

Ten things Ailing the Democracy in India and their Solutions

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Democracy is that form of governance in which it is the Citizens who decide as to who shall form the Government and shall rule them.

Democracy was originally born in ancient Greece during the 6th century BC. Infact the very word is of Greek origin and it means 'Rule by the People'.

In a Democracy, each individual adult in a country or specific area can vote for a candidate who will represent him in the government. This means that power is not concentrated in the hands of one person or a group of people but shared equally by the all members of a society.

The idea of democracy is based on the belief that everyone should enjoy the same rights and freedom in short that all men and women are born equal.

Indian Democracy

India, the seventh largest in size and second most populous country on Earth, has the distinction of being the World's largest Democracy. India is a multi party democracy with six main national political parties. Power to govern is divided between Central Government, 29 State Governments and 7 centrally administered Union Territories, with New Delhi as national capital.

The head of Government is the Prime Minister and head of the nation is the President. Laws are enacted in the Parliament, which has 2 chambers – the popularly elected Lok Sabha and indirectly elected Rajya Sabha.

In India every citizen above age of 18 has the right to vote and the Indian Constitution guarantees its citizens a lengthy list of fundamental rights including freedom of speech and religion.

But despite being the largest Democracy in the world it has its own shortcomings and in this research we aim to focus on its problems and solutions.

10 Shortcomings of Indian Democracy:

1. No free speech:

A true democracy is known to propagate the idea of free speech and thoughts, and this is why democratic nations are most advanced in the present times. Press is known as Fourth pillar of Democracy. However, openly stating your opinions and putting forward any Anti-Government agendas is almost next to impossible in India. Your actions and words are always under the surveillance of the Government watchdogs, who won't allow any negative information about their leaders or their policies out. Penal Laws are used by Government of the Day to scuttle Media by threatening FIRs and Arrest.

2. Protest is an alien concept:

Democratic unions provide equal rights to every citizen of the state to protest silently and present their disapproval to the government. However, it is amply clear to the people of the country that any anti-establishment agitation or the demonstration against corrupt nexus of politicians and criminals meets a brutal end. Therefore, similar to many other dictatorial regimes across the world, our nation is running on the same concept of 'rule of stick

3. No social justice:

Social justice is the corner stone of any political ideology, be it based on Communism or Democracy. However, as years passed, the definition of social justice became meeker. Not only is there a clear economic divide prevalent in the so called largest democracy of the world, the Indian society still remains divided into sections of minority and majority on the basis of caste, religion and political inclination. The disadvantaged and marginalized sections are the ones that face the wrath of every defective policy of the government, while the few rich happily accumulate more money at the cost of the poor. Although Legal service institutions vouches to provide 'Access to Justice for All' but the widening economic divide in the Society is a cause of concern for all.

4. Government is not of, for or by the people:

What is democracy and why is democracy? Abraham Lincoln had rightly opined once that democracy is a system where "Government is of the people, for the people and by the people." However, successive Governments in our country have failed in winning trust of all sections of Society. This is because of the corrupt nature of a substantial number of our elected representatives.

The words of the famous US President could easily be re-arranged as “Government of the fortunate few, for the fortunate few and by the fortunate few,” in the present context.

5. No transparency in system

Farce is the word used to describe the opaque and lacking political system in the country. Not only do political parties prefer to maintain distance from the general public after gaining power at center or state, they make it certain that zero level of transparency is maintained in the workings of the government. It assists them in carrying out all the possible malpractices behind curtains. Right to Information has made inroads into hitherto corridors of power but things are yet to achieve a level of desired transparency.

6. Unfair elections:

The state of affairs in the interiors of states, such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand to name a few, are too depressing. The way common man’s votes are acquired by the politicians with a criminal background is no hidden secret. Although, the Election Commission of India has worked hard over the last few years to improve the situation on ground, badland politics emerges fearless at every level of the election process. Use of Money Power for buying Votes, free flow of Liquor and Caste based voter polarization are also weakening our Democracy.

7. Corrupt media:

Media being one of the four pillars of our democracy and plays an important role in nation building process. However, the degeneration of the state of affairs in the media world has further weakened the democratic values of the country. Paid media channels are ruling the roost and present only one side of the picture. All possible efforts are made to conceal the truth. Also big media houses are apparently aligned on Party lines and sub serve their masters alone.

