INDIAN DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT: AN OVERVIEW

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"Many forms of Government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time".

--Winston Churchill [1]

Abstract

India is the largest democracy in the world. The foundation for Indian democracy was laid much before independence. Many factors played crucial role in making India as a democratic country. Firstly, India's prominent leaders involved in gaining freedom from Britishers' were educated from London. Secondly, after the Second World War, the waves of democracy had swept India along with many other colonial countries. Thirdly, the ancient Indian culture had features of democracy in it, therefore it had comfortably adapted to it. After India received her Independence, many Western scholars such as Lucian Pye and Mill had raised doubt over the life of Indian democracy. John Stuart Mill, an exponent of an authority on representative institutions of modern democracy, subtly expressed his apprehensions over the possibility of success in the functioning of Parliamentary institutions in plural societies. He remarked that the deeply divided communities on ethnic basis will not sustain Parliamentary democracy. It was further strengthened by Lucian W. Pye by bringing enough evidences to portray that the political processes and performances of the democratic institutions are influenced by ethnic considerations. Thus the society which is deeply divided on the basis of caste and communal consideration will not have the resilience to absorb the finer elements of the democratic institutions in the body politics. Despite all the odds, democracy in India continues to sustain for more than six decades. This paper makes a serious attempts to identify and analyse those factors which has helped India to sustain its democratic principles for more than seven decades.

Key Words: Democracy, Institution, Party system, Election, Pluralism, Judiciary

Introduction

For anything that has ever been said about Indian democracy, there is every chance that it's opposite has also been asserted. If some people have described democracy in India as an anomaly, others have seen it as an ideal case for testing democratic theory[2]. If there are those who marvel at its resilience and endurance, there are also those who see it as hopelessly fragile. If some are impressed by the multiple levels and forms of participation, others regard this as a mask that conceals the reality of unequal access[3]. Indeed, if there is, in the study of Indian politics, any single issue that remains unvaryingly contentious, and on which there are as many verdicts as there are scholars, it is surely the complex trajectory of India's fifty- year experiment with this unique political form[4].

For the rest, everything about Indian democracy that appears unfamiliar or mysterious in terms of western democracies has been flung into the basket of Indian exeptionalism. That basket is now bulging at the seams, and even overflowing as almost everything that is central to India's democratic experience now lies in it, and the lid no longer fits. In the pages that follow, through this study attempts have been made not only to merely evaluate the success of Indian democracy[5].

This paper has been broadly divided into two sections. First section, discusses the origin of democracy especially in the developed countries such as Britain, America and France. The second part of

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[1] Former Prime Minister of United Kingdom, Speech in the House of Commons (1947-11-11), The Official Report, House of Commons (5th Series), 11 November 1947, Vol. 444, CC. 206–07

[2] Majumdar, A. K. *Democratic Theory and Its Application to Indian Politics*. Jaipur: R.B.S.A. Publishers, 1999.

[3] Katherine Fierlbeck, *Globalising Democracy: Power, Legitimacy, and the Interpretation of Democratic Ideas*(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) 13

[4] Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Democracy in India*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001) 1

[5] Ibid

the first section concentrates on the history of democracy in India and third part throws light upon strengths or positive aspects of Indian democracy.

A Brief History of Democracy

The political philosophers believe that the origin of democracy could be traced back to the ancient Athens (508 BCE) of Greece[6]. Contrary to that view, political scientists like Amritya Sen view that the democratic form of government was existed in other parts of the world as well much before 5th BC[7]. However, early ancient Indian history records reveal that in settling disputes on social and religious matters, public discussion was conducted in a democratic manner. The best example was that the Buddhist council meeting, after the death of Gauthama Buddha in India. For instance, to settle the differences and to find amicable solution, the first Budhist Council (400 BCE) met at Rajagriha (Modern Rajagir) and the second meeting was held at Vaisali (500-520 BCE) after around hundred years. The last one was held in the second century AD in Kashmir. All these meetings of the councils were met to solve the differences based on open debate and discussion[8]. Further a Greek Historian Diodorus[9] in his writing mentioned that democratic and independent states were existed in India as well[10].

Moreover, during the medieval period, evidences suggest that the early seventh century Buddhist prince Shotoku from Japan, who was a Regent to his mother, Empress Suiko, drafted a democratic constitution of seventeen Articles', in 604 AD which is much in the spirit of the Magna Carta signed six centuries later in 1215 AD[11]. Shotoku constitution says that, a decision on any important matter should not be made by one person alone. It suggests that decision should be made based on open discussion. Some scholars view that the constitution framed by Shotoku was inspired by Buddhism which laid the foundation for Japanese democracy in the later period[12].

It is necessary to mention that Uttaramelur inscription clearly reveals the conduct of election code, qualification of people's representatives and good governance and highlights the democratic tradition prevailed in Tamil civilization[13]. However the western developed capitalist countries laid the strong foundation of constitutional democracy.

England is undoubtedly called as mother of parliamentary democracy. Its history of democracy goes back to the conquest of William of Normandy after 1066 A.D. Since he was facing difficulty in ruling both England and France together, he introduced decentralization of power by dividing England into many parts and authorized the noble men such as Barons, Earls and Dukes (who were very loyal and fought war with him) as local administrators. Their work was to collect the tax and also to help the king by sending soldiers to fight war. These noble men were called Tenants-in-Chief. They had further divided their land and given to the Norman knights who had also fought well in battle. These knights were known as Sub-tenants.

However in the later period King William had lost control over these noble men. Consequently to make law, the King had to take the consent of the great council which consisted of Arch Bishop, Bishops, Earls, Barons and Abbots.

Nevertheless when King John of England started taking unilateral decision, a group of his subjects and the feudal lords compelled him to sign *Magna Carta* on 15th June 1215 which is considered as the great Charter of the Liberties of England because it was an attempt to limit the kings power by law and protect

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[6]Amartya Sen, The *Idea of Justice*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009) 467

[7] Ibid

[8]Sen, Amartya. *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture, and Identity*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005) 15

[9]In another example, after the Great Alexander's invasion on India,

[10]The Library of History of Diodorus Siculus, published in Vol. IX of the Loeb Classical Library edition, 1947 http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/18A*.html

[11] Sen, , *The Argumentative Indian*, 15

[12] Ibid

[13] T. S. Subramanian, Uttaramerur Model of Democracy, *The Hindu*, accessed on: 20/10/2014, http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/uttaramerur-model-of-democracy/article243997.ece

their rights[14]. This charter is widely known throughout the English speaking world as an important part of the protracted historical process that lead to the rule of constitutional law in England and beyond[15].

Ever since the signing of the Magna Carta the democratic history of England was beset with so many civil wars, conflicts and blood shed revolutions initiated by nobles, opposition parties, religious heads, and popular movements which gradually reduced the power of absolute monarch into a titular monarch and strengthened the power of parliament. Further the English parliament which was dominated by House of Lords gradually lost its power to the House of Commons. The following Charter and Acts paved the way for the strong Parliamentary Democracy in England.

- Charter of Liberties (1100) - served as the model for the Magna Carta (The Great Charter) in 1215.
- Magna Carta (1215) — largely repealed today except clauses 1, 13, and 39
- Provisions of Oxford
- The Petition of Right (1628)
- English Bill of Rights 1689
- Act of Settlement 1701
- Acts of Union 1707[16]
- Act of Union 1800
- Scotland Act of 1998 and Associated Legislation
- Government of Wales Act of 1998 and Associated Legislation
- Northern Ireland Act of 1998 and Associated Legislation
- The Belfast Agreement (1998)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)[17]

United States is the greatest and oldest Constitutional Democracy and the history of direct democracy of amongst non-native Americans in the United States dates from 1750 in the New England colonies.[18] However after the famous American war of Independence the constitution of USA, adopted in 1788, provided the World's first formal blueprint for a modern democracy. American Constitution is well known for its brevity, rigidity and durability. George Washington was elected unopposed as a President in 1789 and again for a second time in 1792. American Constitution emphasizes principles of limited governments, separation of powers, federal principles, division of powers, popular sovereignty, checks and balances, periodical elections and human rights including property rights. However the blacks and women had to struggle and wait for a longer period for their voting rights.[19]. For instance After the US civil war (1861-65), the 15th amendment ratified in 1870, prohibited the states from denying a male citizen the right to vote based on "race, colour, or previous condition of servitude"[20] Similarly American women got the voting right through the 19th amendment of the US constitution during the year 1920.Though American democracy is often appreciated for its two party system, independent judiciary and public opinion, it has been criticized as corporate democracy for denying equal opportunity to women and blacks. For instance the Americans elected the first black President during 2007[21] and yet to elect a woman President. In spite of these limitations America is practicing true federal principles than any other federal governments.

