

The Indian political system: A way of a sustainable democracy

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Abstract

Generally the political system of Third World states is known for political instability, chaos, dispute and so on. Most of the states of the Third World are struggling for a stable political system. Although most of them begin their government with democracy, a very few can sustain on that system. But there is one exceptional and surprising state named India bearing all qualities of Third World States able to keep on her political system successfully. Study of this research paper will try to explore and examine how it retained sustainability in her democratic government despite thousands of handicap. Basically the research will study the factors which are really responsible for India's successful democracy and reveal the role of these factors in maintaining such stability which can be followed by other countries of third world.

Keywords: political system, democratic government, Indian

1. Introduction

Though India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world named the Indus Valley civilization, goes back at least 5,000 years. After independence like many other new born states India also began with a parliamentary democracy. Regarding the parliamentary democracy, on March 28, 1957, Prime Minister Nehru said, "we chose this system of parliamentary democracy deliberately; we chose it not only because to some extent, we had always thought on those lines previously, but because we thought it was in keeping with our own old traditions, not the old traditions as they were, but adjusted to the new conditions and new surroundings. We chose it – "Let us give credit where credit is due – because we approved of its functioning in other countries, more especially in the United Kingdom."^[1]

At present, India has proved herself as a strong and successful democratic state in world. It emerged as a role model of sustainable democratic government for the other states of third world. Even developed states are also very much concerned and interested about the success of the Indian democracy. According to Dr. Amita Joshi's statement India has maintained successful democratic rule since its independence till present P.M. Modi's regim excluding two years of Emergency Period from 1975 to 1977. "Democracy is next to impossible in multilingual societies and completely impossible in linguistically divided society"^[2] India is a multilingual, multi-cultural, and multi-religious country where society is intensely divided. In spite of all these doubts and fears India has passed about seven decades with successful democratic system and appeared as an anomaly in the present world. David Cameron, the British Prime Minister during his visit to India regarded India to be the beacon of democracy to the world. We know that there is no success without any key. Same way there must be some factors worked for the success of India's democracy. These factors are described as below.

2. Panchayat System

The Panchayat system of ancient India helped the people of India to cope with the culture of democracy. "Panchayat means a council of five and it usually refers to a village council – which may or may not have five members – which has a great deal to say about the life of the people of the village, in social and religious as well as in economic and political matters. Officially speaking, "The panchayat is today the lowest and in a sense the most basic – unit of self-government in India."^[3] In a television interview in London on July 7, 1957, Prime Minister Nehru insisted that "India did have a democratic tradition, although he explained that this tradition in centuries past has been manifest largely in villages and other small centers of grass – roots democracy"^[4] Thus when India started their journey with democracy in 1947 then this panchayat system worked as the base of democratic system in the village level. In India that roots is properly maintained by panchayat system which helps India to prolong their democracy.

3. British Rule

The British rule taught the Indian about political party, legislature, legislative acts (1773 acts to 1947 acts), election, civil service and so forth which increased political awareness and knowledge of the people of India. These things really helped the Indian to run their state after getting independence from the British rule. In the early period of the British rule there was no organization to speak for the mass of India with the British rule. Thus, the British rule encouraged the Indian to setup Indian National Congress, The prime voice of the Indian middle classes. According to the Indian Council Acts 1892, "the government agreed to allow elections to be held in India under the rule, the Indian Council Acts 1892 was a first approach to the admission of the elective principle in the representation of Indian unofficial opinion in Viceroy's Legislative council. So, that was the British rule which

acquainted the public of India with the electoral practice. This practice of election facilitated the Indian to adopt them with basic principle of democracy in afterward. British colonialism played a great role as democratic training period for the people of India which helped the Indian nationalist leaders to adopt the parliamentary form of democracy and maintained it successfully.

4. Great Leadership

One of India's outstanding assets has been what Dr. Paul Appleby has called "*Extraordinary national leadership*."^[5] India has been very lucky because of producing many charismatic leaders who always guided the Indian in a proper way. "These include persons of such diverse qualities, ideals, and personalities as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, Vinoba Bhave, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru"^[6] In afterward, we can say about Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Raj Naranin, Murarji Desai, A.B. Vajpai and so on. Their leaders have no interest in political power rather they work for the interest of the public. Thus, we can observe that after getting independence Gandhi easily left the power what he could easily take it in his own hand. Not only this but also he never want to take any advantage of this power and popularity. So, no one came from his family in the Indian politics. Therefore, without any question we can say that India's stable democracy is nothing but a gift of their great leaders.

5. Federalism

According to Finer, "A federal state is one in which part of authority and power is vested in the local areas while another part is vested in a central institution deliberately constituted by an association of the local areas." So, from above we can say the large new states with vast population, many free states, and multi-culture face many problems of establishing a central democratic government. Therefore, these kinds of states to hold their unity start their journey with federal democratic system As a result, like the U.S., Switzerland and Canada India also chose the federalism. Many scholars commented that federalism contributed a lot for the success of the democracy in India.

Federalism always helps the Indian to handle the problems of multi-culture, multi-language, and different religions successfully and lengthen the democracy of India.

6. Electoral System

According to Sir Stafford Cripps, in democracy the people must have a free and unfettered choice of their representatives with a right of recall at stated period. Same way, Mr. E. F. M. Durbin points out that for the successful working of democracy the first essential is the ability of the people to choose a government.

