

SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY.

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Abstract

The Indian democracy, which is the largest democracy in the world, is a tribute to the tenacity and vitality of democratic principles in a nation that is both diversified and diverse in population. India has maintained a democratic framework ever since it gained its independence in 1947. This framework is defined by regular elections, a robust multiparty system, and a constitution that guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to its population. The capacity of Indian democracy to tolerate a wide range of racial, linguistic, religious, and cultural differences while simultaneously supporting inclusive growth and development is the primary reason for its relevance. A federal framework, an independent judiciary, a free press, and active civil society groups are some of the key components of Indian democracy. The devolution of authority through the federal system is another important component. These components are important contributors to the system of checks and balances that is necessary for the operation of a well functioning democracy. Furthermore, the democratic experience of India offers great lessons in the management of plurality, the promotion of social justice, and the guaranteeing of participatory government. In the course of its development, democracy in India has not been devoid of complications. The roots of the organization are still being put to the test by problems such as corruption, socioeconomic inequities, and geographical discrepancies. On the other hand, the dynamic nature of Indian democracy is shown by the continuous efforts to resolve these difficulties through reforms and public involvement. To summarize, the relevance of Indian democracy can be seen in its ability to change and adapt to changing socio-political environments, its ability to remain committed to democratic values despite the presence of diversity, and its position as a model for democratic government in the developing world.

Keywords: Indian, Democracy

Introduction

The Indian democracy, which is often regarded as the largest democracy in the world, is a unique illustration of a nation's dedication to democratic values in the midst of extremely diverse populations. A democratic system that is defined by frequent elections, a robust multiparty framework, and a constitution that enshrines fundamental rights and freedoms for its inhabitants has been developed and maintained in India ever since the country gained its independence from British colonial authority in 1947. By outlining the democratic framework and the rule of law, the constitution of India, which was established in 1950, serves as the basis for the democracy that exists in the country. It also ensures that all persons are guaranteed their rights and liberties. The federal system of governance in India allows for localized administration and improved representation of a wide range of regional interests. This is made possible by the distribution of authority between the central government and the government of the several states. The election process in India is an essential component of the country's democratic system. It involves the participation of millions of voters over large geographical and cultural landscapes. Elections carried out on a regular basis, both at

the national and state levels, guarantee that the government will continue to be responsible to the people. The electoral system, which is defined by its complexity and inclusiveness, makes it possible for a large number of political parties to participate. This reflects the rich tapestry of political beliefs and regional ambitions that exist inside the country. Keeping the constitution intact and upholding the preservation of individual rights are the primary responsibilities of India's judiciary, which acts independently. For the purpose of holding the government responsible and fostering transparency, the presence of a free press and an engaged civil society are both extremely important factors. With their combined efforts, these institutions provide a contribution to the system of checks and balances that is essential to the operation of a flourishing democracy. In spite of its achievements, the democratic system in India is confronted with a number of obstacles, such as gaps in socioeconomic status, geographical inequities, and corruption. On the other hand, the dynamic and adaptable nature of Indian democracy is shown by the tenacity of its democratic institutions and the continuous efforts to resolve these concerns.

