

The Role of Social and Digital Media in National Security - Part - 1

By Uday Kumar Varma

Author is a former Secretary, Information and Broadcasting, GOI

In the ever-evolving theatre of modern warfare, social and digital media have emerged as powerful battlegrounds. Once primarily tools for communication and connection, platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are now critical instruments for shaping narratives, influencing public opinion, and even conducting operations that can alter the course of conflicts. The intersection of these digital tools with national security has created both unparalleled opportunities and complex challenges.

Social Media: The New Battleground

Take, for example, the recent Israel-Palestine conflict. The information space became a warzone, with conflicting narratives flooding social media. Posts with emotional appeals, doctored images, and half-truths were shared at lightning speed, swaying international opinion. For national security strategists, such episodes underscore the growing criticality of mastering this new domain while mitigating its potential for harm.

On the positive side, governments and organizations can harness these platforms to foster transparency, counter misinformation, and build resilience among citizens. Social media has proven invaluable during crises, allowing authorities to communicate real-time updates and instructions. For instance, during emergencies like natural disasters or terrorist attacks, digital platforms can be lifelines, ensuring that people remain informed and coordinated. Moreover, governments can use these channels to counter extremist narratives and mobilize international support. Ukraine's robust digital campaign against Russian aggression is a case in point, turning global opinion against its adversary and galvanizing tangible support.

But the risks are equally potent. Disinformation campaigns, cyber espionage, and polarization are among the most insidious threats. Algorithms often amplify sensational or divisive content, while bot armies and troll farms systematically distort public discourse. A stark example of such tactics can be seen in conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war, or Israel-Palestine confrontation, where both sides use digital propaganda to advance their objectives. Use of cyberattacks and fake narratives of one side have been met with the strategic dissemination of factual but emotionally charged content of the other side, illustrating how the digital battleground can be both a weapon and a shield.

Modern warfare now incorporates cyber operations designed to hack and leak sensitive information, creating chaos and mistrust. The proliferation of tools like deepfakes adds another layer of complexity, with hyper-realistic fake videos capable of tarnishing reputations or inciting unrest. Meanwhile, platforms unwittingly serve as open-source intelligence (OSINT) goldmines; for instance, civilians posting images of military equipment or troop movements inadvertently aid enemy intelligence efforts.

The uniqueness of the nature of modern media, thus, is its duality- on one hand as a tool for empowerment and on the other, as a weapon for manipulation. Governments, organizations, and non-state actors alike can utilize these platforms to engage in psychological operations, spread propaganda, and even coordinate logistical activities during crises. On the other hand, adversaries exploit the same platforms to launch disinformation campaigns, conduct cyber espionage, and manipulate public sentiment.

The Challenges of the Digital Era

The rapid evolution of social and digital media has introduced several challenges, particularly in the realm of national security.

1. Disinformation and Misinformation

Algorithms that prioritize engagement often amplify sensational content, inadvertently fuelling division and polarizing societies. This environment is ideal for adversarial actors—both state and non-state—to launch coordinated disinformation campaigns, targeting the fabric of democracies and eroding trust in institutions.

2. Cyber Espionage and Sabotage

The digital realm offers a low-cost, high-impact avenue for cyberattacks. Critical infrastructure, financial systems, and sensitive governmental information have become prime targets for espionage and sabotage. Cyberattacks can sow chaos, destabilize nations, and impair their ability to respond effectively to crises.

3. Deepfakes and Synthetic Media

The emergence of hyper-realistic fake videos and images, known as deepfakes, adds a new layer of complexity. These tools can tarnish reputations, incite violence, or undermine public trust in authentic information. Deepfakes have already been used to spread false narratives, posing significant risks to individuals and institutions alike.

4. Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT)

The ubiquity of smartphones and the tendency of civilians to share information online—ranging from images of military movements to personal details—has made OSINT a valuable tool for adversaries. Such unintentional contributions to intelligence gathering pose serious risks, particularly in conflict zones.

To be continued in next issue

Rare Metals: The Silent Weapons in the New Cold War

By Dr. Santhosh Mathew

The author is Associate Professor at Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies & Social Sciences, Pondicherry Central University

Rare metals have become the defining resource of the 21st century, fuelling everything from electric vehicles and renewable energy to advanced military technologies. Their importance rival's oil's impact in the last century, making them indispensable to modern economies and geopolitics. At the heart of this new resource race is China, which dominates the global supply chain, controlling over 60% of rare earth production and refining. Recent moves by Beijing, such as its ban on exports of key rare metals to the United States, underscore their use as strategic weapons in an escalating Cold War of technology and trade. This ban, which targets gallium and germanium—essential for semiconductors and defense equipment—signals China's intent to leverage its monopoly for geopolitical gain.

