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# An International Journal of Ideas

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Third Concept aims at providing a platform where a meaningful exchange of ideas can take place among the people of the Third World. The attempt will be to communicate, debate and disseminate information, ideas and alternatives for the resolution of the common problems facing humankind. We welcome contributions from academics, journalists and even from those who may never have published anything before. The only requirement is a concern for and desire to understand and take the issue of our time. Contributions may be descriptive, analytical or theoretical. They may be in the form of original articles, reactions to previous contributions, or even a comment on a prevailing situation. All contributions, neatly typed in double space, may be addressed to:

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Designed by: Pt. Tejpal

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## Bharat Jodo Yatra

Traversing a distance of over 3, 800 km on foot covering over 12 states and two Union Territories of India along with weathering heatwaves, rain, and cold wave to spread the message of love, compassion, and brotherhood and focusing on people-centric issues, such as price rise, unemployment, widening gap between the rich and the poor, etc., is a remarkable endeavour on the part of Rahul Gandhi and his 150-co-travelers. Starting from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu on 7 September 2022 the Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY) culminated in Sri Nagar on 30 January 2023

The underlying issue for the launch of the BJY has been emphasized by Rahul Gandhi repeatedly in more than ten press conferences addressed by him from time to time during the course of the BJY. Being disallowed to speak in the Parliament on people-centric issues, non-coverage of the activities of Congress and other Opposition leaders by the pro-government corporate media, misuse of the constitutional bodies like the Enforcement Directorate, CBI, and Elections Commission. Income Tax Department, etc., against the Opposition parties, along with pressure on the judiciary, etc., were some of the prime reasons that led the former Congress president to directly connect with the people through this padayatra. During the entire course of his padayatra, Rahul Gandhi frequently emphasized that he had come to listen to people's problems or Jan Ki Baat relative to Prime Minister Modi's Man ki Baat.

The BJY evoked an overwhelming response among the masses who not only formed a part of the BJY but also greeted it by standing on both sides of the roads through which this padayatra passed. A massive horde of people welcoming the BJY at every entry and exit point not only took the organisers of the BJY by surprise but also belied the hopes of the BJP which was not so sanguine about the BJY's resounding success. A variety of slogans and songs, such as *Mile Kadam, Jude Vatan* (walk together, unite the country), *Mehengai Se Nata Todo, Mil Kar Bharat Jodo* (break ties with inflation, unite India), *Berozagari Ka Jaal Todo, Bharat Jodo* (break the web of unemployment, unite India), *Nafrat Chhodo, Bharat Jodo* (quit hate, unite the country) and *Samvidhan Bachao* (save the constitution) among others, were the hallmarks of this padayatra that stepped up the gusto of the co-travellers.

The overwhelming response of the people and the support extended by the civil society representing different hues epitomises the hopes and aspirations of those who were pining for their voices to be heard and the BJY provided that voice and this is what makes a padayatra a people's own movement. The ruling dispensation at the helm of the Centre led by the BJP has been jittery over the resounding response evoked by the BJY, and in order to hide its cembalo it indulged in spreading canards and fake news about Rahul Gandhi's attire and the goals of this padayatra to denigrate the image of Rahul Gandhi and the co-travellers. Nevertheless, all the ploys deployed by the BJP's propagandist machinery proved futile and exposed the hollowness of the BJP itself.

Launching of the BJY under the aegis of the Congress party can be said to have invoked a positive sentiment of unity, togetherness, solidarity, and partnership in direct contrast to the majoritarian divisiveness being perpetuated by the ruling dispensation at the helm. Apart from upping the personal image of Rahul Gandhi from a reluctant and part-time politician to a hard-working, active, and dedicated politician, the BJY may also prove instrumental in seeking to renew the credential of the Congress as a party of national unity, cohesion, and consolidation, which is dedicated to the uplift of the poor and downtrodden.

The BJY has proved instrumental in upping the image of Rahul Gandhi from that of a reluctant politician to that of a sagacious, agile, ready-to-listen leader who identifies himself with the people and is one of them. He is an upcoming statesman who is feeling the pulse of the people by being with them and listening passionately to their woes. Nevertheless, one Bharat Jodo Yatra is not enough to make Rahul Gandhi a seasoned statesman and he has to undertake more such padayatras, to be with the masses and be a part of them to reimagine a New India of people's hopes and aspirations.

— BK



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