



Problems and prospects of Indian Democracy - A study

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Abstract

India is the largest democracy in the world. In the last more than 6 decades it has worked successfully well to some extent. But in modern India it has to face many challenges that need to be tackled in order to ensure true democracy. India is the world's largest democracy, with a vibrant electoral system, a written constitution, and institutions meant to uphold democratic ideals. Since independence in 1947, India has held regular elections, maintained civilian supremacy over the military, and upheld the rule of law. However, like all democracies, it faces significant challenges that test its resilience and strength. These challenges may include: social and economic inequalities, poverty and unemployment, illiteracy and ignorance, casteism, communalism, population explosion, regionalism, corruption and terrorism, etc. India needs to develop new proposals to reform democracy. Law plays important role in political reformation and may help to prevent wrong practices and encourage good ones. But mere legal changes alone do not help as the changes in laws may sometimes prove counterproductive and may result into negative impact on society. Therefore, the best laws empower people to carry out democratic reforms. The Right to Information Act is the best example that serves as a watchdog against abuse of democratic principles. The challenges to the democracy may be tackled by way of movements of activist or by the politically conscious citizens. Some of the measures that can be taken to sustain a true parliamentary democracy in India include: achieving 100% literacy; educating the masses about democratic rights; ensuring better protection of fundamental rights, and to ensure freedom of press, etc.

Keywords: Democracy, Corruption, Poverty, Problems, Prospects

Introduction

Democracy means rule by the people to ensure that every citizen takes part in the decision-making process either directly or indirectly through elected representatives. India is the largest democracy in the world. In the last more than 6 decades it has worked successfully well to some extent. But in modern India, it has to face many challenges that need to be tackled in order to ensure true democracy. These challenges may include: overpopulation, poverty and the huge gap between rich and the poor, proper sanitation, corruption, illiteracy and right to educational, violence communal, religious, etc., terrorism, naxalism, caste related violence, law and order, economic reforms, good governance, voter turnout, relationship with neighboring countries, diplomatic issues, protection of human rights, women's and children rights and right to developments implementation of various welfare schemes, protection of freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution of India, environment protection, apathy of media, frequent dharma's, strikes, walkouts, non-cooperative movements, etc. India needs to develop new legal, political and social proposals to reform democracy. Law plays important role in political reformation and may help to prevent wrong practices and encourage good ones. But mere legal changes alone do not help as the changes in laws may sometimes prove counterproductive and may result into negative impact on society. Therefore, besides good laws, the political ruling and the opposition must work in with a true parliamentary spirit toward meeting these challenges and hence restoring the true democracy in India. To ensure this Right to Information Active, is the best example that serves as a watchdog against abuse of democratic principles by the politicians and the beaurocrats. In this paper, the author has attempted to study and analyze the existing democratic

setup in India and suggest necessary reforms in order to ensure and sustainable democracy in India.

Structure of Parliament and Its Position in Indian Polity

The basic premise of true democracy is that every individual irrespective of his caste, creed, color or sex and irrespective of the level of the educational, economic or professional backgrounds is capable of governing himself and managing his affairs, the way he deems fir. In a democracy the people are their own masters. But in the modern world of today, direct ruling of country by people by themselves is impossible due to population explosion.

In ancient Greek City-States and also during the Vedic period in India, the people themselves used to assemble together to decide the issues of governance.vi But due to population rise, this system almost got extinct except in a few Swiss Cantons where issues could still be decided by the people at large through vote. But in modern parliamentary system people rule the nation through their elected representatives.

Political Parties and their Roles in India

In Indian political history, for almost sixty years it had been led by the Indian National Congress (INC) party. The other major opposing party to the congress was and is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Besides these two, there are also some regional parties which represent their own states. Then after some years came the era of coalition parties, where in the case if any one party did not enjoy the full majority in the elections would take the support of the other parties to form the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The most important problem in Indian politics is that at least more than a fifth of parliament members face some criminal charges and around 40 of them are accused with serious

criminal charges. In Indian political setup, there are several parties at national as well as regional levels. Each party however small is playing its own role of looking after the welfare of either themselves or the people that they represent. For example, the way the present companying of the coming general election of blame games between some of the parties is going on.

Reasons Behind the Changing Forms of Indian Democracy

Historical Context: India's democratic forms have been influenced by its historical experiences, including centuries of indigenous democratic traditions, colonial rule, and the struggle for independence. The colonial legacy, in particular, shaped the structure of governance and the contours of democratic institutions.

Socio-economic Transformation: India's transition from a predominantly agrarian society to a modern industrial economy has had profound implications for its democratic system. Economic reforms, initiated in the 1990s, led to liberalization, privatization, and globalization, altering the relationship between the state, market, and society.

Technological Advancements: The advent of technology, especially the internet and social media, has transformed the way politics is conducted in India. Digital platforms have enabled greater political participation, information dissemination, and mobilization, reshaping the dynamics of electoral campaigns and public discourse.

Regional and Identity Politics: India's linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity has fuelled the rise of regional and identity-based political movements. Regional parties have gained prominence, advocating for the interests of specific linguistic or ethnic groups and challenging the dominance of national parties.

