and strong governance is naturally associated with him. If I were to pick two other characteristics, I think nationalist and realist come readily to mind and this is not just me. It is the popular image of the Sardar that has remained deep in our consciousness even 74 years after he passed away.

Now much has been written about him both directly and with reference to the events and personages of that period. There is a widely held perception that the conventional narrative with which we are all familiar has not done adequate justice to him. That is perhaps attributed to the politics of the era, but I don't want to go into it on this occasion. My hope, I would say even expectation, is that with the



passage of time and a more balanced and objective debate in our society, the value of Sardar Patel's multiple contributions would be given the recognition that they truly deserve. Allow me today to essentially focus on some of them and highlight their contemporary relevance.

I am sure all of you would agree with me that it is actually no exaggeration to assert that but for Sardar Patel's leadership, the story of the integration of Indian states in the aftermath of the partition would be very different. Decisions pertaining to Hyderabad to Junagadh and the Rajputana have all been written about at length. But there are many more that we take for granted because of his efforts. Even today, his Secretary V P Menon's account of what happened at that time, I believe, is a must-read to understand our modern history. I myself often give that book to young officers who come as trainees because I tell them that it tells you how it really was; and how it could have been, but for Patel.

Equally revealing have been developments in the one state that Sardar Patel was actually not allowed to handle, Jammu and Kashmir. We all know how that unfolded. It has taken us much national effort and many sacrifices to rectify those errors subsequently. Eight decades after independence, perhaps the younger generations and I am happy to see some of them in the room, the younger generations may not readily appreciate how seriously a 'third force' model was being pushed by the colonial power to ensure our permanent weakening. It was in large measure due to Sardar Patel's legendary firmness and vast negotiating skills that ensured that our senior colleagues have spoken about which ensured that many Instruments of Accession were signed. But in the handling of Jammu and Kashmir, we created serious problems for ourselves – problems in national integration, in national security, in diplomacy and in geo-strategy.

The foundation that Sardar Patel laid has since become the strong edifice of a modern and confident India. But there are lessons from his endeavours which are relevant even now. Foremost among them is that our civilizational ethos does not automatically translate into political coherence and national unity. At various points of our history, internal divisions and selfish agendas have done our country great harm. Indeed, these were traits that the world was readily willing to exploit to its advantage. What Sardar Patel was able to do and do remarkably well in 1947-48 was to evoke an emotion and awareness among the states and their rulers towards our nationhood. That is how he could actually bring us all together. Sustaining



that spirit is the task that he has bequeathed to all of us. And overcoming many challenges, we have today reached the current stage in our national life.

But there are still forces and voices, as they have been in the past that seek to divide and weaken. They speak of narrower identities, they promote conflicting interests and they advocate divided loyalties to a point where an India, that has existed virtually as long as human history itself is again envisaged by some people as a negotiation. In a democratic society, I can understand that there will inevitably be debates and discussions. But these should end up as national understandings and national consensus, and not become a counterpoint to our nationalism. For that very reason, we should be continually committed to strengthening the national spirit and nurturing our integration. History has demonstrated the great cost of mainstreaming divisive politics, especially those centered around vote banks. The real tribute that we can pay to Sardar Patel is to never let our guard down.

Friends, all polities are run by institutions and through their established practices. The quality of governance is often a key factor in determining comprehensive national power. At the time of independence, there were serious dilemmas that accompanied the political transition. It is to the credit of Sardar Patel that he stood up strongly for the continuity of our governance, whether it was our bureaucratic or military institutions and their practices. This enabled responsible policy making and smooth implementation. Let us appreciate that in the era of decolonization, very few other countries were able to create the kind of systemic stability that we experienced in India. Obviously, a great deal of the credit goes to the national movement, which instilled political awareness deeply among our people. But this venue is particularly appropriate to also recognize how crucial was the role of the bureaucracy in the exercise of nation-building after independence. Sardar Patel, more than many of his contemporaries, was a bridge builder between the world of politics and that of civil services.

