



RESEARCH ARTICLE

MAJOR ISSUES IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In modern practice Democracy is a system of government in which the citizen's use power directly by electing representatives to form a government and now we call it parliamentary system of government. Democracy is referred as 'rule of the majority'. The word Democracy is originally begins in classical Greece, where political representatives were elected by a jury amongst the male citizens; rich and poor. The English word dates to the 16th century, from the older middle French and Middle Latin equivalents. Democratic government is deference from the forms of government where power is either held by an individual, as in an absolute monarchy, or where power is held by a small number of individuals, as in an oligarchy. Karl Popper defined democracy in contrast to dictatorship or tyranny, thus focusing on opportunities for the people control their leaders and to oust them without the need for a revolution. In this context the study on Indian Democracy is very relevant and this paper is mainly a theoretical study on Issues, concerns and challenges to Indian Democracy.

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INTRODUCTION

Citizens are believed that a country calling itself a democracy must be engaged in direct democracy, in which the people of a state or region vote directly for policies, rather than elect representatives who make choices on their behalf. People who follow this line of reasoning hold that the United States is more properly described as a republican Democratic nation. Basically Democracy is "a government in which supreme power resides in a body of citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by elected officers and representatives responsible to them and governing according to law". However, both democracy and republic have more than a single meaning, and one of the definitions we provide for democracy closely resembles the definition of republic given above: "a 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 periodically held free elections."

According to political scientist Larry Diamond democracy consists of four key elements:

- A political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair Elections;
- The active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life;
- Protection of the human rights of all citizens, and
- A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

In the 5th century BC, to denote the political systems then existing in Greek city-states, notably Athens, the term is an antonym to aristocracy, meaning "rule of an elite". While theoretically these definitions are in opposition, in practice the distinction has been blurred historically. The political system of Classical Athens, for example, granted democratic citizenship to free men and excluded slaves and women from political participation.

Objectives of the study

- To understand the existence of democracy.
- Analyze the issues concerns to democracy.
- To identify the challenges of democracy.

METHODOLOGY

My paper is basically based on the Secondary sources and data, here we tried to explain and understand the present issues and challenges of Indian democracy by using the analytical method. Am taking the support of secondary sources like Magazines, Research articles, Papers, Books, Internet sources etc...

Recent Issues and concerns of Democracy in Indian

TAMIL NADU: CPI (M) to Conduct 'Meet the People' Campaign, Feb20-25:

The death of Jayalalithaa, who was the general secretary of AIADMK and the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, AIADMK split into two factions, one under the leadership of Sasikala and the other of O Panneerselvam. These groups entered into a competition to capture power in both the party and the government. With Sasikala having gone to prison following the Supreme Court judgement in the Disproportionate Assets case, a ministry has been formed under the leadership of Edappadi Palanisamy belonging to the Sasikala faction. A resolution seeking confidence in the new government has been passed in the assembly. In this session of the assembly, events have taken place that had not occurred in the last thirty years and these have brought the state great shame. Against democratic practice, there were attacks on the speaker, microphones and chairs were broken, documents were torn up, and MLAs sat in the speaker's chair and danced, and so on. These incidents have raised among the people of the state the question of whether the DMK behaved as a responsible opposition party. DMK wants people to believe that these actions were legitimate protests. Using the split in AIADMK on account of the competition for power, the BJP continues to try and misuse the powers of the governor in its desire to secure power illegitimately.

Very important issues facing the people of Tamil Nadu have been ignored on account of the struggle for power within the AIADMK, the DMK's lust for power and the back door efforts of the BJP. All these issues have not been considered at all by the rulers. In this situation, the CPI(M) has decided to conduct throughout the state „Meet the People“ campaign on several demands including the need to pay attention to urgent issues facing the people and democratic conduct of the assembly. This campaign will be from February 20 to 25, 2017. The CPI(M) has appealed to the people of Tamil Nadu to participate in large numbers in the public meetings and street corner gatherings and other actions that form part of this campaign.

AIDWA Condemns Censor Board's Denial of Certification to a Movie Depicting Women's Issues: The All India Democratic Women's Association strongly condemns the decision of the Censor Board of Film Certification to deny certification to Alankrita Srivastava and Prakash Jha's film „Lipstick under my Burkha“, which depicts the range of problems that women in India are facing today, and their struggle to overcome these obstacles. The much acclaimed film has won the Best Film for Women's Equality Award at the Mumbai Film Festival and the „Spirit of Asia“ Award in the Tokyo Film Festival. By denying it certification, the Censor Board, which has the tacit support of the government of India, has once again displayed its intolerance for plurality of views and creative rendering of social realities.

