Challenges Of Indian Democracy And It's Prospects: An Overview

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ABSTRACT: *The idea of democracy in India came from Greece. Democracy means ensuring governance by the people so that every citizen participates in the decision-making process directly or indirectly through elected representatives. India is the largest democracy in the world. Democracy has many features (rule of law, equality, justice, transparency, accountability, promoting individual rights and liberties, etc.). Democracy is slowly changing its nature day by day. Democracy in the present era is not the same as it was before. Our country is the greatest democratic country but still, millions of people are struggling for their daily basic needs. In modern India, democracy has faced many challenges. Thus, it can be said that democracy is in trouble in some of the most mature democracies of the world. Presently Indian democracy has lost its form. The undemocratic rulers and dictators are trying to interpret the concept of democracy in their own words. They made it the most confusing theory in India.*

This paper attempts to examine and analyze the existing democratic system in India and its impact on the democratic system of the world. In this paper, I would like to discuss mainly the issues and challenges facing Indian democracy with some examples. In addition, I would suggest certain possible measures to ensure a healthy and sustainable democracy for India.

KEYWORDS: *Challenges, Constitution, Corruption, Democracy, Education, India, Issues.*

INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a system of political arrangement in which the common people and government work together to create a civil society and build a common future. Throughout recorded history, democracy has remained always the most admired and venerated form of the political system of the world. The world regards authoritarianism as the guiding ideology and the power to mobilize the population to achieve national goals and interests, simultaneously resulting in the preparation of soil to establish the roots of democracy on the other hand. Therefore, authoritarianism has been replaced by democracy, which flourished in the prevailing social conditions. Democracy had a beginning with excellent objectives, which were labeled peace, harmony, development, freedom from injustice, and equality. However, when we talked about the characteristics of democracy which are an adult franchise, impartial judiciary, representative government, freedom of the press, fair electoral practices, two or more political parties, and supremacy of the Constitution it emanates and made people think that we are within such a system where democracy is actually present and works accordingly.

Democracy is a very old form of government and hence its theory dates back to the days of the Greeks. Recently, Democracy is not only considering a form of government but it is a way of life. It is the best form of government for the reason that it ensures popular participation. It is the only government, which stands on the will of the people and encourages them to participate in the political affairs of the country. Though Democracy has been considered one of the best government models, it was not universal until the mid-twentieth century only after representative democracy came into its own with universal adult suffrage.

India, as soon as it gained independence from Britain in 1947, adopted the new Constitution in 1950, under this Constitution the representative democracy has been emerged. India is a country with multicultural, religious, linguistic, and social structure. Due to this diversity, there are numerous

challenges before Democracy in India. These challenges may include overpopulation, poverty, a huge gap between rich and poor, corruption, illiteracy and right to education, terrorism, naxalism, caste-related violence, economic reforms, good governance, voter turnout, relations with neighboring countries, diplomatic issues, protection of human rights, women and children's rights, right to development, implementation of various welfare schemes, protection of freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution of India, environment protection, apathy of media, frequent dharnas, strikes, walkouts, non-cooperation movements, etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are some objectives of the study-

1. To understand the meaning of democracy in its different aspects.
2. To study the existing democratic setup in India.
3. To study and analyze major challenges being faced by the Indian democratic republic.
4. To explain the roles of citizens in making an efficient and successful democracy.
5. To suggest possible measures to respond to the challenges effectively and help to restore the Indian democratic system healthier and more sustainable.

MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy may be defined as a system with free, fair, and frequent elections, and universal suffrage that guarantees certain freedoms and rights to its citizens. The word 'Democracy' evolved from two Greek words - 'Demos' meaning 'People' and 'Kratos' meaning 'Power' (Smith, 2008). Hence, democracy means the 'power of the people'. In other words, democracy means a system of government in which the authority of the government lies with the people either directly or indirectly through a representative. Thus, in this sense, it can be said that in a democratic republican country like India, the real power is vested in the hands of the common people.