Similarly the French revolution of 1789, has contributed a new political idea and culture to the world. The famous slogans of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Popular Sovereignty have created a new

[14]History Learning Site.co.uk, "Magna Carta", accessed 21/09/2014, http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/magna_carta.htm

[15]HistoryLearning Site.co.uk. 2005., "The British Constitution", accessed on: 20/10/2014, http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/british_constitution1.htm

[16]Act of Union-1707, accessed on : 20/10/2014 , http://collections.europarchive.org/ukparliament/20090701100701/http:/www.parliament.uk/actofunion/

[17]"History of the Constitution of the United Kingdom", *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, accessed on: 20/10/2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Constitution_of_the_United_Kingdom#cite_ref-4

[18] Joseph Francis Zimmerman, *The New England Town Meeting Democracy in Action*. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999) 248

[19]19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Women's Right to Vote, America's Historical Documents, National Archives, accessed on: 20/10/2014, http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/document.html?doc=13&title.raw=19th+Amendment+to+the+U.S.+Constitution:+Women%27s+Right+to+Vote

[20] "15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Voting Rights (1870)", *Our Documents,* accessed on: 20/10/2014, http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=44

[21]The White House, President Barack Obama, accessed on: 20/10/2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama

impact in the history of democracy. The popular writings of Voltaire -Candide (1759) , Montesquieu ('Esprit Des Lois) first published in 1753,The Spirit of Laws (1748) and Rousseau (The Social Contract)[22] motivated the people to revolt against the autocratic rule of Louis XVI. The French revolution is considered as one of the important milestones of modern democracy.

Though the Western Capitalistic Society with the support of national protestant churches strengthened the forces of nationalism and democracy in Europe and the new land, the search for market and the beginning of colonialism and imperialism laid the foundation of anti- democratic imperialistic role of colonial power in most of the third world countries including India. Understandably the Western Europe and the American civilization are gradually strengthening democratic principles at home and at the same time brutally suppressing the democratic and nationalistic movements of the third world which result into anti-colonial movement in the third world[23].

The defeat of Russia at the hand of Japan in 1905 further strengthened the nationalistic forces of the third world countries including India. However the constitutional history of Modern India was started from the year 1773 when the British parliament passed the famous regulatory Act of 1773. This act was the first milestone in the history of Indian constitutional democracy. As discussed elsewhere, the Britishers are known for their Fabian way of approaching things gradually responding the demands of the freedom fighters by enacting so many Charters Acts and reforms[24]. Through these Acts and reforms the British India helped the Indian people to participate in decision making by conducting elections and the limited franchise initiated by the Britishers was further consolidated through the Indian Act of 1935[25]. Subsequently the Swaraj movement initiated by Mahatma Gandhi with the popular support and decline of British Empire after the Second World War helped India to gain independence from the yoke of British colonialism. India is the most disintegrated country- politically, economically, culturally, ethnically and geographically than any other country of the world. There is a saying that democracy is the most matured form of government which could be successfully practiced among the politically matured people for it is based on debate, discussion, dissent and decision making. Obviously the quality of democracy reveals the political maturity of the people and hence it is very difficult to practice democracy among the illiterate and politically immature people. At the time of India's Independence India had 552 princely states with different types of administration along with 9 British provinces. The literacy rate was less than 12 % and the life expectancy was 36 years. The independent India was beset with not only illiteracy but also poverty, scarcity, health problem, unemployment problem, leadership crisis and it was also fragmented because of so many castes and sub castes, languages and religions [26].Under these circumstance, the Western concept of nation-state based on the principle of common homogeneous culture – either ethnic such as race, language and religion cannot be applicable to India. India has a unique and unprecedented history of democratic experiments. The founding fathers had a vision to build a nation, in spite of so many diversities, with the high values of secularism, pluralism, democracy and positive humanism[27].

The Constituent Assembly consisting of great Indians of that time [28] had a lengthiest meeting of 2 years, 11 months and 18 days for enacting Constitution and to draft the lengthiest constitution consisting of 448 articles in 25 parts, 12 schedules, 5 appendices and 98 amendments (out of 120 Constitution

[22]Linda Frey & Marsha Frey, *The French Revolution* (West Port, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004) 185

[23] Central Intelligence Agency was involved in overthrowing   democratically elected President Salvadore Allande of Chile in 1970, ABC News, http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=82588 accessed on: 20.10.2014, and Pakistan's democratically elected Bhutto was removed from power and later hanged with the help of CIA by General Zia-ul-Haq, http://sixhour.com/cia_sent%20bhutto_to_the_gallows.htm , accessed on: 20/10/2014

[24] Acts and Charters are: Regulating Act of 1773 , Amending Act of 1781 , Pitt`s India Act of 1784 , Permanent Settlement Act of 1793, Charters Act of 1793, Charter Act of 1813, Charter Act of 1833 ,The Charter Act of 1853 ,the Indian Councils Act of 1861 ,Vernacular Press Act of 1878 ,Indian Council Act, 1892, Government of India Act of 1909, commonly known as Morley-Minto Reforms **Act**, Rowlatt Act of 1919, Government of India Act of 1919 , Government of India Act of 1935 and Indian Independence Act of 1947

[25]Government of India Act of 1935 has granted Indian provinces the system of autonomy and meticulously laid down the system of parliament, legislature and governmental separation of centre and states

[26] T. K. Kumar, *India: Unity in Diversity* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1992) 355

[27] P M Bakshi, *Constitution of India* (New Delhi: Universal Law Publishing, 2011) 1

[28]Rajendra Prasad, Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, K.M. Munsi ,G.V. Mavalankar ,H.C. Mookherjee, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel ,J.B. Kripalani Gopinath Bardoloi ,A.V. Thakkar and B.R. Ambedkar

Amendment Bills)[29]. Of course there are so many criticisms against Indian Constitution, however the 65 years of constitutional experiment reveals that India is the most successful and self-adjusting popular democracy. The successive election from 1952 to 2014 reveals that Indian democracy is growing strength to strength after every election[30]. At present there are more than 1,400 political parties, which is a record number in the constitutional history of multi-party democracy[31]. The people are successfully and silently changing the government through the ballot[32]. The enthusiastic participation of voters in the election further underlines the democratic culture of Indian electorates. The defeat of Indira Gandhi in 1977 because of her unpopular emergency imposed in 1975 is the classic example of the zero tolerance of Indian voters for any autocratic rule. Indian democracy is further bringing the estranged people from North East and Kashmir to the main stream[33]. Similarly the sidelined tribals and the suppressed people of India have formed their own political parties to mobilize their people to participate in decision making.[34] The 73rd amendment is considered as an important milestone in decentralizing power and thereby strengthening Panchayati raj[35]. Similarly it guarantees two third of reservation for women in administration. The maturity of democracy can be analyzed through so many ways and one among them is the treatment of minorities by the affluent majority. If the minorities are insecure and discriminated the majoritarianism obviously destroy the unity in diversity and above all the democratic principles. Indian democracy is well known for practicing inclusive and matured decision making. For instance, a Kashmiri based minority community Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India, and Lal Bahadur Sharstri who belong to another minority Kayastha caste became the second Prime Minister of India. Similarly, India had a woman Prime Minister- Indira Gandhi, a Gujarati Morarji Desai, a former politician Charan Singh , Western educated Rajiv Gandhi, a Prime Minister from King family VP Singh, Gandhian Economist Chandrasekhar, Telugu speaking Scholar Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, a Pakistani born diplomat turned politician I K Gujaral (13th Prime Minister), Backward Class former Prime Minister Deva Gowda, a bachelor Hindu Nationalist Atal Bihari Vajpayee (National Democratic Alliance), Western Educated Sikh Dr. Manmohan Sing and the Backward Class Narendra Damodardas Modi. Similarly, India has a very good track of Presidents from different communities.

