

EVA STALIN IAS ACADEMY - BEST IAS COACHING IN CHENNAI

12/24, Muthurangan Muthali St, West Tambaram, Chennai - 600045

<https://www.evastaliniasacademy.in/>

Contact Number - +91-8678969915, +91-9940332851

In diverse India, name change demands consensus

An official invitation sent out by Rashtrapati Bhavan in connection with the G-20 summit in New Delhi under India's presidency which carried the nomenclature of the President of India as 'President of Bharat' set off a controversy. The controversy is symptomatic of the present-day political atmosphere, characterised by an intense distrust of each other, extreme and inexplicable revengefulness and heightened revanchism on the part of the power wielders, and widespread anxiety about the future of the country.

There has been no explanation from official spokesmen of the government for this sudden change. The abrupt change in a very formal official communication from the head of the state caught the nation unawares. Apologists of the powers that be came out with the proposition that the name of the country is interchangeable as Bharat (as is described in Article 1 of the Constitution); therefore, Bharat can be used. In this context, someone was heard saying that all that is required to change to Bharat is a resolution to that effect in Parliament. In fact, it was even suggested that the special session of Parliament next week would do just that. It is a bit surprising that some senior advocates of the Supreme Court of India too chimed in with their considered opinion – of course, in favour of the proposition highlighted above.

Before the whole issue of changing the name of the country and the manner in which it is being handled are considered, it is necessary to make it clear that Parliament has the absolute power to change the name of the country at any time by amending the Constitution. Article 368 of the Constitution empowers Parliament to amend any provision of the Constitution which includes the name of the country, as mentioned in Article 1. But the public has been left aghast by the general cacophony which has left them none the wiser as far as the issue is concerned.

From the constitutional point of view

So, let us examine the whole issue of the change of name of the country from a purely constitutional point of view. First, the invite that went out from Rashtrapati Bhavan. This invite used the nomenclature, "President of Bharat". In



P.D.T. Achary
is former Secretary
General, Lok Sabha

The change of name of a country cannot be and should not be done as the agenda of a political party

fact, at the moment, constitutionally speaking, there is no President of Bharat in the country. Article 52 says that there shall be a President of India. This is the official nomenclature of the head of the state which cannot be changed into anything else unless Article 52 is amended suitably. Thus, it is quite obvious that the term 'President of Bharat' is not in conformity with Article 52 of the Constitution.

Article 1 says, "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States". These words by no means signify that the words 'India' and 'Bharat' are interchangeable and that 'Bharat' can be used in place of 'India' as the official name of the country. As a matter of fact, the word 'Bharat' is not used in any of the articles of the Constitution except in the Hindi version, which was published under the authority of the President under Article 394A.

If the intention of the Constitution makers was to use the word 'Bharat' interchangeably, they would have used it in some parts of the Constitution which is the authentic Constitution of India officially so described under Article 393. In this context, let us try to understand the true import of the words "India, that is Bharat...", used in Article 1. The words 'that is' are clarificatory whose function is to explain or further clarify the preceding word 'India'. Thus, it is interpreted that Article 1 would mean India that is known as Bharat shall be a Union of States. Article 1 in the Hindi translation of the Constitution says "Bharat means India", which shows that Bharat is treated as the translation of India.

In other words the word 'Bharat' does not stand as an independent word in the original Constitution. It is to be used only in the Hindi translation of the Constitution. Further Article 394A(2) says "the translation of this Constitution...shall be construed to have the same meaning as the original thereof..."; this clause reinforces the point that the word Bharat is a translation of the word 'India', as used in the original Constitution, and India is the authentic name of the country until it is legally changed.

Will sow confusion

The use of 'Bharat' interchangeably with 'India' in official communication can create a great deal of

confusion. The official name of the country is the Republic of India. This is the name used in all official communication sent to foreign countries and international bodies. Agreements and treaties entered into with foreign countries are in the name of the Republic of India and not republic of Bharat. If Bharat is used interchangeably, the foreign governments will be thrown into utter confusion. In some agreements with foreign governments or international bodies India will be shown as Republic of India and in some other, as republic of Bharat. A country can have only one official name. It can be either India or Bharat, not both.

A perusal of the debates of the Constituent Assembly shows that Article 1 in the draft Constitution was worded "India shall be a union of states". The word Bharat was added later during the debate because of strong pressure from many Members to use Bharat instead of India. Many formulations were suggested by members such as H.V. Kamath, K.T. Shah, Seth Govind Das, and Shibban Lal Saxena. But B.R. Ambedkar added the words "that is Bharat" as a compromise. He never once said that 'Bharat' can be used interchangeably in the original Constitution.

A strange idea of a 'colonial distancing'

The change of name of a country cannot be and should not be done as the agenda of a political party. In a diverse country like India there needs to be a consensus on this. People in every nook and corner of the country must be able to emotionally connect with the name. Otherwise it will create a sense of alienation among some section or the other. The weird idea of liberation from India's colonial past should lead us to demolish all symbols of colonialism such as Rashtrapati Bhavan, Parliament House, the Assembly building, and completely change the whole administrative structure that is prevalent as well as many other things. The entire railway system in India is also a symbol of the colonial past.