Herodotus of Halicarnassus defined democracy as "a form of government in which the supreme power of the state is vested in the hands of the community as a whole". Aristotle defines it "as the freedom of every citizen". In the 19th century, a highly respected human being throughout the world Abraham Lincoln called it "a system of government of the people, by the people, and for the people" (Cincotta, 1998). Great liberals like John Locke and Edmund Burke developed the same theory. Austrian political economist Joseph Alois Schumpeter defined it, as "an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide using a competitive struggle for the people's vote". The utilitarian defined it as "the greatest good for the greatest number". John Stuart Mill the greatest utilitarian did the same based on his moral or ethical argument. To Rousseau, democracy alone ensures the prevalence of the 'general will'. Viscount James Bryce said, "Democracy is a form of government in which the governing body is comparatively a large fraction of the entire nation". Italian politician Giuseppe Mazzini writes, "Democracy is the government of the best and wisest, for the progress of all and through all". Seeley has given a precise definition, as "democracy is a government in which everyone has a share". In this context, Jawaharlal Nehru[i] observed, "Democracy means tolerance, tolerance not merely of those who agree with us but of those who do not agree with us"(Shah, 1965, p. 61). Wikipedia defines democracy, as "Democracy is a system of government by which political sovereignty is retained by the people and exercised directly by citizens or through their elected representatives" (Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia).

However, from its early stages, the term democracy was accepted as a political concept, but the modern world has adopted two more characteristics of democracy-economic and social democracy. In a political democracy, the government is based on the consent of the people and is a system of government in which

citizens of the country have a share of power. Differences in public opinion and criticism of the government are some of the elements of this democracy. In a social democracy, human dignity is honored. Democracy respects every section of society as a social and human being. Economic democracy aims at reducing the gap between the rich and the poor, freedom from hunger, and social security. This is the most important aspect of democracy, without which political and social democracy would be meaningless.

THE PILLARS OF DEMOCRACY

- The sovereignty of the people.
- Government based on the consent of the governed.
- Majority rule.
- Minority rights.
- Guarantee of fundamental human rights.
- Free and fair elections.
- Equality before the law.
- Procedure established by law.
- Constitutional limits on government.
- Social, economic, and political pluralism.
- Values of tolerance, pragmatism, cooperation, and compromise (Cincotta, 1998).

DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND IT'S EVOLUTION OF INDIAN CONTEXT

Sumit Sarkar (2001) stated that democracy begins in India not in a way to the real 'democratic sense', of the British English man, or English-educated Indian but for the firm necessity of the Indian Council Act of 1861; which for the first time given the recognition to the rights of the peoples of India representing their legislative bodies (Appadorai, 1942, p. 4). The Indian Councils Act of 1909[ii] increased the size of all legislative councils gave legal recognition to the elective principle provided for non-official majorities and extended the powers of the councils by granting them the power to move and vote on the resolutions, particularly on matters of public urgent including the budget. Further, the Act of 1919[iii] introduced certain features of democracy like criticizing the policies and activities of government and restoring of public administrative system.

Finally, the Government of India Act of 1935 was one significant milestone in the growth and progress of democracy in the country. It established almost every feature of democracy in the country. It introduced several notable features such as the devolution of all departments of the provincial government to ministers in charge of administration, valorizing the concept of diarchy and preparing to introduce it at the union level instead of the provincial level, and ministers being given to the charge of administration for all the subjects (Roy, 2018, pp. 202-219). It can be safely said that the idea and concept of democracy were not unfamiliar and weird to India in its pre-independence period. Because in British India and even before the Britishers arrived in India democracy and democratic institutions existed. As Atul Kohli argued a close, study of ancient Indian transcripts is essential to realize the roots of democracy in this country (Kohli A. , 2001).

The Arthashastra of Kautilya has mentioned the concept of a welfare state. The ancient Indian philosopher and political leader argued that the king ought to derive his happiness from the happiness of the people. He believes in the welfare and well-being of all spheres (Tanwar, 2014, pp. 32-35). It indicates that the Indian-origin concept of democracy is also resemblance as of Greek. The Greeks were also of the view that democracy is regarding the well-being of the people. Similarly, the Indian-origin concept of

democracy also entails that the real and true sense of democracy is attributed to the well-being and empowerment of the masses.

After interdependence, India became the Democratic Republic on 26 January 1950 by introducing its own Constitution with a Preamble. In India, the term 'Democracy' has been used for the first time in the Preamble of the Constitution, which is based on the concept of popular sovereignty. The framers of the Constitution of India provide for a representative parliamentary democracy where the executive is always accountable to the legislature for its actions, policies, and other functions. In this context, it has been observed that the Constitution of India aims to establish an egalitarian society for every citizen to provide social, economic, and political justice. Some of the modern fundamental principles, which are practiced even in modern times, are enshrined in the Indian Constitution -

1) In a democracy, people are held as the source of sovereign power, and government is based on the consent of the people.
2) The Constitution provides certain fundamental rights to the citizens of India and it is the supreme duty of the Constitution to protect the fundamental rights of individuals.
3) Special protection measures for socially and educationally marginalized people in India.
4) The rule of law is the fundamental principle of the democracy and governing process established under it.
5) The provision of Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) ensures social and economic equality in India. Economic equality is the most important aspect of democracy.