Table 2.1 Presidents of India

No.	Name of the Presidents	Elected	Took Office	Left Office	Vice President
1	Rajendra Prasad	1952 1957	26/01/1950	12/07/1962	S. Radhakrishnan
2	S. Radhakrishnan	1962	13/05/1962	13.5.1967	Zakir Hussain
3	Zakir Hussain	1967	13/05/1967	03/05/ 1969	VV Giri
–	VV. Giri	–	03/05/1969	20 /07/1969	–
–	Mohd. Hidayatullah	–	20/07/1969	24 /07/1969	–
4	VV. Giri	1969	24/08/1969	24 /08/1974	GS Pathak
5	Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed	1974	24/08/1974	11/02/1977	BD Jatti
–	BD Jatti	–	11/02/1977	25/07/1977	–
6	Neelam Sanjiva Reddy	1977	25/07/1977	25/07/1982	Mohd. Hidayatullah
7	Giani Zail Singh	1982	25/07/1982	25/07/1987	R. Venkataraman
8	R. Venkataraman	1987	25/07/1987	25/07/1992	Shankar Dayal Sharma
9	Shankar Dayal Sharma	1992	25/07/1992	25/07/1997	KR. Narayanan
10	KR. Narayanan	1997	25/07/1997	25/07/2002	Krishan Kant

[29] National Portal of India, Government of India, accessed on: 15/10/2014, http://india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india/amendments?page=6

[30] Government of India, Election Commission of India, accessed date: 20/10/2014, http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx

[31]Rahul Verma, Why India Has So Many Parties, *The Indian Express*, accessed on: 11/10/2014, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/why-india-has-so-many-parties/1109357/

[32] SN Post, List of Indian Prime Ministers (1947-2012), accessed on: 21/09/2014 http://sapost.blogspot.in/2012/07/list-of-indian-prime-ministers-1947.html

[33] Jaynal Uddin Ahmed. *Development Vision of North-East India*. (New Delhi: Concept Publication, 2010) 453

[34] Jharkhand Mukhthi Morcha in Jharkhand, Tripura Upajati Tuba Samiti, The Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura (INPT) in Tripura, etc… regional parties based on their tribals and tradition

[35] S. L. Goel, *Panchayati Raj in India: Theory and Practice*. (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 2003) 521

11	APJ Abdul Kalam	2002	25/07/2002	25/07/2007	Bhairon Singh Shekhawat
12	Pratibha Patil	2007	25/07/2007	25/07/2012	Mohd. Hamid Ansari
13	Pranab Mukherjee	2012	25/07/2012	17/07/2017	Mohd. Hamid Ansari
14	Ram Nath Kovind	2017	25/07/2017	Incumbent	

The above mentioned facts undoubtedly reveal that Indian Democracy is moving in a right direction. However, the 66 years of nation building experiences give a mixed result – positive and negative. The following section deals in detail the positive and negative aspects of democracy.

Positive Aspects of Indian Democracy

"Of all the experiments in government which have been attempted since the beginning of time, I believe that the Indian venture into parliamentary government is the most exciting. A vast subcontinent is attempting to apply to its tens and thousands of millions a system of free democracy... it is a brave thing to try to do so. The Indian venture is not a pale imitation of our practice at home, but a magnified and multiplied reproduction on a scale we have never dreamt of. If it succeeds, its influence on Asia is incalculable for good. Whatever the outcome we must honour those who attempt it"[36].

--K.R Narayanan

John Stuart Mill, an exponent and an authority on representative institutions of modern democracy, subtly expressed his apprehension over the possibility of success in the functioning of parliamentary institutions in plural societies. He remarked that the deeply divided communities on ethnic basis will not sustain parliamentary democracy[37]. It was further strengthened by Lucian W. Pye by bringing enough evidences to portray that the political processes and performances of the democratic institutions are influenced by ethnic considerations. Thus the society which is deeply divided, on caste and communal considerations, will not have the resilience to absorb the finer elements of the democratic institutions in the body of politics[38]. Yet the newly liberated nations of Asia and Africa ventured into the adoption of parliamentary democracy which is alien to their political culture. While considering the level and nature of the political culture of the sensations, adoption of parliamentary institutions seemed to be a risky venture. Notwithstanding the high amount of risk, the political pundits of the Afro-Asian nations decided to go in for parliamentary democracy with a hope to change the attitude of the people suitable to handle parliamentary institutions effectively to deliver the goods. The task of the nations at the dawn of independence was to change the type of political culture from parochial to participative in the course of years to sustain parliamentary democracy. Today, the growing crises in governance in many Afro – Asian countries have moved the state away from parliamentary democracy. Yet, India remains in the domain of parliamentary democracy. At the same time the Indian democracy has not reached the stage of perfectness but it's moving towards it. The performance of democratic feature can be understood, after the proper assessment of it.

As far as Indian democracy is concerned it is very hard to assess the performance due to its diversity and vastness. There are many questions to be answered before we ask whether Indian democracy is a success or failure. In fact a few scholars believe that India is not at all democratic country as it does not have any features of democracy.[39] But the world acknowledges India as the world's largest democratic country[40] and so does this study. The countries across the world are marvelled at the success achieved by Indian democracy despite its all negative aspects. Analysing the problems of Indian democracy, very often the scholars ignore the success achieved by India over 60 years period of time. Researchers often give a blind eye to the counts of success achieved by the Indian democracy. A few systematic studies have been carried out to understand the factors behind the success of Indian democracy. One such effort is made by Atul Kohli, Professor in Princeton University. According to him the records on India's democracy suggest that there are two sets of political processes have guided the management of power conflicts. First, a delicate

[36] K. R. Narayanan , *In the Name of the People: Reflections on Democracy, Freedom, and Development*. (New Delhi: Penguin Viking, 2011) xii, 264

[37] John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (Waiheke Island: Floating Press, 2009) 230

[38] Lucian W. Pye, "Identity and the Political Culture", in Leonard Binder et al. *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) 117

[39]Mr. Venugopal, a prominent writer located in Hyderabad has categorically denied that India is a democratic country. For more details please refer appendix where the full interview is displayed.

[40] Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (New York: Pan Macmillan, 2007) 300

balance has been struck and restruck between forces of centralisation and decentralisation. And, second, the interests of the powerful in the society have been served without fully excluding the weaker groups. The record on both of these fronts is far from perfect; the failures have actually put a great strain on Indian democracy. Nevertheless, accommodation of those who mount powerful challenges by granting them greater autonomy and a share of resources has been central to the strengthening of democracy[41].

At the same time many believe that, the very young democratic country would certainly have many short comings which may have to be overcome slowly. This is surely not a cake walk. A decade ago, the eminent Indian sociologist M.N. Srinivas called Indian democracy "a secular miracle of the modern world and a model for other developing countries"[42]. To him Indian democracy is clearly a success story, yet it still is a work in progress. Similarly in many areas India has shown the world that without having any precondition to be a democratic country, a developing democratic country can survive[43].

India has long been hosting free and fair elections[44] leading to peaceful changeovers of power. It has a vibrant, spirited press and independent judiciary, and has spawned political parties all over the ideological spectrum. India is also defended by a military establishment that has remained firmly under civilian control.[45]

Democracy serves as a strong tool for uniting all the people of India irrespective of the language, caste, religion and ethnicity. Despite poverty, unemployment, rampant corruption and wide spread law and order problems India is able to sustain its democratic features. This is mainly possible because of India's constitution that has provided the space for Indian minority to claim their share of development. In addition to that, accommodation of minority in the mainstream, active Judiciary and civil service, powerful popular ruling party have helped democracy in India to get deep rooted. Consociational theory proposed by Arendt Lijipart has proposed the idea that to raise the efficiency of democracy in a multi-cultural society the country needs to have policies in favour of minority. Any policy which affects minority would certainly affect the very ethos of democracy[46]. Likewise many positive aspects are there in Indian democracy which has been discussed in the following section.