Taking this into consideration, the relevance of democracy in India extends beyond the borders of the country. It provides instructive lessons in the management of plurality, the promotion of social justice, and the encouragement of participatory government, and it serves as an illuminating model for democratic governance in the developing world. It is a captivating tale of optimism, perseverance, and the lasting strength of democratic values that India's democratic path continues to be a compelling narrative even as India continues to change. There have been key turning points along the path of Indian democracy's historical journey, which have contributed to the formation of its current form. After the country gained its independence, the leaders of India, including prominent individuals such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, established the foundation for a democratic republical government. In order to ensure that the Constitution was able to accommodate India's great cultural and socioeconomic variety while also building a system of government that aimed to be inclusive and just, the process of drafting the Constitution was a tremendous undertaking. The Indian democracy is distinguished by its dedication to secularism, which is one of its most remarkable characteristics. According to the Constitution of India, India is a secular state, which means that the government does not give preference to any one religion and treats all of its inhabitants in the same manner, regardless of the religious views with which they identify. In a nation that is home to a diverse range of religious sects, this idea has proven to be an indispensable tool for preserving unity. Another essential component of India's democratic system is the country's electoral process. The Election Commission of India is an independent constitutional institution that is responsible for monitoring the conduct of elections and ensuring that they are conducted in a fair and free manner. The regularity and magnitude of elections in India are unique, with general elections frequently involving more than 900 million individuals who are eligible to vote. This vast election activity highlights the participatory aspect of Indian democracy as well as the importance that it places on the right of the people to express their sovereignty. It is possible for India's states to have a large amount of autonomy because to the federal form of government that the country employs. This decentralization makes it possible to have government that is more responsive and localized, which in turn helps states to handle the specific demands and issues that they face. This system also encourages variety in governing methods and policies, which is representative of the many socio-economic landscapes that exist across the country.

It is widely acknowledged that India's judiciary, which is renowned for its autonomy, plays a significant part in preserving the Constitution and defending the rights of citizens. As a result of landmark decisions,

such as the Kesavananda Bharati case, which established the theory of the basic structure of the Constitution, the role of the judiciary as a protector of democracy has been strengthened. In India, a press that is both free and active serves as a watchdog, responsible for providing openness and accountability to the governance system. In spite of the difficulties it faces, the media continues to contribute significantly to the process of informing the general public and promoting conversation on important matters. Organizations that are part of India's civil society are also important contributions to the country's democratic system. In the course of their advocacy, social work, and community development activities, these organizations frequently address gaps in the services provided by the government and advocate for the rights of underprivileged populations. On the other hand, the democratic system in India is not without of difficulties. Public faith in governmental institutions is being undermined by the chronic problem of corruption, which continues to exist. There is still a considerable portion of the population that does not have access to fundamental services and opportunities, which contributes to the continuation of socioeconomic disparities. The problem of achieving equal growth and integration over the entirety of the nation is further complicated by the existence of regional differences in development. Furthermore, the political scene in India is marked by tremendous competitiveness and, at times, hyperbole that divides people. In certain instances, identity politics, which are focused on religion, caste, and regional ties, have the potential to eclipse government that is based on policies. In spite of this, the democratic system has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for resilience, with sturdy institutions and an active electorate that are persistently working to resolve these constraints.

History of Democracy

India has a long and complicated history of democracy, stretching back to ancient times when councils of elders were responsible for decision-making in many kingdoms and republics. There are many different republics and kingdoms in India. However, the beginning of contemporary democracy in India may be traced back to 1947, when the country gained its independence from British administration. At the time of its adoption in 1950, the Constitution of India created a democratic government that was characterized by a federal framework and a parliamentary system. Over sixty percent of eligible voters participated in India's first general election, which took place in the years 1951 and 1952. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the leader of the Indian National Congress, was successful in gaining a majority and forming the government.

Democratic System

The ideals of federalism, parliamentary democracy, and a multi-party system are the foundations upon which India's democratic system is built. In this nation, there is a Constitution that outlines the structure that governs the running of the government as well as the division of powers between the central government and the state governments. There are three branches that make up the central government of India. These branches include the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. The Lok Sabha, which is the lower house of parliament, and the Rajya Sabha, which is the upper house of parliament, jointly constitute the legislative arm of the government. These two houses are accountable for the creation of legislation and the monitoring of the operation of the government. The Prime Minister is the leader of the executive branch, which is responsible for putting into effect the laws that have been established by the legislative. The Prime Minister is helped in this implementation by a council of ministers.

The Supreme Court, high courts, and subordinate courts are the three branches of the judicial system. These courts are accountable for interpreting the Constitution and ensuring that the law is followed legally.