Such actions mirror Beijing's past use of rare earth restrictions during disputes with Japan and the broader global competition with the West. The implications are vast, reshaping alliances, supply chains, and the global balance of power.

The United States, heavily reliant on Chinese imports for its technological and defense industries, now scrambles to diversify its supply chains. Efforts to ramp up domestic mining, forge partnerships with allies like Australia and Japan, and invest in recycling technologies have gained momentum. The U.S. Inflation Reduction Act exemplifies this shift, encouraging local production of critical minerals to counter dependency on Beijing. Afghanistan emerges as a key player in this contest. With untapped mineral reserves estimated at over \$1 trillion, the country is often referred to as the "Saudi Arabia of lithium." After the U.S. withdrawal, China has moved swiftly to court the Taliban and secure access to these resources, further solidifying its rare metal dominance. Yet, Afghanistan's instability presents challenges to large-scale mining operations, leaving its future role in the global supply chain uncertain. The race for rare metals is not merely economic—it is deeply geopolitical. Control over these resources determines technological supremacy and the ability to lead in critical sectors like artificial intelligence, green energy, and defense. As China tightens its grip on the supply chain, the United States and its allies must grapple with the risk of being outmanoeuvred in the technological arms race.

However, the pursuit of rare metals is fraught with environmental and ethical challenges. Mining and refining these resources often result in significant ecological degradation, water contamination, and human rights abuses. In nations like the Democratic Republic of Congo, cobalt mining has been linked to child labour and exploitation, raising urgent questions about sustainability and equity. For India, the rare metal race offers both challenges and opportunities. While the country has limited rare earth reserves, it boasts significant monazite deposits that could be tapped for strategic minerals. Strengthening partnerships with resource-rich allies and investing in recycling technologies could bolster India's position in this global contest. As a member of the Quad, India has a vital role in countering China's dominance and ensuring supply chain resilience.

Rare metals are more than commodities—they are the silent drivers of the 21st-century economy, defining the contours of global power and progress. The escalating competition over these resources reflects a deeper struggle for technological and economic dominance. How the world navigates this rare metal race will shape not only the future of industry but also the very structure of international relations in the decades to come.

Israel Scrambles for Support to Counter ICC Arrest Warrants

By Vappala Balachandran

The author is Former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat

Contrary to the bravado displayed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his advisers on the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on November 21, there are indications that they were worried at that possibility even earlier, in April this year, and were trying to prevent it by enlisting other powers' support.

On April 19, 2024, The Times of Israel, quoting Channel 12, said that an "emergency discussion" was held at the Prime Minister's Office to decide how to "fend off" the potential warrants. The paper also said that Netanyahu had raised this possibility with visiting Britain Foreign Secretary David Cameron and Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and "sought their help".

The same paper said on April 28 that Netanyahu was "under unusual stress" over the prospect of an arrest warrant against him by the ICC "which would constitute a major deterioration in Israel's international status." Hence, steps were taken to give a "rare briefing on Shabbat" to the international media through Israeli Defence Force (IDF) spokesman Nadav Shoshani on the government's support to the American-sponsored temporary humanitarian pier off Gaza.

Their worry was heightened when another UN body, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), started hearing the genocide case against Israel, launched by South Africa on December 29, 2023. Two hearings in the case were held on January 11 and 12, 2024.

The ICJ, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN), was established in 1945 under the UN charter for adjudicating disputes between states and fixing responsibility of a state under international law after inquiring whether a state party to the case has breached it. It can issue "provisional measures" to preserve those rights until the case proceedings are completed. In this case, provisional orders to prevent and punish incitement to genocide and to allow relief materials were passed on January 26, 2024.

On July 19, 2024, the ICJ, in a different context, gave its advisory opinion that Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, along with the associated settlement regime, annexation and use of natural resources was unlawful. This was on a reference made by the UN General Assembly in 2022. The ICJ mandated Israel to end its occupation, dismantle its settlements, provide full reparations to Palestinian victims and facilitate the return of displaced people.

The ICC, established in 2002 by the "Rome Statute", is different from the ICJ as it seeks to establish individual criminal responsibility for serious international crimes. Through its prosecutor, who has the power to carry out investigations of crimes within the jurisdiction of the ICC, the court can issue arrest warrants for individuals.