Constitution

As mentioned earlier Indian Constitution being the supreme law of the land laid the strong foundation for Indian nation building by underlining the principles of socialism, pluralism, secularism, democracy and positive humanism. The duly Constituted Constituent Assembly consisting of 299[47] great Indians of different walks of life representing different regions had taken 2 years, 11 months and 18 days for enacting Constitution. Indian Constitution is the lengthiest written Constitution[48]. This is longest written Constitution in the World containing 448 articles in 25 parts, 12 schedules, 5 appendices and 98 amendments[49]. It is known for its flexibility, adoptability and also durability. The framers intended to address the need of the people of all walks of life with utmost care by providing special privileges and rights to the weaker section and minorities. Consequently, the constitution became bulkier[50]. Moreover, the founding fathers wanted to give detail accounts of all aspects of administration. Therefore, the constitution gives detail accounts of federal features, secular features, Centre-State relations, citizens, fundamental rights, directive principles of state policy, the executive, the election of President, the bicameral legislature,

[41]Atul Kohli, *The Success of India's Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 298

[42]Sumit Ganguly, "India's Improbable Success", *Journal of Democracy* 19.2 (2008) 170-174, accessed on: 09/10/2014, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v019/19.2ganguly.html

[43] Ibid

[44] Government of India, Lok Sabha Elections, Election Commission of India, accessed 23/11/2014 http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx#,

[45] Sumit Ganguly, "India's Improbable Success", 170-174

[46]Lijphart, Arend, "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 , 1996, 258-268

[47]Parliament of India, Constituent Assembly, accessed on: 20/10/2014 ,http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/facts.htm

[48] A. P. Bhardwaj, *Legal Aptitude and Legal Reasoning for The Clat* (New Delhi: Pearson Publication, 2011) 249

[49]Government of India, Constitution of India, National Portal of India, accessed on: 21/05/2014,http://india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india/constitution-india-full-text

[50]For instance Indian Constitution provides provision for SC /ST minorities: Article 29 Protection of interest of minorities, Article 30 Right of Minorities to establish and administer educational institutions, Article 350 A: Facilities for instruction in mother tongue at primary stage.

Judiciary, state administration, local administration, various autonomous bodies like Election Commission, Finance Commission, Comptroller Auditor General of India CAG etc.

Moreover, in order to meet the changing needs, Indian constitution has been amended for more than 98 times. A serious study of Indian constitution alone satisfies the scholars to appreciate the validity of amendments. Being a young democracy, with multiple identities and a lengthy constitution, a lot of clarity is necessary for clarifying so many complicated issues. The Western scholars and constitutional experts while comparing this with the American Constitution branded Indian Constitution as the lengthiest and most complicated one and the American Constitution as the most brief and rigid constitution. It is necessary to mention here that Indian Union is having only one constitution, of course a lengthy constitution, however, US is having a federal constitution and another fifty constitutions for fifty states. While comparing the two constitutions it is necessary to understand the reality. Indian constitution is more inclusive day by day and addressing the expectations of the people. For instance Right to Information Act (RTI), Right to Education and Food security Act, occasional Judicial activism, war against corruption , dynamism of the free media and above all the vibrant youth are playing a positive role in strengthening the constitutional secular democracy of India[51].

Multi-Party Democracy in India

Scholars classify Democracy into One party democracy, Bi-party democracy, Multi-party democracy, Limited democracy, Titular democracy, De-facto democracy, De-jure democracy and Transitional democracy. However most of them appreciate two party and multi-party constitutional democracies as real democracy. Political parties play an important role in any democratic system. The functions of the political parties have been clearly explained by David Easton in his book. [52]. The political parties are representing the interest of the nation or the majority groups or minority groups or some sects. The main aim of any political party is to mobilise support to capture power by contesting election. America has set an example to the rest of the world for Bi-party democracy, and England has set an example for three and two party democracy and Germans are well known for multi-party democracy. In India, Indian National Congress played a decisive role in mobilising the people for freedom struggle and subsequently emerged as the single largest political party before and after independence. Consequently Congress was in power from 1952 to 1977. However the plurality of India and the democratic rights given by the constitution have created awareness among various ethnic, regional and caste groups to take active part in the political game. The identity politics prompted many people's group to form many political parties. Consequently many regional parties emerged in different parts of India and 1967 onwards many states like Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kerala etc. have succeeded in forming Non-Congress governments. The emergence of many regional parties slowly and systematically reduced the prominence of national parties. However in 1977 the main opposition parties at the national level along with the support of so many regional parties like DMK and Akali Dal formed grand alliance to defeat Mrs. Gandhi for her autocratic rule[53]. This first experiment to form an alternative government to Congress under the Janata party headed by Morarji Desai was not a successful endeavour, for the political parties with different ideologies demonstrate their maturity to form a stable coalition government to meet the expectations of the people. Consequently Congress re-emerged as the only national alternative. Indian democracy again witnessed controversial coalition experiments after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. Under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee the NDA's first experiment was a 13 days affair and however the coalition governments under Narasimha Rao and Vajpayee succeeded in providing stable governments[54]. UPA I and II are the other classic examples of stable coalition. It shows that Indian democracy is demonstrating its maturity day by day. The controversial UPA second government mainly because of so many corruption charges popularised by the ever active media created the wrath of Indian voters and majority people voted BJP as their choice and reduced the strength of ruling Congress party to 44. The Hindutva oriented BJP under the dynamic leadership of Modi guaranteed peace, unity, development and good governance and attracted the new voters and emerged as the majority party in the recently held election.

[51]Atul Kohli, *The Success of India's Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

[52]David Easton has published many books on Political parties such as The Political System Easton, D. (1953). The political system. NY: Alfred Knopf, Easton, D. (1979). A systems analysis of political life, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press etc.

[53] ML. Ahuja, *Handbook of General Elections and Electoral Reforms in India, 1952-1999* (New Delhi: Mittal Publication) 347

[54] Lawrence Ez, *New Dimensions of Politics in India: The United Progressive Alliance in Power* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011) 185

According to the Indian Election Commission Report, there are 1,759 registered political parties in India out of which six are National parties, 54 are State parties, and 1706 unrecognised parties[55]. The growing number of political parties is one way or other strengthening Indian democracy because the side-lined and ignored people of India have started playing their political role by forming their own group to articulate their own demands.

The regional parties like AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Trinamol Congress in West Bengal, Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, Telengana Rashtra Samiti in Telengana, Biju Janata Dal in Odisha, National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, are in power. The above analysis shows that Indian political parties though diversified in nature represent the national interest as well as regional interest apart from ideological base. However the greatest negative side of the Indian political party system is the lack of inner party democracy. At one side the dynasty democracy is providing stability in the party system and on the other side it is creating some sort of slavery and blindness among the party cadres. The charismatic leaders based on their cini-popularity like Jayalalitha or sectarian popularity because of their caste identity are hailed as gods and goddesses[56]. The blind followers and autocratic political party leaders are responsible for practising anti-democratic principles of slavery within political parties. It is one negative aspect of transitional democracy; however the educated youth the vibrant media and other opinion makers are slowly changing the mentality of the people. It is necessary to mention here that a period of 65 years is not sufficient for a young democracy to attain maturity on par with the Western democracies of more than 300 to 500 years. However, Indian democracy and the political party system are moving towards the right direction.

Periodic Elections and Peaceful Transformation of Power

"The 360 million Indians voted over the last month, the world's largest and most fractious democracy once again set a stirring example for all nations.... India's rich diversity sometimes looks like an obstacle to unity. But the latest election has proved that a commitment to resolving differences peacefully and democratically can transform diversity into a source of strength (after 1999 election)."[57]

Periodical election and peaceful transformation of power are some of the important features of constitutional democracy. In the Western, Capitalistic and more matured constitutional democracies like USA, UK, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and also in the other Western European countries the peaceful transfer of power is not an issue at all. However, most of the transitional states which gained independence after Second World War like Asia, Africa and Latin America are often witnessing frequent instability, military coup and civil wars for the people are not matured enough to understand the seriousness of democracy. Here, India is the only exceptional transitional democracy successfully conducting periodical elections except during the period of emergency between 1975 and 77[58]. Mrs. Gandhi imposed emergency and introduced (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) MESA to arrest all the Opposition Party leaders for 18 months and behaved like a dictator cancelling Fundamental Rights imposing strict censorship which created a lot of controversy. Realising her blunder Mrs. Gandhi assured the people during her election campaign that there would not be any emergency for 1000 years. However, she was miserably defeated in the election[59].

