



THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA: A STUDY OF ITS CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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Abstract

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861–1946) stands out as a luminous star in the history of modern Indian political thought and the national movement. He established a unique ideological paradigm by harmonising nationalism, cultural renaissance, education, and social reforms. This research paper comprehensively analyses Malaviya's political ideology and evaluates its contemporary relevance in 21st-century India. The study is structured around four primary objectives: first, to understand his foundational political ideology and the nature of his nationalism; second, to analyze his political and reformist vision, highlighting his contribution to shaping Indian political thought; third, to assess the impact and significance of his ideas on political and constitutional reforms during the British colonial era; and fourth, to formulate practical recommendations based on his ideology to address contemporary challenges in Indian politics, such as communalism, crisis of cultural identity, falling standards of education, and moral degradation. Malaviya's nationalism was not narrow or exclusionary; rather, it was culturally rich, inclusive, and dedicated to universal welfare. He institutionalised the motto 'Satyamev Jayate' (Truth Alone Triumphs) as the guiding principle of national life. Through the establishment of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 1916, he designed a framework that integrated modern science with eternal ethical values—a model that serves as a beacon for India's current National Education Policy. This study adopts a qualitative, historical, and analytical methodology, utilizing primary sources (Malaviya's speeches, writings, and Congress presidential addresses) alongside secondary sources. In conclusion, Malaviya's ideology was not merely confined to the freedom struggle; it remains deeply relevant today for building a just, ethical, and self-reliant Indian republic.



Keywords: Madan Mohan Malaviya, Political Ideology, Cultural Nationalism, Value-based Education, Contemporary Relevance, Indian Political Thought.

1. Introduction

The history of modern Indian political thought is not merely a blind imitation of Western concepts. Instead, it represents a continuous journey of rediscovering cultural roots against colonial subjugation to build a sovereign nation. Among the prominent pioneers of this journey, 'Mahamana' Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya occupies a leading position. Malaviya was an astute politician, a dedicated freedom fighter, an editor, an educationist, and a social reformer. He served as the President of the Indian Indian National Congress four times (1909, 1918, 1932, and 1933), which mirrors his massive political stature and nationwide acceptance.

Malaviya's era (the late 19th and early 20th century) was a period of intense ideological churning in Indian politics. While the Congress was balancing internal friction between the 'Moderates' and the 'Extremists', the British colonial government actively promoted communal polarisation through its 'Divide and Rule' policy. In such a complex environment, Malaviya adopted a centrist and harmonising approach. He firmly believed that political independence would remain incomplete and fragile unless the country revived its cultural identity, moral values, and indigenous educational framework.

This research paper explores and analyzes the multi-faceted political ideology of Mahamana. Today, as Indian politics encounters challenges like ideological vacuum, polarization, corruption, and institutional decay, Malaviya's principles gain renewed importance. This study evaluates his philosophy to find structured solutions to contemporary political and social challenges.

2. Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this research paper are as follows:

1. **Objective 1:** To comprehensively study the foundational political ideology of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and the philosophical roots of his nationalism.
2. **Objective 2:** To analyze Malaviya's political and reformist vision and its role in shaping modern Indian political thought.
3. **Objective 3:** To assess the significance and influence of Malaviya's political ideas on the political and constitutional reforms during the British era.
4. **Objective 4:** To formulate actionable recommendations based on Malaviya's political ideology for addressing contemporary challenges in Indian politics (such as communalism, educational decline, and moral erosion).

3. Research Methodology



This research primarily relies on a **Qualitative, Historical, and Analytical** methodology. To ensure objectivity and academic rigor, both primary and secondary sources have been extensively evaluated:

- **Primary Sources:** These include Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's presidential addresses at the Indian National Congress, his historic interventions and speeches in the Central Legislative Council, articles published in newspapers edited by him (such as *Abhyudaya*, *Maryada*, and *The Leader*), and his foundational policy statements regarding Banaras Hindu University.
- **Secondary Sources:** These consist of biographies, books by eminent scholars, research papers, articles from peer-reviewed national and international journals, and institutional publications by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

The collected data has undergone chronological and thematic analysis to demonstrate the current validity of Malaviya's philosophy.