Now, it is not just a question of structures. Contemporary accounts, including many of those who were his political colleagues at that time, reveal how hard Sardar Patel strove to ensure that decisions were not made in silos and we are all from that world and we understand that challenge. Probably his unique standing encouraged others to seek his advice and to share their anxieties. Though, his portfolios were Home, the States and Information & Broadcasting, his policy impact actually ranged from Defence and External Affairs, to Development and Finance. The takeaway here is the importance of integrated decision-making and



efficient systems of delivery. Today, when much greater emphasis is being put on continuous training and strong performance evaluation, the Sardar certainly serves as a symbol of good governance.

Sound policymaking requires a proper understanding of the environment in which we operate and I am sure none of you would disagree with that proposition. Since no nation is really an island unto itself, this applies as much to foreign policy as it does to domestic one. What makes Sardar Patel stand out was his hard-headed approach to challenges, reflected in both strategic clarity and decisive action. He, at least, was never given to viewing problems through rose-tinted glasses, nor being swayed by the fashionable ideologies of the day.

This was a man who intuitively gauged the big picture, who worked through all its complications and carefully prepared the ground for the right responses. In the field of national security, for example, he assessed the dangers in Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir very accurately. And when the time came to act, he had no hesitation in using all the instruments at his command. And because the governance structures at this delicate period in our history saw him as their champion, they too responded to their fullest. In that sense, this period is instructive on how to get the best out of the system and deal with critical issues. Those too are lessons to remember.

A particular relevance in this regard is the handling of Jammu and Kashmir, and the decision to refer the Pakistani attack to the United Nations, under Article 35 of the UN Charter, which is the Article on the threat to international peace and security. Now, there is a debate whether this could have been done better under Article 51 of the Charter, as a right of self defence. But Sardar Patel actually was opposed to going to the United Nations at all. He had resisted this in the case of Junagadh and he had resisted this in the case of Hyderabad as well. And his logic was a logic of basic realism that India should not submit its issues to the judgement and to the interests of other powers.

Sadly, for all of us and for our nation, his caution was disregarded. An India lulled by a sense of false internationalism was set up by the United Kingdom, ably assisted at that time by Belgium, Canada and the United States. What began as the 'Jammu and Kashmir Question' was conveniently changed to the 'India-Pakistan Question', putting the two of them at par with each other and with all the attendant implications. It took us a quarter century thereafter to settle the matter.



Other than the misreading of world politics, there was an equally serious misjudgement of Pakistan by India. Within our system, Patel was the most forceful advocate of using all avenues of pressure on that country after the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir. His reluctance to take the matter to the UN itself stemmed from the belief that it was better to deal directly with Pakistan, rather than in a framework that would allow Pakistan to manipulate. His own approach in regard to the refugee handling and rehabilitation issues in the country also said much about his attitude to nationalist forces. Sardar Patel recognized that those who truly responded to the crises should be supported without allowing politics to colour his assessment.

Today, we may be tempted to speculate what Sardar Patel's approach would have been to Pakistan-related issues that came up in the decade after his passing away. For example, would he have extended his support to the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960? Or dismissed it like the then Prime Minister, as an issue just about a 'pailful of water' that was negligible in the context of larger international politics and subscribed to the justification that it was a decisive move towards a settlement and to peace with Pakistan? An understanding of the Sardar's life, policies and actions should allow us to come to our own answers. Like any neighbour, India would certainly like to have good relations with Pakistan. But that cannot happen by overlooking cross-border terrorism and indulging in wishful thinking. As the Sardar demonstrated, realism must be the foundation for policy.

India's relationship with China is similarly an issue on which Sardar Patel's instincts are on record. And they differed considerably from that of Prime Minister Nehru. The most cited example was, of course, their famous exchange of correspondence in 1950 on this matter. In Patel's view, India had done everything to allay China's apprehensions, but that country regarded us with suspicion and skepticism, perhaps mixed with a little hostility. He highlighted that for the first time, India's defence had to concentrate on two fronts simultaneously. His assessment was that China had definite ambitions and aims that shaped its thinking about India in a less-than friendly way. What I am giving you is a near verbatim summary of his famous letter.

