

Independence Day

By Ramneek Singh (Student, class 12th)

This year, we are celebrating the 75th year of our independence, but the question to ask is "are we really independent?"

We achieved our independence after numerous and invaluable struggles and sacrifices but do the ideals of the people who fought for our independence still stand today?

India did not become what it is today, overnight. After our independence from the British in 1947, we still had several problems lined up on our plate, the biggest of which was uniting a diverse country like India. After our independence, there were still 3 princely states who had not yet signed the instrument of accession and claimed their independent status, namely- Kashmir, Junagarh and Hyderabad. Under Sardar Vallabhai Patel's leadership, all these states joined with India. Another big problem was establishing democracy in a diverse state like India. Many experts and political scientists commented that the failure of democracy was inevitable in India. But the vision of our revolutionaries was clear. They would settle for nothing less than a complete democratic structure in India. The first general elections in 1951 proved to be perhaps the biggest win for independent India. The then chief election commissioner, Sukumar Sen, was also called by many Asian and African countries to facilitate their elections.

We must understand the hardships that brought India to where it is today. It is also imperative to understand the meaning of the word independent. Will the mere absence of a foreign power make our country independent?

Are we really independent if we are still a slave to ourselves? And now the most crucial question: is today's India really independent?

Sardar Bhagat Singh once said that independence is not just the freedom from the British but the absence of all social evils. We can only call ourselves independent when each and everyone of us are treated as equal and with dignity. As Sardar Bhagat Singh once said "we call ourselves spiritual but don't treat fellow humans with dignity." The essence of democracy and the ideals of independence are still buried somewhere inside us. Are we willing to ignite the spark that could turn India into the nation that the harbingers of independence dreamt of?

With that question, I bid adieu to all of you.

Jai Hind!