The origins of Indian democracy

The "transition" to democracy that took place in India during the 1940s is little explored and should be subjected to more inquiry. Historians have frequently delegated the responsibility of addressing such problems to political scientists, who frequently do not have a care for the "past," which is predominantly the purview of historians. One argument in the relevant literature claims that India's democracy is primarily a legacy of British colonialism (for example, Weiner 1989). This argument is based on what little research has been done on the topic. When this argument is presented, it instantly raises the question of why democracy has not been as successful in a great number of other countries that were formerly British colonies, including Pakistan. Despite this, the issue is a serious one that deserves some study, particularly due to the fact that the effects of British colonialism were different in each of its colonies for different reasons. A relatively centralized state, including a well-functioning civil service; early introduction of elections; and socialization of the highest political elite in values of liberal democracy are some of the political characteristics that India inherited from British rule. It is possible to argue that these characteristics are significant for India's future democratic evolution. Other academics, in contrast to those who place a greater focus on the legacy of colonialism, place a greater emphasis on the role that the Indian nationalist elite and nationalist movements played in the emergence of democracy in India. It is possible that such an approach would place greater emphasis on the socioeconomic foundations of nationalist movements or on the political qualities of these same movements. For instance, Barrington Moore (1966) regarded the nationalist movement in India as a "bourgeois revolution" of sorts that contributed to the paving of the way for democracy. This hypothesis, which is influenced by Marxism, also needs to be investigated further, particularly because it has the potential to shed light on the similarities and differences between India and Pakistan. After all, the Muslim League, which was the driving force behind the movement for Pakistan during the first half of the twentieth century, was led by landed aristocrats who frequently struggled to garner support from everyday people. An argument that is more political in nature might very well center on the significant role that nationalists played in the formation of a "nation" in India, or it could also center on the implementation of inclusive democracy within the nationalist movement. The remaining article in this book, which was written by Sumit Sarkar, makes a contribution to the ongoing discussion over the various roles that indigenous Indian nationalists and British colonialism played in the development of Indian democracy. Sarkar places great emphasis on the role that Indians played in developing their own brand of democracy, particularly the combination of full adult franchise, secularism, and federalism. This is despite the fact that he acknowledges that the British had a role in development of democracy. The British may have been responsible for the introduction of electoral politics, but they also fought against the suffrage of the majority of adults. In the end, Indian nationalist leaders who collaborated closely with politically engaged Indian masses were the ones who were successful in pushing for adult franchise. Due to the diverse nature of India, the process of constructing a unified nationalist movement necessitated the development of concepts of "unity in diversity" by Indian leaders. These concepts ultimately resulted in the establishment of a federal structure, which was considerably different from the one that the British had envisioned. In addition, the same variety, particularly the Hindu-Muslim division that existed on the subcontinent, compelled nationalist leaders to work against the divide-and-rule policies that were prevalent during the colonial era. They did this by developing a pragmatic, political secularism that provided proportional

treatment to the many religious populations. Sarkar advances a second significant concept, which is that Indians were not of the same mentality.

This is in addition to the fact that he emphasizes the indigenous origins of Indian democracy. He examines two main political inclinations by observing both long-term political trends that occurred over the first half of the twentieth century and evaluating the more sceptical political discussions that occurred prior to the establishment of the Indian constitution in the 1940s. One thing that he observes is that there were certain Indian leaders who campaigned simultaneously for full adult franchise, true political equality for a range of religious sects, and genuine federalism with some degree of power devolution. A muddled form of this viewpoint prevailed at the time of the establishment of the independent Indian republic. This was the political position of genuine democracy, which placed an emphasis on suffrage, secularism, and federalism. Sarkar, on the other hand, also observes that there was a sign that could not dissent from this viewpoint. This sign was characterized by silences on topics pertaining to adult suffrage, undertones of pro-Hindu religious politics, and a desire for a unitary, centralized state. One way to define this inclination is as one that favored a democracy with higher levels of restriction. The fact that these early splits among Indian elites led Sarkar to imply that there may be an elective affinity in India for democracy, secularism, and federalism were the result of these divisions. Consider the following question: Does the recent change in India toward a more pro-Hindu politics pose a threat to Indian democracy and federalism? The modern implications of this significant historical observation are worthy of rejection.

