

Democracy and Politics in Modern India

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Abstract

This paper explores how democracy started in independent India and analyzes the structure and functioning of democracy in India. This paper is structured on the basis of secondary sources. Before concluding, it has been necessary to explore the present state of Indian democracy and politics with an analytical review of the Role of Caste.

Keywords

Democracy, Politics.

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Introduction

India is the world's largest democracy. It is the only country in Asia that has remained democratic ever since it attained its independence from British rule. The only exception to this is the brief period of emergency in 1975-76, when the democratic process was halted.¹ Democracy in India has seemed somewhat inconsistent in the last six decades. India has been an agrarian society with a rigid and hierarchical social structure. In this type of social system, holding elections on a fixed period, the formation of constitutional governments, freedom of expression and assembly has always been an intellectual puzzle. In a world where there has been a more stable democracy where there has been an industrialized and capitalist economy, many scholars are of the view that Indian democracy is either not perfect or it is going to disintegrate soon. Talking about the larger structure of Indian democracy, we have to understand this first. What is meant by the word democracy and why it has become so important to understand it?

This paper will spread its wings by discussing how democracy started in independent India. Structure and functioning of democracy in India. Before concluding, it becomes necessary to discuss the present state of Indian democracy and politics with references to the effects of globalization. Indian democracy and politics are such an enigma that cannot be explained in a few words.

Meaning and Definitions of Indian Democracy And Politics

The etymology of the English word democracy, referring to democracy, can be linked to ancient Greece. Like other English words ending with Crecy, autocracy, and bureaucracy, it is derived from the Greek word Kratos, which means 'power' or 'governance', thus, democracy means the rule of the people. Although originally it denoted 'poor' or 'many'. However, "the rule of the people usually doesn't get us very far". The problem with democracy has been its popularity that threatens the term's meaningful political credentials. It is universally seen as 'good'. That is, democracy is used and used in a much better sense, which means that it is recognized by specific types of concepts or systems of governance. *Perhaps the beginning of an understanding of the nature of democracy can be traced back to Lincoln's Gettysburg speech in 1864, when the Civil War in America was at its height. In that speech, he called it the "government of the people, by the people, for the people".* This makes it clear that democracy acts as a link between the government and the people, but this link can be seen in many ways.

Democracy in India is better understood by examining modern political traditions. Commitment to the democracy of Indian leaders after independence has played an important role in the survival of democracy in India.

Indian Democratic Structure and Politics after Independence

The Republic of India got its governance and power from its people. The Goals Resolution (1946) declared that it would ensure justice for all its citizens, equality of social, economic and political opportunities, equality before the law, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, beliefs, beliefs, worship, employment, assembly, and ensure action and general morality. In the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, the philosophical and sociological beliefs promoted which led to the creation of a democratic-majority, federal, secular Indian Republic?

Although the Constitution of independent India made some changes while retaining the continuities of the past, India's independence and transfer of power to Indians was also a 'separation from the colonial past'. The Constitution of India is a mirror for all Indians because it was created by the Indians themselves.

The two main structural aspects of Indian democratic politics have been 'parliamentary democracy' and 'federalism'. The basic basis of Indian democracy is visible in the Indian Constitution, on the basis of which the high and low levels of the last six decades of Indian democracy can be understood. Parliamentary democracy is an elected house at the center and legislatures of the Indian state, which has the power of a politically responsible agent; this form of government is given by the constitution. The third refers to all of the parliamentary forms found in Canada, Australia or England.

Federal System In Indian Politics

The Sangh is a political organization whose purpose is to ensure the centralization of the issue of national importance and the separation of the army on the issues of provincial importance. It is also a system of separation of political power at several levels, closer to the people who are governed by it. There are not only two types of central and state governments in India, there is also a third tier of local government, namely Panchayati Raj Institutions. The difference of power was due to the 73rd amendment of the Constitution and the transfer of the 11th Schedule and 29 functions of the State Service to Raj Institutions in 1993.

