Development Strategies during PM Vajpayee for Indian Structural Development

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ABSTRACT

Since last year, 2022, India has been celebrating Amrit Kal. This is the seventy-fifth year of independence and marks the platinum jubilee celebration. In this context, it is high time to analyse the contributions of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who laid a strong foundation of capacity building and structural changes in the economy. He also made the economy widely open through trade networks and foreign exchange mobilization. The purpose of the present paper is to highlight important initiatives of Vajpayee during his two terms as PM and to make the UP state and the country a very strong one. In this paper, we have focused on infrastructural change, disinvestment, and fiscal prudence. The paper is based on secondary sources of data. The trend line has been estimated based on time series data for highways. The paper concludes that the origination of the National Highway Authority of India, disinvestment in sick PSUs, and fiscal prudence are core strategies that improved the Indian economy. Needless to say, UP and Uttarakhand jointly are the biggest states in the country.

Keywords: Disinvestment, fiscal prudence, NHAI, PM Vajpayee, policy reform, telecommunication.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian economy is celebrating Amrit Utsav at the end of 75 years of independence. During this period, there has been growth and transformation in the economy. Starting from the First Five Year Plan, 1951-56, the nation suffered from food crisis, hunger, and miseries. This plan focused on prioritizing agricultural sector growth. Suddenly, it was also realized that the economy needed capacity building for industrialization, especially heavy industrial growth. That is why during 1956-61, heavy industrialization was done with cotton textile industries, steel industries, and major dams. This growth process focused on MSMEs, employment augmentation, poverty reduction, food provisioning, and inclusive transformation continued in a long-term strategy of Indian planning. Before 1990, major economic reforms in Indian planning were direly felt. For these reasons, his major achievements were on the economic front. He carried forward the reformist measures initiated by earlier Prime Ministers. Later, when Dr. Manmohan Singh took over as Prime Minister after Vajpayee in 2004, the economy performed extraordinarily on the macroeconomic front in the sense that the GDP growth rate reached the 8% mark while the inflation remained well below 4%. The foreign exchange reserves shoot up to record levels. Although Vajpayee was not a trained economist, he used to involve institutions and experts in the planning process; the initiatives of Vajpayee on the economic front gave an image to his party, the BJP, as a right-wing party, focusing on the latest trends on economic policy matters focused upon higher capital investment and capacity building.

II. OBJECTIVES AND DATA

The purpose of the paper is to highlight the key efforts of PM Vajpayee on roadways, telecommunication infrastructure, privatization, and fiscal deficit management. The data pertains to secondary data available in various government reports of central agencies. The data confines to the Prime Ministry of AB Vajpayee. The secondary data is processed statistically.

Below are four key economic, infrastructural, and fiscal reforms of the Vajpayee Government as the prime minister:

1. Road Construction
2. Telecom Growth
3. Disinvestment and Privatization

His government introduced the Fiscal Responsibility Act. It focused on pulling down the fiscal deficit. It encouraged PSU savings. It increased savings from -0.8% of GDP in FY 2000 to 2.3% in FY 2005. In the following analysis, we elaborate on these four strategically taken initiatives.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In his biographical collection The State of the Nation (Vajpayee & Ghatate, 1996), Vajpayee, in his speech in the Parliament, commented on the issues concerning the economic crisis of the early 1990s while raising questions on the devaluation of the Indian Rupee in 1991 and mortgaging India’s Gold Reserves to foreign creditors. He questioned the manner in which these actions were undertaken and asked for an introspection and discussion in the Parliament. He repeatedly asked the government to explain the facts of why such a severe situation was created in the first place. He blamed contemporary policymakers for indiscriminate borrowings and indiscriminate spending. He raised a number of issues about the state of the economy during the early 1990s, which included the issue of black money, smuggling of gold, and under and over-invoicing of foreign trade transactions, and asked the government as to what it has done in these matters. Vajpayee (1999) in an address to the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) reiterated by mentioning the National Agenda for Governance, the common agenda of the newly formed coalition government, that the focus of the government would be to give people a stable, honest, transparent, and efficient government with an orientation to the all-round development of the country.

Palit (2012) listed among the key reforms that took place during the 2001-03 period under Vajpayee’s leadership were the introduction of the Value Added Tax (VAT), the enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, the privatization of state electricity distribution companies by establishing State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC). Sweeping reforms were undertaken to encourage Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), keeping in view India’s growing need for capital and technology.