Political institutions and the consolidation of democracy

Although many countries that had been colonies in Asia and Africa began their road toward independence as democracies, only a few of these countries were able to establish open and competitive political systems. One of the most notable examples of democratic consolidation in a postcolonial context is India, which raises the issue of how and why India was able to achieve such impressive results. The solution is not straightforward, as one might expect; rather, it is a huge and complicated one that is composed of a great number of components, some of which are examined in great length in this volume. The recent political evolution of India may be broken down into three separate periods, which is helpful when attempting to comprehend the reasons and mechanisms behind the establishment of democracy in India. During the first phase, which was led by Nehru and lasted from around 1950 to the middle to late 1960s, many democratic institutions and practices gained a significant amount of acceptability. This phase lasted for a great amount of time. India benefited throughout this period by the presence of two extremely significant institutions, namely a well-functioning civil service and a popular ruling party, the Indian National Congress (or Congress). Nehru's personal devotion to democracy was yet another factor that contributed to India's success during this era. The civil service, which India inherited from the colonial period, served as the core of the state. The "new" civil service that India established was largely constructed on the foundation of this colonial foundation, as stated by Potter in 1986. Both the efficiency of the administration and the stability of the political system were facilitated by this civil service. This was in contrast to the Congress, which had been the driving force behind a successful national movement and, as a consequence, earned a significant amount of popularity and credibility. These newly appointed leaders of India, particularly

Nehru, made strategic use of the political capital they had inherited, appeasing competing elites within the greater political system.

Democracy: A narrow concept

Democracy was seen to be nothing more than a political system in the ancient Greek society. When it came to democracy in the 17th and 18th centuries, ideals were the primary focus of attention. Especially in the society that we live in today, democracy is devoid of ideas and values, particularly after the Second society War. To put it another way, several academics have underlined the solely political nature of the democratic part of the system. Several renowned academics, such as John Austin, James Bryce, A.V. Dicey, John Seely, and A.L. Lowell, are among the expounders of democracy who have primarily regarded the idea of democracy as a form of governance. In this view, the notion of democracy is primarily a mode of government. It is possible to trace the origins of democracy back to ancient Greece; nevertheless, political intellectuals did not begin to adopt the concept until the nineteenth century. It would appear that all political parties, including fascists, communists, anarchists, conservatives, socialists, and liberals, have been singing the praises of democracy with great enthusiasm.

Defining democracy

Herodotus of Halicarnassus provided a definition of democracy, stating that it is a "form of government in which the supreme power of the state is vested in the hands of the community as a whole." Democracy was defined by the ancient Greek philosopher Cleon, who said, "That shall be democratic, which shall be of the people, by the people, and for the people." This definition was written around 2400 years ago. Abraham Lincoln is credited for reviving this idea in the modern era, stating that "it is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people." According to the definition provided by James Bryce, "democracy is that form of government in which the ruling power of state is legally vested, not in any particular class or classes but in the members of the community as a whole." It is written by Mazzini that "Democracy is the government of the best and wisest, for the progress of all and through all." A specific definition of democracy has been provided by Seeley, who stated that "democracy is a government in which everybody has a share." As one of the definitions of democracy, we may say that the people are the primary source of power for the state. Despite the fact that it is a government of the majority, the interests of minority groups are not completely overlooked under this style of governance. The concept of democracy has been described in a variety of ways by various academics. A society, a state, and a government are all terms that are used to define it. A democracy is a system of society in which all citizens are socially equal, regardless of their material wealth or social status. This is the definition of democracy. Equal rights, freedom of expression, fair trials, and intolerant treatment of minority groups are all principles that are upheld by this organization. Democracy is a kind of state that is defined by the fact that every segment of the population is represented in the legislature in an equal manner through elections that are based on the eligibility of adults to vote. However, democracy as a system of governance established that citizens engage in government either directly or indirectly through elected representatives. This was the case regardless of the style of government. The following is a definition of democracy that can be found on Wikipedia: "Democracy is a system of government in which political sovereignty is retained by the people and exercised directly by citizens or through their elected representatives."