8. Red-Tapism:

Bureaucratic framework has become so rigid and unproductive that the country should be renamed as “*Babustan*” than “Hindustan”. The prevalence of Red-tapism is so wide spread that no paper moves an inch before several months or years pass by, unless you’re some big shot or have the power to bribe. The speed of execution of policies is getting slower and slower as the number of pending files is only rising. Citizen Charters are being put in place but results are not visible as of yet.

9. Sluggish judicial system:

The disposal rate of judiciary in India is regarded as one of the slowest in the world. The rate of final disposal of pending cases in the courts is slower than that of the laziest snails. This has led to a feeling of disgust towards the legal system of the country. Judiciary is considered as one of the four strong pillars of a true democracy and plays an important role in taking the nation forward. However, the rate of performance of our judicial set up is not too pleasing to make our democracy truly potent. With around 2.65 Crore pending cases, cumbersome Trial procedures and one of the poorest Judge-Population Ratio, no miracle can be expected too soon.

10. Non-inclusive growth:

The democratic set up works on the main objective of providing equal chances of growth to the citizens of the state. However, since most of the countrymen are devoid of equal social and economic rights, our nation seems to be getting closer to doomsday. The growth is non-inclusive and irrelevant. It clearly shows that the fruits of Indian democracy is most likely a farce or even fake.

Recent Incidents that shook India's Fundamentals

Patidar Movement

Spearheaded by 22-year Hardik Patel, who single-handedly took Gujarat politics by storm, the Patidar Movement saw thousands join hands against the government with slogans such as "Jai Sardar, Jai Patidar" in their demand for OBC status.

India is a democratic country that believes in the freedom of speech, but does it mean that we have to tolerate slogans that ask for "Bharat ki barbadi"?

In fact, the movement was so intense that Section 144 was imposed in cities such as Surat, Mehsana, Ahmedabad and Rajkot. Gujarat CM Anandiben Patel had to call military support to put an end to riots. While the situation in Gujarat was termed as unconstitutional on the grounds that people were not allowed to register their protest, others took pot-shots at PM Narendra Modi citing the failure of Gujarat model.

Finally, Hardik Patel was arrested in Rajkot by the Gujarat government on charges that he insulted India by inverting the national flag and using anti-nationalist language in front of crowds.

Dadri incident

Call it an unfortunate aberration or a ploy to derail BJP-led NDA to win Bihar, a Muslim man was lynched because he was rumored to have stored beef in his home in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh. Soon, politicians were flocking to his house to offer their condolences even as they slammed the BJP government for promoting intolerance towards minorities. This was during the time when various states had supported a ban on beef, resulting in protests from other quarters. The Dadri incident caused a lot of vitriol towards Modi and his government, with the anger fueled by the Prime Minister's silence on the matter. This attitude coupled with the strength of the Mahagathbandhan made the BJP-led NDA face the bitter truth during the Bihar elections

Suicide of Rohith Vemula

The suicide of Rohith Vemula brought BJP's HRD Minister Smriti Irani under fire. Rohith, a Dalit student of Hyderabad University, had allegedly been suspended from the hostel for engaging in activities that the MHRD had dubbed as "anti-national". In the aftermath, much like the Dadri incident, politicians like Arvind Kejriwal and Rahul Gandhi swooped in to express their sympathies and gain political mileage. When PM Narendra Modi came to address students in Hyderabad, he was welcomed with black flags and slogans such as "Justice for Rohith." Students in pockets of Delhi and Mumbai also marched across the city demanding justice for the student.

Solutions to Problems ailing Indian Democracy

1. The electorate should be imparted with the knowledge of political consciousness. They should be made fully aware of their rights and privileges through organising programs such as conferences, seminars, workshops, symposia etc.

2. 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.

3. The media must also play its important role bringing about true facts and maintaining the true spirit of right to speech and expression

4. The Directive Principles of State Policies must necessarily made justiciable rights just like fundamental rights of part III of the Indian Constitution

5. Legislatures and Judiciary should keep track of what is going on around the world as far as some of the sensitive human rights related issues are concerned such as same sex marriages, abolition of death penalties, etc. and try to keep pace with the changing world around us.

6. People should not allow communalism, separatism, casteism, terrorism etc to raise their heads. They are a threat to democracy.