The federal system of India demands to see that the unity of the country is maintained and the cultural diversity of the people is also protected. Initially, the dialogue in India was closely related to the rights of minorities, as could be seen, there was a demand for a federal structure so that religious minorities, who were also the majority in some states, could self-govern as far as possible. Although some princely states, being totalitarian in nature, supported the parliamentary structure, the situation changed due to political acrimony and division. The Indian Constitution has created a "dual system" of governance. The administrative, financial

and legislative powers of the central and state governments have been divided on the basis of three lists. Central List, State List and Concurrent List, their jurisdiction has also been divided and explained.

Thus, Indian federalism is not a static entity, as it has evolved over the years in a parliamentary system, from the period when the Indian National Congress dominated the quasi-federal system, and again from 1989 when the multi-party system and mixed governments prevailed.

Secular Politics In Modern India

Independent India could only run on the basis of tolerance and secularism, so that unity and integrity remained in the country. Secularism in the West refers to a political system that has nothing to do with religion and the church. Secularism can be seen in India's long history. The word secular was included in the Preamble of the Constitution in late 1976. The constitution prohibits the state from making any kind of discrimination on the basis of religion. It ensures the right for every citizen to freely adopt his religion. Propagate it, here the state is not anti-religion but it is all He treats religions equally. Independent India could only run on the basis of tolerance and secularism, so that unity and integrity remained in the country. Secularism in the West refers to a political system that has nothing to do with religion and the church. Secularism can be seen in India's long history. The word secular was included in the Preamble of the Constitution in late 1976. The constitution prohibits the state from making any kind of discrimination on the basis of religion. It ensures the right for every citizen to freely adopt his religion. Propagate it, here the state is not anti-religion but it is all He treats religions equally.

Decentralization of Indian Politics

The decentralization of politics in India accelerated after the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. After 1994, the democratic base expanded and enabled the local government to undertake horizontal planning and its implementation. Planning is done at many levels in the government. Multi-level planning at the central, state, district, block and village levels has expanded the scope of local government in the sense that they can move towards fulfilling this two-tier goal of the constitution. With economic development and social justice, high will power and vision, the state government of Kerala made decentralization efforts on a large scale, which gave new ground to the process of democratization of the Indian Union.

The 1993 Constitutional Amendment established the working principles of decentralization and also established the powers, responsibilities and resources of local governments. After these constitutional amendments, the democratic base

of the Indian Union expanded further and it gave direction to democratization and political mobilization for all sections of the society. The Union of India fulfills all the essential characteristics of a republic as it involves decentralization and transfer of power and resources to the third level of government, thereby expanding the democratic base of politics. Decentralization opened new doors of political participation and no doubt it aroused political consciousness among all sections of the society.

Decentralization led to the creation of large-scale democratic institutions and social measures to ensure that the common man gets his due in the political system. In turn, it developed a sense of integration and ownership in the process of politics and development. Gradually people developed this ability to suggest alternative steps, establish their democratic rights and demand their due rights in the process of development.

Indian Politics: A Labyrinth

The beginning of the decade marked the beginning of a new era in Indian politics. Although the Congress (I) returned to the government in 1991 as a minority government, it lost its grip on power. The Nehruvian socialist structure adopted by that party lost its relevance. The Congress (I) party lost the moral ground it had gained from its role in the freedom movement, and it came to be seen as broadly corrupt. The main alternative to the Congress's shifting social base, the Bharatiya Janata Party launched a campaign for a Hindu nationalist alliance. Similarly, Janata Dal, Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party made efforts to move towards power through alliance of Dalits, backward scheduled tribes and religious minorities.

The Indian federal or central dance not only produced a strong central government, but also centered itself on the central government in general and the prime minister in particular. Power disputes and political tensions have been the cause. This is likely to increase political disputes in the times to come as pluralism is increasing in the party system, and the representation of Hill groups is also becoming more diverse.

