The Future of Democracy in India

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UNITY COLLEGE PUBLICATIONS

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This book is dedicated to the everlasting memory of Janab Korambayil Ahammed Haji, the founder of our institution.

-Editors

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opportunity and   are indebted to the college management for the unconditional support offered for establishing a publication division. Our gratitude is also due to the Librarian and the faculty members of the college whose worthy contributions made the publication a reality. We would like to offer our sincere gratitude to all the well wishers whose motivation definitely instilled the spirit to produce this work.

PREFACE

A shield against the unilateral typology of selection of principles and execution of the

programmes, democracy safeguards the fairness system of governance though it rejects at times the understanding of heterogeneities the word contains. Majority as authority, when recognized as a crucial defining code of democracy in certain contexts problematizes the notion of justice that citizenry demands and the constitution envisages. This irony if lead to the partial collapse of democracy to address the inherent diversities in a country with multiple cultural categories, social hierarchies and political complexities which may results in certain opinionated ramifications ending up in atrocities against the underprivileged. The ultimate injury this may result in is the threat against sustenance of democracy and relegate the influential citizen to immobilized captive under surveillance. A substantial amount of political insight, along with ethical intentions to prioritize the people and unlearning the design of predisposition are vital in safeguarding democracy in the current political scenario in sovereign India. Visualizing future through the spectacles of the subaltern provide the nuggets of wisdom worth exploration to identify the burning economic, political, social, religious issues pertinent to and constitute a hazard to egalitarianism and secularism that may leave the country with frighteningly blurred future.

This scenario necessitated well informed viewpoints, both academic and non academic, with deliberations fulfilling a vision to have India with an incredible prospect and Korambyail Ahamed Haji

Memorial Unity Women's College provides a prestigious platform to have scholarly interventions on 'The Future of Democracy in India' through this publication. Plural perspectives on the theme are explored through this work which envisages to promote novel and original research in the area of analysis. The book, with its interdisciplinary approach, promises to offer variant perspectives on the future of democracy in India.

Indian Constitutional Approach on Environmental Protection

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Abstract: Protection of environment is a part of our cultural values and traditions; moreover healthy environment acts as the essential element of welfare state. Environmental pollution has emerged as one of the biggest social problems affecting the society with long term consequences. Our country is now under an obligation to fulfill the basic aim of socialism, that provide garbed standard of living to all which can be possible from a pollution free environment. According to the preamble of our Constitution, the country is based on "Socialistic" pattern of society, where the country plays more attention to the social problems. Initially, the Constitution of India had no direct provision for environmental protection. While global

consciousness for the protection of environment in the 70's, Stockholm Conference and increasing awareness of the environmental crisis prompted the Indian Government to enact 42nd Amendment to the Constitution in 1976. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 defines environment as "Environment includes water, air and land and the interrelationship which exists among and between air, water and land and human beings, other living creatures, plants, micro-organism and property". Presently, the fundamental duties of the Indian Constitution (Articles 14, 19, 21, 48A, 49A and 51A) clearly impose on every citizen to protect environment. The knowledge of constitutional provisions regarding environmental protection is need of the day to bring greater public participation and environmental awareness that sensitize the people to preserve ecosystem and environment. As a result of the Constitutional approach, Panchayats have been empowered to take measures such as soil conservation, water management, afforestation, biodiversity conservation, pollution control and promotion of ecological aspect at local area level. Though, our country now seriously strives for the remarkable sustainable development and maintenance of ecological balance in virtue of natural resources and environment degradation due to increasing population and urbanization.

Key words: *Environmental protection, Indian Constitution, Democracy, Pollution, Sustainable development, Natural resources.*

Introduction

Environment encompasses both biotic and abiotic factors that mutually interact for balanced ecosystem. The entire life support system on the earth depends on the well-being of all the environmental factors. The biotic components include plants, animals and micro-organisms; while the abiotic components consist soil, water, air, temperature and light etc. (Balasubramanan, 2008). The organism uses the natural resources in daily life which can be classified as renewable or non-renewable. The basic difference between the two is the rate at which they are regenerated back into a usable form and relative to the rate at which they are used by humans. Non-renewable resources cannot be replenished by natural means as quickly as the rate at which they are consumed. They include minerals and fossil fuels which are formed over millions of years by natural processes from decayed plants and animals (Tahvonen & Salo, 2001). Renewable resources are constantly available or regenerated over short timescales by natural processes that include wind, solar energy, fresh water, biomass etc. (Wustenhagen et al., 2007).

