

Democracy in India

The Indian voters have off and on shown their strength, thrown out one government and brought in another. The elections, conducted more or less peacefully, have, on the whole proved that democracy – at least in its electoral aspect – is well- entrenched in India. Indeed, Indian democracy is thriving on the basis of other criteria as well- campaigning is free and open with no restriction on any political party, the changeover from one government to another is mostly smooth and peaceful, and the government is accountable to the people. These are positive aspects which we ought to value

Today, say some analysts, Indian democracy has become more representative, with more regional groups coming to the fore and having a say in the political arena. But in the circumstances, can any party truly claim the 'majority' of votes? In the first-past-the post electoral system followed here, and with the existence of so many parties in the fray, the with the government that is formed is never truly representative; it has the support of much less than even 50 per cent of the voters.

If Indian democracy has become more representative, it is only in the sense that several caste, sect oral and regional grouping have risen to claim a share of the people's vote; this has led to leaders who feel they have to see to the welfare of the particular group which they represent, and not all the people. And, equally, people have taken to voting along caste and communal lines, in the belief that this will ensure their welfare. It is the short-term gains that people seek, and it is these short-term gains that the political party tries to address. The promise of populist measures directed towards sectors of population is lapped up eagerly without thought as to how and for how long these promises can be implemented. Again, populist and impassioned speeches can easily sway the electorate. In the recent elections, one cannot explain the victory of film stars who have just entered the political arena, and are clearly at loss over political issues; their victory is surely to be attributed to other reasons than their competence or ability to serve the people they are to represent. If the people voted for them surely it was not on the basis of politics parties of all hues. Not much thought is given to public weal.

Even now, distribution of liquor and money or gifts is used as a ploy to woo voters, and the voters also accept these 'benefits. In the maze of caste and communal and regional groupings, other deserving groups lose out because their cause cannot win votes. There is no doubt that money and muscle power have much to do with elections in India, and many a constituency suffers from rigging

—even in the age of the electronic voting machine- and criminal intimidation in voting besides bogus voting and bought votes.

To too many people in India, the right to vote is per se the one and only criterion of democracy. But a healthy democracy means much more; it implies the existence and enjoyment of civil rights and socio-economic rights; indeed, the vote is just an adjunct to these. Today, if the poorer sections of the population vote in greater numbers, it seems as if they are clutching desperately to this one right in the absence of those other rights except on paper; there is a great joy in the power experience, the power to change governments. But people will be empowered only if the rule of law and equality before the law are firmly entrenched into the politico –socio- economic system. Only that would ensure that democracy has come of age in this country.

Essay No. 2

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In equality of rights and disparity of opportunities has been breeding ground for revolutions. So, on the ruins of monarchy and aristocracy, democracy has come into being with its doctrine of political equality. It is undoubtedly a grand social ideal. According to George Bernard Shaw, “It is a social order aiming at the greatest available welfare for the whole population and not for a class.” “A world in which, the voice of the people is the voice of God and the political capacity and sagacity of everyone over the age twenty-one is infinite and infallible.”

According to eminent political theorists, there are three basic conditions, which a democracy must fulfill. It must aim at the greatest good of the largest number; it must aim at setting differences through discussions and compromise and it must work for the establishment of an egalitarian society. If we cast a critical glance backward, we shall see that the evolution of a genuinely democratic system in India has been continuously blighted by these factors ever since we became free.

Efforts to secure the greatest good to the largest number have been blocked by the undue attachment to self-interest on the part of the citizen, the legislator and the minister alike. The most eloquent proof of this is the widespread incidence of corruption in its various forms. There is almost no sphere of doesn't get them. At this stage the drugs are sold to him at the highest rates.

The eradicates this menace, Anti Narcotic Squad (ANS) and International Drugs Enforcement Agency (IDEA) have been formed, but agencies do not seem to be effective as more and more youth are lured towards it. The reason is that the police

and other agencies responsible to control the evil are corrupted by the racketeers and even the top officials and politicians become the patrons of the trade instead of controlling it.

Some of the narcotic drugs, which need special mention, are LSD, Ganja, Brown Sugar, Crude Molasses, and Cocaine etc. The most common drug is CRACK which can be very easily prepared. With every puff of smack, one inhales a deadly combination poisonous chemical like carbon monoxide, nicotine, hydrogen oxide, arsenic, tar, etc. then an addict takes in the drugs through hypodermic needles or through nostrils, it cause hardening of arteries, heart attack, high blood pressure and cancer. Obviously, a combination of various diseases springs up, resulting in acute paralysis and finally leads to death.

Most of those who start taking drugs are socially maladjusted persons. Some of them are unemployed and frustrated while others have some other social or family problem. The government is duty-bound to look through the various pros and cons of the problem. Strict measures to stop sale of drugs in open as well as secret market should be taken. Guidance and counseling centers should be opened in all universities and institutional complexes to give advice and guidance to the youth. The advertising media has to be very effectively used to counter the spread of the menace by educating people about the harmful effects of drugs. Expert medical aid should be made readily available to wean the addicts away from this malady. Moral Education should be started as a subject. Phonographic literature should be banned. Hippies and foreign visitors who encourage the use of drugs and smuggle them in the country should be put behind bars.

These steps can help in a long way to stop the trend. The disease is still infancy in India. It will be proper to nip the evil in the bud before it is too late.