Since independence, India has been watched by the rest of the world for its success in conducting periodical election at the National, State and Local levels. Periodical elections conducted by the Election Commission of India for more than six decades reveal the success of Indian democracy[60]. Indian Election

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[55]Government of India, Election Commission of India, accessed on: 02/10/2014,
http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/year2014/EnglishNotification_12032014.pdf

[56]For instance M. Karunanidi of DMK , Jayalalitha of AIADMK, Dr. Ramadas of PMK, Bal Thackeray of Shiv Sena, Mayawathi of Bahujan Samajwadhi Party, Mulayam Singh of Samajwadhi Party, Laloo Prasad Yadav of Rashtriya Janata Dal, Naveen Patnaik of Biju Janata Dal, Mamata Banerjee of All India Trinamool Congress, Farooq Abdulla of National Conference, are the classic examples of private limited party system or family centred dynastic democracy

[57]_____: Mr. Vajpayee's India, *The New York Times*, Published: October 8, 1999
http://www.nytimes.com/1999/10/08/opinion/mr-vajpayee-s-india.html , accessed on: 23/08/2013

[58]One India News, 1947-2009: List of Prime Ministers of India, accessed on: 30/09/2014
http://news.oneindia.in/2009/05/22/1947-2009-list-of-prime-ministers-of-india.html

[59] Government of India, India 6th Lok Sabha (General) Election Results - 1977 , Election Commission of India, accessed on: 02/08/2014, http://www.elections.in/parliamentary-constituencies/1977-election-results.html

[60] Encyclopaedia Britannica, India, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/285248/India/47070/Emergency-rule, accessed date: 2/05/2014

Commission, an autonomous constitutional body is conducting periodical election in all the 29 states according to their requirements providing stability at the state level. The election procedures adopted by the Election Commission like

a) Universal Adult franchise, b) Single member constituencies, c) Secret ballot, d) Joint Electorate, e) Reservation of seats for Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, f) Election Petition, g) women reservation, h) regulating election campaign, i) introducing voters ID, j) Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), k) Regulated Propagandas, l) Independent Election Observer, m) Monitoring election campaign, n) Initiative to curb the influence of money and free bees[61]etc are well appreciated by the rest of the world.

Reservation is India's intervention to empower weaker sections. The reservations are categorised as political, economic, job and educational. According to the Indian Election Code, out of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, 79 seats are reserved for Schedule Castes and 41 seats for Schedule Tribes[62]. Similarly, according to the 73rd Amendment Act 33 % are reserved for women in the local self-government. Further on August 27th, 2009 the UPA government cleared a proposal to amend Article 243 (D) to enhance the reservation for women into 50 %[63]. Subsequently, more than million women started playing active role as leaders in deciding the policies of the local bodies[64]. This reservation not only empowered the socially weaker section of the people but also the women who have been discriminated by the male dominated society for centuries together.

The apathy of the voters is one of the negative aspects of the Western democracies, for the percentage of voters participating in election is not encouraging. However, the strategies of Indian election clearly show that the voters of India are repeating their own record by whole heartedly participating election after election. The table 2.3 and figures depict the total number of voters participated in the successive elections for the Lok Sabha and the percentage of male and female voters. It shows that the people's faith in electoral democracy is growing day by day. Majority of the people believe that the periodical ballot camp brings their desired change. It is the most positive side of Indian democracy.

Table 2.3 Election Statistics - Voting Percentage in Lok Sabha Elections

General Election	Year	Total Electors	Voters Turnout	Male%	Female%	Total
1st	1951	173212343	105950083	-	-	44.87
2nd	1957	193652179	120513915	-	-	62.2
3rd	1962	216361569	119904284	63.31	46.63	55.42
4th	1967	250207401	152724611	66.73	55.48	61.04
5th	1971	274189132	151536802	60.90	49.11	55.29
6th	1977	321174327	194263915	65.63	54.91	60.49
7th	1980	356205329	202752893	62.16	51.22	56.92
8th	1984	379540608	241246887	68.18	58.60	63.56
9th	1989	498906129	309050495	66.13	57.32	61.95
10th	1991	498363801	282700942	61.58	51.35	56.93
11th	1996			62.06	53.41	57.94
12th	1998	605880192	375441739	61.97	57.88	61.97
13th	1999	619536847	371669104	63.97	55.64	59.99
14th	2004	671487930	389342364	52.65	44.65	48.74
15th	2009					56.97%
16th	2014			67.09	65.63	66.4 %

Source: Government of India, Indian Elections, http://www.indian-elections.com/india-statistics.html

Figure 2:1 Election Statistics - Voting Percentage in Lok Sabha Elections

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[61]Cash and gifts for vote it is a curse of Indian election campaign, the political parties are spending huge money to win the votes by distributing so many gifts, mainly in bye election. The Thirumangalam Formulae introduced by the former minister Alagiri was the clear case for winning the election by hook or crook

[62]Government of India, State/UT wise Seats in the Lok Sabha and their reservation status, Election Commission of India, http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/seats_of_loksabha.aspx , accessed on: 26/04/2014

[63]The Indian Constitution, accessed on: 08/07/2014, http://indiankanoon.org/doc/1091659/

[64] India Report, State of Women in Urban Local Government India , accessed on: 21/07/2014, http://www.capwip.org/readingroom/india.pdf
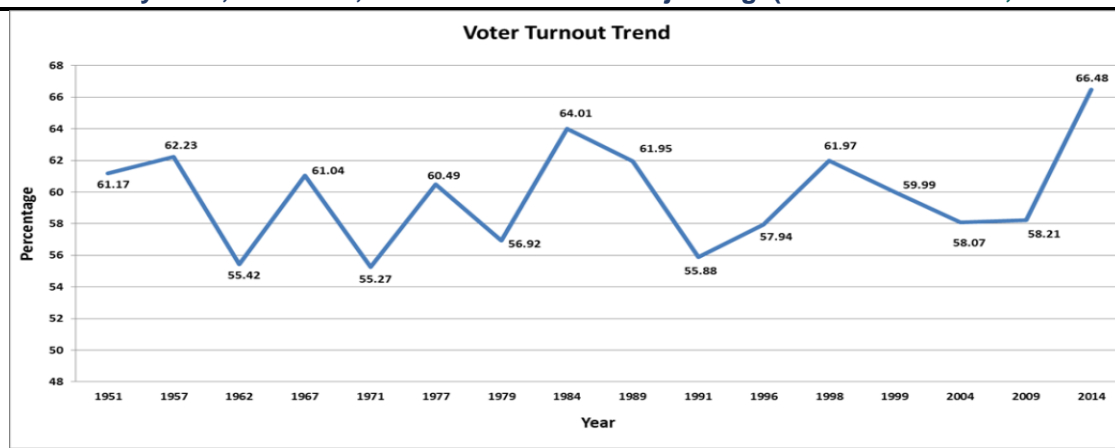
Source: Election Commission of India, http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/GE2014/line.htm

Table 2.4   The Successive Indian Governments After 1952

№	Name	Party (*Alliance*)	Term of Office		Elections (Lok Sabha)
1	Jawaharlal Nehru	INC	15/08/1947	27/05/1964	—
					1952 (1st)
					1957(2nd)
					1962 (3rd)
2	Gulzarilal Nanda	INC	27 /05/1964	9 /06/1964	– (3rd)
3	Lal Bahadur Shastri	INC	9 /06/1964	11 /01/1966	– (3rd)
4	Gulzarilal Nanda	INC	11 /01/1966	24 /01/1966	– (3rd)
5	Indira Gandhi	INC	24 /01/1966	24 /03/1977	– (3rd)
					1967 (4th)
					1971 (5th)
6	Morarji Desai	Janata Party	24 /03/1977	28 /07/1979	1977 (6th)
7	Charan Singh	Janata Party (Secular) *with INC*	28 /07/1979	14 /01/1980	– (6th)
8	Indira Gandhi	INC (I)	14 /01/1980	31 /10/1984	1980 (7th)
9	Rajiv Gandhi	INC (I)	31 /10/1984	02 /12/1989	– (7th)
					1984 (8th)
10	V. P. Singh	Janata Dal (*NF*)	02 /12/1989	10 /11/1990	1989 (9th)
11	Chandra Shekhar	Samajwadi Janata Party *with INC*	10 /11/1990	21 /06/1991	– (9th)
12	PV. Narasimha Rao	INC (I)	21 /06/1991	16 /05/1996	1991(10th)
13	AB Vajpayee	BJP	16 /05/1996	01/06/1996	1996(11th)
14	HD Deve Gowda	Janata Dal (*UF*)	01/06/1996	21/04/1997	– (11th)
15	IK Gujral	Janata Dal (*United Front*)	21/04/1997	19/03/1998	– (11th)
16	AB Vajpayee	BJP (*NDA*)	19/03/1998	22/05/2004	1998(12th)
					1999(13th)
17	Manmohan Singh	INC (*UPA I and II*)	22/05/2004	26/05/2014	2004(14th)
					2009(15th)