Therefore, India ensured the voting right of people of India by the Constitution of the India which is supreme law of the country. "*The framers of the Constitution of India described about election of India in the Part XV, Articles 324 to 329 of the Constitution.*"^[7] And the article 326 says that elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be on the basis of adult suffrage. Moreover, the Indian government or leaders always arrange the elections after the said tenure. In this approach people always get chance to exercise their power or to choose their favourite

candidate. Not only this but also the Indian government or leaders always showed due respect toward the verdict of the election. It means that the Indian leaders always accept the choice or view of the people unlike to Pakistan. In Pakistan, political leaders hardly wanted to give election. "*Thus, in eleven years from 1947 to 1958 there was no election for parliamentary democracy in Pakistan.*"^[8] In addition, Pakistan government ever wanted to accept the verdict of their people deliberately. Hence, many scholars said that lack of electoral practices contributed a lot in the fall of democracy in Pakistan. On the contrary, India always encouraged electoral practices and showed proper respect toward the verdict of the mass. This thing increases the political awareness of the people and they realize that they have an important role to play in the politics and participation of the voters in the elections is climbing up in every election.

7. Written Constitution

According to Lecky, the essential thing for the safe working of democracy was "*A written constitution, securing property and contract, placing difficulties in the way of organic changes, restricting power of majorities, and preventing outburst of mere temporary discontent and more causal coalitions from overthrowing the main pillars of state.*"^[9] Accordingly, the leaders of the Congress Party choose the written constitution as the organic law of the Indian republic which went into effect on January 26, 1950. This constitution clearly describes about the nature of the Republic, the organization and powers and mutual relations of the Centre and the States, the Fundamental rights of the citizens (Articles: 13 to 35), the directive principles of State policy (Articles: 36 to 51), and so on. "*This constitution spells out almost all pros and cons of functions of the country. It was, in-fact, the longest constitution of the world.*"^[10]

This written constitution assists a lot to maintain the relation between the centre and the states and the stability of the country. It clearly discusses about the functions of the centre and the states which helps to the growth of democracy in India. In this mode, the written constitution plays a great role in the success of democracy in India.

8. Loyalty of Military

In maintaining a democratic system of government intact in India the loyalty of military toward the government plays an important role. Because most of the states in the "*Third world, in-fact more than two-thirds of these states have experienced military intervention already and many more are likely to do so in the near future.*"^[11] "*By June 1987 the United Nations Organization had 159 members states and 82 of them (50%) had been under military rule at one stage or other*"^[12] But in the formidable period India as a new democratic state never taken over by their military which undoubtedly strengthen the democracy of India. Even though the wars of 1965, 1971 and Cargill war between India and Pakistan, India launched an ambitious military build-up plan but it never let the military enter into the political sphere and it set up a tradition of keeping the military's role limited to the battle field and barracks.

9. Independence of Judiciary

At present, the independence of Judiciary is considered crucial feature of the democratic country. In democratic

countries, the Judiciary is considered the guardian of the constitution and the country. Bryce has rightly said, *“There is no better test of excellence of a Government than the efficiency of its judicial system, for nothing more nearly touches the welfare and security of the average citizen than his knowledge that he can rely on the certain and prompt administration of justice”* [13] Garner also observes, *“A civilized state without judicial organs is hardly conceivable.”* [14] Thus, unlike the United States and other democratic states, India has ensured a free and an independent judicial system. According to the constitution the Supreme Court of India was to consist of a Chief Justice and not more than seven other judges. The Supreme Court of India has gained a respectable position in the Indian political system. Its many decisions and interpretation have played a great role in maintaining the stability of democracy in India. Many of its most important judgments on constitutional issues have related to the interpretation of Article 14, guaranteeing equality before the law, Article 19, guaranteeing important freedoms to the individual, and Article 31, regarding property rights. So, we can say that the Indian Supreme Court is very much instrumental unlike to its counterpart in Pakistan where the Supreme Court is likely the mere court in the world to have faced a recurrent round of challenges arising from as many as six martial law and government dissolution proclamations in less than a quarter century of its existence apart from various other politicized cases. Therefore, without any doubt we can say that the Indian Supreme Court performs its role as perfect guardian of the country and guide the all democratic institutions in the right path of democracy to enhance the stability of democracy in India.

10. Conclusion

In summing up, we can say that in this long journey India has faced many challenges to maintain its democracy. So, where parliamentary democracy is being a big question for most of the countries of the third world there India could keep up with their democracy because of the above factors. Thus, many scholars pointed that the nation state of India has quite few things to be proud of and one of them is the rich legacy of the democracy.

Hence, from this paper we can understand how other developing countries like India could strengthen their democracy. If above factors can help India to sustain their democracy, these factors will also work for other countries which are still struggling for a sustainable democracy. In this paper we could propose the following recommendations for other developing countries:

1. If developing countries could control their military forces like India then it may help them to prolong their democracy.
2. An ideal written constitution can also work as tool to strengthen the democracy of the country.
3. Election is a prime means for democracy which helps the people to exercise their power.
4. To maintain democracy another element is independence of judiciary.
5. Without a well-built local government no democracy can become stronger.
6. If developing countries could maintain the balance between their central government and local government then they could hope for an effective democracy.

7. Without a perfect guide and leader no nation could move forward.

According to Dr. Jitender Kumar’s opinion India, being a developing country and facing many challenges like Poverty, Corruption, Multi-religion, Multi-Culture, Multi-languages, unhealthy opposition, terrorism etc, is running smoothly on the path of sustainable democracy under the wise, Balanced, forshited reliable leadership of our beloved Prime Minister Sh. Narainder Modi and proper guidance and watch of President Pranav Mukhar ji india can become solid example of sustainable democracy for other developing states. Finally, we can say that the democracy is a continuous process which is not possible to accomplish entirely. Therefore, India is still functioning on their democratization process and same way every country should also strive for the development and sustainable democracy.

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