Pandit Nehru, in contrast, referred to China's protestations of friendship and warned against losing our sense of perspective and giving way to unreasoning fears. To him, it was inconceivable that China would undertake, what he called, a



wild adventure across the Himalayas. He did not, and again these are his words, he did not envisage any real military invasion from China in the foreseeable future.

This exchange was part of an internal debate and it obviously allowed the two leaders to express themselves very frankly, even if it was very undiplomatic. Each one reflected an approach not just to a neighbour, but to issues of national security and to world politics as well. Patel passed away soon after this exchange and must have surely felt vindicated by the events in the decade that followed. The point about the recollection is to stress the importance of getting the right assessment of the relevant situation. This is a key aspect of governance because, if we start with a mis-diagnosis, everything else thereafter only takes us in the wrong direction.

The result of the idealist view in this case, for example, shifted India's focus away from preparing our defences. Instead, we spent our energies making common cause on third party issues, and advocating the claims in the United Nations, of the very neighbour, with whom we went on to have a conflict in 1962.

Now, governance is equally about undertaking the appropriate level of planning, right level of preparations and ensuring suitable appointments. I am talking in Civil Services Institute, so I think that should be fairly obvious. In 1962, our troops were sent to the Himalayan borders without the right equipment or acclimatization. And that was because there was virtually no planning for that contingency. And to compound matters, those charged with responsibilities from Defence Minister Krishna Menon downwards were visibly ill-equipped to deal with them. This was not hindsight because many questions were raised and in fact, controversies erupted even ahead of the 1962 war.

Today, the same challenge is being met but it is being met with more painstaking and focused efforts, in parallel with our diplomatic engagement. That our border infrastructure spending has gone up five times in the last decade is but one reflection of our seriousness. So too is the fact that we have such a tight 'pol-mil' approach, which ensures that our system moves fully in lockstep. Indeed, even other facets of the relationship are coordinated in a manner that our national security interests are better served. Sardar Patel would surely appreciate that the integrated decision-making, which used to center in his time around his personality, is now increasingly built into our system.



During the end of the Sardar's life, India and China were both re-emerging in the global order as modern nation states. The complexities of their relationship were just beginning to be visible. Much has happened in the decades that have passed. Today, our ties are again at cross-roads. The present situation does not serve the interests of either nation. There is a way forward. And that is by reinstating peace and tranquility in the border areas, respecting the LAC and not seeking to change the status quo. Beyond that, the three mutuals, that is, mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests – offer a credible pathway. After all, the rise of Asia can only happen when India and China have a positive dynamic.

Another issue that has confronted our nation from the Sardar's time till now is the nature of the relationship that we should have with the West. This is with particular reference to the United States and to some extent, perhaps more in the earlier days, with the United Kingdom. Even by 1950, the duality of these relationships had become apparent. On the one hand, Western nations were our major development partners and they were our main interlocutors on the international stage. At the same time, on matters related to our national integration and our national security, most of all Jammu and Kashmir, their role was mischievous, if not worse. All Indian leaders have sought to strike a balance and the Sardar was no exception. How to get it right has been the perennial challenge.

Sardar Patel's view was typically optimal grounded, was very grounded. In some of my own writings, I have referred to him as the pioneer of an 'India First' approach. He recognized the realities of the global power structure and felt that they should be handled appropriately to gain full advantage. In particular, he appreciated the salience of the United States to the world order, and we are talking about 1946-1950, and he believed that it would be difficult for India to industrialize significantly, without American cooperation. As a nationalist, he had absolutely no problems standing up to the West on Jammu and Kashmir. But as a realist, he saw little point in crossing them on matters not central to Indian interests. At that time, India's vigorous advocacy of China's permanent membership of the UN was actually a major irritant with the West. Many of the less ideological members of the Cabinet also believed that this campaign was misplaced. They included Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee amongst others.