Ahluwalia (2018) mentioned that despite the slow pace of decision-making, the government under Vajpayee opened the insurance sector to foreign investment by allowing foreign players to take up to 49% of the equity in a joint venture with an Indian Firm. The government, on the recommendations of the R. N. Malhotra Committee, established ‘The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority’ in 1999 as a Statutory body for overseeing various legal and regulatory issues in the insurance sector. Mishra (2018) noted that Vajpayee will also be remembered for initiating both large and small infrastructure projects, among which the ambitious highways development project connecting the four metro cities, New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai. In addition, his vision to connect all villages in the country with an all-weather Pucca road (Concrete or Charcoal) was an equally important project aimed at providing necessary infrastructure to rural areas. Sharma (2018) mentioned that his vision included Har Khet Ko Pani, Har Hath ko Kaam (every farm be irrigated and every hand has worked), and a firm focus on the issues relating to youths and farmers in constructive association with modern skills and technological knowledge under the slogan Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan (Hail the Youth, Hail the Farmers, Hail the Science). Kumari (2021) finds that the most notable initiative of the Vajpayee era was the Golden Quadrilateral plan to connect the major cities from North to South and from East to West. She mentions that some work of the project could be completed during his tenure; however, significant work was to be completed in the later years.

IV. MAJOR POLICY INITIATIVES

A. Road Construction

National highways are the lifeline of any nation's transportation infrastructure, providing crucial connectivity to urban and rural areas. India, with its rapidly growing economy, requires a robust and extensive network of highways to keep pace with the development. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, one of India's most renowned leaders, served as the Prime Minister of India from 1998 to 2004. During his tenure, he played a significant role in transforming India's road and transportation infrastructure. He inherited an economy that was struggling to keep pace with the rest of the world. The transportation sector, in particular, was in dire need of an overhaul. The country's road network was inadequate, and the existing infrastructure was in a state of despair. Vajpayee recognized the need to address these issues and launched several initiatives that would transform the transportation sector in India. He is known for his contribution to the country's infrastructure development and economic growth. During his tenure as Prime Minister, Vajpayee launched several initiatives aimed at improving the transportation and road infrastructure in the
country. Public-private partnerships (PPP) were encouraged, and various models were introduced to make investment in the sector more attractive. The government also established the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) in 2002 to oversee the development of highways in the country.

The major initiatives taken are:

1) **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)**

One of the most significant initiatives launched by Vajpayee was the *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana* (PMGSY) in 2000. The aim of this scheme was to connect all villages in the country with all-weather roads. The scheme was aimed to provide connectivity to remote areas of the country and help in the development of rural areas. Under this scheme, over 5 lakh km of roads have been constructed, and over 1 lakh habitations have been connected with all-weather roads.

2) **National Highways Development Project**

Vajpayee also initiated the National Highways Development Project (NHDP) in 1998. The aim of this project was to upgrade and widen the existing highways and construct new highways to connect major cities, ports, and industrial areas. The Golden Quadrilateral project, which was aimed to connect four major cities of India, was completed in 2006. The project covered a distance of 5,846 km and was completed in a record time of six years. The NHDP was divided into seven phases, and the government announced a target of constructing 7,000 km of highways every year. We observe from Table I that total length of National Highways increased to about 71,000 km by the end of 2010 and reached to 132500 in 2018-19.

3) **The Golden Quadrilateral**

One of the most significant initiatives launched by Vajpayee was the Golden Quadrilateral project. This project connected four metro cities of the economy- Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata - through highways. The project covered a distance of 5,846 km and was completed in a record time of six years. The Golden Quadrilateral not only improved connectivity between the major cities but also provided an impetus to economic growth in the regions it covered.

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<th>Per Year Change</th>
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Source: Ministry of Road, Transport, and Highway.

*Note.* # refers to the base year for calculating Y-o-Y growth for subsequent years.
The trend line in Fig. 1 reflects the fact that the performance of the government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee is linearity from 1998 to 2004, then during UPA governments between 2004 to 2014 lower performance on linearity pattern and then in the NDA-II government between 2014 to 2018 Highways development recovered its linearity and grew faster than previous governments.

