Challenges and essential conditions for success of Indian Democracy

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ABSTRACT

Democracy is the most popular form of government. Democracy refers to the 'government of the people, for the people, and by the people'. In democratic government people directly or indirectly participate in the decision-making process. India has the largest democracy in the world. On the other hand, it has faced many social and economic inequalities such as poverty and unemployment, illiteracy, casteism, communalism, corruption, etc. which needs to be resolved as it requires new proposals. Undoubtedly, the law plays an important role in drive out Indian democracy from these issues, but the mere legal proposals are not enough for the necessary reforms in society. Some of the measures that can be taken to maintain a democratic democracy in India are 100% literacy; Make people aware of democratic rights; Ensure better protection of basic rights, and freedom of the press. In this paper, it has been attempted to study the existing democratic set up in India, analyse the challenges of Indian democracy and suggest necessary conditions in order to ensure a sustainable democracy in India.

Key Words : Illiteracy, Casteism, Communalism, Corruption

INTRODUCTION

Amongst the democratic countries, India is the largest democracy in the world. According to, Abraham Lincoln, "Democracy is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people." The term 'democracy' is derived from the Greek word demokratia which means "rule of the people". It was coined from two words: Demos which means "people" and Kratos means "power". Democracy means that form of government where the power rests with the people. In ancient Greek City-States and during the Vedic period in India, the people themselves used to assemble together to decide the issues of governance. Democracy underwent changes during the period of transformation from ancient Greece to the modern world. As a result, the pattern of democracy that prevailed in ancient Greece took on a completely different and new form. Prof. Seeley says, "Democracy is a government in which everyone has a share." when we say that India is a democracy, it does not mean that only its political institutions and the processes are democratic, but also the fact that Indian

society and every citizen of India are democratic, reflecting the basic democratic values of equality, freedom, fraternity, and justice in the social environment and individual behaviour. Democracy is defined as a form of government in which the ultimate power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections.

Objectives of the study:
1. Identify major problems and challenges being faced by Indian democracy.
2. Recognize the essential conditions for improving the Indian democratic system.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is descriptive and analytical in nature. The data used in it is collected from secondary resources.

Democracy in India:
The Constitution of India came into force from January 26, 1950, declares India a democratic republic. The Constitution has laid down the requirements for maintaining a democratic governmental system.

Forms of Democracy:
There are different forms of democracy. In ancient Greece, the practice of democracy was known as the 'City state system'. People use the power of their rules through this system. In fact, it was a system of government for all people. In the 'City State' system, democracy is governed and controlled by qualified individuals and citizens. Democracy was under the rule of the citizens. Under this system, however, ancient terms, slaves and foreigners were not considered citizens in the democracy of ancient Greece.

Direct Democracy:
The Direct democracy system is the oldest form of democracy. In direct democracy people directly participate in the administration of the state. In ancient times, direct democracy was popular in Greece. In this system, citizens come together to enforce the laws necessary for governance and they also enforce these rules. Citizens were also directly involved in the judicial process. There was no separate court for justice. The citizens themselves performed their duties. The rulers were selected by a number of systems for a limited period. In essence, citizens participated directly in the governance process.

Indirect Democracy:
In today's society, indirect democracy prevails and the nation-state system is now accepted and practiced around the world. This is also called representative democracy. In this, people elect their representatives on the basis of universal adult franchise and these representatives run the government. Representatives are responsible to the people for their use of power. There is indirect democracy in India. People elect their representatives at various levels, such as centre, state and local.

Challenges to Indian Democracy:

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

Corruption:

Corruption has been a major concern in public life in India. According to the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, India is ranked 95th out of 179 countries, but its rate is constantly improving from 2.7 in 2002 to 3.1 in 2011. In India, corruption takes the form of bribery, tax evasion, exchange control, embezzlement, etc. There are corruption at all three levels - political, bureaucratic, and corporate. One can see an alliance between politicians, bureaucrats, and entrepreneurs that has resulted in corruption and corrupt practices. Corruption has affected all parts of the government, including the judiciary. The Right to Information Act of 2005 played an important role in finding a number of politically motivated scams. Corruption is one of the main reasons that hinder the progress of a nation.