Israel is in a bind as it had signed the Rome Statute on December 31, 2000, after considerable reluctance, although in the 1940s, the Jews were ardent supporters of such a court, having suffered under the Nazi regime. The procedure is that either the UN Security Council or any of the 124 member states of the Rome Statute can refer a situation to the court, asking the prosecutor to conduct a preliminary investigation. The prosecutor can also launch an investigation on his own initiative.

The court does not have a police force, but all states that have signed are obliged to comply with a requested arrest warrant. Hearings are conducted as a criminal trial, with prosecution and defence counsels before a tribunal of judges.

Israel complained to the ICC on October 5 that its prosecutor Karim Khan did not give it an opportunity to investigate "his allegations before seeking arrest warrants against its leaders, which was a fundamental principle of the ICC's founding charter."

According to it, the prosecutor should have, under Article 18 of the Rome Statute, provided "sufficiently specific information to the state under investigation about the crimes that they are investigating" to examine whether that country was willing to launch prosecutions against the errant individuals.

It alleged that Khan relied upon a 2018 notification sent to Israel about alleged crimes "relating to Israeli settlement policy and claims raised in previous hostilities in Gaza" and not on the Israeli operations consequent to the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and two US senators supported this, saying that Khan "rushed" to get the warrants "to politically target Israel."

As things stand, it is not clear what the signatories, especially from Europe of the Rome Statute, would do. America, Israel, Russia, China and India have not ratified the Rome Statute. President Joe Biden has said that America had rejected the ICC decision. Incoming Republican leader John Thune has urged the Senate to pass a Bill that was cleared by the House of Representatives, under which the US would impose sanctions on people "engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain or prosecute any protected person of the United States and its allies."

There are many imponderables here. While Britain, supported by EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, originally said that it would honour the treaty obligations, there are reports that France is reconsidering its earlier stand by Prime Minister Michel Barnier that the country was bound to abide by all treaties.

On November 27, Israeli newspaper Haaretz quoted the Quai d'Orsay (French foreign office) to reveal that Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant could be entitled to immunity from arrest warrants issued by the ICC. This was after the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire, helped by French President Emmanuel Macron.

At the same time, western powers led by America are apprehensive that any dilution of the ICC's powers might boomerang on the ongoing investigations against Argentina and Russia, which they want to pursue.

The Haaretz says that Netanyahu is waiting for the Trump administration to pull him out of this morass, along with another domestic scandal on the deliberate leak of an IDF intelligence document on the killing of hostages for 'swaying public opinion against a ceasefire with Hamas.' For this, Eli Feldstein, Netanyahu's close aide, was arrested on November 18. In the deeply polarised Israel, Netanyahu is worried whether Israeli prosecutors would also hold him responsible.

[Read complete article on website tribuneindia.com](https://tribuneindia.com)

Will Trump 2.0 Prove to be The Trump Card for India and The World

By Ashok Sajjanhar

The Author was the Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia, and has worked in diplomatic positions in Washington DC, Brussels, Moscow, Geneva, Tehran, Dhaka and Bangkok.

Curtains came down on more than a yearlong intense campaigning in the US Presidential election by Republicans and Democrats at the end of voting hours in Alaska, the western most state of the US, on November 5, 2024.

The contest was expected to have a nail-biting finish. It did not. It was thought that the final result might elude us for days and weeks if not months. It did not.

In fact, the direction of the final result became quite obvious a few hours after the counting commenced. Donald Trump registered a decisive and emphatic victory, even if it was not a landslide triumph. He became the first US President after more than a century to win a non-consecutive term. He also became the first Republican President after 2004 and only the second since 1988 to win more popular votes in the election than his adversary. He was able to achieve this by significantly enhancing his appeal to the electorate across the board. In addition to the white males without college degrees, who were the mainstay of his committed support base, Trump weaned away many voters from different demographics including the Latinos, the Blacks, and the Asian Americans including the Indian Americans who had voted for Joe Biden in 2020. With this added support he amassed more than 74 million votes with a total of 312 electoral votes.

As against these numbers, his opponent, the Democrat Kamala Harris was able to muster only 71 million votes with 226 electoral votes. What was particularly remarkable was that Trump romped home with a convincing win in all the seven battleground states with 93 electoral votes, out of which he had won only North Carolina (16 electoral votes) in 2020.