4. The Political Ideology of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (Study of Ideology)

Malaviya's political ideology was not modeled after any single Western political school, such as Marxism or pure liberalism. His political philosophy drew sustenance from ancient Indian philosophy, the Advaita Vedanta principles of the Upanishads, and the universal welfare tenets of Sanatan Dharma. The core pillars of his political thought include:

4.1 Spiritual and Cultural Nationalism

Malaviya viewed nationalism not merely as a set of geographical boundaries, but as a deep spiritual and cultural sentiment. He was deeply influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's 'Vande Mataram' and Swami Vivekananda's call for a cultural renaissance. He believed that the soul of India resided in its Vedas, Upanishads, and rich civilizational heritage. He viewed the nation as a living organic entity endowed with a distinct collective consciousness (*Chiti*). His nationalism possessed two distinct features:

- **Idea of Integrity:** He was a staunch advocate for the geographical and cultural unity of India. The idea of partition was, to him, a profound civilizational tragedy.
- **Synthesis of Religion and Politics:** For Malaviya, 'Dharma' did not mean a narrow sectarian creed or religion; it meant 'duty' and 'righteousness' (morality). His famous dictum stated that when politics is divorced from morality (Dharma), it becomes a destructive force.

4.2 Faith in Constitutional and Democratic Methods

While Malaviya's cultural views appeared deeply anchored in tradition, his political methods were entirely modern and constitutional. Like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, he was a firm believer in the Rule of Law and the independence of the judiciary.

- He opposed the oppressive policies of the British government (such as the Rowlatt Act) but always chose rational, legislative, and constitutional avenues of protest.



- In the Central Legislative Council, he earned a formidable reputation as an eloquent parliamentarian who dismantled colonial arguments using irrefutable facts, statistics, and logical reasoning.

4.3 Swadeshi and Economic Nationalism

Long before Mahatma Gandhi's full-scale entry into Indian politics, Malaviya understood the critical role of Swadeshi. His economic nationalism aligned closely with Dadabhai Naoroji's 'Drain of Wealth' theory. He recognised that political freedom would remain hollow unless the nation attained economic self-reliance.

- He relentlessly demanded protectionist policies for Indian industries from the colonial government.
- He strongly supported the boycott of foreign clothes and championed the development of Khadi and cottage industries to strengthen the rural economy from the grassroots level.
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5. Malaviya's Political and Reformist Vision (Analysis of Reformist Vision)

Malaviya's greatest contribution to Indian political thought was his approach to looking at politics as an active tool for social and educational transformation. He sought a profound transformation of society rather than a mere transfer of political power.

5.1 Educational Vision: Synthesis of Knowledge and Character

Malaviya argued that the primary cause of India's degradation was the systematic destruction of its indigenous education system. Lord Macaulay's education policy had alienated Indians from their own cultural heritage. To counter this institutional challenge, he founded **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** in 1916. This institution was designed to be the living laboratory of his political and social philosophy.

- **Objective:** To create an educational framework that embraced modern Western science, engineering, and technology while preserving its core foundation in Indian culture, ancient texts, and ethical values.
- **Character Building:** According to Malaviya, "If education does not build character, it can become dangerous to society." He emphasised instilling patriotism, self-discipline, and a spirit of selfless public service in students.

5.2 Social Reforms and Eradication of Untouchability

Critics often mischaracterize Malaviya as a rigid conservative due to his affiliation with traditional Sanatan Dharma. However, his social outlook was progressive and deeply humanistic. He viewed caste discrimination and untouchability as severe stains on Hindu society.

- **Actions and Leadership:** He worked closely with Mahatma Gandhi through the 'All India Harijan Sevak Sangh'. He actively led movements for temple entry for Dalits, personally making efforts at the Kalaram Temple in Nashik and the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi.