Globalization and International Relations: India's integration into the global economy and its growing role on the world stage has impacted its democratic forms. International norms, institutions, and partnerships have influenced policy-making, governance practices, and human rights discourse within the country.

Issues in India

Overpopulation: Indian population has reached up to an estimated 1.27 billion. This is one of the greatest challenges that have hindered the possible progress of our country to some extent. Government of India which is already facing challenges from various angles has failed to control the population growth.

Poverty: Though India is approaching towards becoming an economic super power, it has an equally great challenge towards tackling the poverty. According to the World Bank's estimates on poverty based on 2005 data, India has 456 million people, i.e., 41.6% of its population, living below the new international poverty line of \$1.25 (PPP) per day. The World Bank further estimates that 33% of the global poor now reside in India. Moreover, India also has 828 million people, or 75.6% of the population living below \$2 a day, compared to 72.2% for Sub-Saharan Africa. The major reason for poor population in India is due to its

uneven distribution of wealth with 10% of income groups earning 33% of the income.

Corruption: Corruption is widespread in India. India is ranked 95 out of 179 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, but its score has improved consistently from 2.7 in 2002 to 3.1 in 2011. In India, corruption takes the form of bribes, tax evasion, exchange controls, embezzlement, etc. Right to information Act, 2005 has played a major role in unearthing various scams which are politically motivated. Corruption is one of the main causes that hinder the progress of a nation.

Education: Education has remained one of the priorities of the Indian government since independence. Though many initiatives have been taken up by the Government of India to ensure maximum literacy in India, but still, education continues to persist as an impediment to development.

Democracy in India: Its Problems and Prospects

Soon after attaining independence, India gave herself a Constitution and became a Democratic Republic on 26th January, 1950 and has since been governed by this Constitution. This was indeed a commendable achievement, more particularly when one looks at some of the countries in our neighborhood and even around the world. For it established a system of governance, a sound legal system and a fairly sound basis for a democratic socialistic society when elections were held regularly and the popular mandate was respected. Thus, we may say that the democratic system has been established as accepted as an indispensable part of Indian political life; yet we have to recognize that in practice, there have been serious shortcomings and these will have to be addressed sooner or rather than later. Democracy is not a modern phenomenon; it was practiced with some measure of success in ancient Athens and in ancient India; also, they laid down some of the fundamental principles of a democratic society which will be very relevant to us even in modern times.

Though India claims to be one of the biggest democracies in the world, but in reality, there are various challenges that are responsible for creating hindrance in the true functioning of democratic republic of India. The lack of awareness of true values of democracy amongst the Indian Citizens is also another because which prejudices the minds of the people towards exercising their participation in the formation and functioning of the Government. Further, that most of the politician's venture into politics with a sole motive of maximization of their personal wealth by whatever means they can know very well that someday they may be prosecuted for their acts for example, ministers involved in scams such as 2G Spectrum, Common Wealth Games, Coal Block allocation, etc. This shows that these political leaders make many promises during their election campaigns but fail to exercise their duties in true parliamentary spirit. Political parties make all the efforts to mould public opinion for their personal gains. Recently, we are witnessing a practice called the opinion polls or exit-polls. These practices do not have any scientific basis as they as some of the news items associated with it are paid news. However, exit-polls often tend to cause a prejudicial impact on the voters' mindset and hence end up in electing a wrong leader. The electorate should be imparted with the knowledge of political consciousness. They should be made fully aware of

their rights and privileges through organizing programmes such as conferences, seminars, workshops, symposia's, etc.

The illiterate masses of India should be providing proper education so that they can sensibly vote for the right leaders. The USA, Britain, Germany and Japan are successful democratic countries and gave progressed in every sphere because the masses are literate.

The politicians should also respect the true spirit of democracy by playing their crucial role not as a master but as servant of the represented. They should refrain from corruption caste and communal politics.

Legislatures and Judiciary should keep track of what is going on around the world as far as some of the sensitive human rights related issues are concerned such as same sex marriages, abolition of death penalties, etc. and try to keep pace with the changing world around us.

Conclusion

Finally, it can be concluded that it is very sad that our democracy after 66 years of independence has given us some illiterate and corrupt ministers who are ready to do any kind of scams for their welfare. Our Autonomous agencies like CBI, Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments, are seem to be paper tigers in dealing with these scams and are unfortunately acting only on the guidelines of corrupted ministers. Some politicians have also tried to divide our country on religious grounds only to full their vote banks which have gave rise to various communal violence. These and many more activities have caused the Indian democracy to loose its respect in the world. However, at the same we must be also fortunate enough to live in a democratic country like India because it is only democracy that can provide us equal rights and duties. Thanks to the Constituent Assembly. It is equally true that Indian is the only country in the world where people are united together in spite of the fact that we belong to many religious, cultural and traditional backgrounds. So, finally I can be said that that no government or country is perfect. There is nothing wrong in the Indian Constitutional Law, in fact it is the responsibility of citizens to make efforts to actively participate in the functioning of the government and make their country perfect.

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