



## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY: AN ANALYSIS

V.RAVI KUMAR

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, OSMANIA UNIVERSITY, HYDERABAD-(T.S-India)

## ABSTRACT

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: 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. In this paper, the author has attempted to study and analyse the existing democratic setup in India and some issues and challenges of Indian Democracy.

**KEYWORDS :** Constitution, Democracy, Federalism, Leadership, Issues and Challenges.

## 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.

## Meaning of Democracy:

Long back, former President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln said, "Democracy is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people." The term 'democracy' comes from the Greek word *demokratia* which means "rule of the people". It was coined from two words: *demos* that means "people" and *Kratos* which refers to "power". That is, in a democracy the power rests with the people. This meaning is based on the experiences of the governments that existed in some of the Greek city-states, notably Athens. And, today also, democracy is defined as a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections. When you examine the definitions of democracy, as suggested above, you will find that most of those definitions define democracy as a form of government which is run by the elected representatives.

## Objectives of the study:

1. To study and analyse the existing democratic setup in India.
2. To study and analyse various issues and challenges that are being faced by the Indian democratic republic, and
3. To suggest measures to meet the challenges effectively and help restore Indian Democracy in its true spirit.

## Issues and challenges in India:

The issues that are posing a great challenge to the Indian Democratic setup include:

- **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 equally great challenges 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.

- **Sanitation:** Statistics conducted by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have shown that only 31% of India's population is able to utilize proper sanitation facilities as of 2008. Studies by UNICEF have also shown that diseases resulting from poor sanitation affect children in their cognitive development.
- **Corruption:** Corruption is widespread in India. India is ranked 95 out of a 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.
- **Violence:** Constitutional speaking, India is supposed to be a secular, but large-scale violence has periodically taking place in since independence. In recent decades, communal tensions and religion-based politics have become more prominent.
- **Naxalism:** Naxalism is a communist group that has been emerged out of the Sino- Soviet split in the Indian communist movement. Naxalism is found in areas such as West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

## Democracy in India: its Problems and Prospectives:

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 socialist 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.

#### **FINDINGS:**

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 cause which prejudices the minds of the people towards exercising their participation in the formation and functioning of the Government. Further, that most of the politicians venture into politics with a sole motive of maximization of their personal wealth by whatever means they can knowing 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 parliamentarian 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.

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

The author would like to suggest following recommendations for the successful functioning of Indian democracy:

- 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 provide 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.
- There must be a complete ban on Opinion Polls as they cannot be scientifically relied upon.
- The media must also play its important role bringing about true facts and maintaining the true spirit of right to speech and expression.
- 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.
- The citizens should elect leaders with good moral values and integrity.
- People should be guided to choose their true representatives. They should not be influenced by anyone in this respect. Individuals should learn tolerance and compromise and understand that freedom is not unbridled but dependent on not harming another individual's well-being.
- Democracy demands from the common man a certain level of ability and character, like rational conducts, an intelligent understanding of public affair, independent justice and unselfish devotion to public interest.
- The Directive Principles of State Policies must necessarily made justiciable rights just like fundamental rights of part III of the Indian Constitution.
- People should not allow communalism, separatism, casteism, terrorism, etc to raise their heads. They are a threat to democracy.

#### **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. 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 inspite 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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