Parliamentary Democracy in India: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract:
In a parliamentary democracy, the legislative branch is the source of legitimacy and the executive branch is answerable to it. This system is distinguished by the existence of a parliament that has considerable decision-making authority and represents the will of the people. The election process, cabinet system, separation of powers, and parliamentary representation are some of the mechanisms in this system. Challenges in the parliamentary system of government include party division, coalition politics, political instability, and the possibility of corruption and executive supremacy. The fact that the Prime Minister frequently calls a meeting of the opposition parties to make some crucial decisions is one of the saving graces. This aids the ruling party in understanding the various viewpoints held by various social strata and geographical areas. In truth, all parties should be consulted before making significant decisions in a democratic system, especially in parliamentary democracies.

Keywords: Parliamentary Democracy, Effective Governance, Issues and Challenges, Executive Dominance, Accountability and Parliamentary representation, India, Parliament, Critics, Judiciary, social composition.

Introduction:
Given the number of participants and the low literacy rate in India at the time, the universal adult vote in the first general election of Independent India in 1951–1952 is an accomplishment in and of itself. OOver 173 million of the 360 million eligible voters cast ballots, making it the largest such exercise in history. There have been sixteen general elections for the House of Representatives, several elections for state legislative assemblies, and elections for local self-government institutions in each state since that historic election in 1951–52. Power transfers and governmental changes have occurred in a calm and orderly manner.
Everyone agrees that our elections are free and fair, and the Election Commission of India, an independent constitutional agency, holds them on a regular basis. OThe Indian constitution, which established parliamentary democracy, requires Parliament to have authority over political executives and to hold them directly accountable for all activities they perform while serving as state officials. The leaders of Independent India should also be commended for creating strong institutions that have endured over time. Our democracy has benefited greatly from the efforts of the judiciary, the Election Commission of India, the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the National Human Rights Commission, the office of the Chief Information Commissioners, etc. [1–5]
The world's largest functional democracy is India. After a protracted national effort, it attained independence. Being the biggest democracy in the world makes us proud. We have seen successful elections, peaceful changes of leadership at the federal and state levels, and individuals expressing their right to freedom of speech, travel, and religion for more than 65 years. India's economy and society have also been growing and changing. At the same time, we frequently hear complaints about widespread

unfairness, inequality, or the failure of some segments of society to live up to their expectations. These individuals do not consider themselves to be involved in the democratic process. You might wonder why this is the case. Democracy is defined as "government of the people, for the people, and by the people," as you have already read in a previous unit. It implies that democracy encompasses not just the election process but also the realization of the social and economic goals of the populace. We continue to discuss these different facets of democracy, as well as its successes and difficulties, in India.[6-7]

Meaning of Democracy:

Abraham Lincoln, a former US president, once stated, "Democracy is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people." The Greek word demokratia, which meaning "rule of the people," is where the word "democracy" originates. It was created by combining the terms demos, which means "people," and kratos, which means "power." In other words, the people hold the authority in a democracy. The governments that were in place in several of the Greek city-states, most notably Athens, provide the basis for this interpretation. Furthermore, democracy is still defined as a system of governance in which the people themselves hold ultimate power and exercise it either directly or indirectly through a system of representation that typically includes regular free elections. [8–9]

Review of Literature:

Yuan (2010) states that India's remote strategy has never placed a high priority on democracy advancement. Security, trade, and vitality concerns have traditionally been at the center of the pursuit of national interests in the global arena. India's history of imperialism, Cold War political problems, and its major flaws may help to explain why it hasn't made a significant contribution to the advancement and support of democracy outside. In any event, this study argues that India has recently adopted a more active role in promoting and assisting democracy outside. It highlights the specific ways in which India has worked to promote and support democracy overseas. It demonstrates how this behavior may be clarified by the evolving perception of India's relationship with the United States and India's growing international prominence. In any event, the pursuit of traditional remote arrangement ideals should be balanced with the advancement and support of democracy outside. When it comes to the subject of democratic development in India's remote arrangement, there are elements of both progress and alteration observed. Only a small number of countries have been successful in establishing and maintaining a vote-based political system, including India. Over the past 20 years, there have been significant developments in local legislative concerns in India. The most enduring of these developments was the Congress Party's departure from the dominant party structure at the national level in the middle of the 1990s. Over the course of sixty years, the transition to a truly multi-party system was ongoing. Even if the Indian parliament is becoming more fragmented, it is also becoming more aggressive. Both elites and the general public concur that a legal system provides the best means of managing differences and governing a country with a wide range of social diversity. India's foreign policy has never placed a high priority on advancing democracy. Security, trade, and vitality concerns have always been at the center of the pursuit of national interests in international affairs. India's history of expansionism, Cold War political problems, and its own fundamental flaws may be the main reasons for the lack of dynamic association in the advancement and support of democracy elsewhere. In the post-Cold era, India has recently adopted a more active role in promoting and bolstering democracy overseas. To promote and strengthen democracy overseas, it has been locked in with the global network (via organizations like the Commonwealth of Nations, Community of Democracies, and its offshoot, the United Nations Democracy Caucus). Similarly, it has employed reciprocal improvement assistance and taught specific skills to countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, and Nepal in order to construct the framework, training, human security, and common society that are the cornerstones of democracy in these countries. [10]

Objectives:

1. To understand the meaning of democracy in its different aspects;
2. To identify major problems, issues and challenges being faced by Indian democracy;
3. To analyze the corrective measures for improving the Indian democratic system.

Research Methodology

The present study on "Parliamentary Democracy in India: Issues and Challenges" adopts a descriptive and analytical research methodology based primarily on secondary data. The study uses information collected from books, research articles, academic journals, government reports, parliamentary documents, newspapers, and reliable online sources.

