



EDITORIAL: INDIAN EXPRESS

GENERAL STUDIES 2: GOVERNANCE

DATE: 28.12.2024

THE ARC OF SINGH'S VISION

Manmohan Singh was devoured by populist furies. History is a mean avenger

Dr. Manmohan Singh's Unparalleled Legacy

- **A Multifaceted Legacy**

- Singh's contributions defy simplistic analysis, often overshadowed by labels like "accidental prime minister" or the failures of UPA II.
- His legacy reflects a blend of personal brilliance and an acute understanding of India's socio-economic and political landscape.
- He demonstrated grace, decency, and transformative leadership in shaping modern India.

- **Economic Reforms: A Visionary Approach**

- Singh's tenure as Finance Minister in the 1990s marked India's entry into a liberalized global economy.
- His leadership during UPA I facilitated growth, poverty reduction, and infrastructure expansion.
- Singh emphasized the psychological and strategic dimensions of liberalization, fostering global competitiveness.
- His reforms remain a cornerstone of India's economic framework.

- **Complex Leadership Style**

- Singh exemplified a unique combination of humility and influence, ascending to power without a traditional political base.
- His quiet leadership achieved strategic breakthroughs in diplomacy, including ties with the U.S. and China.
- His measured response to 26/11 attacks reflected long-term geopolitical strategy.
- Singh's Musharraf-Manmohan agreement demonstrated creative diplomacy despite political setbacks.

- **The Nehruvian Ethos**



- As a modern Nehruvian, Singh championed secularism, consensus-building, and knowledge-driven governance.
- He adapted this ethos to the post-Soviet global order, maintaining India's democratic and inclusive character.
- His governance under UPA I balanced liberalization with welfare reforms like NREGA and RTI.
- **Challenges During UPA II**
 - Internal party dynamics, corruption scandals, and unclear leadership during UPA II overshadowed his achievements.
 - Singh's stoic silence was misconstrued as passivity, affecting his public image.
 - The Congress Party failed to project Singh as its greatest asset, misattributing key achievements to others.
 - Despite challenges, his conceptual vision for India's future remained unparalleled.

Lessons from Dr. Manmohan Singh's Leadership

- **Academic Rigor Meets Policy Pragmatism**
 - Singh's grounding in economics ensured evidence-based, sustainable policymaking.
 - His consultative leadership style fostered dialogue and inclusivity in decision-making.
- **Balancing Pragmatism with Principles**
 - Singh emphasized gradual, socially acceptable reforms, minimizing disruptions during economic liberalization.
- **Commitment to Equity**
 - He championed inclusive growth through rights-based initiatives like NREGA and the Right to Education.
 - Singh balanced market-oriented reforms with social responsibility.
- **Integrity and Ethical Leadership**
 - Known for his strong moral compass, Singh upheld integrity in a corruption-prone system.
 - His willingness to resign over ethical issues, such as during the Harshad Mehta scam, underscored his principles.



PL RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

MAKING YOU SERVE THE NATION

- **Strengthening Institutions**

- Singh empowered institutions like the RBI and the Planning Commission to ensure independent and aligned policymaking.
- His tenure introduced systemic changes, such as modernizing India's tax structure and abolishing ad hoc treasury bills.

- **Leadership in Adversity**

- Despite political challenges, Singh remained calm and focused, handling setbacks with dignity.
- His resilience during the UPA's 2014 defeat solidified his legacy as a respected leader.

Conclusion

Dr. Manmohan Singh's leadership underscores the enduring power of integrity, intellect, and strategic foresight. His balanced approach to governance and unwavering belief in India's potential make his legacy a guiding framework for sustainable progress in a globalized world.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/manmohan-singh-nehruvian-progressive-legacy-9746824/>