Humans need to interact with the environment to obtain our food, water, fuel, medicines, building materials and many other things. Forests play a significant role in survival of all living organisms by providing quality air and water. It offers animal habitats, human livelihoods, watershed protection, prevention of soil erosion and

mitigation of climate change. According to the World Wildlife Fund forests cover more than 30% of the Earth's land surface (Noss, 1999). Over-exploitation of natural resources can result in damage to or the loss of entire ecosystems. If one component of the system is removed, this can have knock-on effects on the other parts of the system. Increased population rate gradually results in deforestation, the permanent removal of trees from earth surface (Chakravarty et al., 2012).

Advances in science and technology help us to exploit the environment for our benefit, but we introduce pollution that causes environmental damage. The impact of environmental issues on humans is noteworthy, affecting all human activities including health and socio-economic development. The degradation of the environment through air, water, noise, radiation and thermal pollution changes the lifestyle that contribute to substantial increases in rates of diseases like obesity, diabetes, cancer, asthma, allergies etc. (Khan & Ghouri, 2011; Halder & Islam, 2015). This environmental degradation has been recognized by government and has begun placing restraints on activities that cause environmental degradation. Since the 1960s, the environmental movements have created more awareness of the multiple environmental problems (Kampa & Castanas, 2008).

Human impact on environment

Based on the interaction between human social system and ecosystem, all environments in the Universe can be categorized into three types: uninhabitable, uninhabited habitat or inhabited habitat (Cockell, 2014). Human social systems and ecosystems are complex adaptive systems (Marten, 2010). Five fundamental needs of human beings from the environment are oxygen, water, food, shelter and warmth which keep him alive. Human impact on environment in several ways, cause adverse effects include environmental pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, depletion of natural resources, climate change etc.

Overconsumption of resources diminishes the sustainable capacity of the ecosystem that can be measured by the ecological footprint. Human overpopulation is a root cause for much of the negative impact on our environment. As the population grows in cities or rural areas, more resources are used that cause pollution of air, water, soil etc. (Figure 1). Amelioration in usage on the available natural resources and industrial activities, in turn influences adversely on the quality of agriculture, forests and water bodies. Deforestation and automobile exhaust are lead to air pollution. Discharging of wastes from sewage, households, agricultural lands and factories to water bodies bring about the water contamination by toxic chemicals, which destroy the aquatic ecosystem. Water quality is also degraded by the changes of ambient water temperature.   A

common cause of water thermal pollution is the use of water as a coolant in power plants and industrial manufacturers (Mittal & Mittal, 2013).
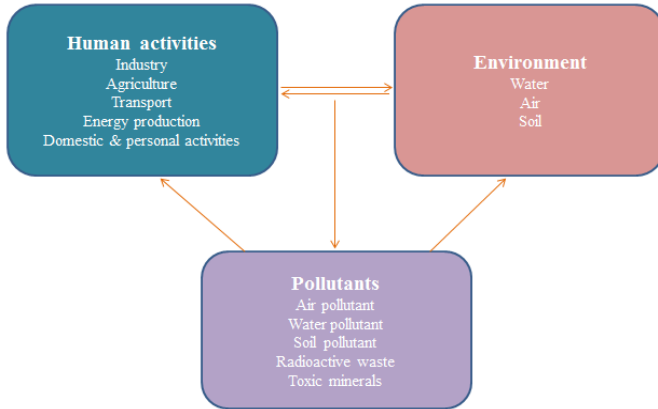
Figure 1. Human impact on environment

Pollution caused by natural or anthropogenic radioactive materials is much more common today. Exposure to heavy doses of radiation through nuclear power plants, computers, cell phones, radio waves, TVs etc. causes mainly skin burns, cardiovascular diseases and cancer. A threshold dose of radiation is a level below which there is no effect of radiation on the biological response in living organisms. Moreover at certain low levels ionizing radiation may do more good for human cells than harm (Busby, 1995).

Environmental Performance Index

The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) is a method of quantifying and numerically marking the environmental performance of a country's policies. This index was first published in 2002. EPI - 2018 is calculated on the basis of data gathered from 24 individual metrics of environmental performance. In the EPI - 2018, India has been ranked 177 among 180 countries (Table 1). This index has been developed by Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. Its overall low ranking of India was linked to poor performance in the environment health policy and deaths due to air pollution categories. Despite of government action, pollution from solid fuels, coal and crop residue burning and emissions from motor vehicles continue to severely degrade the air quality (Pimonenko et al., 2018).

Table 1. The dynamics of EPI

Countries	EPI 2018		EPI 2016		EPI 2014	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
China	120	50.74	109	65.1	118	43
USA	27	71.19	26	84.72	33	67.52
India	177	30.57	141	53.58	155	31.23
Russian Federation	52	63.79	32	83.52	73	53.45
Japan	20	74.69	39	80.59	26	72.35

Environmental democracy

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Environmental democracy describes meaningful participation by the public to ensuring that, land and natural resource decisions adequately and equitably addresses citizen's interests. People are at the heart of environmental democracy, embodying the procedural dimensions of the right to a healthy environment. In this, the government should be transparent and accountable, in turn have an effect on the quality of people's livelihood and their environment. At its core, environmental democracy involves three mutually reinforcing rights; the ability for people to freely access information on environmental quality and problems, to participate meaningfully in decision-making, and to seek enforcement of environmental laws or compensation for damages (Leithold & Lippelt, 2016).