The Censor Board has reportedly objected to the film as being „lady oriented“, and for containing abusive words! This and other reasons that have been cited by the CBFC chairperson Nihalani for denying certification to the film reveal a patriarchal and conservative mindset which cannot accept women's agency in breaking stereotypes, and challenging the old order. Depicting women who have the courage to defy social norms and exercise their choice in their quest for equality should be welcomed in a democratic and gender just society. In contrast, the decision of the Board reflects the Sangh Parivar's ideology which defines women as subordinate to men, and conceptualizes a secondary role for her in society. Apart from violating the basic rights of the film makers to

freedom of expression, the Censor Board has played a regressive and anti women role, in the name of upholding and preserving Indian culture, which is constitutionally untenable. AIDWA demands that the CBFC should immediately take steps to ensure that the film is certified for screening. The rights of creative film makers should be safeguarded. The Modi government has a responsibility to ensure that institutions like the CBFC do not become implementing agencies of the Sangh Parivar ideology, thereby undermining women's emancipation and right to equality in a democratic framework.

Huge Rally of Workers, Peasants in Guwahati: Guwahati, the capital city of Assam, witnessed a huge rally of workers and peasants on February 26. The rally was organized jointly by the Assam state committees of CITU and AIKS against the anti-worker and anti-peasant policies and the politics of communal divide pursued by the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the state. In Assam, soon after coming to power, the BJP government unleashed a massive eviction drive of the peasantry and other sections of the working people from „khas“, railway, VGR/PGR land. Without making alternative arrangements for their rehabilitation, thousands of families have been evicted and several thousands have been served notices for eviction. What is more atrocious is that in carrying out this eviction drive, the BJP government particularly targeted the religious minorities. The rally demanded immediate halt to such eviction drive and adequate compensation as well as proper rehabilitation of all those evicted.

The rally also raised several other demands that included a minimum wage of Rs 18,000 per month, recognition of scheme workers belonging to ICDS, Mid-day Meal, ASHA, etc. as worker and payment of wage to them instead of honorarium, halt to the so-called labour law reforms that envisage changing of labour laws in favor of the owners, immediate halt to the process of privatization and disinvestment of PSUs, remunerative price to the peasants for agricultural produce, permanent solution of the problem of flood and erosion in Assam, massive irrigation, adequate job creation under MGNREGA, expeditious update of National Register of Citizens with March 24, 1971 as the cut-off year for the solution of the vexed problem of foreign nationals, etc.

More than 20,000 workers and peasants from different corners of the state took part in the rally. The spacious bank of the river Brahmaputra, the venue of the rally, turned into a sea of humanity with thousands of red flag with hammer and sickle emblem flying high. It was an inspiring display of fighting unity of the working class and peasantry irrespective of religion, language, caste and ethnicity at a time when the ruling party and the communal forces patronized by it have been working overtime to divide the people of the state on communal lines. The rally demonstrated once again that it is only the struggling bond of workers and peasants organized under the Red Flag that can act as a bulwark against the politics of communal divide being indulged in by the present regime.

Hemen Das, a veteran leader of the peasant movement in Assam, Deben Bhattacharjee and Tapan Sarma, Vice-President and General Secretary of the CITU Assam State Committee respectively also addressed the rally. Earlier Tiken Das, Secretary of Assam State Kisan Sabha, explained the

objectives of the rally. The rally in a resolution also extended its wholehearted support to the bank strike on February 28 called by the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU). A presidium consisting of Fazlur Rahman (AIKS), Asit Dutta and Niroda Kakati (CITU) presided over the rally.

United Forum of Bank Unions Holds Successful Strike: At the call of United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), the umbrella organization of nine unions of workmen and officers of the banking industry of the country, the workmen and officers of banks all over the country, including those of regional rural banks and co-operative banks, struck work on February 28 to ventilate their unequivocal protest and opposition to the neoliberal reform of the banking sector being pursued by the central government. The strike was total throughout the length and breadth of the country. Employees of Reserve Bank and NABARD organized lunch time solidarity demonstrations at all centers.

