

Indian Politics @75: Issues And Challenges

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Abstract:

India to play a larger role in the global economy, and for it to become more efficient, competitive, and resilient. In his 2020 address to the nation, he said that the 21st century could belong to India if the country makes itself "self-reliant". But for India to fulfil these ambitions, it will have to meet the health and development needs of its people. Many millions of Indians are still without access to quality health services. Despite the launch of several headline grabbing policies, Modi and state leaders are failing a huge swathe of India's citizenry. Gender inequality is still a major barrier to the health and development in India. There is a continued female survival disadvantage and wide gender discrimination. Malnutrition and anaemia are unacceptably high and have barely improved despite supplementation programmes. Relative to men, women have less access to health care and female labour force participation has dropped considerably. Gains made in the areas of domestic violence, child marriage, and dropping out of school were reversed during the pandemic. This paper attempts to study how the Indian society is hungry for more transparency in public life and political about the financing and internal functioning of Indian political parties. India, being a democratic nation, has achieved many praises but the feud between the openness of a democratic nation and the preservation of secrecy has been a longstanding issue.

Key words: political parties, India, Transparency, Democracy, RTI, Public Trust, Party System

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I. Introduction:

India is poised to become the world's most populous country during 2023. The demographic dividend has resulted in an expanded young population, but fertility is now stabilising. As a result, India has an opportunity, for a limited period, to reap the potential benefits. To capitalise requires investment in the health and wellbeing of its people. The Government must do more than appeal to nationalistic interests and rely on eye-catching health care policies without any accountability for their effectiveness. It must safeguard the right to health and quality health care for all its citizens. It must move from a curative approach to health, to a preventive one. It must embrace, and not fear, the role of civil society. It must invest in young people so that they can participate fully in the economy and society. It must ensure that social safety nets are there for those who need them. It must address the social, political, commercial, and cultural determinants of health. And it must recognise that unless every Indian, irrespective of gender, caste, class, religion, or region, can realise their full potential, enabled and supported by the state, any aspiration of becoming a truly global power will remain a mirage. One fifth of humanity and the world's largest democracy completing 75 years of independence, it is not only a time for reflection but also a time to take bold actions for an inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous future. The shadow of COVID-19 looms large over the economy despite some signs of economic recovery. The pandemic has exposed major structural weaknesses in the economy as well as its governance. Beyond the pandemic, other major systemic challenges climate change, disruptive technology, rising inequality, and rising majoritarianism merit urgent attention.

The reasons for Indian democracy's success are much debated. Some factors are deeply structural, others more contingent. For one, India's dizzying plurality of faith and language groups dispersed rather than stoked communal tensions after independence. The actions of India's founders also proved momentous. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi or Mahatma Gandhi's construction of a participatory and grassroots Congress Party created, for the first time in Indian history, nationwide demos upon which democracy would later rest. The First Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, established norms for future premiers, including deference to the judiciary, Parliament, and party consensus. The question of Indian unity dominated the 80s as Sikh, Tamil, and Assamese nationalism turned violent, resulting in the assassinations of two prime ministers. Indira Gandhi fell at the hands of two of her Sikh bodyguards in October 1984, following Operation Blue Star. Her second son, Rajiv, though he was in opposition at the time, perished in a bombing conducted by the LTTE (Liberation of

Tamil Tigers Eelam), a Sri Lankan terror outfit in 1991. Both killings revolted the wider public and extended Congress' electoral lease on life. Accordingly, the government managed the outbreak of separatist agitation with a mixture of repression for militants and conciliation for moderates, which in the long run proved successful. The Hindutva vision of a homogenous, centralised body politic united by shared culture and belief clashes with the reality of India and the pluralism of India's founders. The Indian Constitution guarantees the equal treatment of all faiths and ensures that the diverse groups that make up Indian society obtain adequate representation in Parliament and the state legislatures. This secular, democratic, and federal pluralism is framed and regulated by strong intermediary, counter-majoritarian institutions like the courts, the civil service, civil society, and the press. As this system begins to degenerate, India appears to be on the cusp of a kind of second founding, a founding guided by an exclusivist ideology that threatens to undo the achievements of past generations. When constitutional norms and the liberal international order are facing backlash around the world, Indian democracy's future course will be of great significance for the overall direction of global politics in the 21st century.