- **Mantra Diksha:** Breaking rigid caste boundaries, Malaviya initiated marginalized and downtrodden sections of society with 'Mantra Diksha', asserting their equal spiritual and social rights. He maintained that as long as any section of society remained oppressed, the dream of an integrated India would remain unfulfilled.

5.3 Women Empowerment and Rights

Malaviya was an opponent of child marriage and a passionate advocate for women's education. He believed that educating a woman meant educating an entire family and, by extension, the nation. He established a dedicated college for women (Mahila Maha Vidyalaya) within BHU to ensure access to higher education in a safe environment.

6. Significance and Influence on Reforms (Impact on Constitutional Evolution)

Malaviya played an essential role in shaping the framework of political and constitutional reforms during the British colonial period. He leveraged statutory platforms to amplify the voice of Indian citizens against oppressive colonial laws.

6.1 Impact within the Legislative Councils

Malaviya joined the Provincial Legislative Council in 1902 and was elected to the Central Legislative Council in 1909. He delivered landmark interventions on the Indian budget, press freedom, and fundamental civil rights.

- **Opposition to the Rowlatt Act (1919):** When the British government introduced the Rowlatt Act to curb free speech, Malaviya spoke against it continuously for four and a half hours in the Central Legislative Council. This remains one of the longest and most impactful speeches in Indian parliamentary history. He eventually resigned from the council in protest.
- **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre Investigation:** Following the tragedy, Malaviya personally visited Punjab. He headed the non-governmental inquiry committee set up by the Congress, meticulously documented evidence to expose colonial brutality to the world, and established the 'Jallianwala Bagh Fund' to provide financial relief to grieving families.

6.2 Role in the Round Table Conferences

In 1931, Malaviya accompanied Mahatma Gandhi to London to attend the Second Round Table Conference as a representative of the Indian National Congress. There, he made a structured case for India's 'Dominion Status' and full self-governance. He strongly opposed the British strategy of creating separate electorates designed to institutionalize communal divisions between Hindus and minority communities.

6.3 Guardian of Press Freedom

Malaviya recognized that an independent press is a foundational prerequisite for democracy and nationalism. When the British administration enacted harsh press gagging acts, Malaviya fought them fiercely. By founding and editing highly influential newspapers like *The Leader* and *Abhyudaya*, he



established a robust foundation for independent journalism, which later inspired the inclusion of 'Freedom of Speech and Expression' (Article 19) in the Constitution of India.

7. Contemporary Challenges & Relevance of Malaviya's Ideology

While contemporary India is advancing rapidly as a technological and economic power, its domestic political and social landscapes face deep institutional challenges. The solution to these modern crises can be traced back to Malaviya's philosophy.

7.1 Communalism and Social Polarisation

- **The Challenge:** Today, electoral politics often relies on communal and caste-based polarization, deepening systemic distrust between different demographic communities.
- **Malaviya's Solution:** Though Malaviya was one of the founders of the Hindu Mahasabha, his understanding of Hinduism was deeply inclusive and liberal. He exemplified the principle of 'Sarva Dharma Samabhav' (Equal respect for all religions). In his 1922 Congress Presidential address, he stated:

"India is not a country of Hindus alone. It belongs to Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and Sikhs as well. The nation can progress only when all communities live in mutual harmony and unity."

Modern political setups require this exact brand of 'positive nationalism', where citizens can take pride in their cultural roots while maintaining deep respect for other faiths.

7.2 Commercialisation and Moral Decay in Education

- **The Challenge:** The current education system has largely shifted toward commercialization, transforming into a mechanism for distributing degrees and securing corporate placements. It frequently overlooks moral values, social responsibility, and national consciousness, leading to an increase in white-collar crimes among educated youth.
- **Malaviya's Solution:** The educational blueprint implemented at BHU directly aligns with the core principles of India's **National Education Policy (NEP 2020)**. Malaviya maintained that education must prioritize holistic character development over basic livelihood training. He advocated for a mandatory synthesis of modern sciences with ethical education, ensuring that scientific progress serves human welfare instead of destruction.