TYPES OF DEMOCRACY

Generally, the practice of democracy in Ancient Greece was known as the 'City State System'. In this system, people exercised their power of governance. So, it can be said that it was a system of government run by the entire people of a democratic country. In ancient Greece, in the system of 'City State', democracy is the rule and control of the country by qualified persons and citizens. In other words, Democracy or the people's rule was under the control of governance by the citizens.

Democracy is divided into two types, such as Direct Democracy and Indirect Democracy.

Direct Democracy- For the first time, the direct democracy system was practiced in Ancient Greece. In the system of direct democracy, the people of the country assemble for the enactment of laws required for governance and they implement these rules too. Citizens were also directly involved in the judicial process of the country. As per the provision of democracy, citizens themselves performed these duties. It can be said that citizens have the power to participate directly in the governance process as well as the decision-making process of the country. Switzerland is one of the best examples of direct democracy.

Indirect Democracy- In this type of democracy, citizen participates indirectly in the country's decision-making process through their representatives. In the present society, most of the countries of the world accept indirect democracy as the best form of democracy, because of its large size and vast population. As this system is by the representatives, it is also known as Representative Democracy. A country like India is the best example of indirect democracy and is considered the largest democracy in the world. In India, due to the large populations and vastness of the country, people elect their representatives at the center, state, and local levels.

MAJOR CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

The Greek Philosopher Plato (360 BC) argues that democracy is inferior to various forms of monarchy, aristocracy, and even oligarchy because democracy tends to undermine the expertise that is necessary to properly govern societies. In a democracy, most people, including legislators, do not have the knowledge

that enables them to think well about the difficult issues involved in politics. This lack of political knowledge certainly will affect adversely the functioning of the government.

Illiteracy: Education is necessary for making the citizenry alert and capable of discharging their duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Without an educated citizenry, democracy cannot be a success. Democracy and illiteracy cannot coexist in a country like India. It is because the democratic system of governance can be enriching in such a society where there is a rule of law and the provision of equality. Democracy requires competent leadership, but ignorant and illiterate people cannot choose the right people as their rulers. They also cannot understand the basics of democratic government. As a result, the weak structure of the democratic institutions of an ignorant or illiterate society cannot dynamically promote a healthy democracy. Even today marginalized groups, scheduled casts, scheduled tribes, and minority people especially women population are not able to get minimum education. In a large country in India, the majority of the population does not get an adequate education, how can they participate in the democratic process? Thus, this is the major challenge to democracy in India.

Poverty: In the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2023, India ranks 111th out of 125 countries, indicating a serious level of hunger (Chandra, 2023). Neighboring countries, such as Sri Lanka (60th), Nepal (69th), Bangladesh (81st), and Pakistan (102nd) scored better than India (The Indian Express, 2023). This data revealed that one-sixth of the Indian population is undernourished, 190 million people in India go hungry daily, 30% of children in India aged below 5 are underweight, and 3000 children in India die daily from poor diet-related illnesses.

Sir Angus Stewart Deaton[iv] is a strong critic of India's poverty line, expressing his view that "Indian poverty is measured using a series of household surveys run by India's National Sample Survey (NSS). The results of these surveys have been subject to intense debate in recent years. There are also significant questions about the appropriateness of the poverty lines used by the Government of India. Finally, the Indian consumer price indexes used in the poverty calculations have also been questioned" (Tripathy, 2015).

The Criminalization of Politics: The increasing number of criminalization of politics is one of the major threats to the working of democracy. Generally, it means the direct entry of criminals into the political parties and legislature through elections and the use of criminal methods and tactics to influence the political processes. It makes democracy more disordered and disrupted because here lawbreakers become lawmakers. Therefore, there is the possibility of the breakdown of law and order in society as well as in the functioning of the democratic machinery. Many political parties in India are involved with gangs of criminals to gain political power or for their self-interest. The criminalization of politics has led to a steady erosion of democratic values in society. As India braces for recent Lok Sabha election results, 2572 candidates are crorepatis while 1,643 candidates have criminal cases registered against themselves, according to poll rights body ADR-Association for Democratic Reforms (The Economic Times, 2024). This adversely affects the functioning of Indian democracy in modern India.

