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Threats to Indian Democracy and Possible Way Out

Tirtha Mondal

Assistant professor, Department of Political Science, Deshabandhu Mahavidyalaya, Chittaranjan, West Bengal, India

Abstract:

The Indian polity, much hollered about as the largest democracy in the world, in recent decades, has developed certain trends which keep adversely affecting the inner core of the system. Particularly since the general election held in late 1989 the trend of pre-poll or post poll alliance based mostly on opportunism rather than consistent ideology has developed. This tendency coupled with the menace of money power and muscle power, both in national and state level keeps vitiating the political ambience claimed to be democratic. This reality is getting worsened day by day.

Hereditary trend often tantamount to dynastic rule is another trend cutting across almost all political parties. Secularism has been recognized in the 42nd amendment of the constitution of India. But the prominent political parties both in National and State level even go to the extent of resorting to religious fanaticism. Public Administration often gets menacingly intermingled with religion. These are the feudal trends overpowering the democratic norms. The reality is getting worsened when we come across that the menaces of religious fanaticism is countered with another form of religious fanaticism. That most of the prominent political parties subjugate to the big capital house is another trend uncalled for. Democracy, supposed to be a political system for the people, of the people and by the people, sounds a mockery in its trend to find an iconic or superman image projected as the savior of the people. All these are the alarming trends to be reckoned with.

Key Words: Indian Democracy, Political Violence, Secularism, Political Ideology, Dynastic Rule.

Introduction: The Indian polity, much hollered about as the largest democracy in the world, in recent decades, has developed certain trends which keep adversely affecting the inner core of the system. The Institution mostly affected is the legislature. The factors responsible for this are to be attributed to various social, economic and cultural issues. The individuals, supposed to be participating in democratic system must satisfy some preconditions to make the system successful. Adequately educated people alone are conscious enough to be significantly participators in a democratic system. A system can be

termed as a genuine and comprehensive democracy only when it fulfills both political and socio-economic aspects of people's participation and satisfaction.

Objectives of the study:

- 1) To have an analysis of the history of development of democracy in India
- 2) To get an idea of the democracy prevalent in India
- 3) To know the obstacles faced by democracy in India
- 4) To find possible way out of these obstacles and impediments.

Research Methodology: The nature of the subject presently dealt with is thematic. The methodology followed, therefore, has been based on study and analysis of secondary documents relevant to the subject. The specific viewpoint pertinent to the subject concerned has been pivotal in elaborating the theme the present work is dealing with. The number of secondary works, duly referred to as and when required, have been gone through with a view to collecting material and interpreting them in terms of the theme in question. Apart from these, a number of articles published in journals or elsewhere, too, have been studied to have smooth headway leading to establish the proposed research work. The entire process has purportedly been aimed at finding a sound logical basis for the thesis to stand on firmly.

Obstacles Indian Democracy Needs to Overcome: Legislature, as is well known, is one of the important pillars of parliamentary democracy. Legislature cannot afford to be polluted by any means. But the fact of the matter stands that, owing to various reasons the Indian legislature at all the level is getting vitiated.

Particularly since the general election held in November 1989, the trend of pre-poll and post-poll alliance based mostly on opportunism rather than consistent Ideology have contributed to this pollution. Political parties with different political Ideology and programme are supposed to seek peoples' mandate. There should be transparency in the entire approach. Unholy alliance is the result of sluggish political Ideology. A political party adhering to a consistent political Ideology can ill afford to indulge in such practices. The flip side of this coin is resorting to money power and muscle power. Political parties, especially is the third world countries often resort to violence to distort the electoral process with a view to wresting power. Violence contravenes the core value of democracy. Democracy is all about resorting to rationality which leads to health debate and discussion among political parties upholding antagonistic political ideology. A modern society thrives exclusively on the cultivation of a vibrant democracy which alone can address the requirement a rational human being. The lack of true democratic value can be attributed to and held responsible for the outbreak of fascism and autocratic polity. Political parties, in a democratic setup, must abstain from resorting to violence. Political parties participating in an election use violence, intimidation and conflict to influence the results or timing of an election. This is particularly true when a particular side perceives the process as unfair or exclusive. As Jeff Fischer rightly observes, "when electoral violence occurs under these circumstances, it is not a product of an electoral process; it is the breakdown of an electoral

process. The challenges, therefore, is to ensure that elections are fair, credible and transparent. (Kumar, 2015)

The widespread rigging and other malpractice particularly in some areas of the country are evident from various media report. Even the judiciary has often to intervene to streamline, though not always successfully, the election process. Inflow of huge money, often what is called Black money is a menace. This is an open secret that political parties indulge in buying voter. Recent events in Maharashtra that culminated in to the toppling of Uddhab Thakre government is an ugly instance of the evil perpetrated by Black money. A chunk of MLAs belonging to the Shiv Sena party were flown to Guwahati Via Gujrat and accommodated there in five Star hotel is too nasty an event to fit for democracy. The political dispensation in India currently at the helm of affairs can hardly shed off the moral responsibility of these ugly developments is the sphere of politics. (htt2) Horse trading and Floor-crossing are now the features of Indian democracy. The MPs and MLAs elected with the ticket of are particular party often demean themselves as salable commodities with sheer disregard for democracy.

The 42nd amendment of the constitution has recognized India as a secular state. (Pylee, 2009) But it sounds a sheer mockery when the prominent political parties, both in national and state level, often go to the extent of resorting to compromising the secular values and bow down to the religious fanaticism. Public administration often gets menacingly intermingled with religion. The reality is getting worsened when we come across the fact that the religious fanaticism is often countered with another form of religion fanaticism.

Besides, there are hereditary trends which are often tantamount to dynastic rule. Political parties cutting across their varied political ideology often indulge in this practice. These are the feudal features overpowering the democratic norms in Indian Polity.