7.3 Criminalisation of Politics and Lack of Probity

- **The Challenge:** Money, muscle power, and unethical practices often dominate modern elections. The timeless Gandhian and Malaviyan focus on the 'Purity of Means' has been replaced by an obsession with winning at all costs.
- **Malaviya's Solution:** Malaviya maintained absolute transparency and impeccable ethical standards in his public life. He never compromised on his principles for personal gain or political office. Indian politics needs a return to the practical implementation of '*Satyamev Jayate*' that Mahamana exemplified throughout his life.



8. Formulating Recommendations

Based on Malaviya's ideological legacy and political philosophy, the following recommendations are proposed to reform contemporary Indian political, social, and educational frameworks:

1. Developing a Value-Based Political Culture

- **Recommendation:** Political parties must move away from evaluating candidates purely based on 'winnability' (financial and muscle power) and prioritize moral character, public service records, and unblemished integrity.
- **Implementation:** A strict statutory code of ethics must be enforced for elected representatives, with swift disciplinary action against undignified behavior inside Parliament and State Assemblies.

2. Infusing Ethical and National Values into the Education System

- **Recommendation:** Curriculums from primary to higher education tiers should integrate India's history, cultural diversity, and value-based education into practical learning models.
- **Implementation:** Professional and technical streams (such as Engineering, Medicine, and Law) should feature mandatory modules on professional ethics and social responsibility, replicating Malaviya's foundational model at BHU.

3. Executing Inclusive Social Harmony Initiatives

- **Recommendation:** To counter caste-centric and communal politics, the state and civil society must jointly launch structured social harmony campaigns.
- **Implementation:** Beyond economic welfare or reservations, marginalized communities (Dalits, tribal groups, and women) must be guaranteed full, dignified access to mainstream cultural, religious, and institutional spaces, mirroring Malaviya's historical 'Mantra Diksha' initiatives.

4. Implementing Decentralised and Self-Reliant Economic Policies

- **Recommendation:** National economic policies should protect domestic interest groups from the vulnerabilities of unchecked global capitalism by bolstering localized production systems.
- **Implementation:** Grassroots programs like 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' must be strengthened by providing financial credit and technological tools to rural cottage industries, small-scale enterprises, and traditional artisans to decentralize job creation.

5. Restoring Integrity to Mass Media and Journalism

- **Recommendation:** Drawing inspiration from Malaviya's journalistic career, mass media must move away from sensationalism and corporate-driven 'Paid News' ecosystems.
- **Implementation:** An independent, non-governmental regulatory framework should monitor media networks and social platforms to curb hate speech and manufactured narratives, ensuring a healthy public discourse.

9. Conclusion



Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is not merely a historical figure from India's past; he represents an enduring philosophy that transcends temporal boundaries. This study demonstrates that his political ideology was anchored in **cultural nationalism, moral purity, inclusive social reforms, and a harmonious synthesis of tradition and modernity**. He envisioned an India that leads the global community in science and technology while remaining anchored to its ethical and spiritual soul.

As 21st-century India positions itself as a global power, it must re-evaluate its political and social systems through Malaviya's philosophy to ensure sustainable internal strength. The resolutions to contemporary crises—be it the criminalization of politics, communal polarization, or declining educational ethics—do not lie in Western frameworks. Instead, they reside in the path of '*Satyamev Jayate*' and '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' (The World is One Family) championed by Mahamana.

The truest tribute to Malaviya lies in aligning our educational networks with character building, restoring clean governance to our political institutions, and empowering the most marginalized citizens both economically and culturally. Ultimately, Malaviya's life and philosophy continue to serve as a steady beacon of light, guiding the Indian Republic toward a just, equitable, and powerful future.

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