18	Narendra Modi	BJP (*NDA*)	26/05/2014	Incumbent	2014(16th)

Table 2.3 also depicts the different popular governments elected by people of India from 1952 onwards. It shows how Indian democracy is transforming from one party domination to first failed coalition experiments (1977-80) and again one party (Indian National Congress) rule under the leadership of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi 1980 – 89. Further, the Indian democracy witnessed a fluid and unsuccessful second experiment[65]. However, the first stable successful coalition government under the leadership of Narasimha Rao (1990 – 95) of Congress is considered as one of the most important milestones in Indian democracy though the third and fourth coalition experiments under the leadership of Deva Gowda, I.K. Gujaral and A.B.Vajpayee of NDA have failed. However, the second successful coalition government (NDA coalition) under the leadership of Vajpayee (1999-2004) and third and fourth successful coalition under UPA I and II showed that Indian democracy is moving towards maturity. It is necessary to note here in the latest election of 2014 BJP a Hindutva political party has emerged as a single largest party.

It clearly depicts that Indian democracy is systematically moving from one stage to another. The 2014 General Election, which was fought on the platform of unity and development under the dynamic leadership of Modi, gained the popular support and formed the first Non-Congress one party government in India.

Pluralism in India

Unity in diversity is the prime slogan of Indian nation state. As mentioned elsewhere, during the time of independence India was a politically fragmented country. There was no common thread to unite the Indian masses with multiple identities. For instance, according to the 2011 census there are 1,635 languages[66]. At present there are 22 official languages in India[67]. Though, 29 languages have more than a million native speakers and 60 languages have more than one Lakh and 120 have more than 10,000 native speakers. There are many languages like "Kodava" " Tulu" that do not have a script but have group of native speakers.

Similarly, India is a socially disintegrated country mainly because of the centuries old notorious caste system. There are about 3,000 castes and over 25,000 sub castes in India (other castes are still being identified). Some have millions of members; others have only a few hundreds. More than 15 % of Indian population is designated members of Schedule Castes and they were previously considered as untouchables. Each cast group is following its own customs, rituals and traditions[68]. Likewise, as depicted in (table 2.4 on Religion) India are having people with multiple religious identities

Table 2:5 Compositions of Different Religious People of India

Religious Group	Population % 1961	Population % 1971	Population % 1981	Population % 1991	Population % 2001
Hindu	80.45%	82.73%	82.30%	81.53%	80.46%
Muslim	08.69%	11.21%	11.75%	12.61%	13.43%
Christian	2.44%	2.60%	2.44%	2.32%	2.34%
Sikh	1.79%	1.89%	1.92%	1.94%	1.87%
Buddhist	0.74%	0.70%	0.70%	0.77%	0.77%
Animist, others	0.43%	0.41%	0.42%	0.44%	0.72%
Jain	0.46%	0.48%	0.47%	0.40%	0.41%

Source: Census of India, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001

The major religious groups are (followed by their approximate portion of the total population; 2001 census) are Hindus (80 per cent), Muslims (13.43 per cent), Christians (2.34 per cent), and Sikhs (1.87 per cent). Other important religious minorities are Buddhists, Jains, and Parsis. Indian Constitution as the

[65] Seema Chishti, After 30 yrs of Coalition, Unfamiliarity of One-Party Rule, accessed on: 05/05/2014, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/politics/after-30-yrs-of-coalition-unfamiliarity-of-one-party-rule/

[66] Government of India, Census of India, accessed on: 21/09/2014, http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Data_Online/Language/gen_note.html

[67] Constitution of India, Official Language, http://www.constitution.org/cons/india/p17343.html, accessed date: 14/03/2014

[68] Wendy Donige, Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions, Library of Congress Cataloging, 1999, USA

supreme law of the land guarantees equality to all the people and the Indians are practicing pluralism and tolerance by accepting minorities as their leaders[69] in different walks of life, for Indians are well known for their religious tolerance.[70]

However, the occasional communal riots and caste conflicts have damaged India's pluralistic image. But the integrative forces are gaining strength day by day. Thanks to the information explosion and the educational and job opportunities available in different parts of India which encourage the youth from North East and Kashmir to join the mainstream.

Independent Judiciary

Judiciary is expected to function not only the guardian of Constitution but also people's rights and State rights. Though Indian constitution is following the English model of parliamentary democracy it incorporates the American model of Judiciary emphasising the supremacy of Judiciary. The Indian Supreme Court enjoys judicial review power on par with American federal court. Indian Supreme Court consists of Chief Justice of India and 30 other judges. The Supreme Court has Original Jurisdiction, Appellate Jurisdiction and Advisory Jurisdiction. Indian Supreme Court is well known for the great land mark judgments. Land mark judicial verdict of Indian Supreme Courts not only changes the Constitution but also changes the political and social life of India. For instance, the famous judgements in the following cases:

1. Champakam Dorairajan Vs State of Madras (1951)
2. K.M. Nanavati Vs State of Maharashtra (1960)
3. Golaknath Vs State of Punjab (1967)
4. MadhavJiwaji Rao Scindia Vs Union of India (1970)
5. Kesavananda Bharati Vs State of Kerala (1973)
6. HimmatLal Shah Vs Commissioner of Police (1973)
7. Courtroom Drama
8. Indira Gandhi Vs Raj Narain (1975)
9. A.D.M. Jabalpur Vs S. Shukla (1976)
10. Maneka Gandhi Vs Union of India (1978)
11. Minerva Mills Vs Union of India (1980)
12. Ramesh DalalVs Union of India (1988)
13. Rajan Case (1981)
14. Kehar Singh Vs Delhi Administration (1984)
15. Babri Masjid, Ayodhya Case (1994)
16. Best Bakery Case (2006)
17. Shah Bano Case (1985)
18. Courtroom Judgment
19. Indira Sawhney Vs Union of India (1992)
20. St. Stephen's College Vs University of Delhi (1992)
21. S.R. Bommai Vs Union of India (1994)
22. R. Rajagopal Vs State of Tamil Nadu (1994)
23. P.A. Inamdar Vs State of Maharashtra (2005)
24. SarlaMudgal Vs Union of India (1995)
25. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind Vs Union of India (1995)
26. Ministry of I&B Vs Cricket Association of Bengal (1995)
27. Vishaka Vs State of Rajasthan (1997)
28. Samatha Vs State of AP (1997)
29. Rupan Deol Bajaj Vs K. P. S. Gill (1998)
30. Representation of the People (Amendment) Act (2002)
31. Tamil Nadu Vs SuhasKatti (2004)
32. Om Prakash Vs DilBahar (2006)[71]

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[69]For instance the people from minority groups TATAS so many Jains Field Marshal Sam HormusjiFramjiJamshedjiManekshaw, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed , Naval chief Robin Dhowan and Sushil Kumar Isaac, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam and K. R. Narayanan, GianiZail Singh, Manmohan Singh all are belong to different castes and religious group played prominent role in different walks of life

[70]National Portal Content Management Team, http://knowindia.gov.in/knowindia/culture_heritage.php?id=70 , accessed on:23/06/2013

The last mile stone which led the Supreme Court judgment ordering the speedy trials of charge sheeted politicians has further strengthened India's electoral democracy. According to Association for Democratic Reform (ADR) 162 of 543 MPs elected in the 2009 elections had criminal charges against them. This means that 30% of the MPs had cases pending against them in Court of Law[72]. In March 2014, the Supreme Court of India passed a land mark judgement asking for speedy trails of charge sheeted politicians in governments[73]. Although the constitution has provision for disqualification of convicted politicians, cases would lie pending for long years with politicians still in power.

