



Democracy of India: Some Achievements and Problems

Dr Jamil Ahmad Khan

Assistant professor, Deptt of political science, G. F. College, Shahjahanpur, U.P, PIN 24 2001

Mail i d : jamilkhanmmdc@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

India has come a long way since gaining independence in 1947, establishing itself as the world's largest democracy. The country has made significant progress in various sectors, including education, healthcare, and economy. However, Indian democracy still faces several challenges, including corruption, inequality, communalism, and violence. The country has also witnessed the rise of populist leaders and the erosion of democratic values in recent times. The abstract will highlight the key achievements and challenges of Indian democracy and suggest potential solutions to address the existing issues. Ultimately, the abstract will demonstrate the significance of Indian democracy and its relevance to the global political landscape. India's 75-year journey as the world's largest democracy has been both remarkable and challenging. In this abstract, we will explore the achievements and challenges that Indian democracy has encountered over the years. The country has made notable strides in education, healthcare, and the economy. Despite these advancements, the nation still struggles with deep-rooted issues such as corruption, inequality, communalism, and violence. Moreover, in recent times, Indian democracy has witnessed the rise of populist leaders and the erosion of democratic values. In this context, this abstract aims to underscore the crucial accomplishments and challenges of Indian democracy and identify potential solutions to address the existing issues.

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This discussion will further demonstrate how the Indian democratic model is significant and relevant to the global political landscape. Overall, this abstract serves to highlight India's vibrant democracy's accomplishments and challenges, which continue to shape the nation's trajectory as it marches into the future.

Introduction

India achieved its independence from British colonial rule on August 15, 1947, and soon after became a democratic republic. Since then, India has completed 75 years of democratic rule, which is a significant milestone for the country. India has made significant progress during this time, but the country still faces several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure a prosperous and equitable future for all its citizens. In this essay, we will discuss India's achievements and challenges in the past 75 years of democratic rule. While we are conscious of our 5,000 years of continuous history, we are proud of our contemporary achievements in the area of science and technology. India has the second largest group of scientists and engineers in the world. Its space programme is one of the most advanced and cost-effective in the world. India has launched hundreds of communications and remote sensing satellites, contributing to tele-education, weather forecasting and remote resource mapping. Indian scientists have developed several projects such as Mangalyaan, Chandrayaan etc. The successful completion of Mangalyaan (Mars Orbiter Mission) in September 2014 led ISRO to become the 4th in the world to reach Mars orbit and the first to do so in the first attempt. It also achieved the feat of cheapest satellite recently. India belongs to the select group of countries who have developed indigenous nuclear technology. India is among the few countries which have developed ballistic missiles. In the field of space science, India has the capability to launch GSLV satellite. Indian space agency ISRO has developed to an extent to provide commercial satellite launches. India also aims to send Indians to space with self-developed technology under Gaganyaan mission by 2024.

In 1947, the newly born independent India inherited a shattered economy from the British. Successive five-year plans envisaged an overall development in agriculture and industry that put a check on 'Ship to mouth' economy and with the aim of self-reliance, and placed India strongly among the developing nations. India's GDP stood at ₹ 2.7 lakh crore at Independence. 75 years on, it has reached ₹ 135.13 lakh crore. India is now the 5th largest economy in the world and is on its way to becoming the third-largest by 2031. The Indian government has announced an aspirational target of making India a USD 5 trillion economy by 2024-25.



India was an early mover in Information Technology, and since the 1990s has become a major exporter of IT services. Further, the Digital India programme launched in 2015 to transform India into a digitally empowered society and a knowledge economy added momentum to this sector. In July 2021, the United Payments Interface (UPI), the payment platform of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) recorded three billion transactions. PM Modi launched a pre-paid voucher based digital payment platform called e-RUPI. The increasing digital connectivity is contributing to transparency, preventing leakage of funds and greater revenue collection.

The environment of India comprises some of the world's most biodiverse ecozones. Therefore, in order to preserve them the Government of India (GoI) is taking steps to reduce the carbon footprint by setting a target of generating 50 percent of the energy needs through renewable energy by 2030; it is on its way to achieving those goals and realizing its dream of becoming self-reliant by following the ESG norms.