In one of his last public appearances, Sardar Patel declared that many people, and we all know what that means, many people believed that India should not take



American help because it would lose prestige and be perceived as joining a bloc. He, on the contrary, felt that India was quite capable of realizing and protecting its own interests and positions. This was both a debate, in a way, you can say, about our national assuredness as well as on global strategy. Allowing others a veto on our positions, and not exercising choices because we fear the displeasure of what will they say, if we do this, this is being neither independent nor being smart. Unfortunately, those ideological stances, the outlook that Sardar Patel was contesting in 1950 still continues to this date. We saw that when it came to assessing the merits of the Quad mechanism in the Indo-Pacific. The difference between backing out in 2007 and standing firm in 2017 was one of clarity and of confidence. In the last decade, whenever we have returned to the approach of Sardar Patel, it has undoubtedly served us very well.

While we largely associate the Sardar with the challenge of integration and with the promotion of our administration capabilities, some thought also needs to be given to his economic outlook. He had very strong faith in Indian entrepreneurship and he actually envisaged unleashing our economic energies as key to rebuilding India. In that regard, he visualized partnerships abroad that would enhance productivity and upgrade technology at home. How comfortable he would have been with the socialist policies that followed his demise is something that we can only contemplate, though I think we can do that with some degree of confidence. That this eventually led us to the crisis of 1991 is, of course, an undeniable fact. It is strange that some seek to advocate again the very policies which brought the nation to that point. But the fact is the Government today is doing the reforms we should, rather than just the reforms we must, and that is a phenomenon that would surely meet with the Sardar's approval.

Let me also say a word about vote bank politics, since it is so prevalent in our times. Sardar Patel was amongst those of his generation who were troubled by our unwillingness then to take forward our ties with Israel for that very reason. Like so many things in India, that too has fortunately changed.

Sardar Patel was dealing with the enormous challenge of reconstructing India after two centuries of colonialism. But we must not forget that he was doing so at a time when the international order was being reshaped after the Second World War, and as decolonialization had just began. Reading the big picture right and making our calculations is not easy. Today, the world is again in the midst of a great churn. That order that had just emerged in Patel's times has now run its course.



We are seeing the emergence of multi-polarity and the return to the natural diversity of the world. There is no model, there is no textbook that is going to guide us in this regard. What we need is the right combination of self-belief, of realism, of preparation, of nationalism the very qualities of Sardar Patel that I spoke about. We need them to prepare for Viksit Bharat. Sardar Patel will always be an inspiration in that endeavour.

I thank you for your attention.

Mahesh Kapoor: In the next 10 minutes that we have, the minister has agreed to answer any questions that may be there in the audience. Anybody having a question may please introduce themselves and make a short and specific question and not make a statement so that more people can have an opportunity to ask questions. Thank you.



Question and Answer Session

Q: Dr. Surabhi: Thank you. Since you said governance is about planning and you are planning to go to Pakistan for the SCO, given the love-hate relationship that Pakistani media and the government has with you personally, what are the kind of questions and challenges and blaming etc. are you anticipating and planning for? Thank you.

Q: Dr. Mukta: Good afternoon, Sir. I actually have two questions for you. When it comes to women-led governance, as per your vast experience, what are some of the key aspects or practices that we can adopt from other countries perhaps that are doing better than us in this regard? Thank you.

Q: Raghu Dayal : I have two brief questions, one to ubiquitous indefatigable EAM and the other as an erudite member of the cabinet. To EAM, I only refer about what you have been calling integration, one of the most difficult tasks that Sardar Patel accomplished. Mr. Minister, I just want to ask that we have in SAARC Plus 1, for instance, 9 countries in close neighbourhood with India accounting for almost 80% of GDP of all these SAARC Plus 1, I mean SAARC Plus Myanmar. How is it that most of them seem to be reluctant to accept India as the real natural historical pivot for the region? Secondly, as member of the Cabinet, some aspects which seem to be repugnant to even some of us and also to some of the US legislators, for instance, the Rand Paul and others who seem to have special affinity for you, that the image of India is riled; I mean, in terms of the fringe elements being allowed to sully the image of the government. Now as a member of the cabinet, whether you have ever felt the necessity to see whether something more positive can be done to get rid of this particular image? Thank you.