The strike was observed opposing banking and labor law reforms, infringement of trade union rights, outsourcing of permanent jobs and demanding, mainly, legitimate compensation to employees and officers for extra hours of work due to demonetization, removal of ceiling for payment of gratuity, adequate recruitment in all cadres, implementation of compassionate appointment scheme, improvements in pension scheme and extension of defined benefit pension scheme in banks in lieu of NPS, stringent measures to recover bad loans and fixing accountability of top executives of banks, criminal action against willful defaulters of bank loans, initiation of process for next wage revision, introduction of five-day banking and others.

The adverse effect of demonetization on the economy has resulted in decline in the growth rate of GDP. The demonetization has taken away the lives of more than 100 innocent citizens of our country including more than ten bank employees. The government did not find time to even express sorrow for such deaths. The bank employees, including women, who had to work beyond normal working hours, even till midnight on some days during the months of November and December 2016, have not been paid their due compensation in terms of their service conditions.

Historic March of Students and Teachers in Delhi University against ABVP's Goondaism: Thousands of students and teachers marched in the north campus of Delhi University on February 28 against ABVP's goondaism. This was the biggest mobilization of students and teachers which DU has seen in decades. The immediate call against the ABVP's terror tactics to silence all voices critical of the RSS-BJP regime through violent means became a rallying point for a mass mobilization which was beyond the reach of any organization. It came a week after the disruption of an academic seminar in Ramjas College by ABVP and later large scale violence on students, teachers and media persons with Delhi police playing the role of facilitator. The call for march was given by student and teachers organizations under the banner of „Save DU“. JNUSU and JNUTA had also given a call to join the march. Entire campus resonated with slogans of "DU hamara aap ka, nahi kisi ke baap ka!" (DU is ours and yours, not anyone's father's) and "goondagardi nahi sahenge". A call for citizen's march on March 4 from Mandi House to Parliament Street has been given. The attack on DU is latest in a series of attacks on academic institutions where RSS-ABVP in collusion with

State machinery is being used to silence all critical voices. In this case too, every attempt was made to reduce the issue to the binary of „national vs anti-national“ or that of „left vs right“, while in reality it is a struggle between democracy loving forces on one side and the destroyers of democracy on the other. It goes without saying that every such attempt has seen brave resistance from the student movement. The latest assault too will be resisted by mobilizing the widest possible section of university in defense of the campus democracy.

Challenges of Indian Democracy:

- Women who are 50% of the total population hardly get 10% representation in state assemblies and parliament. No wonder that rape, domestic violence, child marriage etc are dealt causally or not an urgent issue for male chauvinist govt.
- Just 1% of the population pays income tax in a nation of 1.24 billion which has at least 15% of them is liable for income tax.
- Unmanageable & inefficient large sized states. India has only 29 states for a population of 124 crore against USA with 50 states for 34 crore people. More than
- 15 languages spoken by 10 million people doesn't have states and forcefully administered by government in alien languages such as hindi, English and other. Hundreds of Tribals have no say in government for distribution of funds and natural sources. And government considers Maoists/naxals need military solution.
- Faulty and slow justice system. Four crore pending legal cases in various courts with less than 6000 judges instead of minimum 20,000 judges required and courts are closed for 2 months in summer instead of running 24x7.
- Black money transactions in both domestic and foreign channels. None of the real estate, gold, business transactions are reporting to government correctly in a country of 2.40 Trillion Dollar economy.
- Too many regional parties, in India we see the most of the regional political parties which is challenges to the national party to proving a majority and make a government.
- Illiteracy among people was a matter of grave concern for the successful functioning of democracy in India on the eve of independence and it still continues to be a major challenge. The level of education of citizens is a key to both the successful functioning of democracy and socio-economic development of the country. And perhaps, more importantly, it is an essential condition for human dignity. But the state of formal literacy was almost dismal when India achieved independence. The literacy rate in 1951 was mere 18.33 per cent and female literacy was negligible with 8.9 percent. It was, therefore, feared by many that the citizens would not be able to play their roles effectively and exercise their right to vote meaningfully which is an individual's expression of the power of the people. As you also know, this apprehension, however, has been proved wrong by the Indian electorate over the years. In spite of a substantial number of them being illiterates, they have demonstrated maturity in the exercise of their right to vote on more than one occasion thus resulting peaceful transfer of political power since independence. The Indian National Congress under the leadership of Ms. Indira Gandhi was very popular and powerful during the early part of 1970s. But in 1977's general election, the people of India rejected her primarily because of the misuse of power during