Concept of democracy and its evolution in Indian context

It was the British administration that was responsible for the development and introduction of democracy in modern India. According to Sumit Sarkar (2001), democracy does not begin in India in the sense of the real "democratic sense" of the British English man or the English educated Indian. Rather, it begins in India because of the firm necessity of the Indian Council Act of 1861, which for the first time has given recognition to the rights of the peoples of India representing their legislative bodies. Increasing the size of all legislative councils, which gave legal recognition to the elective principle, and providing for nonofficial majorities, as well as extending the powers of the councils by granting them the ability to move and vote on resolutions, particularly on matters of public urgency, including the budget, are all things that were accomplished by the Indian Councils Act of 1909, which is also known as the Morley-Minto reforms. In addition, the Act of 1919, which is commonly referred to as the Montagu-Chelmsford reform, was responsible for introducing certain aspects of democracy, such as the criticism of the policies and actions of the government and the restoration of the public administrative system. Finally, the Government of India Act of 1935 was an important milestone in the development and advancement of democracy in the country. It was passed in 1935. It established practically all of the democratic characteristics that are present in the country. Several significant features have been implemented, such as the transfer of all departments of the provincial government to the responsible ministers in the administration, the idea of diarchy has been valued and prepared to be implemented at the union level rather than the provincial level, and ministers have been given the responsibility of administration for all of the subjects (Roy, 2018). During the time before India gained its independence, the notion and concept of democracy existed in India, and it is reasonable to say that it was not foreign or strange to the country. mainly due to the fact that democracy and democratic institutions were already in place in British India, even before the establishment of British colonial authorities in India. Considering that Atul Kohli (2001) suggested that it is necessary to do a thorough investigation of ancient Indian transcripts in order to comprehend the origins of democracy in this nation. It is indicated in the Arthashastra of Kautilya that the notion of a welfare state exists. The renowned Indian philosopher and politician of ancient times stated that the happiness of the people should be the source of the king's own pleasure. In every aspect of life, he is a firm believer in social welfare and well-being. This makes it very evident that the notion of democracy having its roots in Indian culture is similarly similar to Greek democracy. The Greeks were likewise of the opinion that democracy is concerned with the well-being of the people. In a similar vein, the notion of democracy that originates from India encompasses the idea that the genuine and authentic feeling of democracy is ascribed to the well-being and empowerment of the whole population.

Challenges to Democracy in India:

The type of governance known as democracy is confronted with a multitude of new obstacles. In the following, we will discuss several significant obstacles that democracy faces.

1. The Criminalisation of Politics - One of the most significant challenges to the functioning of democracy is the growing number of instances in which political activities are criminalized. In a general sense, it refers to the direct admission of criminals into political parties and the legislature through elections, as well as the employment of criminal methods and tactics to exert influence over the political processes. Due to the fact that lawbreakers are now legislators, this circumstance renders democracy even more disordered and broken. Therefore, there is the chance that the democratic machinery would fail to work properly, as well

as the possibility that law and order will be disrupted in the community. For the purpose of acquiring political power or for their own self-interest, a number of political parties in India have become connected with criminal gangs. As a result of the criminalization of politics, democratic principles in the society have been steadily deteriorating over time. A total of 67 politicians with criminal histories who were members of the Janata Party were elected to office in the state of Bihar during the election that took place in 1997. When this occurs, it has a negative impact on the functioning of the democratic system in modern India.

2. Casteism - There is another danger to the functioning of democracy in India, and that is casteism. The civilization of India is characterized by its caste system, which is rather distinctive. The democratic system in India has been witness to caste-based politics, caste-based voting patterns, and caste-based warfare as well. There is a caste system in India that has an impact on the fundamental rights of individuals, such as the right to live and the freedom to develop, which are the cornerstones of democracy. There is a correlation between the caste system and democracy in Indian society, both on the sociological and political levels.