Illiteracy:

Illiteracy among people is a serious concern for the success of democracy. Without education, the citizens would not be able to play their role effectively and exercise their right to vote properly. According to the 2011 census over one-fourth of the country's population is still illiterate while among women nearly one out of three is not literate. Although many efforts have been made by the Government of India to ensure maximum literacy in India still, education continues to be a hindrance to development.

Poverty:

Poverty is considered as one of the biggest threat of democracy. This is the root cause of all inequalities. The persistent poverty situation reflects a number of factors, one of which is mass unemployment and underemployment. A large number of people in rural areas do not have regular and appropriate work. Even in urban areas, the number of unemployed is very high.

Casteism:

Casteism is also contributing to socio-economic inequality. Caste in India has been politicised. The number of political parties and pressure groups made on the basis of caste is increasing day by day. The caste also influences voting behaviour and the decision-making process. The political behaviour of the people is influenced by caste consideration. Caste-based inequalities are posing a serious challenge to Indian democracy.

Communalism:

Communalism and religious fundamentalism in India have taken a very dangerous form and aalarming proportion. They violate the coexistence model in our multi-religious society. Communism is an insult to Indian nationalist identity and a tragic obstacle to its developing secular culture. This undermines our democratic political stability and destroys our glorious legacy of humanism and complex culture. Communalism is often used as a synonym for religion or conservatism. Loyalty to religion or attachment to a religious community is not

communalism. Although conservatism is social backwardness, it also does not mean communalism. Indeed, communalism is an ideology of political loyalty to the religious community. He uses a religious community against other communities and perceives other religious communities as his enemies. This is contrary to secularism and even humanism. One of the manifestations of communalism is a communal violation. Also in the recent past, communalism has several times been a serious threat to our social and political life.

Regionalism:

India is a country with different religions, languages, communities, tribes, and cultures. Several cultural and linguistic groups are concentrated in certain territorial segments. Although the development process in the country is aimed at the growth and development of all regions, regional differences and imbalances in terms of differences in per capita income, literacy, health and infrastructure, and educational services, the state of the population and levels of industrial and agricultural development continue to exist. The existence and continuation of regional inequality between states and within the state create a feeling of neglect, deprivation, and discrimination. This situation has led to regionalism, manifested in demands for the creation of new states, autonomy or additional powers for the states, or even for the separation of the country. It is true that regionalism and sub regionalism is expected in a country as vast and diverse as India. It is not always right to consider all attempts to support or protect regional or sub regional interests as disconnecting, splitting, and unpatriotic. The problem begins when these interests are politicized, and regional movements are promoted by hidden political intentions. This unhealthy regional or sub regional patriotism is carcinogenic and alarming. Continuing regional imbalances have led to the emergence of military movements in some parts of our country. The separatist demands in Jammu and Kashmir or the ULFA (Assam United Liberation Front) in Assam or various groups in the northeast are issues of serious concern to Indian politics.

Criminalization of Politics:

In recent years, the criminalisation of politics has become a hot topic in India. There have been allegations that there are some elements in politics that do not believe in democratic values and practice. They indulge in violence and take shelter in other unhealthy and undemocratic methods of electoral victory. Undoubtedly, this is not a healthy trend in politics, and there is an urgent need to apply serious checks to these trends. The criminalization of politics is the self-denial of democratic values and does not take place in a democratic environment. Democracy can be strengthened by accepting and promoting democratic values and avoiding criminal activity. Recently, the judiciary, by taking a serious note of criminal trends in politics, has shown signs of taking corrective measures to enforce serious verification of these elements. The central government and many state governments have taken steps to address this problem effectively. It is a matter of great satisfaction and a healthy signal for the proper functioning of democracy in our country. We, as awakened citizens and as voters of the world's largest democracy, can also contribute by discouraging people with criminal backgrounds from contesting the election.

Conditions for success of Democracy:

Some essential conditions that are required to strengthen the democracy are given below:

Educated citizens:

For the success of democracy, it is essential for citizens to be educated. Education is an important factor that influences the political consciousness. An educated person can make proper use of their right to vote. Education enhances the understanding of rights and duties. Citizens should be well aware of the ideas and values of democracy. Education can enhance the thought process of constructive criticism of their abilities to help them to reach the right decision.