Inequality: Article 14 of the Constitution has made clear that no person can be denied his rightful possession just based on caste, color, place of birth, religion, gender, etc. Untouchability has been practiced in one or the other way. Gender-based inequality dates back to the Vedic ages. Even today, Indian society thinks that the realm of politics, public service, or running a business firm are all considered just means of men because they are intelligent. The majority of the women folk particularly in rural India have not been able to break out of the patriarchal system of society. If we want to build meaningful democratic institutions, provisions for a better political representation of women are needed to address today's blatant male domination of many democratic institutions, from parliament to panchayat.

There are also many opportunities for more equitable electoral rules, better safeguards against human rights violations, more decentralized governance, and so on.

Communalism: Communalism is another serious problem facing Indian society today. There is religious fanaticism everywhere in India, thousands of people have been killed, and property worth cores of rupees destroyed. Communalism has become the single most important ideology in contemporary India. Our society appears prone to continuing communal violence with the potential for political destabilization. Communalism is an affront to India's nationalist identity and a shocking blow to our secular culture (Tiwana, 1994, p. 56).

Constitutionally India is a secular state. It means the Indian state has nothing to do with religion. People can freely exercise their religious rituals. The state will not do anything in favor of any religious group. After the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act (1976), the term 'Secular' was added to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. Religion has become an important tool to win the Indian Government's political game. All political parties are the same. All are playing their religious game. Religious minorities are not safe in India. Indian states should be treated equally. However, this is not happening in reality. Therefore, it is a major challenge that Indian democracy is facing.

Casteism: India has a caste-based society that is peculiar. The democracy of India has witnessed caste-based politics, caste-basted voting patterns, and caste-based wars too. In India, the caste system affects the fundamental rights of an individual to live or to grow which is the essence of democracy. In Indian society, the caste system affects democracy at societal and political levels.

Rule of Majority: The campaign of the BJP of Hindu Rashtra to build a Ram temple in Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh) developed this thought of defining democracy as majoritarian democracy promoting the interest of the Hindus in India. Minority rights are in danger. The way the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, RSS, and BJP followers succeeded in demolishing Babri masjid in 1992. Democracy is not only based on majoritarianism; it is a participatory system that is based on the principles of justice, equality, and freedom. When the majority makes a decision, it should respect the rights of the minority people; but this did not happen in the year of 1992 (Mohanty, 1996, p. 804).

Accountability: Accountability must be accepted not only during elections but also throughout the life of the government in power. M.N.Roy believed that to make democracy work, the people should exercise this right day by day, not periodically. Active citizenry is essential to ensure the successful functioning of participatory democracy and make it a reality (Sorabjee, 2006, p. 87). According to Irish patriot Daniel O'Connell, "No man can be grateful at the cost of his honor, no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity and no nation can be grateful at the cost of its liberty'' (Sorabjee, 2006, p. 90). From June 1975 till March 1977 there was a temporary death of democracy in our country. Political leaders are more accountable to their party than to ordinary people. Power is everything in politics.

Tolerance: There should be freedom to express views. Freedom of speech means nothing without freedom of speech. Tolerance is essential in a free democratic society. An authoritarian regime cannot tolerate the expression of ideas that challenge its doctrines and ideals in the form of writing, play, music, or paintings. Intolerance is incompatible with democratic values. The rise of intolerance all around is alarming. It is not confined to any particular political party, group, or sector. Any criticism of Sonia Gandhi and her style of functioning by any Congressperson is visited with unpleasant consequences. Justice Chinnappa Reddy in Jehova's Witnesses case has rightly reminded us that "Our tradition teaches tolerance; our philosophy preaches tolerance; our Constitution practices tolerance. Let none dilute it"(Sorabjee, Indian Democracy: Reality or Myth? We Have Pledges to fulfil, 2006, p. 163). Fighting

between religious groups is a common phenomenon in India. Democracy does not support this. Indian Constitution never supports this.