People are too often excluded from decision making processes that affect the transformation and exploitation of the environment they live in. The main objective of environmental democracy is to preserve the health of the community and its environment. This active participation from the citizens guarantees a fair use of environmental resources. Therefore, environmental democracy sets a standard for how decisions should be made that is based on three fundamental rights: free access to information on resources and environmental issues, participation to the decision making process and demanding the application of environmental protection laws or compensation.

The Environmental Democracy Index (EDI) is recently released by Washington-based World Resources Institute (WRI) and Access Initiative. EDI measures these rights using an internationally recognized set of guidelines developed through the United Nations Environment Programme. India has ranked 24th out of 70 countries in the first EDI. In the first edition of this index, Lithuania has topped among the 70 countries and other nine countries are Latvia, Russia, United States, South Africa, United Kingdom, Hungary, Bulgaria, Panama and Colombia. EDI evaluates progress of countries in enacting laws in order to promote citizen engagement and accountability and transparency in environmental decision making (Worker & De Silva, 2002).

Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 - EPA

EPA, 1986, relates to the protection and improvement of the human environment and the prevention of hazards to living organisms and properties. In the wake of the Bhopal Tragedy, the Government of India enacted the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986 under Article 253 of the Constitution. It has 26 sections and 4 chapters and extends to the whole of India (Thakur, 1997). The purpose of the Act is to implement the decisions of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held at Stockholm in June, 1972, in which India participated, to take appropriate steps for the protection and improvement of human environment.

EPA, 1986 is also called the 'Umbrella act' because it provides the framework to the central government in order to make the coordination between different states as well as the central authorities using different acts like Water act (1974), Indian Forest Act (1927), Wildlife Protection Act (1972) etc. In EPA act, "environment includes water, air and land and the inter relationship which exists among and between water, air and land, and human beings, other living creatures, plants, micro-organism and property". Whereas the "environmental pollutant means any solid, liquid or gaseous substance present in such concentration as may be, or tend to be, injurious to environment" and the "environmental pollution denotes the presence in the environment of any environmental pollutant" (Gu & Kang, 2009). Within five years of Stockholm declaration, the Constitution of India was amended to include Protection and Improvement of Environment as constitutional mandate. The government of India has launched various programmes to educate the people and enhance the consciousness to protect the environment.

Articles related to environmental protection

The constitution of India is not an inert but a living document which evolves and grows with time. Healthy environment is the essential element of every welfare state. One of the Indian Constitutional mandates is the protection and improvement of the environment. Moreover, Article 14, Article 19 and

Article 21 clearly impose duty on every citizen to protect environment and guarantees fundamental rights to

Table 2. Indian Constitutional Articles related to environmental protection

Indian Constitutional Articles	
Article 14	"The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India."
Article 19	"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers".
Article 21	"No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law".
Article 48A	"State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country".
Article 49A	"It shall be the obligation of the State to protect every monument or place or object of artistic or historic interests, declared by or under law made by Parliament to be of national importance, from spoliation, disfigurement, destruction, removal, disposal or export, as the case may be".
Article 51A	"It shall be duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life and to have compassion for living creatures".

life (Table 2). Right to healthy environment is important attribute of right to live with human dignity. Article 19 also protects certain rights to citizens including 'to freedom of speech and expression; to assemble peaceably and without arms; to form associations or unions; to move freely

throughout the territory of India; to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business'.

The Constitution of India has provided many provisions regarding protection of environment that aims the conservation of natural resources. Now India has to tackle a number of problems such as population, scarcity of proper food and water, health facilities and poverty. To deal all the issues and sustainable development of nation, there is the effective remedy in Indian constitution. The Articles 48A, 49A and 51A have imposed an obligation to protect and improve the natural environment (Table 2) (Thakur, 1997).

Legal control and abatement of environmental pollution

Urbanization and industrialization along with economic development have led to increase in energy consumption and waste discharges. The global environmental pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions, acid deposition, water pollution and waste management is considered as international public health problems. Environmental pollutants cause various adverse health effects including perinatal disorders, infant mortality, respiratory disorders, allergy, malignancies, cardiovascular disorders, increase in stress, endothelial dysfunction, mental disorders and various other harmful effects (Pathak, &

Mandalia, 2011). This special issue wanted in-depth research across all areas of health effects of pollutants in air, water and soil environments as well as development of new techniques for their measurement and removal.

