



Democracy and Development

India opted for the parliamentary form of government in order to make the nation-state based on the principles of universal adult franchise and periodic election in contrast to the village level government in the light of Gandhian principles.

The assessment of democracy depends on the indices used to indicate or measure it. There are mainly two models of indices regarding democracy - first related to the institutional minimal i.e. procedural democracy and second related to the substantive or effective democracy.

Procedural Democracy

- The observers of the procedural democracy largely believe that democracy in India has been successful. The criteria for this assessment are - participation and competition. These are indicated by the frequency of the elections in India and competition among political parties to contest elections.
- Procedural democracy was meant to contribute to the nation-building in India. Theorists believe that universal adult franchise and periodic elections usher modernization process. It would be accompanied with socio-economic modernization, urbanization, spread of mass media, education, wealth and equality.
- It was believed that development in India would strengthen democracy and divisions based on caste and religion would disappear.

Substantive Democracy

- Believers of this form of democracy highlighted that elections and universal adult franchise are not sufficient conditions for democracy. Democracy has to be situated in the society and has to be taken out from institutional mode.



- The rise of identity politics – dalits, OBCs, women, tribal, ethnicity and environment – have necessitated the focus on substantive democracy. This is viewed both as a challenge to the nation-state and as an increase in the democratic content of the country.
- With the introduction of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, the decentralization has been democratized and the scope of democracy has expanded to include the women, OBCs and dalits at the grass root level.
- This is an attempt to change 'top – bottom' to 'bottom – top' democracy.

Role of Democracy in Development – Appraisal and Criticism

Are democracy and development compatible?

However, it is established fact that it is democracy that ensures economic development of 'right kind'.

What is economic development of the right kind?

Economic development of right kind has several dimensions:

- Growth in the productive capacity of society i.e. growth in productivity of labor, agriculture, and capital. It ensures growth in per capita income and per capita assets.

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Improvement in quality of life of the poor.

- Distribution of economic assets and incomes.
- Improvement in conditions of health and safety in workplace.
- Improvement in quality of life - improved access to health care, clean water, education
- Sustainable environmental change
- Gender equity