Dr. S Jaishankar: Let me start with the first question. Yes, I am scheduled to go to Pakistan in the middle of this month and that is for a meeting of the SCO Heads of Government. Normally, Prime Minister goes to the high level meetings, the heads of state and one of us, and it changes, usually one of the ministers goes for the Heads of Government meeting; that is in line with the tradition. It so happens that the meeting is taking place in Pakistan because like



us, they are a relatively recent member. Your question, I think as I understood was, am I planning for it? Of course, I am planning for it. In my business, you plan for everything which you are going to do and for a lot of things which you are not going to do and which could happen also. You plan for that as well. I expect there would be a lot of media interest because the very nature of the relationship is such and I think we will deal with it. But I do want to say it will be for a multilateral event. I am not going there to discuss India-Pakistan relations. I am going there to be a good member of the SCO but since I am a courteous and civil person, I will behave myself accordingly.

On the women-led governance, I think we also have our own experiences and so do other societies. When I look, a lot of people in the room, their career has been dealing with administration, with development, with society very deeply. Mine was mostly dealing with foreign policy, but in the last five and a half years as a Member of Parliament, obviously, I see very much more of you can say, in a way, the grassroots and my own sense is that there are lot of things we can learn. There are lot of things where we ourselves are an example and certainly, in the case of women-led development. In fact, in the G20, we were the people who really pushed this idea that, this is not just about closing gender gaps because that's almost like women will continuously stay behind and you are going to play catch up and that's where it ends. There are many areas and after all, in many ways, they are a natural pivot of families and there are areas where their contribution and their role is very different and it is not something which is replaceable by men. I do think it's a very active subject to engage the world. But other than that, part of what I would say we are trying to do in foreign policy is, many countries have used foreign policy in a very focused manner to get the best things out of the world. It could be investment, it could be trade, it could be technology, but a lot of it is about best practices. How does some other country do this better or different or in some manner? Is there something we can learn? And I think that's an attitude I would say we should encourage and certainly through foreign policy, we are trying to do that.

On the integration issue, at the moment, SAARC is not moving forward. We have not had a meeting of SAARC for a very simple reason that there is one member of SAARC who is practicing cross border terrorism at least against one more member of SAARC, may be more. If you are all sitting together and cooperating, and at the same time, this kind of terrorism goes on so openly, it actually poses a challenge for us that do you ignore it and go ahead. And in



which case, you are normalising it; you are accepting that this is a legitimate tool of state craft. And I think at some point, we came to the decision that we should not do this. Terrorism is something which is unacceptable and if, despite a global view of it, if one of our neighbours continues to do it, then there must be a cost to that. It cannot be business as usual in the SAARC and that is the reason why actually SAARC meetings have not happened in recent years. But I want to make an equally important point. Because SAARC has not happened does not mean regional activities have stopped. In fact, I would argue that in the last 5 or 6 years, we have seen far more regional integration in the Indian subcontinent than we have seen since the partition of India. If you look today with Bangladesh, with Nepal, with Bhutan, with Myanmar, with Sri Lanka where I came from this morning. You have railway lines being restored, you have roads being rebuilt and you have electricity grids being built. Countries export and import power. You have fuel lines. Our refineries today give fuel to Nepal and to Bangladesh. You have ferries, you have fertilizer supplies. And if you look, medical visas, the way our hospitals are linked. I actually would say that what is happening in the neighbourhood and it is happening because we are espousing this policy called Neighbourhood First. Neighbourhood First means we are the biggest country. We must put in the maximum resources. We should not look to say, are they doing something equal to us? Because they are smaller, they will not be in a position to necessarily reciprocate. We need to take that as our primary responsibility and push that.

I didn't entirely understand the second part of your question, but if I got it right, you are saying that sometimes people say things which are awkward. And how do you deal with that? That's how I understood it. If I understood it right, in democratic politics or in politics, many things are said. In diplomacy, all things are handled.