Democracy, in the true sense of the term, demands sovereignty of the people. But the prominent political parties claiming to be the champion of democracy often subjugate to the big capital house which, in its turn, tend to influence the policies of the government.

Democracy supposed to be a political system with government of the people for the people and by the people sounds a mockery to find an iconic or super-man image projected as the savior of the people.

All these are the alarming trends vitiating our legislative system. The peoples' representatives, if elected through this vitiated process, can do little to justify their responsibility. The MPs and MLAs with criminal background is not a rare phenomenon is present Indian Democracy. Democracy is necessarily to be pre-condition by vibrant participation of conscious citizens. Democracy is not to be confined to the domain of politics only. It has deeper and wider connotation to involve persons having self-dignity. Democracy, as properly known as a system of the people, for the people and by the people, can ill- afford to do without dignified participants. But, unfortunately, the recent trend, especially in the third world countries including our country, is suggestive of sorry state of

affairs. Criminalization of politics and politicization of crime almost is the flip side of the same coin. Common people who are supposed to play an assertive role, now a days often are terrorized by criminal elements. Most of the so called main stream political parties do indulge in using the miscreants. People are intimidated. The administrative machinery, instead of standing by helpless common people, play a negative and destructive role is contravention of the norms of democracy. Rule of law sounds a mockery. Criminals, pretending to be servants of people, run amok to fulfil then personal agenda at the cost of common people's interest. The politicians are thriving today on the basis of muscle power provided by criminals. The common masses who constitute the bulk of voters are in most cases are reluctant to take effective measures that would curtail the criminal activities. Once the political personalities join the criminal elements, the nexus becomes extremely dangerous. Many of the politicians chose muscle power to gain vote bank in the constituency, and normally they assume that if they were unable to bring faith in the community, then they would generate fear or threat to get the power in the form of election. (Gulshandeep, 2020)

Challenges: Optimism rather than getting overpowered with pessimism is the need of the time to standby Indian democracy. We as responsible and conscious citizens cannot afford to get bogged down with these negative trends of Indian Polity. Silver lining even in the darkest cloud must be looked for. We must not forget that Indian democracy has time and again survived crisis.

Citizens' forum at various level of society has to be formed to guard against the menacing trend. These forums would make people aware of the true value of democracy. Firm adherence to the democratic norms must be resorted to combat money power, muscle power, religious fanaticism and hereditary trends.

The election commission of India in recent years, has introduced an option NOTA (None of the above), giving a voter a wider scope to exercise his/her choice. Any voter upgraded to democratic consciousness through the awareness programme' of citizens' forum may have their democratic right more significant. These voters would think twice to vote for any political party indulging in unholy opportunistic alliance and any candidate with the track record of horse trading and floor crossing.

The citizens' forum can also take up programmes to generate awareness among people regarding the just and proportionate distribution of National Resources. The political parties ruling the central government must desist from using the office for gaining political milage. The central government often is alleged to deprive state on ground of political rivalry. Conscious citizens must guard against such political vindictiveness at the cost of economics development. In a feudal system a healthy reciprocation between Central Government and the states must be maintained in order that a democracy runs significantly. The same applies with regard to the relation between a state government and the local self-government under the jurisdiction. A proper reciprocation will guarantee responsible participation of all concerned towards the well-being of common people. In the context of contemporary Indian

politics, some trends, it can be apprehended, are alarmingly getting prominent. Extra constitutional interference of the governor into the business of the state government is one of these unhealthy trends. The recent cases of relations between the governor and the state governments of West Bengal and Kerala can be referred to. Besides, since the introduction of constitution, there are instance galore where the governors have allegedly worked as the agents of the central government. An elected state government, if democracy has any significance, does not deserve this. Any fair minded and impartial observer can have no doubt that having regard to the growing responsibility of the states the distribution of taxes and revenues is very unfair to the states too favorable to the Centre. (Rani, 2014). Last but not the least the Unity of people alone can do the best. The framers of our constitution had designed it to create an India as a Unity in diversity. It is our responsibility to translate this Ideal into a Reality.

Conclusion: Direct democracy with active participation of each and every citizen is not feasible in the present day. Nor it is desirable in contemporary India owing to huge population. That is why representative democracy has replaced direct form of democracy which was feasible in ancient Greek with limited population. Yet, representative democracy, otherwise termed as 'indirect democracy', with compliance of a number of pre-conditions, can still be significantly functional towards the wellbeing of common people. Political forums like various civil right groups which, with their sincere and persistent activities can contribute greatly to ensure democratic values. Recent events like farmers movements demanding to revoke the three agriculture acts has been a glaring example. Media-both print and electronic, the fourth pillar of democracy, as the recent trends in our country go, have been, to a great extent, along the path of deviation. Yet there are some silver linings in the thick and dark cloud. Some YouTube channels are doing valiant job which should have been carried out by the so called main stream media. These YouTube channels, with their large subscribers and followers, are doing their level best to set Indian democracy on the right track. In addition to all these the educated and liberal minded people too have moral duty to generate awareness against any sort of onslaught upon our democratic set up. Each and every educated person, by virtue of his/her contribution, can play this role of whistle blower. Every person, which ever stratum of the social setup he or she may belong to, can be the watch dog. This would be tantamount to being active participator. Conscious role of every single liberal person in contemporary India can be a game changer. Indian democracy has witnessed the gloomy picture of emergency declared in the year 1975. But people of India did not hesitate to get around. All these are indicative of optimism. The tunnel of is never too long to be endless. Democracy in India, by virtue of its inherent strength, must survive the threat that wreaks havoc, albeit for the time being, if and only if every conscious liberal citizen musters courage to chip in whatever he or she can.

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