Parliamentary Democracy Issues and Challenges: [11-14]

In order to strengthen and protect parliamentary democracy from the extreme challenges it faces today, all stakeholders must collaborate to find long-term solutions. During the pivotal years of its independence, India had the great advantage of beginning its journey under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. A remarkable group of visionary and wise men and women led effectively in the task of consolidating democracy and laying the institutional foundations of the republic. In 1936, Jawaharlal Nehru, the president of the Indian National Congress, stated that India's ultimate goal was "the establishment of a democratic state," a sovereign nation that would advance "full democracy" and bring about a new social and economic structure. According to a survey, 26% of parliamentary time has been lost to disruptions during the first three years of the 14th Lok Sabha. The Lok Sabha lost 73 hours, or 34% of its time, owing to disorder during this year's budget session. During the monsoon session, just eleven of the twenty-five bills that were scheduled were passed. Due to adjournments, the Rajya Sabha lost 49% of its time during that session, while the Lok Sabha lost 40%. The Lok Sabha passed four bills without debate. The Lok Sabha barely worked 65 hours during the 2007 monsoon session, compared to 124 hours during the 2006 monsoon session. The public coffers pay almost Rs. 26,000 for every minute of legislative time.

Our sociopolitical system is becoming more and more tainted by intolerance, division, corruption, conflicts, and disdain for dissent. In addition, certain institutions are trying to discredit and marginalize significant people's forums in order to take up more space than is ideal or allowed by the constitution in a representative democracy. The perceived deterioration of parliamentary accountability is used to justify judicial activism. Regular interference in the legislature's exclusive domain will only serve to further undermine Parliament's authority. Parliament has set an example by removing ten MPs for their participation in the "cash-for-query" fraud and suspended others for varying lengths of time for other crimes. However, people's esteem for democratic institutions is not adequately enhanced by these activities. Instead of acting as doomsayers and helping people lose faith in institutions, the media should work to strengthen their trust.

The main challenges to India's parliamentary democracy's smooth operation! The best way to characterize India would be as a representative parliamentary democracy. In the Indian political system, Parliament holds a central position. At the national level, all constitutionally organized facets of popular opinion are represented by the Indian Parliament. It is the embodiment of the Indian people's "Sovereign Will." However, there are significant barriers that prevent India's parliamentary democracy from operating smoothly. India was not ready to embrace the principles of parliamentary democracy because it was essentially a traditional nation. One of the main obstacles to the democratic operation of the Parliamentary System is India's diverse population.

The extreme caste, religious, and social divisions in Indian society make it impossible for parliamentary democracy to function properly. Then there are the challenges posed by the high rates of poverty and illiteracy.

Anti-defection law and voting system

On the other hand, in order for the Houses to run smoothly, the presiding officer is required by the rules of procedure to allocate discussion time among the parties according to the strength of each House. At that point, the party's leader gives its members internal time. Furthermore, the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1985, which added the Tenth Schedule, made an MP's particular positioning meaningless. The interests of a constituency, as represented by its MP, are subordinated to the political stance of the party whip in the House. Furthermore, compared to the far more dependable "division voting," which may record each member's response, even abstentions, a significant portion of the measures in the Parliament are carried through "voice voting."

Even while India still holds regular elections and upholds constitutional government, some problems have an impact on the standard and efficiency of democracy.

1. Polarization in politics Growing social and political polarization is one of the main issues. Religion, caste, ideology, and geography are common divisions in society. There is less room for productive discussion when political conversations become extremely combative. By encouraging division rather than consensus, polarization can erode societal cohesion and have an impact on democratic decision-making.
2. False information and fake news Social media's explosive expansion has made information readily available, but it has also facilitated the spread of false information and fake news. Unverified information can affect voter behavior and public opinion during elections and political events. Some segments of society lack digital literacy, which facilitates the propagation of false narratives and jeopardizes informed democratic participation.
3. Making Politics a Crime The growing number of political officials with criminal histories is another significant problem. Concerns regarding moral principles in public life are raised by the existence of candidates who are accused of grave crimes. Despite efforts to address this issue through legal reforms and court interventions, democratic integrity is still at risk.
4. How Money Power Affects Elections Large sums of money are needed for election campaigns, and the power of money in politics has grown dramatically. Election fairness may be diminished and unfair competitiveness may result from high campaign spending. Political fundraising transparency is still a major issue.
5. Stress in Institutions There is growing pressure on democratic institutions like the judiciary, Parliament, and independent organizations. Institutional efficiency can occasionally be impacted by less parliamentary discussions, frequent use of ordinances, and delays in the legal system. Institutions must continue to be autonomous and responsible in order for democracy to work properly.
6. Public Debate's Declining Quality Respectful and well-informed debate is essential to a healthy democracy. However, sensationalism, media bias, and emotive storylines frequently impact political discourse. Sometimes political competition takes precedence over constructive policy discussion.
7. Economic and Social Inequality Participation in democracy is also impacted by economic inequality and unequal development. Access to opportunities and resources may be challenging for marginalized groups, which may hinder their ability to effectively participate in democratic processes.

Conclusion:

Since India's independence was the result of the largest freedom movement, the British form of parliamentary administration was adopted by the Indian Constitution's framers. Thus, it might be a vast democracy founded on the right to vote for all adults. But unlike its English equivalents, they did not grant it autonomous legislative authority. They gave the legislative supremacy, but it had to be limited because, in contrast to Great Britain, India has a long-written Constitution, a federal division of powers, and a list of essential rights.

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