Judicial activism, fair and free and speedy trials alone strengthen people confidence for Indian democracy. However, there are critics who are criticising Indian judiciary for taking a long time in giving verdicts. For instance, for the disproportionate assets case against Jayalalitha, the court has taken 18 years to give the verdict[74].

Free Media

The fourth estate is called as 24 hours permanent opposition monitoring the activities of both the ruling and opposition parties. India is blessed with a vibrant ever dynamic free media. Media in any democracy is like a two edged sword. At one side they criticise the government, on the other side they praise the government. Similarly, the neutral media are criticising the opposition for failing their duties. It is not fair to say that all printed and electronic media are neutral and unbiased in their opposition. At present the corporates are controlling the media and they are blindly supporting one or two political parties because of their connections. The political parties also launch their own media network in order to articulate their ideologies and principles[75]. Therefore it is very difficult to identify a neutral print electronic media in India. However Indian public are getting varieties of commentaries, opinions and debates through different news channels. Though most of the channels are opinionated, the role of media in democracy should not be undermined. For instance, the Indian group newspapers strongly opposed Indira Gandhi's autocratic rule during emergency and exposed so many corrupt practices existing during Indira Gandhi's regime. Similarly, Indian media strongly opposed Indo-Soviet friendship treaty and the subsequent one sided treaty as surrender of India's Sovereignty[76].

Further, Indian media exposed so many scandals and initiated discussion on many issues of national importance. Indian media gives wild coverage of various scams 1940 onwards. Indian politics is beset with so many scandals starting from 1948 Jeep Scandals to the latest like Hawala scam, Satyam, Common Wealth Scam, 2G scam, Indian coal allocation scams etc.[77] Though the series of scams are damaging the reputation of the political leaders, political parties, their representatives and Indian democracy in general, the discussions and debates are undoubtedly creating a lot of political awareness among the people of India. Consequently, people have defeated so many parties on corruption platform. For instance, DMK in Tamil Nadu was defeated by Tamil Nadu people after Sarkaria Commission, Indira Gandhi was defeated because of emergency and so many corrupt practices; Rajiv Gandhi was defeated because of Bofors Scandals;

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[71]For more details, refer mudraa.com, accessed on: 25/07/2014, http://indiancorruptionlist.blogspot.in/2011/12/list-of-indian-correption-scam-by.html

[72] Political Party Watch, Association for Democratic Reforms, accessed on: 22/09/2014, http://adrindia.org/research-and-report/political-party-watch

[73],Utkarsh Anand, "Fast-Track Trials of Legislators, Wrap in a Year: Supreme Court", Indian Express accessed on: 21/09/2014, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/fast-track-trials-of-legislators-wrap-in-a-year-supreme-court/#sthash.SYrdRA89.dpuf

[74]On 27th September 2014 Jayalalitha was convicted by the Bangalore special court by the judge John Michael Junga of special court of Bangalore. The judge convicted her of four years imprisonment and 100 crore fine , See, "Jayalalithaa Disproportionate Assets Case: Timeline" India Today , accessed on: 21/08/2014, http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/jayalalithaa-case-jayalalithaa-case-verdict-jayalalithaa-case-judgement-jail-bangalore/1/393170.html

[75] Aditya Thakur, Top 7 Indian Channels That Are Owned By Politicians! , Hill Post , accessed on: 05/08/2014, http://hillpost.in/2013/08/top-7-indian-channels-that-are-owned-by-politicians/95166/

[76]Indian express strongly opposed Indira Gandhi emergency, Tuqulaq of S Ramasamy published so many columns opposing Indo - Soviet deal during 1970s and 80s. V N Khanna, *Foreign Policy Of India* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing house, 2009) 359

[77]Top 10 Corruption Scams in India, accessed on: 20/09/2014, http://trak.in/tags/business/2010/11/25/top-10-corruption-scams-scandals-india/

Second UPA government under the leadership of Manmohan Sing was defeated because of so many scams[78]. The peculiar thing about Indian political parties is that most of them are corrupt in one way or other and the people have only limited options to choose. For instance, in Tamil Nadu both DMK and AIADMK are well known for their exposed corrupt practices. In this context, the Indian media is playing a very dynamic role by discussing and debating various issues creating political awareness among the people of India. Obviously debates and dissents are two strong pillars of any democracy.

Secularism

In India, Secularism means equal treatment of all religions by the state. Unlike the Western concept of secularism which envisions a separation of religion and state, the concept of secularism in India is acceptance of all religions, and equal participation of state in different religions.[79]

The 42nd amendment of Indian constitution enacted in 1976 asserted that India is a secular state.[80] As discussed previously, India is the birth place of five religions such as Jainism, Buddhism, Dravidian religion, Adivasis faith[81] and the latest Sikh religion. The Aryans introduced idolatry in India and popularised Hinduism. The Jews entered India due to persecution and the Parsis[82] migrated to India during 10th century to escape the Islamic persecution. St. Thomas[83] the first disciple introduced Christianity during 1st century AD. Islam the latest religion entered India through so many invasions. Understanding the plurality of the religions the founding fathers guaranteed the protection of minority rights allowing the people to establish their own institutions and guaranteed them the freedom of worship. Secularism is one of the strongest pillars of democracy binding the people of different faith under one umbrella. History of nation states reveals that any nation built on the majoritarian principles is self-destructive and disintegrated. The lengthiest civil war is going on in Myanmar after the state tried to introduce majoritarian Buddhism illegally as state religion[84].The majoritarian aggressivism of Serbian Catholicism resulted into balkanisation of former Yogoslovakia. It is a well-known fact that it is next to impossibility to bring unity and integrity based on religious principles where people with multiple identities are living. India is beset with pocket oriented minorities as well as scattered minorities[85]. Therefore, secularism is the best thread of unity, for the best democracy is one in which the minorities feel secure and enjoy all rights equal. However, the vested interest sectarian pressure groups and political parties, in order to gain some political dividend occasionally popularise the poisonous seeds of communalism with limited success. In spite of so many communal riots and other political turmoil, Indian democracy is reproving that it is the most self-adjusting and successfully surviving secular democracy.

Table 2:6 Compositions of Different Religious People of India

Religious group	Population % 1961	Population % 1971	Population % 1981	Population % 1991	Population % 2001
Hindu	80.45%	82.73%	82.30%	81.53%	80.46%
Muslim	08.69%	11.21%	11.75%	12.61%	13.43%
Christian	2.44%	2.60%	2.44%	2.32%	2.34%
Sikh	1.79%	1.89%	1.92%	1.94%	1.87%

[78]The widespread corruption in the UPA – II regime has degraded the party image as corrupt party and it resulted to the losing the election with a huge margin. In 2014 Lok Sabha election congress could win only 44 seats.