At one time it was seen as a solution to Indian economic and social problems. Now Indian politics is being seen as a problem by political observers as populist slogans have started awakening the sentiments of the people. Can you at the same time, the law and order situation continued to deteriorate as the police continued to be unable to nab the criminals and suppress communal disturbances. Indeed, many observers are lamenting the criminalization of Indian politics because people are using people's power to perform well in elections, and criminals themselves are

succeeding in elections. Based on these circumstances, many observers believe that India has entered a period of deepening Raman's crisis.

Some analysts do not consider India's problems as deep, they are also satisfied that civil society is becoming more mature and more democratic political plans are emerging. Backward castes, Dalits and Adivasis have ceased to be content with mere patronage and populist initiatives of the Congress system. The awakening of these groups has strengthened the base of the political opposition and reduced the hold of the Congress. The number of NGOs has increased since the late 70s. These groups began to make new demands on the political system and began to emphasize the need for redistribution of political power, economic resources and social status. Whether the development of Indian politics intensified the growing problems or gave rise to a larger democracy, began to promote the direction of the solution of these three main points. How will the Indian political system, which is based on more egalitarian values than ever before, accommodate the changes that are taking place in its social hierarchy? How will the state strike a balance between the need to recognize the interests of the country's pluralistic society and national unity? And the way the legitimacy of the Indian state has been eroded. As civil society continues to grow, will the Indian state find its legitimacy, and if so, how will it redefine the boundaries between the state and society? These issues have been faced by India throughout history. These issues with their inherent tensions will continue to be the agents of change in Indian politics.

Role of Caste In Indian Democratic Politics with Analytical Review

Political institutions are concerned with the distribution of power in society. Max Weber defined the state as a human community with successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical forces within a given territory. Thus the state is one of the important agencies of social control, whose functions are carried out by means of law, backed ultimately by physical force. It is one association within society and not society as whole¹.

Though politics have been studied even since a systematic study by Aristotle but political behavior in itself is rather a new trend in modern times. This makes the modern political science a relatively new distinction between the political and the social, which constituted the background of the emergence of the sociology of politics. This does not mean that politics has been studied rather two have been supposed to be continuous with each other. It is in the context of the study of modern societies, conceived of as a complex system with growing independence among its various constituent elements, that the need to study the political phenomenon from a total societal perspective has been stressed. Thus political structure has come to be

characterized as a distinct sub-system of societal system that represents the adaptative dimensions of society.

Sociologists and social anthropologists have been interested in the study of the traditional social institutions in politics. As the caste is an important aspect of Indian society it has attracted the attention of a large number of researchers. The number of studies in this field is so large that it is difficult to make a comprehensive survey of all of them.

When Srinivas (1962)² pointed out the crucial role of caste in Indian politics there was a feeling in certain quarters that he was probably exaggerating the importance of caste. He surveyed the part played by caste in the politics of various states in his paper "Caste in Modern India". The Second General Elections of 1957, which were held soon after, vindicated his position substantially. Since then many studies have been undertaken to understand the relationship between caste and politics at various levels. Leach (1960)³, Gough (1960)⁴ and Bailey (1963)⁵ have argued that ideally the caste system is characterized by interdependence and cooperation and it does not permit different castes to compete for political power. Politics or competition for political power is confined within the dominant caste.

Rajni Kothari (1970)⁶ studied the relationship between caste and politics as a relationship for the specific purpose of organizing public activities. She did this in two ways: (i) by examining the nature of the relationship between caste and politics and (ii) by examining the type of change that has taken place in the political system as a result of the involvement of caste organization. Thus, his focus was not so much on what happens to the caste system as a whole but on what happens to the political system because of the vote of castes. Andre Beteille (1970)⁷ has also discussed on the basis of his study of castes in Tamil Nadu in the 1970s the problem of how caste enters into politics. Beteille has suggested that two kinds of changes seem to be taking place in the relationship between caste and politics; one, power shifts from one dominant caste to another; and two, the locus of power shifts from the caste system itself to differentiated structures of power like political parties, panchayats, etc. Anil Bhatt (1975)⁸ On the basis of his study on caste and political mobilization in one district in Gujarat had pointed out that the problem of mobilization of masses today is the same as they were seven to eight decades ago.