India played a major role in assuring the success of the Paris Climate summit and Prime Minister Modi's personal intervention in the adoption of the landmark Paris Agreement was acknowledged by several world leaders. His initiative on the setting up an International Solar Alliance for promoting solar power worldwide was welcomed. India is advancing on a broad front to ensure a clean energy future for its people, drawing upon its ingrained civilizational attributes and putting in place a wide range of policy interventions under the legal framework of the Energy Conservation Act, covering 15 energy intensive industries and the Energy Conservation Building Code, covering all new urban infrastructure. It is hoped that India's leadership in dealing with its own challenges of Climate Change and Energy Security will act as a spur to other countries to raise their own contributions to meeting this global and existential challenge. India is actively promoting adoption of e-automobiles and other efforts such as conservation of water to make India not a superpower but a sustainable leader.

The achievements of independent India are aplenty, including the, the Right to Information bestowed upon them, the minimum national rural employment guarantee scheme and, more recently, the JAM trinity (the linking of Aadhar, or the Unique Identification Number issued to all residents, with Jan Dhan, or people's bank accounts and mobile numbers) and Ayushman Bharat, the national health insurance programme.

India is engaged in technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud Computing and 3D printing, in a move towards Industry 4.0. In 2016, the Startup India programme was launched to nurture innovation and startups in the country towards sustainable economic growth as well as large scale employment opportunities. India has the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world with nearly 50 'unicorn' organisations as of now.



In 1963, the Green Revolution modernised agriculture with better seeds, fertilisers and technology. Today India has self-sufficiency in food production and exports various food grains. The total food production, which stood at 54.92 million tonnes in 1950, rose to 305.44 million tonnes in 2020-21. In 1970, operation Flood resulted in India becoming the largest producer of milk in the world from milk deficient country. India is the second-largest producer of sugar cane in the world and the largest producer of cotton. India is also the largest exporter of beef in the world.

Affirmative action has enabled all sections of society to have access to higher education, government jobs and to rise to occupy leadership positions in both public and private sectors. India's literacy rate at the time of independence was a mere 18 per cent. As per NSO, the literacy rate was 77.7 per cent in 2016-17. Life expectancy at birth in 1947 was 32, now it is around is 69.4 yrs. We have successfully eradicated various epidemics and polio from our nation. According to the Ministry of Power, only 3,061 villages had access to electricity in 1950. In 2018, the Indian government announced that all of India's villages – 5,97,464 in total – had been electrified.

India is the world's largest democracy and the popular world because of its secular credential and socialistic nature. It is the only country in Asia that has remained democratic ever since it attained its independence from British rule. India is the only nation in the world that gave every adult the right to suffrage from its first day under Nehru. India was the first ever country to grant voting rights to women without any discrimination.

The success of the parliamentary form of government, rule of law, and the people's faith in the democratic process are the biggest achievements of independent India. The distinctiveness of this achievement is the fact that every change of government since independence has been only through the ballot box as India has been able to keep out the armed forces from the democratic process.

The country has witnessed many changes in these 75 years. There has been all-round development in all the spheres in this period, which includes the Road Transport and Highways sector. The total length of National Highways (NHs) in 1947 was about 21,378 km, which has now gone up to more than 1.40 lakh km. India now has second largest road networks in the world with a total length of about 62 lakh km. The first train ran in 1853, which was steam powered and now India is constructing high speed rail network aka Bullet Train. It is already running semi high speed trains such as indigenously built Vande Bharat Express. This shows the capability of Indians in developing a robust infrastructure from scratch. Notably, the Indian Railways is one of the largest networks in the world under single management. It reportedly ferries more than 8.7 billion passengers and some 1 billion tonnes of freight a year.



In the fields of sports as well India has always been a leader in its own right. India hosted the Asian Games in New Delhi in 1951 and 1982. India has also hosted or co-hosted several international sporting events, including the 1987, 1996 and 2011 Cricket World Cups, the 2003 Afro-Asian Games, the 2010 Hockey World Cup, and the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Major international sporting events annually held in India include the Chennai Open, the Mumbai Marathon and the Delhi Half Marathon. The country hosted the first Indian Grand Prix in 2011.

Indians owe their freedom, sense of security and avenues for development to its rock-solid institutions that ensure that India never falters in its various pursuits. Of these institutions, Indian Army stands in a class of its own. Over the years, the Indian army has provided personnel to UN peace-keeping missions, making India the largest troop contributor to UN peace-keeping forces since its inception. Personnel from India were deployed for various peace-keeping missions, including the Korean conflict, while also providing contributions to peace-keeping efforts in Central America, Iran, Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait and others globally.