Economic equality:

Economic inequality and poverty are two main obstacles in the way of democracy. Poor people can neither contest elections nor make proper use of their right to vote. They remain indifferent towards political affairs. They are always worried about earning their livelihood. The gap between the poor and the rich is continuously increasing. For the success of democracy, it is essential to provide economic equality to the people.

Social equality:

Social equality is required for the success of democracy. Discriminations on the basis of caste, colour, sex, religion, etc. should be prohibited. Democratic governments need to plan various social security programs, such as pension schemes for elders and widows, and comprehensive health insurance for the development of these categories of people.

Political consciousness:

Citizens need to be aware of their rights and duties. They should take an interest in political affairs. They should play a positive role in different areas. It regards the people's consciousness towards state and politics. This includes healthy competition, tolerance, clear perception, and consent. These are the essential elements of a successful democracy.

Independence of media:

The media plays an important role in communicating the functioning and democratic ideals of the government. Media helps in making the government responsible. This works as a link between the people and the government. The media should place correct facts before the public. The media should evaluate national and international problems independently. Fair and unbiased media helps to form and express public opinion.

Well organised political parties:

Democracy cannot function without political parties. Political parties form political opinions, fight elections, form government and criticise and oppose the wrong actions of the government. But political parties should be well organised. Political parties organised on the basis of religion, caste, communalism is harmful to national unity.

Decentralisation of powers:

For the success of democracy, the powers need to be decentralised at national, state and local levels. The administration should be run from different centres and the maximum number of people should be connected with the administration.

Free and fair elections:

Elections are the soul of democracy. It is through elections that the people elect their representatives and express their confidence in the government. So, to conduct free and fair elections proper arrangements should be made. For this purpose, an independent Election Commission has been created with constitutional status.

Good constitution:

A good constitution is essential for the success of democracy. Constitution provides the basis of the administration. The constitution should be based on democratic principles like equality, liberty, and justice, etc. there must be provisions of the protection of rights. Constitution should be amendable. There should be a clear description in the constitution of organisation and actions of different organs of government, the mutual relation between different organs.

Independent judiciary:

For the protection of individual liberty and rights in a democracy, an independent judiciary is essential. Judiciary must be free from the control of executive and legislature and there should be the provision of its independence in the constitution so that it can perform its functions independently.

Suggestions:

The suggestions for the successful functioning of Indian democracy are given below:

– Voters should be made fully aware of their rights through organizing programmes such as conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.

– The illiterate people of India should be given proper education so that they can vote wisely.

– The media must work positively to expose the facts and to improve the true spirit of democracy.

– Politicians should have a sense of democracy as they play an important role in maintaining democracy. They should act like a slave and not a master.

– Citizens need to be aware of when choosing their leaders with good moral values and honesty.

– The Directive Principles of State Policies must necessarily be made justifiable rights just like fundamental rights.

– Changes should come through peaceful, democratic and constitutional means.

– Political education should be part of the education system so that they can either become the dominant leaders of tomorrow or choose their leader wisely without being influenced by immoral factors.

– Elected representatives should be the role model for the youths.

Conclusion:

In fact, we can conclude that, although India is considered one of the largest democracies in the world, in reality there are several problems that create obstacles to the true functioning of the democratic republic of India. It is disturbing that, despite many years of independence since 1947, there is a lot of illiteracy and corruption in India. Agency independence remains only in the documents. CBI, Election Commission, income tax departments, etc. Look like paper tigers and miserably failed to solve problems. Politicians practice corrupt practices, strike, divide the nation for religious reasons because of their petty voting motives, which negatively impacted respect for Indian democracy in the world. However, in another respect, we live in a democratic country that guarantees equal rights and obligations. Despite the diversity of culture, race, religion, and language the people are united. No government or country can be considered ideal. There is nothing wrong with the constitution of India, but due to the selfishness of some politicians, people's faith has decreased towards democracy, for which everyone should strive to rejuvenate people's faith in democracy, understanding their responsibility, making efforts, actively participating in the functioning of the government.

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