The equation $y = 3755.6x + 27448$ indicates that the per year change of road construction is 3755.6 km. Before both the UPA and NDA, government roads and highway construction was 27448 km, which represents the intercept of the trend line mentioned above.

Table II shows the Government's Average growth rate of Highway construction. During the United Front governments, the average growth rate of 4.25% was recorded during 1996-1998; in the NDA-I period, it jumped to 9.69% between the period 1998-2004, while during UPA governments it decreased by one-third to 3.92% between 2004 and 2014 and in NDA-II it jumped again and doubled to 7.79% during 2014 to 2019. It means NDA governments are more serious about Highway development compared to the UPA government.

### B. Telecom Growth

The cellular telephone industry was made competitive by private investments, and private participation was also permitted in the Value-Added Services (VAS) sector. The National Telecommunications Policy (NTP), which was implemented in 1994 and changed the ownership, operation, and regulation of telecommunications infrastructure, was adopted during this time by the Narasimha Rao government. The strategy introduced the idea of universal access to telecommunications, and its goal was to extend telecommunication services to every Indian hamlet. This policy also included plans for the liberalization of basic telecom services. Additionally, they were successful in forming partnerships between foreign firms and state-owned telecom companies. 49% of the overall stake was open to foreign companies. The multinationals were only concerned with technology transfer; they were not involved in setting policies.

The international agencies IMF and World Bank opined to the Government of India for liberalizing the long-distance tele-services in order to end the monopolies of the state-owned DoT and VSNL so as to open the sector for competition in the long-distance carrier industry, which would help lower tariffs and improve the nation’s economy. Instead, the government led by Rao liberalized local services, gaining the trust of opposing political parties, and guaranteed foreign participation in the long-distance industry after 5 years. For basic phone service, the nation was split into 20 telecom circles, and mobile service was divided into 18 telecom circles. Depending on how much each circle’s revenue was worth, these circles were categorized as A, B, and C. The government came out with an open bidding system for one private operator per circle while also carrying the government-owned DoT in each circle. Two service providers were allowed to operate in the cellular service segment per circle, and each was issued a 15-year license.
The government encountered opposition from the ITI, DoT, MTNL, VSNL, and other labor unions during all of these improvements, but they were able to overcome every obstacle.

The NDA government under Vajpayee’s telecom policy, which was released in 1999, opened the door for structural reforms in the industry, resulting in a record-breaking increase in mobile subscribers, the entry of competitiveness into the wireless tele-services sector, and a set of deep-seated regulatory reforms, which were then furthered by an amendment in the TRAI Act, 1999. The new telecom policy of 1999 permitted businesses to offer mobile services on a revenue-share basis rather than requiring them to pay fixed costs. As a great economic reformer, he was always driven by the notion that liberalization would enable us to recognize our economic potential and, in the end, pave the road for our country to establish itself as a globally competitive, robust, and resilient economy.

The government established TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) in 1997, which decreased government intervention in setting prices and policies. In 1999, new political forces came into play, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s new administration encouraged reforms and improved liberalization measures. With an amendment to the TRAI Act 1997, the Vajpayee administration established the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal in 2000. The main reason for the creation of TDSAT was to enhance the regulatory framework by relieving TRAI of its duties related to adjudication and dispute resolution. The TDSAT settles any disagreements involving the licensor, licensee, service provider, and customers. Additionally, any TRAI directive, order, or decision may be contested by filing an appeal in TDSAT. On October 1, 2000, the government corporatized the DoT’s operations division, renaming it the Department of Telecommunication Services (DTS), which ultimately adopted the name Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL). The opposing political parties and socialist thinkers condemned the proposal to increase the foreign investors’ stake from 49% to 74%. Business organizations in the country urged the government to privatize VSNL. Ultimately, in April 2002, the government made the decision to reduce its ownership of VSNL from 53% to 26% and put it up for sale to private businesses. Finally, TATA acquired a 25% stake in VSNL.