Leadership: Louis Brandeis rightly reminds us that, "Democracy in any sphere is a serious undertaking. It is more difficult to maintain than to achieve...Success in any democratic undertaking must proceed from the individual". The main need is to revolutionize the mindset of common people. We need persons whom Roy calls 'detached individuals; spiritually free individuals'. Good leadership is very important to the success of democracy. A leader should be free from corruption and impartial, not biased. Indian political leaders are not exempt from this. The former chief minister of Bihar, Lalu Prasad Yadav, is an example of this (The Fodder Scam). India needs a true, impartial, and unbiased leader to succeed in its democracy.

Election: "Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic" (Ambedkar B. R., 2002, p. 484). An MLA of Assam told former PM A.B. Vajpayee in a Lok Sabha debate "Sir, you keep talking about the rapid growth of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from 2 seats in 1984 to the majority party in 1996. But, sir, not all growth is good; some growth is cancerous" (Natrajan, 2009, p. 16). If the governments go against the interests of the common people, citizens can do nothing except wait for the next election (after five years). They are less interested in thinking about the candidates. The party leaders are influencing them. Rigging, booth jams, and threats are very common in elections. India is facing all these challenges. India has to fight against all these to make its democracy very strong and perfect.

Existence of Institutions: Democracy always supports the existence of institutions. In a democratic system, institutions can promote their activities through peaceful means. It makes a democratic system very strong. Individuals must abide by all the rules and regulations of the organization. All functions are divided among institutions. If the state wants to fulfill the needs and demands of the people, then the state has to do so. State is an institution but not all. Political leaders try to subordinate the role of institutions. They try to disable inactive institutions.

Lack of Moral Values of Political Leaders: Parliamentary democracy in India is passing through a severe crisis. There has been a decline in moral values, which have been our guiding spirit. Increasing incidents of booth grabbing, violence, kidnapping or killing of candidates, etc. are serious threats to the existence of parliamentary democracy. Despite various obstacles, India has shown resilience in sustaining democracy. The successful conduct of periodic elections to Lok Sabha, State Legislatures, and other democratic bodies and people's active participation in the electoral process demonstrate their strong faith and trust in the system (Gupta, 1988, p. 765).

Terrorism: Terrorism is another emerging challenge to the functioning of democracy. It undermines democratic governments and kills innocent people. In a democratic country like India, terrorism distorts public debate, discredits moderates, empowers political extremes, and polarizes society. Now, it is a great barrier to the national and international level. Actors like governments, international institutions, and civil society face terrorist violence and mitigate which are the most dangerous political effects not only in India but also throughout the world. India has been facing terrorist problem for many years in Jammu & Kashmir. Terrorist Attacks in the Indian Parliament (2001)[v], Taj Hotel (2008)[vi], Pathankot (2016)[vii], and Pulwama (2019)[viii] are some of the burning examples, which threatened democratic governance in India.

Corruption: Political corruption is another barrier to the working of democracy. There is no news in the newspapers and the T.V. news channels without a single corruption scandal every day. It undermines government legitimacy, democratic values, and good governance. Political leaders use political power to collect the illegal wealth of the country. In a country like India, corruption has direct effects on politics, administration, and institutions. Corruption in the decision-making process undermines faith and

accountability in public policymaking. These include the rule of law in the judiciary and inefficient provision of services in public administration. Corruption may have a direct impact on the economy of the country.

In 1975, Suresh Kohli argued that corruption was a 'ritual of India' (Kohli S. , 1975). In India, at least 120 of India's 523 members of parliament face criminal charges and at least 330 elected members of India's 4,050 Members of Legislative Assembly are defendants in ongoing rape cases in 2013. India ranks 93 out of 168 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index in 2023 (The Hindu, 2024). In an inaugural speech in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), our honorable President Sri Pranab Mukherjee asserted, "There has been no letup in our national efforts to root out corruption; we have to acknowledge our limited success in this regard. Corruption remains a major obstacle to the progress of our nation. It has increased transaction costs reduced efficiency of public services, distorted decision-making processes, and undermined the moral fiber of our society corruption has reinforced inequities and limited access to public service by the common man, especially the poor" (The Economic Times, 2014).

NECESSARY PRE-CONDITIONS FOR DEMOCRACY
Following are some of the prerequisites for strengthening democracy in the world in general and in India in particular.

1. **Democracy & Political Freedom**: The first and foremost pre-condition required for democracy is political freedom. It provides political preferences fully and freely to every citizen of the democratic country. This is the fundamental right of people to organize them politically, through which they can exercise political preferences. In a country like India, people have the right to vote, the right to contest elections, and further have the right to exercise political power.

