

## Challenges to Indian Democracy

Democracy is a form of rule. This implies the presence of rulers and ruled, and relaxations of subjections as well as accountability. Democracy recognizes the need for collection agency, which requires binding collective decision making a system of public choice that can make such decisions binding which establishes political authority. India is today an intensely political society in the sense that Indians have come to see the main hazards, threats and opportunities that confront them as the products of human agency-and no longer as the effect of divine sanction, of nature or of any other extra-human agency. The emergence of such a political world imposes a burden on citizens of India to reflect and think, for themselves and collectively. The coming of democracy necessitates a new kind of social intelligence, a different division of intellectual labour in the society

During the last century, government has extended the realm over which it claims to exercise power. The fact that India is an overwhelming agrarian poor society, where most people have been socially suppressed for centuries, is now beginning to imprint itself on the country's identity. There has been a transformation in the structure of deference within the society. All this and besides many others pose a challenge to Indian democracy. Some of the main hurdles to the smooth functioning of democracy are-

1. India's Population- As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020, India's has about,1,387,297,452 population. In spite of various family planning measures, India has failed to control the population growth. Over population is a big challenge for democracy in India.
2. Poverty- The world bank estimates about 33 percent of the global poor, resides in India. There is an uneven distribution of wealth with 10% of

income groups earning 33 percent of the income. Thus the gap between the haves and have nots, poses a challenge to the democracy in India.

3. Corruption- India is ranked at 80<sup>th</sup> in terms of corrupt countries of the world. Corruption here is in every sphere, and in spite of various steps taken by the government, its root has become too deep here. Right to Information Act of 2005, has tried to unearthed corruption at various levels, still it has imbedded so much in our system, that it is one of the gravest challenge to Indian democracy.
4. Education- Except for Kerala, states have yet to achieve complete literacy. Lack of proper education, impedes the development of the country. The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. Many initiatives have been taken both by the Central as well as State government, still the country lags behind, and thus it is a stumbling block in the progress of democracy here.
5. Elections- are the most important means by which democracy's sustenance can be ensured. They give power to the people to vote, and the power to choose. However this weapon is powerless, if the citizens lack the understanding of what is good or bad. Such citizens remains gullible and are exploited by the politicians. Also criminal- politician nexus may get strengthened and money power and muscle power may be used to win elections. So even with elections, democracy ceases to have any meaning. Also as voting is not a compulsory duty in India, many urban as well as rural people do not exercise their right, which is detrimental to future of democracy here.

6. Violence- It fractures social relations, disrupts the economy, and harms, political institutions. For a smooth democracy, elections must be free and fair. Bullet cast under the shadow of gun cannot reflect the true belongings of the people. Booth capturing, intimidating voters, killing opponents, are various means by which various votaries of violence try to gag the election process. In such circumstances, rather than democracy, it is the gun power that rules. In recent years, religion based politics and communal tensions, cast a shadow on the spirit of democracy.
7. Terrorism – India has been a great sufferer of terrorism in recent years. Not only Jammu and Kashmir who has continuously suffered because of cross border firing from Pakistan, many states have been targets of terrorist activities, like Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujrat and many more. Besides terrorism by Pakistan, India also suffers from Naxal activities in states like, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bengal, Orissa and Bihar. All this impedes the progress of democracy here.
8. Strong and healthy opposition-The presence of a healthy opposition offers a practical alternative to the party or person in power. In recent years, there has been a lack of healthy opposition, in both the centre as well as state level, which is very important for a democratic set up.
9. Centre-State relations-There should be a cordial relations between centre and states, as then only the various schemes of the government can be implemented. In recent years it has been seen, that whichever party is at the helm of the power at centre, the benefits are reaped more by the states who belong to the same ruling party. The main loser in the dispute between centre and state is the citizens.
10. Role of Judiciary- In the case of Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala, court held the supremacy of the Indian Constitution and prevented the authoritarian rule by a single political party. An impartial role by judiciary is a must to safeguard the constitution, and for democracy to succeed.

Many a times judiciary has played an active role, in giving judgements, relating to arbitrary decisions by various governments. In India legal process takes such a long time, for final verdicts, that the very ethos of democracy becomes a far reach of ordinary citizens. There is a need for more fast track courts, for justice to the aggrieved parties.

11. Independence of Media- Media's positive role strengthens the democracy. Since media plays a pivotal role in conveying the functions of the government to the public, its bias role many a times puts hurdles in smooth functioning of the democracy.

12. Public health and sanitation. Swachh Bharat Mission, has been focussing on sanitation in the country. Because of poor sanitation, and the lack of drive to keep the environment clean, it has seriously affected the health of the citizens, especially the children in rural areas. A nation can progress only when its citizens are healthy.

India is one of the largest democracy of the world, but these challenges and many more, put hurdles in its smooth functioning. Even after so many years of independence, there is still illiteracy, corruption is rampant in every sector. Independence of agencies remains in papers, and various government departments to check corruption, many a times become a tool in the hands of the ruling party. The politicians too play caste or religion card to win elections. People need to be aware of their rights and duties, which have been guaranteed by the constitution. They should be guided to choose their true representatives. Like the Fundamental rights, the need of the hour is to make the Directive Principle's justiciable. Our elected representatives need to be role model, above caste, creed or religion. It is due to the politicians that many a times our faith in democracy is shaken up.