Water pollution: Water is crucial resource for all existence on this earth as well as an essential part of the global ecological system. Water stocks on earth can be divided into two categories i.e., salt water and fresh water. The total volume of water on earth is about 1386 million cubic km. Only 2.5 per cent of the total volume of water is fresh water and less than 1 per cent of all fresh water is directly available for human use (McPhee et al., 2009; Barange et al., 2010). Because of high population growth rates, water resources in India are being polluted. Main sources of water pollution includes untreated sewage, chemical discharges, petroleum leaks and spills, dumping of waste, agricultural chemicals, manure and fertilizers that are washed off or sweep downward from farms etc. Causes of water pollution can be classified under two broad categories, 'point source' which occurs when harmful substances are emitted directly into the body of water and 'nonpoint source' which delivers pollutants indirectly through transport or environmental change (Goel, 2006).

Discharge of nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients from agriculture, waste disposal and fossil fuel stimulates harmful overgrowths of algae, which can have direct toxic effects and ultimately result in

low-oxygen conditions. Overgrowths of these toxic algae results in "harmful algal blooms," which are more colloquially referred to as "red tides" or "brown tides". Zooplankton eats the toxic algae and begin passing the toxins up the food chain. Finally, the bio accumulated toxins ultimately pass through seabirds, marine mammals and humans in turn cause illness and sometimes death (Anderson, 1989).

The water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, established the Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Boards for to promote cleanliness of streams and wells in different areas of the States by prevention, control and abatement of water pollution. The purpose of this act is "to provide for the prevention and control of water pollution and the maintenance or restoring wholesomeness of water for the establishment, with a view to carrying out the purpose of aforesaid of Boards for the prevention and control of water pollution, for conferring on and assigning to such Boards powers and functions relating thereto and for matters connected therewith." The other acts and rules which seek to prevent water pollution in India include The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977; The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Rules, 1975; The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Rules, 1978; Central Board for the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution Rules, 1975 etc. (Agarwal, 2005).

Water pollution control is an essential task that helps to prevent pollution by various methods. It reduces or eliminates the release of pollutants in to the water bodies. Pollution can be controlled using different measures including treatment of sewage water and industrial effluents before releasing in to water bodies, avoidance of the excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides, establishment of riparian buffers, applying Water Hyacinth to purify water, cleaning of oil spills in water using bregoli, prevention of disposal of hot water in to the river, avoidance of dumping of solid waste in to the water bodies and strict implementation of legislations for water treatment (Dar et al., 2011). As part of the conservation of natural water sources, we quantify the water quality parameters like Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Dissolved Oxygen (DO), pH, coliform level etc. (Garg, 2012). If the water quality of any source is not complying with standard value of parameters, the water cannot be used for drinking purpose without undergoing complete treatment. Drinking water treatment technology include screening, plain sedimentation, disinfection, softening, filtration and miscellaneous treatments. However, sewage can be treated by preliminary, primary and biological treatments that make it safe (Van Haandel & Lettinga, 1994; Kartal et al., 2010).

The major steps being taken by the Government to control pollution include the action plan for sewage management and restoration of water quality in aquatic resources, implementation of National River

Conservation Plan for abatement of pollution in identified stretches of various rivers, interception and diversion of raw sewage, construction of sewerage systems, setting up of sewage treatment plants, implementation of low cost sanitation facilities, education and awareness creation, community participation, river front development, notification of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules etc. (Helmer et al., 1997).

Different steps have been taken by the Central Government to control water depletion and to promote rain water harvesting / conservation. They are (1) Creation of a new Ministry of Jal Shakti for dealing with all matters relating to water at one place in an integrated manner; (2) The National Water Policy (2012) has been formulated by Department of Water Resources, RD & GR, to advocates rain water harvesting and water conservation; (3) Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has issued directions under Section 5 of "The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986" for mandatory Rain Water Harvesting / Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting for all target areas in the Country; (4) Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) under DoWR, RD & GR has prepared a conceptual document entitled "Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water in India" during the year 2013; (5) CGWB has taken up Aquifer Mapping and Management programme during XII Plan, under the scheme of Ground Water Management and Regulation; (6) Department of Water Resource, RD

& GR has instituted National Water Awards to incentivize good practices in water conservation and ground water recharge; (7) Mass awareness programmes are conducted from time to time each year in various parts of the Country to promote rain water harvesting and artificial recharge to ground water; (8) Department of Land Resources is implementing 8214 watershed development projects in 28 States under the Watershed Development Component (WDC) of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for development of rain fed portions of net cultivated area and cultivable wastelands. Moreover, the Government has notified the Environment (Protection) Amendment Rules in 2017 to regulate the water pollution (http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in).