3. Illiteracy- An further obstacle that stands in the way of the functioning of democracy is this. They have a lack of awareness regarding the operation of the machinery of the government, which poses a threat to democratic institutions. In a nation such as India, democracy and illiteracy are incompatible with one another. Therefore, this is due to the fact that the democratic form of governance has the potential to be enhanced in a society that is characterized by the rule of law and the supply of equality. Having competent leadership is necessary for democracy; nevertheless, those who are illiterate and uninformed are unable to select the appropriate individuals to serve as their rulers. In addition, they are incapable of comprehending the fundamentals of democratic administration. As a consequence of this, the poor framework of democratic institutions associated with a society that is either uneducated or illiterate is incapable of promoting a healthy democracy in a dynamic manner.

4. Terrorism- Another new threat to the functioning of democratic institutions is the threat posed by terrorism. As a result, democratic regimes are undermined, and innocent people are killed. Terrorism has the ability to provoke and distort public discussions, denigrate moderates, strengthen political extremists, and polarize populations in a democratic nation like India. At this point, it's a significant obstacle on both the national and international levels. Actors such as governments, international institutions, and civil society are confronted with terrorist violence and are attempting to reduce its impacts, which are among the most hazardous political effects not just in India but also all over the globe. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the United States of America stated that terrorism is the adversary of the globe. In Jammu and Kashmir, India has been dealing with an issue of terrorism for a considerable amount of time. There have been a number of incidents that have posed a danger to the democratic administration in India, including the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001, the TajHotel in 2008, Pathankot in 2016, and Pulwama in 2019.

5. Corruption- Governmental corruption is just another obstacle that prevents democracy from functioning properly. Not only does it undermine democratic norms and effective administration, but it also weakens the legitimacy of the government. Political leaders make advantage of their political authority in order to amass an unlawful amount of riches for the nation. There is a direct impact that corruption has on the political system, the administrative system, and the institutions of a country like India. A decrease in confidence and accountability in the process of formulating public policy is a consequence of corruption in the decision-making process. Additionally, corruption undermines the rule of law in the judicial system

and leads to inefficient service provision in public administration. Corruption may have an effect on the economy of the country in a direct and immediate manner.

Conclusion

To summarize, the democracy in India is a multifaceted and ever-evolving institution that reflects the country's many different cultures and its dynamic nature. Its significance resides not only in its size and durability, but also in its capacity to adjust and transform in response to the shifting requirements of society. As India continues to make progress, the country's democratic experience provides vital insights on the management of diversity, the promotion of inclusive development, and the maintenance of democratic norms in a world that is fast changing. One of the most powerful examples of the enduring force of democratic principles is the Indian democracy, which is not only the largest but also one of the most diversified in the world. Since it gained its independence in 1947, India has worked to cultivate a democratic framework that is inclusive of pluralism, participatory governance, and other democratic principles. The country has been able to successfully traverse the difficulties of its large cultural, religious, and linguistic environment because to the foundations that were built by visionary leaders and entrenched in a thorough constitution. Indian democracy is characterized by its robust institutions, which include a robust multiparty election system, an independent judiciary, a free press, and an engaged civil society. These institutions are the manifestation of the relevance of Indian democracy. These pillars guarantee that there are checks and balances in place, that the rule of law is upheld, and that individual rights are protected. The federal system makes it possible to have localized government, which allows for the promotion of varied policy approaches and the addressing of regional requirements. Despite the fact that it is confronted with obstacles such as corruption, socioeconomic inequality, and geographical discrepancies, the democracy in India continues to develop. In addition to the dynamic character of its political and social institutions, the active participation of its population is a driving force behind the continuing changes and improvements that are being implemented. Keeping governance responsible and reinforcing the notion of popular sovereignty are both accomplished through the election process, which is defined by its comprehensiveness and inclusiveness. With regard to the management of diversity, the promotion of social justice, and the guaranteeing of broad-based involvement in government, the trip that Indian democracy has taken offers great lessons for the rest of the world. Both its strength and its viability are shown by the fact that it is able to adjust and change in response to the requirements of society. Even as India continues to advance and modernize, the democratic framework that it has established continues to serve as a source of inspiration and a model for developing democracies all over the world.

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