This served as a point of entry for numerous international investors into the Indian telecom sector. From March 2000, the government relaxed its regulations and was more lenient when granting private operators licenses. The government increased the permissible ownership for foreign firms to 74% while significantly reducing the license fees for [cellular service providers]. All of these factors combined to lead the service fees to ultimately decrease and the call rates to significantly decrease, making cell phones affordable for a typical middle-class family in India. In India, close to 32 million mobile phones were sold. The data demonstrates the Indian mobile market’s true development potential. Numerous private operators have successfully entered the lucrative Indian telecom market, including Reliance Communications, Tata Indicom, Vodafone, Loop Mobile, Airtel, and Idea. Only 0.05 to 0.1 million new customers were added on a monthly basis in the first 5 to 6 years, bringing the total number of mobile users to 10.5 million in December 2002. The total number of mobile users, however, has expanded quickly to over 929 million customers as of May 2012, thanks to a number of proactive measures adopted by authorities and licensors. The country’s total number of mobile consumers stood at 375 million in March 2008, an increase of about 50% from the year before. Mobile network providers consequently banned the use of some 30 million mobile phones (or about 8% of all mobile connections) by April 30, 2009, since unbranded Chinese cell phones without International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) numbers constitute a severe security concern to the nation. Mobile operators cannot be contacted by phone without a valid IMEI. The last two decades have been regarded as the industry’s “golden age,” with rapid advancements in technology, market, and regulations. India has the world’s second-largest telecom subscriber base, which has expanded rapidly in recent years. Strong consumer demand combined with liberal and reformist policies have been crucial to the rapid expansion of the sector.

The market for telecom infrastructure in the form of communication tower establishment business has increased at an astounding rate of 65% during the past seven years. In 2021, there will be 660,000 mobile towers, up from 400,000 in 2014. Accordingly, the number of mobile base transceiver stations has climbed to 2.3 Million in 2021 from 800000 in 2014, an increase of 187%. From 44% in March 2014 to 58% in October 2022, rural tele-density increases.

Mobile phone exports have gone past $5 Billion in just seven months, with phone shipments more than doubling Y-o-Y in the period from April to October. This is more than twice the $2.2 Billion that India generated during the same period in 2017. By 2025, India is projected to have 920 million unique mobile consumers, of which 88 million will be 5G subscribers, making India the second-largest Smartphone market globally. This is according to the GSMA. Additionally, it is predicted that 5G technology will greatly expand India’s economy by $450 billion between 2023 and 2040. Over the past ten years, India has added nearly 500 million additional Smartphone users. By 2026, there will be 850 million Smartphone users or around 55% of the population.

According to its Annual Report, the Department of Telecommunications (2023) wants to have 30 lakh km of fiber-optic cable network installed, average broadband speeds of 25 Mbps, 100% broadband access
in rural areas, and 55% fiberization of mobile towers. Broadband connections increased by 1238% from 61 million in March 2014 to 816 million in September 2022. By December 2024, the DoT hopes to fiberize 70% of towers and provide an average internet speed of 50 MBPS and a rollout of 50 lakh kilometers of fiber optic cable across all of India. According to the Network Readiness Index 2022, India moves up six spots to occupy the 61st spot. Further, India ranks second in both “International Internet Bandwidth” and “Mobile Broadband Internet Traffic within the country.” India ranks third in both “Domestic Market Size” and “Annual Investment in Communications Services.”

By the end of January 2023, 5G services had been activated in 238 cities throughout all licensed service zones. India moves up 10 ranks in the global rankings for average mobile speeds, moving from 79th in December to 69th in January 2023. The most prominent among many reform initiatives taken in the telecom sector are listed in the Table-III:

| TABLE III: THE RECENT GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES RELATED TO THE TELECOM SECTOR |
| 1. Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface |
| 2. Bharat Net Project |
| 3. Mobile Number Portability |
| 4. Draft Telecommunication Bill 2022 |
| 5. Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Program to produce telecom and networking products. |

**Source:** Reports and Statistics, Department of Telecommunications, Gov.

C. Disinvestment and Privatization

The country chose a development path wherein the public sector served as the economic engine for the first 40 years following independence. The public sector, however, outgrew itself, and its flaws started to show in low capacity utilization and low efficiency of the sector due to over-manning, poor work ethics, overcapitalization due to significant time and cost overruns, a lack of innovation, an inability to make quick and timely decisions, significant interference in the decision-making process, etc. The private sector, on the other hand, began to show signs of growth. As a result, in 1991, the decision to pursue the Disinvestment strategy was made.