emergency in 1975-1977 and provided an opportunity to the first non-Congress government at the Centre in form of the Janata Party. After that there have been changes in the governments both at the Centre and in the States almost regularly. Literacy is necessary not simply for enabling citizens to participate in elections and exercise their right to vote effectively, it has other important implications as well. Literacy enables citizens to be aware of various issues, problems, demands, and interests in the country. It also makes them conscious of the principles of liberty and equality of all and ensures that the representatives elected by them truly represent all the interests in the society. Universal literacy is therefore a must for the successful functioning of Indian democracy. Although according to 2011 Census, the literacy rate has risen to 74.04 per cent, the female literacy rate is still lagging at 65.46 per cent. This means that over one-fourth of the country's population is still illiterate while among women nearly one out of three is not literate. If the children have access to basic education, the problem of illiteracy can be checked. Recently, the Right to Education is provided as a fundamental right. We hope that this will help the cause of educating the children universally.

- A high percentage of educated and sensible Indians who don't vote, because of they have lack of interest and working place is away from voting place.
- Corruption in public life has been a major concern in India. In 2011, India was ranked 95th of 183 countries defined as corrupt in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). In fact, corruption is rampant in all walks of life, be it land and property, health, education, commerce and industry, agriculture, transport, police, armed forces, even religious institutions or so called places of spiritual pursuits. Corruption continues to exist in covert and overt ways at all three levels - political, bureaucratic and corporate sector. One can see the nexus between the politicians, the bureaucrats and the industrialists which has resulted into corruption and corrupt practices. The tentacles of corruption have affected all organs of government, including the judiciary. Above all, corruption in electoral processes and bribing of voters who participate in elections at different levels has now become a common practice. Have you or your friends observed this happening during elections in the recent past? In recent years, various scams have been coming out in our country in quick succession. In fact, corruption is a sign of political instability and institutional decay, challenging seriously the validity and propriety of governance. We as citizens should take a vow not to indulge in corrupt practices at any level and contribute in eliminating corruption from our country.
- The caste system which presumably originated in the division of labor in the ancient society has become a more or less rigid group classification, based on birth. Have you ever experienced the role of caste in your life and society? You will agree that the most detrimental and inhuman aspect of the caste system is the practice of untouchability which is continuing in spite of the constitutional ban imposed on it. This has led to segregation of so called low castes or „Dalits“, depriving them of education and other social benefits. The Dalits have been typically performing menial labor and some of the hardest physical work in society. Casteism has played a negative role even in the democratic political processes. In fact, casteism has become notorious as a strategy of exploitation of caste consciousness for narrow political gains. The caste system

acts against the roots of democracy. The democratic facilities - like fundamental rights relating to equality, freedom of speech, expression and association, participation in the electoral process, free media and press, and even legislative forums - are misused for maintaining casteist identity. Casteism has also been contributing towards continuation of socio-economic inequalities. It is true that India has been an unequal society from times immemorial. The Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the backward classes have suffered down the ages from socio-economic deprivations. There are enormous inequalities in our society which are posing serious challenge to Indian democracy. What is more alarming is the mixing of caste and politics resulting into „politicization of caste“ and „casteization of politics“ in contemporary Indian polity which has become a grave challenge to our democracy? Despite the era of liberalization and globalization caste consciousness has not been eroded in our society and castes are being increasingly used as vote bank politics.

CONCLUSION

In the end, the challenges before democracy is a never-ending debate, the more one writes or speaks the lesser it will be. So, what is most important is that we should change our attitudes and mindset. We should try to overcome our self-centered nature. As we see the issues in front of Indian democracy like Tamil Nadu: CPI (M) to conduct „meet the people“ campaign, Feb 20-25, AIDWA Condemns Censor Board's denial of certification to a movie depicting Women's issues, huge rally of workers, Peasants in Guwahati, United Forum of Bank Unions holds successful strike, and Historic March of student and teachers in Delhi University against ABVP's Goondaism, and we also see the many problems which challenges to the Indian Democracy. It is only a tip of the iceberg and in future days many more problems are expected. Democracy should become a way of life and not just for political functioning. This to become true, theory and practice should be culminated and it should involve people in not only decision - making but also make them conscious of their rights and involve them in political participation. Then and then only, can India play a vital role in world politics.

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