A STUDY OF EMERGING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES TO INDIAN DEMOCRACY

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Abstract –

This Research paper is discusses about concept of democracy, development of Indian democracy. There is lot of issues and challenges faced by Indian democracy are discussed like corruption, poverty, illiteracy, casteisms, horse-trading in politics, criminalization of politics and violence, new education policy, gender discrimination, communalism, regionalism etc.

This Research paper also focuses on the various strategies for improve the Indian democracy. Also useful in finding the corrective measures for improving the Indian democracy. Also focuses on roles of citizens in making an efficient and successful democracy. For a better understanding of the same, we discuss this in this research paper.

Key words: criminalization of politics and violence, new education policy, gender discrimination, communalism, regionalism

Introduction –

India is the largest democratic country in the world. We are proud to be the largest democracy in the world. For more than sixtyfive years we have witnessed the conduct of successful elections, peaceful changes of government at the Centre and in the States, people exercising freedom of expression, movement and religion. India has also been developing and transforming economically and socially. At the same time we, quite often, listen complains about prevalent inequalities, injustice or non-fulfillment of expectations of certain sections of the society. These people do not feel themselves participative in the democratic process.

We know that democracy means 'government of the people, for the people, and by the people'. It means democracy is not limited to just a process of election, but also fulfilling social and economic aspirations of the people. In India we keep on debating these various aspects of democracy and its achievements and issues as well as challenges. Important issues like horse-trading in politics, the anti-defection law, pros and cons of post-poll alliances and discretionary powers of the governor has brought to light the various challenges facing Indian democracy. For a better understanding of the same, we discuss this in this research paper.

Some objectives of this paper are -

1.   To understand the concept of democracy.

2.   To understand the development of Indian democracy.

3.   To identify current issues and challenges being faced by Indian democracy.

4.   To explain the roles of citizens in making an efficient and successful democracy.

5.   To suggest some corrective measures for improving the Indian democracy.

Democracy -

Let us begin with understanding the meaning of democracy and the conditions that are essential for its successful functioning. This will help us in appreciating the challenges to Indian democracy. Former President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln said, "Democracy is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people." The term 'democracy' comes from the Greek word demokratia which means "rule of the people".

Democracy is defined as a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections. When you examine the definitions of democracy, as suggested above, you will find that most of those definitions define democracy as a form of government which is run by the elected representatives.

Emerging Issues and Challenges -

Since last decades Indian democracy has faced number of challenges as well as there is lots of issues are created by political parties. New Ethical wrong trends are coming-up like horse-trading in politics, criminalization of politics and political violence. That's affects the general people in country. Now days it is seen that the Indian democracy is not properly worked in any way.

Since independence India has been functioning as a responsible democracy. The same has been appreciated by international community. It has successfully adapted to the challenging situations. There have been free and fair periodic elections for all political offices from the panchayats to the President. There has been smooth transfer of political power from one political party or set of political parties to others, both at national and state levels on many occasions.

India is a very large country full of diversities – linguistically, culturally, and religiously. At the time of independence it was economically underdeveloped. There were enormous regional disparities, widespread poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and shortage of almost all public welfare means. Citizens had enormous expectations from independence. As mentioned above, India has changed a lot. Yet, there are various challenges that the country faces in terms of fulfillment of expectations of various sections of society. The challenges come both from prevailing domestic and international conditions as well as lack of adequate prerequisites for a smooth functioning of democracy.

Some challenges were found like Illiteracy, Poverty, Gender Discrimination, Casteism, Religious Fundamentalism, Regionalism, Communalism, Corruption, and Criminalization of Politics etc. all are the major challenges in front of Indian democracy.

Anti-Defection law does not seem to be doing much to stop MLAs from defecting. This is primarily because MLAs are offered back-door entry to assemblies by rival parties. Ethics of post-poll alliances, unlike pre-poll alliances, where the voters are aware of whom they are voting for, post-poll alliances present a new set of challenges. The post-poll alliance is seen as a betrayal of the trust of the voters by many. Misuse of data on social media sites, privacy of users and the power of social media to influence important political outcomes. Dynastic politics, lack of strong opposition at the centre and Religion based politics. Freebies given by political parties during elections.

We have moved towards multi-party system, with fractured mandates becoming the norm. Another issue is that of the discretionary powers of the governor. Government formation now seems to be like who approaches the governor the fastest to stake claim to form the government. We saw a situation of Maharashtra state government in last few days about the government formation and role of governor of Maharashtra state. Four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court held a press conference and raised a banner of revolt against the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The duration for which Parliament meets in India, compared with other democracies, is short. As well Disruptions in parliament by the members of parliament is becoming most issue.

ROLE OF CITIZENS IN AN INDIAN DEMOCARCY

The role of citizens of India in democracy is very important. As citizens of India, do we really appreciate the role of a citizen in a democracy? Why is this role so important? Generally, it is believed that the government rules the people who have to respect the political authority and obey it. They are there to be governed. But don't you think that this is not so in a democracy? The people who are citizens in a democratic system like India cannot and ought not remain passive and treat them as governed. In fact, a democracy can be successful and vibrant only when citizens imbibe and reflect in their mindset, thinking and behavior the basic values like equality, freedom, secularism, social justice, accountability and respect for all. They have to appreciate the opportunities for their desired roles and play proactive roles to actualize the goals of democracy.

Conclusion–

The citizens must respect the law and reject violence. Every citizen must respect the rights of his or her fellow citizens, and their dignity as human beings. No one should denounce a political opponent as evil, just because of holding different views. People should question the decisions of the government, but not reject the government's authority. There is need for collaboration among governmental agencies, political parties, civil society and citizens in general.

The corrective measures that are needed to meet the challenges to Indian democracy are focused around the issues and concerns like universal literacy i.e. education for all, poverty alleviation, elimination of

gender discrimination, removal of regional imbalances, administrative and judicial reforms and sustained economic, social and environmental development.

Indian democracy can adequately respond to all the challenges when it moves forward on the path of sustainable development. Sustainable development is a pattern of using resources that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for future generations to come. The term was used by the Bruntland Commission (1987) which coined what has become the most often-quoted definition of sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Voter education, electoral reforms and periodical highlighting of the performance (or nonperformance) of elected representatives should be high priority. People must exercise their right to vote, participate in democracy and contribute towards the development of the country. The youth must be aware of the problems that the country is facing and choose the candidate who is most likely to bring about a change. Democracy cannot survive without both citizens' participation and politicians' accountability. The promises of democracy can only be realised through collective action in civil society. The state must respect the articulation of the politics of voice and not just the politics of the vote.

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