



EVOLUTION OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY AND FEDERALISM

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ABSTRACT Devolution of Indian democracy and federalism is a complex historical process shaped by colonial legacies constitutional regions social political movements and administrative reforms. This paper examine the development of governance and federal structure in India from ancient roots through British rules to post independence transformations it also analyze challenges and the future trajectory of democracy and federalism in India.

KEYWORDS : Ancient, Democracy, Federalism, British Constitution, Politics

INTRODUCTION

India is the world's largest democracy and unique example of federal governance with strong unitary features the journey of Indian democracy and federalism has developed gradually through constitutional formation political participation the centralization and institutional reforms the purpose of this paper is to understand how Indian democracy and federalism evolved their current functioning and future challenges (The Hindu, Feb 23 2013)

Historical Background of Indian Democracy

Indian democracy did not develop suddenly it evolved over centuries through philosophical ideas social reform freedom struggles and constitutional development India is considered one of the world's oldest civilizations to practice democratic values like debate equality and participation.

1) Ancient roots (Before 12th Century)

In ancient India several regions participated in local self governance sabha and samiti during the Vedic period where early forms of democratic assemblies where people participated in decisions reflected values of consultations discussions and shared governors (K.C Agrawal 2007)

2) Medieval Period (12th to 18th Century)

During this period rulers like the monads Delhi saltan and regional Kingdom govern through centralized monarchy democracy did not disappear completely local village councils called Panchayat continue to function this panchayats made decision on community matters showing grassroots demo critic practice (Yogendra Yadav 2020)

3) British Colonial Period (1757 - 1947)

British rule played a major role in shaping modern democratic institutions in India the British colonial period refers to the time when India was ruled directly on or indirectly by the British East India company and later by the British government revolt of 1857 the first war of independence was a major uprising against British rule through it field it become a turning point after the revolt the British government to direct control creation ICS exam development of railway telegraph roads western education and laws (Prem Shankar Jha 2025)

Evolution of Federalism Post Independent

Federalism in India has undergone significant transformation since 1947. Though the Constitution established a federal structure with a strong central government, the nature of Indian federalism has continually evolved due to political changes, economic reforms, judicial interpretations, and administrative needs. The evolution can be divided into major phases.

One Party to Multi Party Rule:-

The early decades were dominated by a single party which influence the centralizing tendency of the federal structure the rise of coalition government in the 1990's led to a shift towards more power sharing between the centre and States.

State Reorganization:-

The creation of new states based on linguistic and ethnic lines starting with the state reorganization act of 1956 trailer the federal structure to better reflect reasonable aspirations.

Introduction of Local Self Governance

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments in 1993 create a third tier of government (Panchayat Raj and urban local bodies) promoting decentralization and local participation (S.Y Quraishi 2023).

Contemporary Trained and Challenge

Contemporary training refers to modern, competency-based, and technology-driven methods used to develop skills, knowledge, and professional capabilities in today's fast-changing world. Unlike traditional approaches that focus mainly on theoretical teaching, contemporary training emphasizes practical application, digital tools, and industry-relevant skills.

Centralization and Its Impact

Since 2014 a political shift had strengthened centralization leading to several challenges for the federal system

Fiscal Federalism

Issue of physical economy such is the implementations of the goods and service tax GST have been a point of contagion between the centre and states.

Cooperative Federalism

The federal model has become increasingly characterized by cooperative federalism where both the central and state government work together to protect and promote the interests of a share citizenry however political negotiation and divers interest continue to shape it operation. (Peu Ghosh, 2024)

Challenges to Indian Democracy and Federalism:-

- Political polarization and coalition instability.
- Centre state conflicts
- Regional disparities
- Electoral corruptions and money influence
- Identity based politics

Future Prospect

To Strengthen Democracy and Federalism India Must:-

- Straighten decentralization and local government
- Ensure transparency in political funding
- Promote cooperative and comparative federalism
- Invest in civil education and inclusive growth.

Impact of Federalism

Federalism has a significant influence on the political economical administrative and social system of the Nations its shapes how power is shared and how democracy functions in a diver society.

1. **Promotion of Democracy:** - Federalism distributes political power between Central and state government. It prevents the concentration of power is one authority and support check and balance. Local government become more responsive to citizens needs strengthening democratic participation (Chaudhary Keane 2021)
2. **Protection of Diversity:-** Federalism allows different cultural linguistic and regional groups to governance themselves in certain areas. This reduces conflict and promotes unity in diversity. In countries like India it helps maintain harmony among states with different languages religions and traditions.
3. **Better Governance and Administrations:-** Decisions are taken closer to the people. Local governments understand regional issue better for example water agriculture and transport policy very across States.
4. **Encouragement of Innovations:-** States can experiment with policies without out affecting the entire countries. If a policy

succeeds in one state it can be adopted by others. This encourages policy competition and importance (The Hindu 2024).

Methodology

This research is based on secondary data including reports from election commission of India and academic articles and journals famous books of philosophers the study uses qualitative analysis to understand trends and outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Federalism place a crucial role in balancing unity and diversity it promote democracy support regional identity encourage innovations and lead to effective governance in countries like India it has help maintain social harmony practice stability and national development.

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