Q: Deepak Singhal: Sir, I was the Chief Secretary in Uttar Pradesh and I am a very junior colleague of Mr. Prabhat Kumar. I just wanted to bring to your notice that for the last one and a half years, we have started a new chapter of our life where 50 professors and Vice Chancellors have travelled to 60 countries of the world and have done a lot of documentation on solving the world's problems through Indian culture. My own experience has been that most of our colleagues have been in embassies and have served as foreign secretaries as well, the Confucius Centres that China has opened, since you are an MEA today, if we have an institutional arrangements with embassies emerging as parallel



Confucius Centres, not Confucius exactly but keeping our tradition of wisdom and tradition of spirituality and other traditions in mind.

I will give a small example. When I met Raila Odinga in Kenya, his daughter was totally blind and she came to Kerala and got cured when the world could not cure her. Even our PM invites him. If a synopsis of all these success stories if properly articulated and presented to the world, it will immensely benefit our country. Our foreign service too has to be reoriented. This is my suggestion.

Q: Shivam, Research Scholar at University of Delhi: My question is based on historical perspective. Is there any real big difference between Atal Bihari Vajpayee's good governance and Sardar Patel's good governance on the Kashmir issue? Like we can see fraternity integration in both leaders or is there any different perspective that we can gather. Thank you.

Q: My question is regarding UN, the way Israel, Gaza and things are in bad shape internationally, and some people are of the view that it is the failure of UN and there are some chances of proposal for India to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council and some academicians have proposed that UK should cede its membership in favour of India. And second option is there should be 7 members with veto power or next 7 members without veto power. And the third is 7 members to be regularly elected for one year, 2 years, and 3 years. Why not be assertive about this UN Security Council? Thank you.

Q: Soumya Sood: I am closely working in international relations. Given the history of modern war, we have seen that countries that remain on a neutral stand benefit the most out of war situations. The situation that is currently unfolding in the Middle Eastern countries, what do you think are the opportunities and threats that could arrive to India?

Q: Sir, I want your views on setting up of an Efficiency Commission to improve our governance. Is it possible or being considered by you?

Q: Sabina Inderjit: I don't know whether it is really appropriate, but I think in today's time it is, given the fact that it's a Sardar Patel lecture. We have all read and we have all read a lot about Sardar Patel. In his nationalism, would you consider that he would have envisaged a Hindu Rashtra?



Dr. S Jaishankar: Let me start with your first question. Nowadays, we have a cultural centre in every embassy, in every High Commission. This change has come about in the last decade. And everywhere, we definitely try to teach at least yoga, in any language, be it Hindi, Sanskrit or Tamil and our dance too. Apart from this, centres where either our community has grown or there is lot of interest about India, we have made the small centres bigger, like in some places like Russia or UK. The new initiative that has come in this is that the Prime Minister has instructed us to establish Thiruvalluvar cultural centres all over the world. I think we will establish first such centre shortly in some country. I agree with what you are saying that nowadays, there is a lot of curiosity about India in the world and after the International Yoga Day, people have a feeling that there is something in India like you said, there is a tradition of knowledge, tradition of spirituality and there is something to learn. This is definitely there and we definitely believe in this. How we will take this forward from our end is definitely on our minds. I think that for doing this, ICCR which is an autonomous organisation of the Government of India involved in India's global cultural relations, through cultural exchange with other countries and their people is modernizing itself to take this challenge forward.