India began its transformation in 1991–1992 when 31 PSUs were chosen and sold for a combined sum of Rs.3038 Crores. G. V. Ramakrishna was the chairman of the Disinvestment Commission, which was set up in August 1996 to guide, supervise, monitor, and publicize the gradual disinvestment of Indian PSUs. It included 13 studies with recommendations for privatizing 57 PSUs. Dr. R.H. Patil later assumed control of this commission in July 2001. During their tenure, the Vajpayee government placed a greater emphasis on disinvestment. However, the Disinvestment Commission ceased to operate in May 2004.

The Ministry of Disinvestment was established in September 2001 after the Department of Disinvestment was established as a distinct department in December 1999 under the Vajpayee government. The Department of Disinvestment was added to the Ministry of Finance's departments in May 2004. Out of a total goal of Rs.54300 Crore that was to be reached through PSU disinvestment from 1991-92 to 2000-01, the government only succeeded in obtaining Rs.20078.62 Crore. (less than half). It is worth noting that the government only met its yearly goal three times out of ten. Over a projected sum of Rs. 3500 Crore, the PSU disinvestment proceeds in 1993-94 were zero.

Some of the key reasons for such low realization or no realization are as follows:

1) Volatile market conditions,
2) Private Players found the offer of sale unattractive,
3) The valuation process of PSEs became a matter of contention,
4) Sustained Policy Ambiguity,
5) Large-scale protests from Employees and Trade Unions,
6) Marred with the issue of transparency,
7) Missing or weak Political Will.

The disinvestment proceeds realized during this period came through the sale of minority stakes in the PSEs through the issuance of shares for sale to domestic and international investors. Even with well-known firms like IOC, BPCL, HPCL, GAIL, and VSNL, the value obtained by selling shares was low since the government held control. During this period, most of these minority stake offers were accepted by domestic financial institutions. One such major institution was the Unit Trust of India.


In Vajpayee’s government, the major disinvestments occurred during this period. These either took the form of strategic sales consisting of effective transfer of control of management to private investors or an offer of sale to the general public, while the government was to control the ownership. The PSEs that went through a strategic sale are listed in Table IV:
The valuations arrived by this technique exceeded the ones obtained through minority stake sales. The government could manage to raise Rs. 21163.68 crores from PSU disinvestment, against an overall target of Rs. 38500 crores during the period.


The issue of disinvestment became more politically conflicting during the UPA-I regime. It led to a virtual halt of the exercise during this period. Only Rs.8515.93 Crore in total were received from disinvestments in the five years from 2003-04 to 2008-09. The disinvestment proceeds, however, showed a much larger volume during the UPA-II government, amounting to Rs.84208 Crore during the four-year period from 2009-10 to 2012-13.

3) NDA Government (2013-2014 to 2022-2023)

A renewed focus on disinvestments was initially caused by a stable administration and better stock market circumstances. Minority holdings in listed and unlisted (profit-making) PSUs were sold by the government as the process's initial step. By making open offers during this time period, disinvestments were made in businesses like REC, NMDC, SJVN, EIL, CIL, MOIL, and NHPC Ltd. Also, compared to a target of Rs.175000 crore, final realizations fell to Rs.15440 crore (revised target: Rs.78000 crore in 2021-2022). The NDA administration has a lofty disinvestment goal of Rs.65000 crore. As a result, significant disinvestments are projected to occur between 2022 and 2023. A renewed focus on disinvestments was initially caused by a stable administration and better stock market circumstances. Minority holdings in listed and unlisted PSUs were sold by the government as the initial step. By open offers, disinvestments were made in businesses like REC, NMDC, SJVN, EIL, CIL, MOIL, and NHPC Ltd.

D. Fiscal Policy Reforms

The Ministry of Finance in 1989-1990 published the Economic Survey. It was the first official government document to highlight the phrase, which was defined there as "the excess of government expenditure and net lending over current revenues." The term "fiscal deficit" is now frequently used to describe the government's deficit budget. Economists and analysts keep a close eye on the phrase, which has been frequently used to describe the financial health of the country. The government also views this as one of the most significant statistics and, in addition to publishing it along with other budgetary data, computes the expected fiscal deficit when it presents its annual budget. It also offers guidance on what the anticipated level of the fiscal deficit would be in the upcoming years.