Transparency makes citizens aware of the working of the government and its functioning. One of the pillars of a democratic nation is the wellness of people and a democratic government molding their ways of ruling according to the people of the nation. The sensitivity of public opinion is primitive in deciding the success of the government in ruling the nation. The conflict has seen a surge in recent times. As a result, the government has received major criticism from the people and media. Questions have been raised on the transparency of the government. Voices of bringing political parties under the Right to Information Act, 2005 have been raised to which every government has been reluctant to address the issue at large. Governments act as an intricate link between the citizens of the country and the transparency in the thriving of the nation. The key issue of accountability is linked with how closely the constitution of the party matches its actual organization and its activities and how the manifesto of the party released before the elections is reflected in the performance of the party when in power. Intra-party democracy has the potential to promote a 'virtuous cycle' linking ordinary citizens to government, benefitting the parties that adopt it and more generally contributing to the stability and legitimacy of the democracies in which these parties compete for power. It plays an important role in bringing in competition, participation and representation inside the party. A lot of academic attention has been paid to the citizen dissatisfaction with political parties that are viewed as overly hierarchical and dynastic. Greater internal democracy would engage all members of the political party giving space to a mix of ideas and providing incentives to the members.

India of today has capitalist's objective, a socialist plan and a communist minded bureaucracy, where profit is considered ill-intentioned and bordering criminality. Bureaucracy has bartered India's development by seeking favours at the cost of the nation's future. When we complete 100 years of independence, about 20 percent of our population will be senior citizens (about 34 crores), which was India's total population when we achieved freedom. So, we have to serve and care for the population India had when it achieved freedom. Our dependency ratio will undergo a major change and our demographic dividend would have inverted. As we enter the 75th year of independence, India at 75 is a young democracy, aspirational economy and an ageing nation. This Special Issue on 'India at Seventy-Five' aims to explore India's major accomplishments and continued challenges. Each essay will analyse a specific aspect of national development, including politics, the judiciary, the media, human and minority rights, economic development, education, foreign policy, and defence. The authors largely agree that India has made genuine and far-reaching progress since independence on all these fronts. However, they also share the anxiety that the cumulative weight of institutional inertia, politicised identities, and unrealised expectations will continue to hold India back from its promised destiny as an open, free, prosperous, and vibrant member of the global community.

Challenges of Indian Politics:

- Instead of promoting meritocracy, we are still living and promoting entitlements and quid pro quo.
- We have programs for sharing freebies, but we are not focussed on creating wealth.
- We have always tried to be politically correct though economically unviable.
- Individual interests come above national interests.
- Rights come before duties.
- While we are upstreaming aspirations, we are lowering the level of national discourse.
- Instead of data and facts, we believe in unverified perceptions.
- Systems have changed, but mindsets are still the same.

II. Conclusion:

India's first three-quarters of a century as an independent state brought with it great expectations followed by often disappointing results. Though immense headway has been made in alleviating poverty, bureaucracy, illiteracy, and other ills, India still faces multiple interlocking challenges from politico-

institutional decay to under-funded primary education to uncoordinated military strategy. We need an Ecosystems approach and systems thinking. Else we will remain a land of contradictions. Also, the last few decades, India has faced extremism fuelled by vile neighbours, but if we don't pay heed to the climate emergency, we will face internal catastrophes due to ignoring our environment which will decimate development. Already, according to UN, India has lost about 25% of its GDP due to climate change. There is no uniformity of selection process, and often, selection is ad-hoc, resulting in a staggering number of candidates with questionable antecedents. There does seem to be some progress on this issue, with a few political parties beginning to move in the direction of more democratic, accountable decision-making in candidate selection. The issue of government meetings coming under the ambit of RTI needs to be decided. The end of this debate will expose the Union to adopt transparency in their work, which has been non-transparent for a very long time. RTI works for empowering the citizens and bringing transparency in the working of bodies and it will keep on doing that till the final and unambiguous answer to this issue settles.

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