2. **Democracy & Political Education**: Political education is another successful ingredient required for democracy. It is the best platform where citizens have the right to know the ideas and values of democracy. Political education can enhance people's abilities to constructive criticism of the government to help them arrive at the right decision in the decision-making of the government. It should be part of the education system. By political education, citizens can become effective leaders of tomorrow or can choose their leader wisely without being influenced by unethical factors.

3. **Democracy & Political Consciousness**: Generally, political consciousness means people's awareness of state and politics. It includes healthy competition, tolerance, clear perceptions, and consensus towards governments, political institutions, state, and politics. However, political consciousness is essential for the smooth functioning of democracy.

4. **Democracy & Economic and Social Security**: The important ingredients for a successful working democracy are economic and social security. For exercising political rights properly, economic freedom is very essential. It helps to eradicate poverty and provides security towards the availability of opportunities to participate in the production process fairly. To ensure economic freedom for every section of society, the concentration of wealth amongst the few and the eradication of inequality are very much required.

5. **Democracy & Sound Party System**: One of the important functions of political parties is to organize public opinion and create a situation conducive to policy decisions. It runs the governmental functions effectively with formations of the government. To make democracy more successful, a healthy and influential opposition party is necessary to keep a check the ruling government. Thus, a sound and healthy party system is essential for the smooth running of the democratic setup in India.

6. **Democracy & Independence of Media**: According to Edmund Burke, media is the fourth pillar of Democracy. It plays an important and pivotal role in conveying the functioning of the government. It works as the watchdog of democracy. The media also promotes democratic ideas to the public and exposes the activities of corruption, nepotism, terrorism, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to underline that an independent, free, and impartial media is essential in forming and expressing public opinion.

7. **Democracy & Decentralization of Power**: To run the democratic system of governance, the power of the government must be decentralized among every section of the society. Democracy is the best platform for the decentralization of power choices. With the introduction of local self-government by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, of 1992, people directly took interest in the administration and gave full support to the government. Democracy ensures greater participation of the people in governance through the Panchayati Raj System. India's development can be achieved through village development.

8. **Democracy & Free and Independent Elections**: For the smooth working of democracy, independent election machinery is essential which conducts the elections of both union and state legislatures. Article 324 of the Indian Constitution provides an independent election commission designed with constitutional standing for this purpose. To ensure a healthy democracy, electoral reforms, as well as electoral laws, must be formulated throughout the country. The right to vote is indeed an important element of democracy. Thus, independent, impartial, and periodical elections help in establishing the faith of the people and it also respects the opinion of the people.

INDIAN DEMOCRACY IN FUTURE

A keen Political Science student cannot agree that democracy is nearly a form of government, rather than democracy means much more than democratic government, it is a way of life, and it is closely related to a 'good society'. If we look into Dr. Ambedkar's conception of democracy is that it is geared toward social transformation and human progress. Dr. Ambedkar defined democracy as "a form and a method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed" (Kshirsagar, 1997, p. 54). Hence, without achieving the social and economic development of the people, we cannot say ours is a democratic country. So political democracy alone could not be expected to go very far. Dr. Ambedkar expressed in the Constituent Assembly on 26 January 1950- "We are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality, and in social& economic life, we will have inequality. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradiction? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril" (Ambedkar B. , 2007). If we want to strengthen democracy, we must strengthen the better representation of women in politics and wider opportunities for people's involvement in local governance. The spread of education among disadvantaged sections of society, the eradication of corruption, and the end of hunger are all urgent reforms to be taken.

SUGGESTIONS

The following are some necessary suggestions for the successful functioning of Indian democracy-

1. It is important to remember that the electorate is the heart of democracy. The electorate should be imparted with the awareness of political consciousness. It means people can know or be aware of their rights and duties. They must be conscious of their rights and privileges by organizing seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. at the grassroots level.

2. In India's democratic system, proper education should be imparted to the illiterate people so that they can vote sensibly for their respective candidates. Lack of consciousness is dangerous to

democracy. So, in India, this defect can be remedied by providing political education and wide dissemination of knowledge. If the people were not conscious of their political problems, then the system of democratic governance would not be successful.

3. Media, the fourth pillar of democracy should play an active role by bringing about facts and maintaining the true spirit of democracy. The independence of media must be entrusted in India, which can locate the facts of the society to the government.