Large and ongoing fiscal deficits are generally considered detrimental to strong macroeconomic outcomes by policymakers and other decision-makers. Such deficits frequently discourage private investment, raise the risk of inflation, weaken the balance of payments (BoP), complicate financial sector reform, and place a debt burden on future generations. The fiscal deficit is one of the challenges India has faced since gaining independence. India's fiscal deficit averaged 6-7% during the 1990s, never dropping below 3%. The government attempted to address this issue, but it did not adopt any measures that would lower the fiscal deficit below 3%. The Vajpayee government took the initiative towards fiscal consolidation, and on August 26, 2003, the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBMA) was enacted by the Parliament of India. The Act became operational on July 5, 2004. The FRBM Act specifies goals and suggests strategies for reducing revenue and budgetary deficits. It proposed yearly targets to gradually reduce fiscal and revenue deficits in order to achieve the targeted debt-to-GDP ratio.
All of the government’s outstanding liabilities are referred to as debt, while the fiscal deficit refers to fresh borrowing during the year and the revenue shortfall to the extent that these fresh borrowings were used to cover revenue expenses. Savings in the public sector increased as a result, rising from -0.8% of GDP in FY 2000.

In this trend line, we can see that the trend line is falling downward. It gives us a clear picture that the fiscal deficit has decreased over a period of time. The significant and escalating fiscal deficits over the 1980s were the main cause of the economic disaster. India first experienced issues with its balance of payments in the middle of the 1980s, India's oil import bill increased, exports declined, ﬁnancing dried up, and investors withdrew their capital as a result of the Gulf War. Over time, large ﬁscal deﬁcits produced a cascading effect on the trade imbalance that resulted in an external payments crisis. At the end of the 1980s, India's economy was in dire straits. After introducing the LPG policy in 1991, it decreased the fiscal deﬁcit to some extent, but not much. So, in 1999, the Vajpayee government launched an initiative to address the issue of the fiscal deﬁcit and introduced the FRBM Act, which set a goal of 3% of the fiscal deﬁcit after being put into effect. It has resolved the deﬁcit issue, as seen by the graph, which shows that the deﬁcit began to visibly decline from 2004. Despite the fact that the budget deﬁcit increased during the ﬁnancial crisis of 2008, as seen in the graph, its share was smaller than it had been in previous years. The COVID-19 pandemic issue has reemerged, and the country’s economic deﬁcit, which is currently between 6-7% of GDP, remains beyond normal. Yet, since 2004, the FRBM strategy has had a substantial impact on decreasing the fiscal deﬁcit problem since we have used a normal period.

We can see from Table V that fiscal deﬁcit varies during the periods corresponding to different governments. During the 1980-89 period, the fiscal deﬁcit was on average 6.5%. After implementing the LPG policy in 1991, some reduction was seen, but after implementing the FRBM Act, we can see a high decline in the fiscal deﬁcit during the 2004 to 2021 period. In the period 2004 to 2014, the fiscal deﬁcit was at around 4.6%, and between the 2014 to 2022 period, it was, on average, at 4.8% of GDP. Thus, Table V shows how FRBM plays an important role in reducing the deﬁcit while still attempting to meet the 3% target.

In the social sector, Vajpayee has taken many initiatives for the advancement of women (see Verma & Singh, 2023, for further details).

V. CONCLUSION

Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s contributions to the development of India’s transportation sector are remarkable. His vision and commitment to improving the country’s infrastructure have left an indelible mark on the country’s growth story. The initiatives he launched have transformed India’s surface road network, improved connectivity, created job opportunities, and boosted economic growth.
Secondly, his legacy continued and motivated future generations of administration to work towards a better and more prosperous economy through disinvestment and controlling fiscal deficit. Large-scale structural and procedural reforms were implemented in 2021 with the goal of improving liquidity and reducing financial stress in the telecom sector. From 1980 to 89, the fiscal deficit was, on average, 6.5% during this period of time. After implementing liberal, privatization, and globalization policies in 1991, some decrements were seen in the period, but after implementing the FRBM Act, we can see a high decline in the fiscal deficit in the period 2004 to 2021. In the period 2004 to 2014, the fiscal deficit was at around 4.59%, and in the 2014 to 2022 period, it was at 4.82. FRBM played an important role in reducing the fiscal deficit while still attempting to meet the 4% target. The current year budget 2023-24 put a fiscal deficit of 5.9%, which is very high and hence needs disciplinary measures (Verma & Singh, 2023). The post-Vajpayee period also followed his path of highway extension, connectivity extension, fiscal deficit management, and disinvestment.

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