Air pollution: Air is an important and vital component of earth's environment. Its slight change in composition can have varied effects on growth and development of organisms on earth. Air pollution occurs when excessive quantities of substances like gases (ammonia (NH_3), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), nitrous oxides (NO_x), methane (CH_4) and chlorofluorocarbons (CFC)), particulates (organic and inorganic) and biological molecules are introduced into earth's atmosphere. This harmful accumulation causes diseases, allergies and even death to human beings and other living organisms. The pollutants may be primary or

secondary in origin. Primary pollutants are produced by processes such as ash from a volcanic eruption and CO and SO_2 gas from motor vehicle exhausts or released from factories. Secondary pollutants form in the air when primary pollutants react or interact (Arya, 1999). The burning of fossil fuels, agricultural activities, exhausts from factories and industries, mining operations and indoor instruments release the pollutants to the atmosphere, which traps heat around the earth and cause global warming. The reduction of air pollutants from atmosphere is an essential step for the better living of organisms. Air Pollution Control Act, 1955 was the first Clean Air Act enacted by United States to address the national environmental problem of air pollution. The amendment of the Clean Air Act, 1990, introduced a nationwide approach to reduce acid pollution and improve public health by dramatically reducing emissions of SO_2 and oxides of nitrogen (NOx). It is one of the most comprehensive air quality laws in the world. Later, Parliament of India introduced Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, to control and prevent air pollution in India and for the establishment of Boards at the Central and State levels with a view to carrying out the aforesaid purposes. The Factories Act, 1948; The Mines Act, 1952; The Inflammable Substances Act, 1952; Motor Vehicle Act, 1988; The Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and control) Rules, 2000 and The Municipal Solid Waste Rules (Management and handling), 2000 are also framed

by Government to control the rate of air pollutants (Agarwal, 2005).

A scientific study done by Louisiana State University (LSU) and Greenpeace, India has been suggested 13 control measures to prevent the air pollution. The actions taken by the Government of India to control the air pollution consists of notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (2009), setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality, introduction of cleaner/alternate fuel like CNG, LPG etc. and promotion of public transport network and creation of infrastructure for industrial pollution control (Biswas et al., 2011). Kumar et al. (2018) analyzed the Air Pollution Index (API) in 14 districts of Kerala. The study revealed that, only light air pollution is found in Pathanamthitta, Malappuram and Idukki, moderate air pollution in Trissur, Kollam, Wayanad, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Kozhikode and Kannur, whereas heavy air pollution in Thiruvananthapuram, Alappuzha, Palakkad and Kasaragode.

A colour coded Air Quality Index (AQI) developed by United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that provides indicator of the quality of air and its health effects (Chaurasia et al., 2013). The value of AQI ranges from 0 to 500 with 6 AQI category indicating increasing levels of health concern. Computation of the AQI requires an air pollutant concentration over a specified averaging

period obtained from an air monitor or model. In India, the National Air Quality Index (AQI) was launched in New Delhi on September 17, 2014, under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The Central Pollution Control Board along with State Pollution Control Boards has been operating National Air Monitoring Program (NAMP) covering 240 cities of the country having more than 342 monitoring stations. There are six AQI categories, namely Good, Satisfactory, Moderately polluted, Poor, Very Poor and Severe (Table 3). The proposed AQI will consider eight pollutants (PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, NO_2, SO_2, CO, O_3, NH_3 and Pb) for which short-term (up to 24-hourly averaging period) National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed (Nigam et al., 2015; Sahu & Kota, 2017).

World Health Organization (WHO) study has highlighted the problem of air pollution till 2016. It has inferred that 14 most polluted cities in the world are located in India. The WHO report indicates that Delhi is placed at 6th position with an annual average Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 concentration as 143 micrograms per cubic meter (Gupta et al., 2016; Goel & Pant, 2016). Significant action has been taken in Delhi and NCR (National Capital Region) including the formulation of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) by CPCB and a comprehensive action plan by Ministry of Environment; viz., ban on petcoke in Delhi and NCR; strict surveillance over

Table 3. Air Quality Index and corresponding levels of health concern.

Air Quality Index values (AQI)	Levels of Health Concern
0 – 50	Good
51 – 100	Moderate
101 – 150	Unhealthy for sensitive groups
151 – 200	Unhealthy
201 – 300	Very unhealthy
301 – 500	Hazardous

coal-fired plants; strict action against construction activities; augmentation of air quality monitoring stations in Delhi and NCR; integration of data on air quality from stations of Indian Meteorological Department (IMD); launching a Mobile App called SAMEER for grievance redressal and Central government scheme to encourage *in-situ* management of crop residue and reduce stubble burning (Rosencranz & Jackson, 2003; Laura, et al., 2018). National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) was launched by MoEF in April, 2018 and this was preceded by Clean Air Programme in Delhi in February 2018 to sensitize the public in general and implementing agencies in particular (Harish et al., 2019; Reddy & Roberts, 2019).