[79]Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963)

[80]Constitution Society, Preamble of Indian Constitution, accessed on: 11/08/2014, http://www.constitution.org/cons/india/preamble.html

[81]Till 1981 census adivasis faith was regarded as separate faith, they are fire and spirit worshippers without creating any ideals

[82]Noshir H. Dadrawala, The Parsees, Their History, Religion and Contribution To Indian Society, accessed on 15/08/2014, http://www.zawa.asn.au/history2.shtml

[83]Encyclopedia Britannica, Saint Thomas, accessed on: 23/09/2014, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/592851/Saint-Thomas

[84]Multi religious state the minority religious people are fighting for their separate identities

[85]For instance in Kashmir Muslims are majority, in north east Christians form the majority, in Punjab Sikhs form the majority, in Ladakh Buddhist form the majority. However Muslims and Christians are living in different part of south India and other part of India

Buddhist	0.74%	0.70%	0.70%	0.77%	0.77%
Animist, others	0.43%	0.41%	0.42%	0.44%	0.72%
Jain	0.46%	0.48%	0.47%	0.40%	0.41%

Source: Census of India, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001

Democratic and Cosmopolitan Leadership

Limited government, fixed tenure and periodical change of power through ballot are the basic foundations of any democracy. The first American President George Washington laid the strong foundation of not contesting for the third term though he was hale and healthy and popular. The convention laid by him was reverently followed by all his successors except Roosevelt.[86] This resulted into the famous 22nd amendment in 1947 to the USA constitution, which set a term limit to the office of the President of USA[87]. There is a positive correlation between the quality of leadership and the governance. One of the secrets of the successful story of American nation building is the quality of leadership with vision. Most of the transitional societies are beset with leadership crisis than any other crisis. A good leader alone can formulate inclusive visions to take the nation towards positive destiny. Leadership crisis has destroyed and disintegrated so many transitional states mainly because of their sectarian attitude.[88]

However, in spite of some limitations in general, India is blessed with democratic and secular leaders from the dawn of independence though the emergency period was a black mark in Indian democracy for which Indira Gandhi regretted and apologised on several occasions. The Prime Ministers like Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shashtri, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh from Congress Party and the non Congress PMs like Morarji Desai, V.P Sing, Vajpayee and Modi are also known for their cosmopolitan perspective. Indian democracy is evidently an effective force capable of taming and transforming the leaders from negative to positive and sectarian to cosmopolitan. For instance, the present PM Modi a Prachari of RSS, having belief in Hindutva agenda contested the election with the slogan of Unity[89] and Development[90]. Of course, sectarianism, communalism, parochialism and Sub-nationalism are part of Indian democracy, for the Indian democracy is just 65 years old. However India is moving towards the right direction for Indian people will not tolerate any form of sectarianism or autocratic rule.

Youth Power in India

It has been well said that the greatest vibrant and educate youth are the wealth and strength of any nation. The quality of the youth determines the future of any nation. Obviously India's Human resources are the greatest assets. India, now aged at 66 is one of the largest reservoirs of youth population in the world. The age group of 16 – 30 years constituting more than 40 % of India's population is indeed a large force. Kaushik Basu, Professor of economics in Cornell University says that in the year 2004, India had a population of 1,080 million, of whom 672 million people were in the age group of 15 to 64 years, a group which is usually treated as "the working population". An incredible rise in the youth population of India had been witnessed during this age. Population in the age group of 15-34 raised from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011. The prediction for the 2021 suggests that the increase would be around to 464 million[91]. Economists believe that the bulging population would be an added advantage for India, which will add 2 %

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[86] History, FDR wins unprecedented fourth term, accessed on: 20/09/2014, http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/fdr-wins-unprecedented-fourth-term

[87] Cornell University Law School, 22nd Amendment, accessed on: 22/09/2014, http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxxii

[88] For instance Yogoslovia after Marshall Tito- Serbian leader instrumental for destroying the society

[89] "Modi Big Draw at Unity Run", *The Times of India*, accessed on: 04/10/2014, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Modi-big-draw-at-unity-run/articleshow/44999500.cms

[90] Maulik Pathak, The Narendra Modi Model of Development, accessed on: 01/10/2014, http://www.livemint.com/Politics/jidgEODmTuivukTLuJHSTN/The-Narendra-Modi-model-of-development.html

[91]Basu, Kaushik, India's growth could be back at 8.5-9% in 2 years, Business today IN, 7/11/2012, accessed on: 21/2013, http://businesstoday.intoday.in/story/kaushik-basu-indian-economy/1/189685.html

to the GDP growth rate.[92]The modern education, the latest technology, IT revolution and the liberalisation policy adopted after 1991 and re-emphasised by the newly elected Prime Minister Modi have been creating a lot of opportunities for the youth of India.

Obviously, development of a strong nation depends upon the will power, mighty determination and tremendous grits of the youth. Another advantage of the Indian youth is that most of them are growing with a cosmopolitan culture with a lot of adjustment techniques. The Universities and Higher Education institutions are silently playing the significant role of national integration by accommodating the youth from different conflict ridden parts of India. For instance, hundreds of the youth including girls from Kashmir and North East have started entering in different Higher Education institution in India. The Indian government has guaranteed 5% reservation to Kashmiri students in all the Central Universities and 15 % reservation for ST and 7 % reservation for SC[93]. These reservations also help the excluded people of India to join the mainstream. Consequently, Indian youth are moving towards positive direction like American youth, targeting their prosperous career with the determination. A vibrant and well-disciplined youth is the strength of India. However, there are so many challenges faced by the Indian youth and the researcher intends to discuss about them in the below mentioned pages.

Conclusion

The paper explores the positive sides of democracy in India. Towards this attempt the paper is divided into two sections. The first part discusses the history of democracy in general and specifically India and the second part sheds light on the positive aspect of Indian democracy.

Democracy is not a new phenomenon rather it is very old. Several evidences suggest that since ancient times democracy had been prevailed in many countries including India in many formats. However, the modern democratic government was the brainchild of Western countries. The slow origin of democracy was witnessed in Western countries over the long period of time. The important developments such as Magna Carta of 1215, Glorious Revolution (1688), American Revolution (1775–1783) and French Revolution (1789-1799) etc. have played a very crucial role in giving a shape to modern democracy. In post Second World War period many countries adopted the democratic model in their country. However, all the countries could not survive their democratic set up for a long time and very soon they gave up due to various reasons. Nevertheless, India could survive its democratic set up mainly because of its deep rooted ancient democratic culture unlike countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and several other politically instable third World countries. In India, several factors play a crucial role in sustaining Indian democracy such as Constitution, Multi party democracy, Periodic elections and peaceful transformation of power, Pluralism in India, Independent Judiciary, Free Media, Secularism, Democratic and Cosmopolitan leadership and Youth Power in India.

India's longest written constitution of the world has ensured inclusive development along with constitutional rights to every citizen. Caste, culture, language, and other differences have been ignored and the people are given equal rights to ensure the equitable and inclusive development. Multi party democracy is another feature of Indian democracy which has given space to all the people from different backgrounds on the basis of region, caste, and language to form a party to influence the policy makers and to get the share of the cake of development. In this way, the minorities are not largely discriminated. The periodic elections and the peaceful transformation of power are important aspects in which, unlike many other developing countries, Indian democracy has been successful. People's participation in voting is another area where increase in voting percent except 2009 election has been exceptional and taken Indian democracy to a new leap. Reservation of the seats to the SC and ST to empower the weaker section is the sign for healthy democracy. Another positive aspect of Indian democracy is, despite being a pluralistic society it has been peaceful. Except a few riots and clashes and the diversity in culture, ethnicity, language and religion, India has been successfully sustaining democracy for more than 65 years. Independent Judiciary which is another hallmark of Indian democracy has been ensuring justice to every citizen through land mark judgments. It has also been successful in punishing the culprits irrespective of their background. Free media is another positive feature, which has been functioning as a bridge between the government and the people. The rights

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[92] Girija Shivkumar, India set to become youngest country by 2020,The Hindu, 19/04/2013, accessed on: 14/01/2014http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-in-school/india-set-to-become-youngest-country-by-2020/article4631734.ece , accessed on: 14/01/2014

[93] 21 % of the seats are reserved for SC (15%) and ST (7%) in all the higher education institution.

and wrongs done by the government being highlighted by the media and it have been empowering the people to choose the best alternative during elections. The youth power in India is another positive feature. The bulging youth population in India has created ample opportunity to develop India. All these positive aspects of the Indian democracy have been helping to sustain for more than 65 years.

The strength of Indian democracy has helped India to sustain for more than 70 years. Now as Western developed democratic countries are becoming more pluralistic nature of society they are looking upto the strengths of Indian democracy to cope up with the problem emerging due to pluralistic nature of the society. While the positive side of Indian democracy has drew the accolades from the developed democracies, the negative aspect, no doubt, has been haunting India for many years. The negative side of Indian democracry such as Illiteracy, Caste discrimination, Communalism and Insecure minority, Poverty, Corruption, Regional Disparity in the economic development, Growing Inequality, Sidelined Tribal Community, Unaddressed Ethnic conflicts, Corporate Democracy, Exploitation of natural resources, Displaced people and lack of proper rehabilitation, Gender inequality, Poor Health facilities, Lack of people's participation and Lack of Decentralization and corruption at all levels playing major hurdle for India's growth.

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