Over the last five years, India has been ranked among the top importers of defence equipment to gain technological know-how. To modernise its armed forces and reduce dependency over external dependence for defence procurement, several initiatives have been taken by the government to encourage 'Make in India' activities via policy support initiatives. India's defence manufacturing sector has been witnessing a CAGR of 3.9% between 2016 and 2020. The Indian government has set the defence production target at US\$ 25.00 billion by 2025. It has continued to grow and expand its military strength with strategic partnerships and self-development.

India at 75 is a force to reckon with. With 1.3 billion voices, it can easily traverse the challenges that stare at her and the world. India's developmental model, which has evolved with time, has been of great assistance to more than 160 countries across the world through various capacity-building programmes and efforts in the spirit of "Share and Care". It has helped India to create a tremendous constituency of goodwill across continents.

India is a major vaccine producer. India produces two Covid-19 vaccines – the Covishield (AstraZeneca) and the indigenously developed Covaxin. More are in the pipeline. Even during the ensuing Covid-19 pandemic, India was one country which went way beyond her call of duty to help more than 150 countries with medicines and other assistance, and has provided millions of doses of vaccines to over 90 countries. 'Vaccine Maitri' and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' became the mantra during this crisis. It was no wonder that when India faced the second wave of Covid-19, many friends extended their assistance.



India's cumulative COVID-19 vaccination drive surpassed the 200-crore milestone recently. It took the country almost nine months to reach the 100-crore mark and another nine months to touch the 200-crore vaccination mark since the start of the drive on January 16, 2021, with the highest single-day vaccination record of 2.5 crore doses achieved on September 17, 2021. On July 15, the Central government launched a 75-day 'COVID Vaccination Amrit Mahotsav' to provide free precaution doses to all eligible adult populations at government CVCs. This special drive, part of the celebration for 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', is being implemented in a 'mission mode' to increase uptake of precaution dose of vaccine.

Global solidarity for confronting global challenges is what India practices and prescribes. India, with its continental size, is a kaleidoscope of culture, tradition, languages, art, music, films, food and festivities. These would be an integral part of the mahotsav (mega event) until August 2023 and beyond. The India of 2022 is an Atma Nirbhar Bharat or self-reliant India. This is not protectionism; it signifies an India which seeks to participate in global supply chains from a position of strength.

Achievements:

1. Political stability: India has had a stable political system over the past 75 years, with peaceful transfers of power between different political parties. The country has held regular elections at the national and state levels, and the Election Commission of India has been instrumental in ensuring free and fair elections.

2. Economic growth: India's economy has grown significantly since independence, with the country moving from a predominantly agrarian economy to a services-led one. India is now the world's sixth-largest economy in terms of nominal GDP, and the country's middle class has expanded, resulting in significant improvements in living standards.

3. Technological advancement: India has made significant strides in technology over the past few decades. The country is now a global leader in software and IT services and has been at the forefront of technological innovation in many other fields as well.

4. Social progress: India has made significant strides in social progress, including improvements in literacy rates, life expectancy, and access to basic services such as healthcare and education. The country has also made significant progress in reducing poverty and improving access to clean water and sanitation.

5. Cultural diversity: India is a culturally diverse country, with over 1,600 languages spoken across the country. The country's cultural diversity is a source of strength, and the government has worked to preserve and promote the country's diverse cultural heritage.



Problems:

1.Economic inequality: While India's economy has grown significantly over the past few decades, the benefits of this growth have not been distributed equally. The country still has significant economic inequality, with a large percentage of the population living in poverty.

2.Corruption: Corruption is a significant challenge in India, with reports of corruption and bribery in all sectors of the economy. Corruption undermines economic growth and development and is a significant obstacle to ensuring a just and equitable society.

3.Communalism: Communalism, or religious and caste-based violence, is a significant challenge in India. The country has seen a rise in communal violence in recent years, with incidents of mob violence and lynchings targeting religious and caste minorities.

4.Gender inequality: Gender inequality is a significant challenge in India, with women facing discrimination and violence in all aspects of life. The country has made some progress in this area, but there is still a long way to go in ensuring gender equality.

5.Environmental degradation: India's rapid economic growth has come at a significant cost to the environment. The country faces significant environmental challenges, including air and water pollution, deforestation, and climate change.

Conclusion:

India has made significant progress in the past 75 years of democratic rule, with political stability, economic growth, technological advancement, social progress, and cultural diversity being some of the country's significant achievements. However, India still faces significant challenges, including economic inequality, corruption, communalism, gender inequality, and environmental degradation, which need to be addressed to ensure a just and equitable society for all its citizens. Addressing these challenges will require sustained effort and collaboration between government, civil society, and citizens. With continued progress and development, India can become a shining example of a democratic, prosperous, and equitable society.



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