4. Politicians play a vital role in maintaining democracy. They must have the spirit of democracy and the mind of serving the country as a servant. They should do work for the development of the country and should follow the idea of service to the community. Politicians can do politics based on issues, not based on caste, religion, or communal politics in India. They have to play such a role in the country that the true spirit of democracy must be revived and reconfigured for the smooth running of democracy.

5. The leader of the country should have good moral values and integrity. It is the supreme duty of the citizens to choose their leader based on their conduct and character. The leader should have an intelligent understanding of the management of public affairs. They must provide justice and unselfish devotion to the public interest. Thus, the success of democracy depends upon the high moral standards of the people as well as the government.

6. NGOs, government institutions, and people together should always work cooperatively for the betterment of the country. They must promote initiatives for the economic and social development of the country.

7. Finally, it is the duty of the elected representatives; whether they are ruling or opposing, to be a role model for the youths who are going to take over their responsibilities in the future. They should do away with the practice of blame game, indecent, and violent behavior in four corners of the parliament and legislative.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it can be said that though India is considered one of the largest democracies in the world, in practice, there are various emerging issues or challenges that are responsible for creating obstacles in the smooth functioning of the democratic republic of India. However, it is a matter of discussion that even after 76 years of independence since 1947, India has rampant illiteracy, corruption, and terrorist activities that threaten the backbone of democratic governance. In the modern world, every democracy has faced many economic, social, religious, and political problems. These problems can be solved with the cooperation of the people.

Though we have adopted the federal form of government, the central government is dominating the state governments. The ruling party in power at the center is always misusing Article 356 of the Constitution. The central government has taken over the state's administration, and elections have been suspended. Citizens have been denied their basic civil and political rights, criminalization in politics, corruption, and violation of the election code of conduct there are some demerits, that are destabilizing our democratic Society.

Finally, it can be concluded that we are the members of the largest democratic country in the world, which ensures equal rights and duties to its citizens. So, it is the supreme duty of the politicians, governments, and the people to make collective efforts and actively participate in the functioning of the government and make our country perfect.

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[i] Father of Indian Democracy.

ⁱⁱ Famously known as the Morley-Minto reforms.

ⁱⁱⁱ Famously known as the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms.

ⁱᵛHe is the Scottish-American Princeton Professor who won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 2015.

ᵛ The Indian Parliament attack was a terrorist attack on the Parliament of India in New Delhi, India on 13 December 2001. The attack was carried out by five armed assailants and resulted in the deaths of 6 Delhi Police personnel, 2 Parliament Security Service personnel, and 1 gardener. Security forces killed all five terrorists. Indian authorities accused Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) – two terrorist groups operating from Pakistan of perpetrating the attack; however, LeT denied involvement.

ᵛⁱ The 2008 Mumbai attacks were a series of terrorist attacks that took place in November 2008, when 10 members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, a militant Islamist organization from Pakistan, carried out 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks lasting four days across Mumbai. The attacks, which drew widespread global condemnation, began on Wednesday 26 November and lasted until Saturday 29 November 2008. A total of 175 people died, including nine of the attackers, with more than 300 injured.

ᵛⁱⁱ On January 2 2016, 4 militants belonging to the Islamic terrorist United Jihad Council attacked the Indian Air Force's Pathankot Airbase, part of its Western Air Command. Four attackers and two security forces personnel were killed in the initial battle, with an additional security force member dying from injuries hours later. The gun battle and the subsequent combing operation lasted about 17 hours on 2 January, resulting in five attackers and three security personnel dead. Further three soldiers died after being admitted to hospital with injuries, raising the death toll to six soldiers.

ᵛⁱⁱⁱ The 2019 Pulwama attack occurred on 14 February 2019, when a convoy of vehicles carrying Indian security personnel on a vehicle-borne suicide bomber at Lethapora attacked the Srinagar National Highway in the Pulwama district of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. The attack killed 40 Indian Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel as well as the perpetrator-Adil Ahmad Dar, who was a local Kashmiri youth from the Pulwama district. The responsibility for the attack was claimed by the Pakistan-based Islamist terroristgroup, Jaish-e-Mohammed.India blamed neighboring Pakistan for the attack, while the latter condemned the attack and denied having any connections to it. The attack dealt a severe blow to India–Pakistan relations, consequently resulting in the 2019 India–Pakistan military standoff. Subsequently, Indian investigations identified 19 accused. By August 2021, the main accused along with six others had been killed, and seven had been arrested.

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