From the results it has become obvious that notwithstanding the yarn spun by the mainstream media of a close contest with a razor thin margin for either of the contestants, the issues raised by Trump of a declining economy, imperative need to stop inflow of illegal immigration, futility of US participation in conflicts around the world etc. resonated with the ordinary Americans. On the contrary, the issues raised by Kamala Harris of abortion and pro-choice versus pro-life, saving democracy, several ongoing cases against Trump etc. were not enough to tilt the balance in her favour. Not only was Trump able to enhance his appeal in the red and swing states, but he got a higher proportion of votes than in 2020 even from blue states like California, New York and other North-Eastern States.

In the historic election which has brought Trump once again to the White House, he has also managed to snatch the Senate from the Democrats and appears to continue the control that the Republicans enjoyed over the House of Representatives. With the Supreme Court packed 6-3 with the Conservative judges, 3 of whom were appointed by Trump in his earlier tenure, there will be very few checks and balances to stop Trump from doing what he wants to do. In any case, voting on ideological lines, the Supreme Court by a majority of 6-3 declared recently that the President enjoyed immunity and could not be charged for any actions undertaken in pursuit of his official functions.

The US election, like most national elections in large countries, was fought on domestic issues and not on foreign policy aspects. The outcome will however have far reaching consequences for the world at large.

There has been considerable anxiety and nervousness in several regions and capitals of the world about the impact that Trump's victory would have on those countries and regions.

One of the most critical among them is China against whom Trump has threatened that he will impose tariffs of 60 % on imports from that country. It is understood that China has been trying to Trump-proof its economy against any actions that Trump might decide to take. There is a precedence for this. In his last Term, Trump had levied penalty tariffs on about US\$300 billion imports from China. China had retaliated by levying tariffs on about US\$100 billion of imports from the US. The fallout of this tariff war, something like which could break out this time also if Trump were to follow up on his threats, was that China signed an Agreement with the US in January 2020 committing to buy additional goods worth US\$200 billion per annum from the US. The Agreement could not be implemented because the Covid-19 pandemic struck soon thereafter. China is particularly worried because its economy is suffering from many challenges including inadequate domestic consumption, demographic downturn, decline in real estate, hi-tech and education sectors etc. Sensing this possible flow of events, several global investors have already started pursuing the China+1 investment strategy. India could be a possible beneficiary under such a scenario. India was not able to take adequate advantage of such a development in the post Covid sequence of events. India will have to improve its game and make itself a more attractive investment destination as compared to some other competitors like Vietnam, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland etc.

It is expected that Trump could also double down on the Indo-Pacific and the QUAD. Both these concepts are his babies and he could try and progressively disengage the US from its involvement in Europe and the Middle East and devote much greater attention to the Indo-pacific to push back against the expansionist policies of China. The proposed appointment of top Congressman Tim Waltz as the next NSA and Senator Marco Rubio as the Secretary of State, both well-known and pronounced China hawks, could spell greater strategic discomfort for China.

Simultaneously both of them are known to be big supporters of even stronger and closer defence, economic and technological partnership between India and USA. They are also not isolationists as Trump is reported to be. It can hence be safely assumed that the US engagement with the World will be sustained.

NATO countries are also apprehensive of the attitude that Trump might adopt regarding support to Europe. His threat to withdraw from NATO during his first Term and also terming it as “brain dead” does not inspire confidence among member states about Trump’s solid support for NATO’s role to ensure security for Europe. It can however be reasonably expected that Trump will not take such a drastic step to abandon NATO but instead, insist that the member states meet the requirement of spending 2% or more of their GDP to bolster their defences. After the Russia-Ukraine conflict, 23 NATO member-states including Poland, Germany, UK etc. are already spending more than the minimum threshold. There will be an insistence on all others including the alliance partners in East Asia viz. Japan, ROK, Australia to reach this minimum threshold.

[Read complete article on website chanakyaforum.com](http://www.chanakyaforum.com)

Tulsi Gabbard: A Compelling Choice for National Intelligence Director

By Sardar Sanjay Matkar

The Author is an audacious adventurer, an avid student of history and global politics. He has authored ‘Showdown at Dabiq – Islamic State Vs. Armies of Rome in the 21st century.’

Amid a series of high-profile and somewhat controversial Cabinet selections, President-elect Donald Trump made another significant announcement, revealing his choice for national intelligence director: former U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard from Hawaii. This former U.S. Congresswoman and a decorated officer in the Hawaii Army National Guard, exemplifies a rare blend of military discipline, political acumen, and unflinching dedication to service. Her appointment as the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) brings a unique and refreshing perspective to the U.S. intelligence community.