Noise pollution: Sound waves are vibrations of air molecules carried from a noise source to the ear. The normal human ear can detect sounds that

range between 0 dB (hearing threshold) and about 140 dB, with sounds between 120dB and 140 dB causing pain (pain threshold). Noise pollution is the regular exposure to elevated sound levels that may lead to adverse effects in humans or other living organisms (Goines & Hagler, 2007). According to the WHO, the sound levels less than 70 dB are not damaging to living organisms, regardless of how long or consistent the exposure is (Table 4). Exposure for more than 8 hours to constant noise beyond 85 dB may be hazardous. Present studies realized many human diseases due to noise pollution including hyper tension, hearing loss, sleep disturbances, cardiovascular and psychological dysfunctions etc. (Singh & Davar, 2004).

The main sources of noise pollution are vehicles, air crafts, bursting of crackers, loud speakers, projection of satellites in to space, construction works, industries etc. which in turn effects on the life of living organisms and non-living things (Kam et al., 1994). We can Reduce Noise pollution by turning off appliances when not in use, use of earplugs, lowering the volume, planting more trees, regular maintenance of vehicles and machines etc. By controlling noise, we can reduce the health problems of living organisms that noise pollution has on everyone (Omubo-Pepple et al., 2010). Under Article 21 of the Indian

Table 4. Ambient Air Quality Standards in respect of noise
(DT-Day Time, NT-Night Time)

Category of area		Limits in db	Ambient Air Quality Standards	
			DT (db)	NT (db)
Residential	Bed Room	25db	55	45
	Living Room	40db		
Commercial	Office	30-45db	65	55
	Conference	40-45db		
	Restaurants	40-60db		
Industrial	Workshop	40-60db	75	70
	Laboratory	40-50db		
Educational	Class Room	30-40db	50	40
	Library	35-45db		
	Hospital Wards	20-35db		

Constitution, the citizens have a right of a decent environment; and they have a right to live peacefully, right to sleep at night and to have a right to leisure which are all necessary ingredients of the right to better life. Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 recognizes noise as an "environmental pollution" and empowers the Central Government to frame the rules prescribing the maximum permissible limits for noise in different areas (Singh, 2016).

The Central Government has framed different Acts to control the noise pollution, that includes The Police Act, 1861; Railway Act, 1890; Aircraft Act, 1934; Factories Act, 1948; Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Motor Vehicles Act,

1988. Moreover, the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 framed by the Central Government under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (Singh, 2016). The rules says that the increasing ambient noise level in public places from different sources have deleterious effects on human health and the psychological wellbeing of the people. Therefore, it is necessary to regulate and control noise producing and generating sources with the objective of maintaining the ambient air quality standards in respect of noise. In 2015, the National Green Tribunal directed authorities in Delhi to ensure strict adherence to guidelines on noise pollution, saying noise is more than just a nuisance as it can produce serious psychological stress (Shrotria, 2015).

Land pollution: Land pollution leads to other kinds of pollution (water and air) and hence, need to be regulated. Land pollution is majorly caused due to dumping and improper disposal of industrial and domestic waste along with semisolid waste. The waste dumping not only seriously affects the land productivity but also affects the purity of ground water. Municipal solid wastes, agricultural pollutants, mining, radioactive wastes and ocean dumping are major reason for changing the properties of soil and ground water. It can affect wildlife, plants and humans in a number of ways such as problems in respiratory system, skin, birth rate etc. The pollutants also cause different types of cancers in humans (Table 5) (Dutta et al., 2006;

Bundela et al., 2010). This type of pollution can be managed by proper dumping and recycling of wastes, sewage treatments, pesticide usage etc. Deforestation also plays as a major reason of land pollution (Agarwal et al., 2005). Forest plays vital role in maintaining a balanced ecological system and helps in conservation and formation of soil. The Forest Conservation Act, 1980, strictly restricts and regulates the de-reservation of forest or use of forest land for non-forest purposes without the prior approval of Central Government (Ravindranath et al., 2008).

Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 defines "hazardous substance" as any substance or preparation is liable to cause harm to human beings, other living creatures, plants, microbes, property or the environment (Bahl, 2016). The Act provides the Central Government, the power to form rules and procedures to deal with such hazardous substances. There are no direct rules to control land pollution in India because the effect of land pollution is not spontaneous and effects in long run (Petra & Odagiu, 2018). Some of the rules enacted by the Government relating to hazardous waste, chemical accidents, ozone depletion, municipal solid waste, biomedical waste etc. are the following (Table 6)(https://envt.kerala.gov.in/).