The second question of yours on good governance, people live in different times. During Sardar Patel's time, we had just come out of the Partition. The country was really traumatised because when partition happened, nobody really saw what it would mean on the ground, the bloodshed that happened and the disruptions that happened. If we look at Atalji's time, what had happened at that time was that the original socialist model had created a crisis in 1991. We were rebuilding after that. Many decisions had been put up. I would say, Atalji in many ways would be particularly remembered because, one, he took the long-delayed decision on nuclear; exercising the nuclear option. But what people appreciate less is that he was a big economic reformer. If you look at the economic numbers of that period, they are really very, very impressive numbers. There would be comparisons; there would be changes even in Jammu and Kashmir, which was your particular focus. The situation in 1950s, the situation in 1998-99 and the situation today in 2024 is very different. My sense is every Prime Minister tries to improve governance. After all, that is part of the responsibility you have. Some have a greater focus, a greater, I would say, grip a stronger sense. If you look at the present Prime Minister, the kind of emphasis which he puts on training and the kind of feedback mechanisms that we have, the degree of rigour, as someone



who started many years ago. When I started my career, the Prime Minister then was Morarji Desai. When I look from there to today, honestly, the rigour and the workload and the expectations of the people in government has gone up; I think in many ways, the kind of delivery expectation in society. People are not willing to wait the way they would have waited 10 or 20 years ago. Society has become impatient in this country and rightly so in many respects.

On the question regarding the UN, we are not waiting for the failure of UN to reform UN. The UN needs to be reformed because it is 80 years old and when UN was formed, there were 51 members and all 51 were not free. We were one of the founding members. Today, they are 193 members. Imagine if something has changed from 51 to 193, how can the management remain the same? It doesn't make any sense. If you look at the economic hierarchy, that has also changed. People will come up with this idea to take someone out and put someone in. Nobody will willingly yield their position. That is the reality. But there is a negotiation going on called the Intergovernmental Negotiation, the IGN process. The pressures within the UN, we just had a summit of the future. In the summit of the future, there was a much greater sense that we have to do something today about changing the UN. I think the pressures will grow and at some stage, it will grow to a point where it will be impossible for the people who are currently trying to stop it from continually stopping it.

On the question about opportunities in the Middle East, Middle East is not opportunity. Middle East is a cause of great concern, deep worry. The conflict is widening. What we saw as a terrorist attack, then the response, and then we saw what happened in Gaza, now we are seeing it in Lebanon, exchange between Israel and Iran, the Houthis firing on the Red Sea. This is actually costing us. It is not that somebody is neutral and you benefit. Shipping rates have gone up, insurance rates have gone up; foreign trade is being affected. Oil prices have gone up. Day before yesterday, the markets tanked after the Iranian missile attack. , I don't deny that conflicts can be opportunistically used but I think in a globalised world which is so tight, conflict anywhere actually creates problems everywhere and, some supply of some kind will get affected by this. I would say honestly today whether it is the conflict in Ukraine or the conflict in the Middle East, West Asia, these are big factors of instability, big factors of concern, I think the entire world, including us, are worried about it and we are trying to see at least where we can make a difference and do what we can.



On the efficiency side, in this government, actually there is in a sense, a Commission which has looked at making bureaucracy more competitive, making it sharper in a way. There is something called Mission Karmayogi. The whole idea is that the bureaucracy should not be an escalator. There should be training, there should be performance evaluation, and there should be a kind of a right fit for the right job. I think all of that is happening and I would say, having spent most of my working life in the bureaucracy, I can see it today. In our case, the service which I was a member of is in a sense, a one service ministry. You have the opportunity of coming back to it again and again and looking at people in the same environment. I can see changes very frankly for the better. I think people are far more competitive and in a sense, far more willing to do things and, and to me, that's a source of great encouragement.

The last question is a very interesting question because in the late 40s and early 50s, there were big issues and some of them pertained to Sardar Patel, some of them to people like Rajendra Prasad. For example, RSS did sterling work during the partition. There were people who for political reasons don't want to recognise it. I think Sardar Patel, from what I understand, I have not just read the official side of it but I have also read the associated personal accounts of people, people who worked with him. My own grandparents were in the government at that time. I have sort of had talked to them. I think at that time, a lot of people felt that it is one thing to respect all religion should be respected. But respect for religions does not mean that your own religion needed to be suppressed or played down. And that unfortunately, because of the ideologies of the day was the direction in which it went. I think he would have been very uncomfortable with the fact that somewhere people were almost defensive about being a Hindu. My guess is it would have troubled him. If you look thereafter, at issues like inaugurating the Somnath Temple, it became a major political issue at that time. It is hypothetical, but I would say, here was a person with beliefs, faith, culture, tradition who was very comfortable in his own skin.