Gabbard is known for her independent streak and willingness to challenge party lines as a former Democrat. Since the announcement, while critics have largely proclaimed her a national security threat, her supporters applaud her for her willingness to challenge the establishment and her strong stance on issues such as government transparency and foreign intervention.

The U.S. Director of National Intelligence serves as the principal advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council on intelligence matters related to national security. The DNI is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the activities of the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC), which is composed of 18 separate agencies, including the CIA, NSA, FBI, and others.

Gabbard has a spotless military career that is a testament to her commitment to protecting the American people. With two deployments in the war zones of Iraq as a medical operations specialist and subsequently as a Military Police officer, she is known and admired for her courage and battle skills by her colleagues in the military, for which she was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. She has personal insight into the complex realities of global conflict, Islamic terrorism, and the toll-of-war on non-combatants with widespread destruction and civilian deaths that far outnumber battle casualties in the war zone. This would be an invaluable perspective for any intelligence agency’s leader.

Civilian intelligence communities have to operate in tandem with the military forces. Gabbard's deep understanding of military strategy and operations would seem to seamlessly bridge the gap between the military and civilian intelligence operations. Understanding the politics behind the strategies is also a requirement for the job and responsibilities of the DNI.

During her tenure in the U.S. Congress, she focused on foreign affairs, homeland security, and veteran issues; the three areas that align closely with the responsibilities of the Director of National Intelligence. As a member of the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committees, Gabbard has honed her understanding of geopolitical dynamics, defence policies, and the inner workings of U.S. intelligence. Her bipartisan approach to governance and her willingness to challenge the status quo earned her respect across party lines, despite occasional controversies.

Her nuanced perspective on global conflict demonstrates an ability to think critically and strategically; qualities essential for the DNI, who must weigh complex intelligence to advise policymakers effectively. She has consistently emphasized the importance of focusing American resources on combating terrorism and securing the homeland rather than engaging in costly foreign interventions. Her proposed strategies reflect a deep understanding of intelligence priorities, including counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and counterintelligence. As the DNI, she would likely prioritize policies that strike a balance between national security and ethical considerations.

One of Gabbard's most defining traits is her willingness to stand firm in her beliefs, even when they diverge from the mainstream. This independence is particularly valuable in the intelligence sphere, where leaders must remain impartial and grounded, regardless of political pressures. As a DNI, she will often have to navigate politically charged environments, balancing the need for transparency with the imperative of national security. Gabbard's ability to remain steadfast under scrutiny suggests she could excel in this demanding role.

Gabbard, who is often mistakenly assumed to have Indian heritage due to her first name, has no ties to India. She made history as the first Hindu U.S. Congresswoman and took her congressional oath on the Bhagavad Gita. While she is of American-Samoan descent, she identifies strongly with her Hindu faith. It is assumed widely that her Hindu faith and personal connection to the Indian culture could hypothetically influence her political outlook towards India in several ways. Her background and previous actions suggest she may adopt a balanced, pragmatic approach rooted in mutual respect, shared values, and strategic interests.

As the first Hindu elected to the U.S. Congress, Tulsi Gabbard has often spoken about her respect for Hindu traditions and values, which could foster a deeper cultural connection to India, and might enhance people-to-people diplomacy and deepen ties in areas like education, cultural exchange, and tourism. During her time in Congress, Gabbard consistently supported strengthening U.S.-India relations, recognizing India's role as a friend of the U.S in Asia. She has emphasized the importance of partnerships based on shared values, such as democracy, counterterrorism, and respect for sovereignty.

It must be remembered by the Indian lawmakers that despite her cultural affinity for India, Gabbard's political approach is highly pragmatic. Her stance suggests she would prioritize U.S. interests while maintaining a fair and balanced perspective on India's domestic and international policies. While she might support India on strategic matters, she would definitely raise concerns over issues like human rights, religious freedom, or press freedom if they contradict U.S. policies or political decisions.

Gabbard has shown support for India's stance on terrorism, particularly regarding threats emanating from Pakistan-based groups. She recognizes India as a key partner in global counterterrorism efforts. She might work to strengthen intelligence sharing and defence cooperation between the U.S. and India to address common threats, such as terrorism and cyber warfare.