Does this newfound anti-colonial exuberance sit well with the idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', that was the motto of the G-20 under India's presidency?

EVA STALIN

EVA STALIN IAS ACADEMY - BEST IAS COACHING IN CHENNAI

12/24, Muthurangan Muthali St, West Tambaram, Chennai - 600045

<https://www.evastaliniasacademy.in/>

Contact Number - +91-8678969915, +91-9940332851

Activate

A GM crop decision that cuts the mustard

The adoption of science-based technologies for crop improvement such as genetic engineering for developing genetically modified (GM) crops as a supplement to conventional breeding methods has become an absolute necessity to address the burgeoning and complex challenge of achieving global food and nutritional security under the fast-changing climate. According to the global Food Security and Nutrition Report, 2019, it is difficult to achieve the 'Zero Hunger' target by 2030.

The emphasis needs to be on accelerating the pace of improving crops genetically. In order to increase food production and become self-reliant, we require superior crop varieties and hybrids that provide enhanced yields and wide adaptability across environments, and require fewer inputs of natural resources. The advent of the Green Revolution in the 1960s-70s resulted in enhanced food production from a mere 50 million tonnes in 1950-51 to over 300 million tonnes in 2020-21. However, new biotech/GM crops with improved traits are a must in order to mitigate climate change and produce nutrient-dense food.

More crops under GM

Genetic modification of crops using the available and vast genetic diversity in conjunction with traditional farming has been well documented for increased productivity, contributing to global food, feed, and fibre security. According to a report by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) 2020, a total of 72 countries have adopted GM crops either as human food or animal feed, as well as for commercial cultivation (56% of the global GM crop area is in developing countries compared to 44% in industrial countries). GM crops have benefited more than 1.95 billion people in five countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, India and the United States) or 26% of the current world population of 7.6 billion. But

Subhra Chakraborty

is Director, National Institute of Plant Genome Research, Department of Biotechnology (Government of India), New Delhi

Ashwani Pareek

is Executive Director, National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute, Department of Biotechnology (Government of India), Mohali, Punjab

K.C. Bansal

is Secretary, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, New Delhi and former Director, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi

The environmental release of GM mustard DMH-11 marks a new era in self-reliance and sustainability in agriculture in India

cotton was commercialised as the first GM crop in India more than 20 years ago, and has been viewed globally as a great success story in terms of economic advantage to farmers and to the nation. Globally, genetic modification has expanded its reach, beyond the major four crops, maize, soybean, cotton and canola, to other economically important food crops for various traits such as insect and herbicide resistance, climate resilience and nutritional quality improvement.

Global economic gains contributed by GM crops (1996-2018) have amounted to \$224.9 billion in economic benefits to more than 16 million farmers, 95% of whom are from developing countries. Further, GM food crops, since adoption in 1996 globally have been proven for their biosafety for the last 25 years and more.

In edible oil deficit, a focus on mustard

India faces a major deficit in edible oils, with 60% of its demand being met by imports. Mustard is one of the most important edible oil crops in India; however, its per hectare yield is very low when compared to the global average. Thus, increasing the productivity of mustard in the country is vital for the economic well-being of farmers and self-sufficiency in edible oil production.

Using genetic engineering, extensive research has been carried out at the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP), University of Delhi South Campus, to create a GM mustard hybrid, DMH-11 with higher vigour and yield – this will facilitate an increase in domestic production of edible oils as well as enhanced farm incomes.

The GM mustard hybrid is based on the barnase/barstar system, which works on the principle of removing male fertility in one parent and restoring it in the offspring. The herbicide tolerance gene has been deployed as a selection marker for developing the GM mustard. While the

use of herbicides in herbicide tolerant (HT) crops has an advantage in terms of saving soil moisture and nutrients, besides effective weed control, the herbicide tolerance gene in GM mustard is primarily used for selecting genetically transformed lines, and for hybrid seed production.

Aiding self-reliance

On October 25, 2022, the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Government of India, made a landmark decision of approving the release of DMH-11 and its parental line for cultivation. This will help boost the vibrant genetic engineering research sector in the country and enable the generation of new crop varieties with improved traits. As the mustard varieties in India have a very narrow genetic base, the decision by GEAC to allow barnase-barstar-based hybrid production in mustard paves the way for the breeding of mustard hybrids not only for higher yields but also to ensure resistance to diseases and improve oil quality.

This advancement will benefit farmers by increasing yield per hectare, also leading to an increase in their incomes. The domestic consumption of edible oils is around 25 million tonnes, while the domestic production of mustard oil was approximately 8.5 million tonnes in the year 2020-21. India's edible oil imports were approximately 13 million tonnes, which touched ₹1.17 lakh crore in value terms. Cultivation of these GM mustard hybrids developed indigenously could help enhance farmers' income, reduce the oil-import burden and help achieve much-needed self-reliance in edible oil production. The environmental release of DMH-11 marks the beginning of a new era in self-reliance and sustainability in agriculture. More improved GM food crops are needed to boost the profitability of Indian farmers.