Caste as a traditional principle of social stratification involving the ascriptive allocation of occupations continues to characterize society and polity in India. Its extreme and 'classical' forms can still be observed in most of the villages of the state, where, it continues to be a pervasive and all-embracing phenomenon that controls and defines the social, economic, and political relations of the individual. It appears to be

so much deep-rooted in the cultural system that while the whole society has been undergoing a steady transformation, in making of urbanization, industrialization and globalization, its residual influences on social, and political behavior have tended to persist over time. In fact, caste involving culturally defined patterns of instituted inequality, has itself been the greatest impediment to the efforts for social and economic modernization of the state. Even today caste system seems to have found its own way to survive the onslaughts of modern social forces, thanks to the ineffectiveness of social legislation and the widespread prevalence of caste politics.

Conclusion

It is impossible to define Indian democratic politics as liberal, participatory or deliberative as it is a combination of all these together. It is not enough just to see that formal democracy exists, but tests are also conducted by linking it to those institutions to see how effective it is as an institution. So let us examine what was the stage at that time when democratic values and processes were adopted.

According to Samuel Houghton, Indian democracy was going through some crisis at the time of independence. Those crises were: a crisis of national unity, a crisis of identity, a crisis of participation, a crisis of subtlety and a crisis of legitimacy. Thus, we see that there were a number of challenges that the newly independent and freed India from colonial rule was facing when it was adopting the system of democracy. There were big problems before India, linguistic problems, caste problems, poverty and illiteracy. These include malnutrition and poor health conditions, poor housing conditions, poor efficiency, professionalism and inadequate levels of savings.

Since independence, many scholars have compared the level of development and democracy in India. Does democracy lead to development or does development lead to democracy? This dilemma still remains. India had a solid nationalist base and a strong leadership in the form of the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. But the leaders of the Legislature in that period were elitist. Democracy was running smoothly but the reason for this was that the common people were illiterate. Congress was working for the native bourgeoisie at that time. So the Congress remained a party of the status quo.

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, there was a wave of sympathy for Rajiv Gandhi. Who tried to change the development strategies of India? His objective of liberalism was successful to some extent but he also faced many obstacles. The country has the right to vote, but in the Congress, familyism continues even today, which makes representation. Not only the Gandhi family but many MPs are sons or

daughters of some politician or the other. Sachin Pilot Agatha Sagma, Rahul Gandhi, and Varun Gandhi are the names.

But despite all kinds of unrest, democracy in India still remains in its unique form. It is certainly the best form of governance. Democracy has different meanings for different parts of the country. It is meant for the more upper strata. Freedom of enterprise for the weaker sections means equality and representation. Indian democracy will survive in spite of whatever contradictions it sees.

It is to be noted that democracy has remained stable in India, in such a way that democracy has turned into dictatorship in countries with problems. There have been conflicting views about the success and failure of democracy and all of them are related to one or the other ideal. On the other hand, some scholars see democracy as an institution. This means free and fair elections, and legislature and at this level, India can be called the largest democracy in the world. But the assessment of democracy is that both have a mixed form. India's exceptional political stability, and high co-participation have made it one of the most isolated of the post-colonial countries. Overall, more than sixty years after India's independence, India can be seen as an example of a multicultural country capable of using democratic institutions or a federal structure. It has successfully made them all a part of the political process, despite political violence and a temporary law and order crisis.

The path of parliamentary democracy, adopted in India, gives rise to contradictions in terms of a welfare, reformist and mixed means of development. Under this method adopted for social change, the old institutions based on caste, religion and other narrow kin, which were dying out, got new life. In fact, feudalism and religion are being actively used to build capitalism. In India, where illiteracy, backwardness etc. are widely visible, the pace of change seems to be slow.

The policies of the government and the nature of corruption-ridden administration are such that social change is expected only from the alert citizens of the country.

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