India's rapid technological advancements, particularly in info-tech and renewable energy, align with Gabbard's focus on innovation and sustainability. Her leadership might prioritize collaboration in these areas, boosting trade and investment between the two nations, which might lead to encouraging U.S. investment in India's tech sector and clean energy projects, and supporting India's aspirations for a greater role in global governance.

While it is potentially possible that Tulsi Gabbard's Hindu faith and connection to Indian culture might foster warmth and understanding toward India, there is no doubt that her pragmatic and independent political philosophy would likely prioritize U.S. strategic interests and at times be against the geo-political interests of India. She might champion stronger ties between the two democracies and would probably approach sensitive issues with a balanced approach, ensuring that the partnership remains rooted in respect for both nations' values and sovereignty.

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India is Proud of:

Dr Naperla Praveen of Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh

Protecting People & Plants: This Doctor Is Fighting Diseases & has planted 50,000 Trees



In Chittoor's rural areas, Dr Naperla Praveen is addressing healthcare issues like anaemia through free medical camps while also spearheading an environmental movement. By planting 50,000 trees, he's not just improving public health but also fostering a sustainable environment that benefits the entire community.

At 35, this doctor from Punganur, a small town in Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh, is not only defined by his medical expertise but by a relentless dedication to improving the lives of the underserved. His journey challenges us to rethink what it truly means to serve society.

Growing up, Dr Praveen was deeply influenced by the tireless dedication of his father, Dr Anand Rao, a retired government doctor and gynaecologist, who had always believed that healthcare should be a right, not a privilege. In 1994, Dr Anand Rao and his wife, Smt Sowbhagyavathi Garu founded the Rural Health Educational Society, an NGO with a mission to provide free healthcare services to the rural communities.

Inspired by his father's work, Dr Praveen chose the medical profession, but not with the intent of settling into a conventional practice. Instead, he was drawn to the idea of blending medicine with social service. As he completed his MBBS in China, he knew that his ultimate mission lay in rural India, in the very communities his parents had served for decades.

Nurturing nature, nurturing health

After completing his studies, Dr Praveen returned to India, where his connection with the NGO grew deeper.

Dr Praveen's involvement with the NGO wasn't just about providing treatment, he was determined to address the root causes of health problems that plagued rural communities. Anemia, for example, became one of his primary concerns, especially after a personal tragedy

He led several campaigns to raise awareness about anemia, especially among pregnant women and young girls. Through Rural Health Educational Society, he started distributing iron tablets, conducting blood tests, and teaching about hygiene, gradually reducing maternal deaths and improving the health of thousands in the region.

In 2008, driven by his mother's passion for environmental conservation, Dr Praveen established the Bhagyanand Botanical Society in the urban landscape. The organisation focuses on environmental awareness, sustainable practices, and the conservation of nature through Bhagyanand Botanical Society. Dr Praveen has championed several initiatives. His team has planted over 50,000 saplings, organised pollution awareness campaigns, and advocated for eco-friendly practices like the use of electric vehicles.

In rural communities, Dr Praveen treats a wide range of ailments, from simple infections to complex chronic diseases. He also leads public health initiatives to improve overall health outcomes. His work in anemia prevention, in particular, has saved countless lives.

While the 35-year-old doctor has touched many lives, the road hasn't been without its obstacles. The most significant challenge, especially in tribal areas, has been the lack of infrastructure, language barriers, and cultural differences. "Sometimes, it's difficult to communicate. Other times, people don't trust us because they're used to traditional practices. But we break through these barriers with patience, respect, and by showing results," he shares.

Initially, the greatest challenge in the tribal villages was reaching the people. "Gradually, I started building connections with local leaders, village presidents, and officials. I convinced them to support our awareness campaigns in their communities. We brought together teenage girls and pregnant women to educate them about anaemia, using photos and videos to help them better understand the issue. We made the campaigns as engaging and relatable as possible," says the doctor.

Dr Praveen's commitment to healthcare and social welfare has not gone unnoticed. In 2016, he was awarded the Ambedkar National Award in New Delhi for his contributions to rural health. More recently, in 2024, he received an appreciation letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his work in health and environmental conservation.

Beyond his medical work and NGO, Dr Praveen is also an accomplished writer. His books, particularly Maha Swathathryam, have made an impact in the literary world, with many of his works focusing on environmental issues

As Dr Praveen looks ahead, the road may be challenging, but his resolve is stronger than ever. And for those whose lives he touches, his legacy of service will continue to inspire for generations to come.

Write to us at:

bulletin@finsindia.org

**OFFICE :4, Belle View, Lakhamsi Nappu Road,
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