Table 5. Hazardous wastes and its major sources

Hazardous wastes	Sources
Heavy metals	
Arsenic	Mining, Tobacco smoke, processing of textiles, paper, glass etc.
Cadmium	Mining, fertilizer industry, battery waste
Chromium	Mining areas, Tanneries
Lead	Lead-acid battery smelters
Manganese	Mining areas
Mercury	Chlor-alkali industry, paper industry, mining, fuel burning
Nickel	Mining, metal refining
Pesticides	Insecticides
Hydrocarbons	
Benzene	Petrochemical industries, volcanoes, gasoline, crude oil
Vinyl chloride	Plastics, hazardous waste sites
Organic chemicals	
Dioxins	Waste incineration, herbicides, metal smelting
PCBs	Fluorescent lights, E-waste, Hydraulic fluid

Radiation pollution: Pollution by radioactive material is natural or manmade that causes problems in humans as well as ecosystems. Radiations may release to the ecosystem from nuclear energy generation plants, nuclear explosions, radioactive isotopes, mining processes etc. Alpha and Beta particles and Gamma rays are the most commonly encountered forms of radioactive pollution (Jones et al., 2015). Keeping distance from radiation source and reducing the radiation exposure time are the

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better strategies to prevent the health problems related to radiation pollution (Rahman et al., 2014). To strictly control the pollution created by radioactive substances, Central Government has formulated different Acts and rules. Atomic Energy Act, 1962, provides provisions for the development, control and use of atomic energy for the welfare of the people of India and for other peaceful uses and matters connected with. It provides the basic regulatory framework for all activities related to atomic energy programmes and use of ionizing radiation in India. Of the 32 sections of the Atomic Energy Act those related to safety are Sections 3 (e) (i), (ii) and (iii), 16, 17 and 23 (Singh & Singha, 2016).

Table 6. Acts and Rules enacted to control the hazardous substance pollution

Year	Acts and Rules related to hazardous substance pollution
1989	The Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemicals Rules
1948	The Factories Act
1952	The Mines Act
1989	Hazardous Micro-organisms Rules
1996	The Chemical Accidents Rules
1998	Bio-medical Waste Rules
1999	Plastic Manufacture Sales and Usage Rules
2000	The Municipal Solid Waste Rules
2001	Batteries Rules
2008	Hazardous Waste Rules

In accordance with these mandates, the Central Government has promulgated the Atomic Energy (Radiation Protection) Rules, 2004; the Atomic Energy (Working of the Mines Minerals and Handling of the Prescribed Substances) Rules, 1984; the Atomic Energy (Safe Disposal of Radioactive Wastes) Rules, 1987; the Atomic Energy (Factories) Rules, 1996 and the Atomic Energy (Radiation Processing of Food and Allied Products) Rules, 2012. They formulate the policy and regulatory framework for control of activities and for ensuring safety in the activities relating to use of atomic energy. Beyond this, the Central Government established the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) to carry out certain regulatory and safety functions envisaged under Section16, 17 and 23 of the Act. Section 16 and 17 of the Act pertain to control of radioactive substances and special provisions with regard to safety in production, handling, use and disposal of radiation / radioactive substances respectively in the country. Section 23 of the Act deals administration of the Factories Act, 1948. AERB has also been empowered to perform the functions under the Sections 10(1) (Powers of entry) and 11(1) (Powers to take samples) of Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 and Rule 12 (Agency to which information on excess discharge of pollutants to be given) under the Environmental Protection (Amendment) Rules 1987. Further, Rules 2(b) and 3 of the Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemicals Rules 1989 under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 has notified AERB as the authority to enforce

directions and procedures as per the Atomic Energy Act, 1962. Under the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Rules, 2011, AERB also has the responsibility of notifying the occurrence of any nuclear incident (Rhoades, 1976; Singh & Singha, 2016).

Biodiversity   conservation: Biodiversity conservation is the preservation of ecosystems and the organisms that live within them. India is one of the 12 mega biodiversity countries of the world. India has approximately 45,000 species of plants representing as much as 11% of the world's flora (Mudgal & Hajra, 1997). The total estimate of animal species in India is about 89,450, of which insects alone include 59,353 species (Sharma, 1998). Diversity among living organism is a measure of variation at the genetic, species and ecosystem level. It focuses variability among living organisms including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems. There are three types of diversity ie., diversity within species (genetic diversity), between species (species diversity) and between ecosystems (ecosystem diversity). The protection and scientific management of this genetic diversity is the biodiversity conservation (Mayr, 1997). The genetic resources can be conserved in natural habitats like National parks, Wild-life sanctuaries and Biosphere reserves etc. In contrast, the conservation of biological diversity outside their natural habitats called *ex-situ* conservation. Botanical and zoological gardens, seed banks, DNA

library, cryopreservation etc. are also helping for *ex-situ* maintaining of genetic diversity (Vaughan & Chang, 1992; Dulloo, 2010).