Mahesh Kapoor: Before I request Mr. Shanti Narain to propose a Vote of Thanks, I request Mr. Prabhat Kumar to present mementos to Dr. Jaishankar and to Dr. Harivansh.



Vote of Thanks



Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Civil Services Officers' Institute and the IC Centre for Governance, I have great pleasure in proposing a Vote of Thanks. We are deeply obliged to Dr. Jaishankar for accepting our invitation to deliver this 5th Sardar Patel Lecture on Governance. Sir, we are honoured for your sharing with us a whole range of perspectives on the geopolitical scenario in which India is positioned today. Your emphasis on our neighbouring countries was particularly enlightening. It has been an extremely insightful presentation on the evolution of public policy in this vital area of governance.

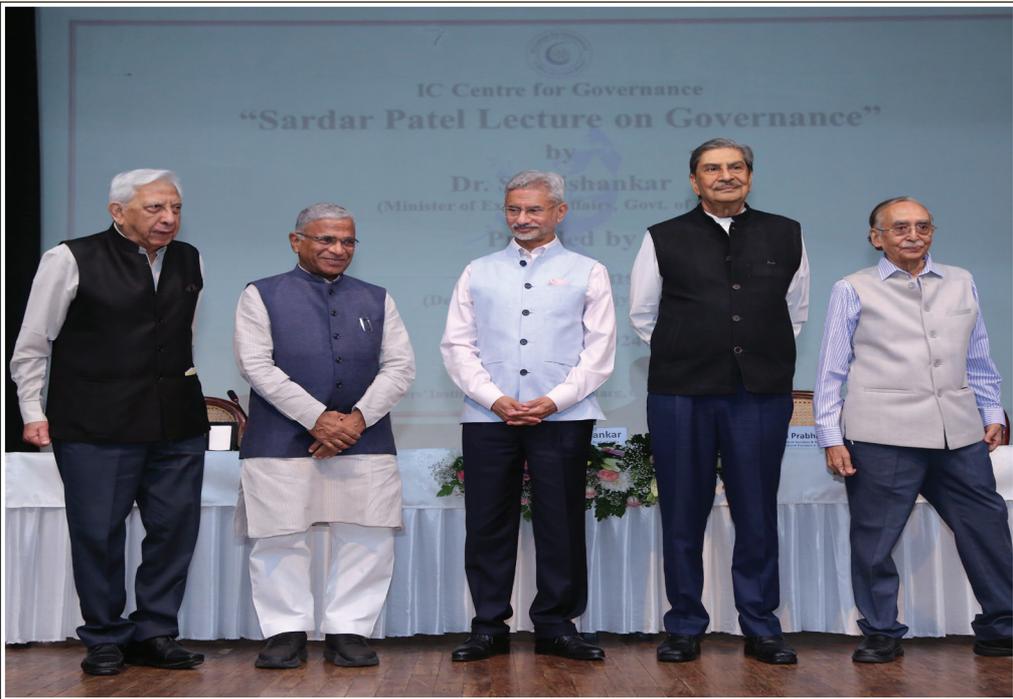
We are also very grateful to Dr. Harivansh, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha for agreeing to preside over this important event of the IC Centre for Governance. Our grateful thanks are due to this august audience who have joined us to make this programme a success. A special thanks to ladies and gentlemen from the media who have found time to cover our event. Thank you very much.

Shanti Narain

Secretary General, IC Centre for Governance



Photo Album of Event



















Venue of the Lecture

October 05, 2024



**Civil Services Officers' Institute (CSOI)
Vinay Marg, Chanakyapuri,
New Delhi - 110021**



IC Centre for Governance

3, Palam Marg, 3rd Floor, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi – 110057

Tel: +91-40809939, +91- 9315606289

E-mail: info.iccfg@gmail.com, iccfg@yahoo.co.in

Website: <https://centreforgovernance.com/>