The concept of conservation of biodiversity is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in Article 48A and 51A. Major Central Acts relevant to biodiversity are the Indian Forest Act, 1927; the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Beyond the acts, there are some International conventions to protect the biodiversity viz., Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Migratory Species, International Whaling Commission, RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands, World Heritage Convention etc. (Matthews, 1993; Bodansky, 1995).

Table 7. The Acts and Rules related to conservation of Biodiversity

Year	Acts and Rules related to conservation of Biodiversity
1897	Fisheries Act
1995	Threatened Species Conservation Act
1914	Destructive Insects and Pests Act
1942	Indian Coffee Act
1953	Tea Act
1965	Cardamom Act
1966	Seeds Act
1974	National Parks and Wildlife Act
1975	Tobacco Board Act
1986	Spices Board Act
1994	Fisheries Management Act
1999	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
1999	Plantations and Re-afforestation Act
2001	Nature Conservation Trust Act

2001	Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights (PPVFR) Act
2002	Biological Diversity Act
2004	Biological Diversity Rules
2010	National Green Tribunal Act
2012	Forestry Act
2016	Crown Land Management Act
2016	Biodiversity Conservation Act

Conclusion

Indian constitution has efficient Acts and Rules to control different environmental pollutions. But the rapid growth of urbanization and industrialization in turn enhances the pollution of water, air and soil. Expeditious urbanization leads to overcrowding and slums, which experience major problems such as poverty, poor sanitation, unemployment and high crime rates. Similarly, the industrialization has led to environmental degradation due to toxic gas emissions occur as a result of highly-polluting industries. These pollutants are the primary cause of the extinction of various species of living organisms and deterioration of biodiversity. The ignorance of public about pollution control Acts and Rules is another major reason for environmental pollution. Awareness programmes on different environmental protection strategies to the public can maintain the balance of ecosystem at a specific level.

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Re-visiting Democracy and

Women's Rights

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The values enshrined within contexts of democracy have added relevance particularly with regard to gender as ideas about equality have been seen to dominate discourses about individual social positioning, especially that of women. The manner in which democracy intersects with gender equality, assumes significance as it also throws light on the different ramifications associated with the development of democracy. Women's roles in advancing the cause of democracy have to be emphasised as the realisation of their potentialities and the experiencing of their basic individual rights contribute not just towards empowerment but also to their full participation in the societal process. In Indian societies as elsewhere, gendered hierarchies and power structures are often seen to conspire towards divesting women of their rights and privileges and also to thwart the fundamental notions about justice. Therefore, gender and democracy become contentious sites that warrant critical attention. It is even more pertinent that contemporary Indian social contexts necessitate a more insightful understanding of the woman's role in furthering questions about individual rights.

Women's participation and inclusion in the social and political processes, incorporating the fundamental principles of democracy are essential for establishing gender justice and equality. In a diverse nation as India, the implications of gender democracy are also bound to vary, as the meaning of gender equality assumes multiple connotations with respect to the changing contexts and

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circumstances of Indian societies. As a result, there requires a deeper understanding of the biases and prejudices that work in different ways to hinder women from exercising their basic right to freedom. Thus, issues ranging from the question of right to existence to the right to determine the choices of life become necessarily intertwined with the woman's cause. Moreover, these issues align closely with the individual's citizenship rights in such a way that the gender problematic tends to become inseparably connected to the question of democracy. Therefore, the fulfillment of democratic ideals becomes the key to ensuring the legitimate rights of women and in maintaining the statusquo.

While examining the contemporary situation in India, it has to be acknowledged that women have access to the provisions guaranteed by the Constitution and have acquired more visibility with education, career and gainful employment. For, as S.K.Pachauri says, there are certain fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and by being "equal citizens of India, women benefit from these rights equally with men" (73). But, inspite of being armed with a slew of legislations and reforms, there exists a great divide between what women aspire for and what women experience. This is largely because women endure victimisation and marginalisation in manifold ways, irrespective of their social status, class, caste ethnicity or religion. The patriarchal structure of Indian societies manoeuvres to contain women within fixed codes of propriety that prove to be detrimental to the goal of emancipation. What

complicates the situation is the fact that the mere fulfillment of constitutional rights do not appear to safeguard the cause of a gender equitable society as very often economic freedom, education, or even equal career opportunities do not always ensure the liberation of women.

The contemporary scenario points to the fact that cultural values, ideals and representations prescribe an alternative hierarchy whereby women continue to exist as secondary citizens with their voices and power subdued. Martha C. Nussbaum says:

> Depressingly many traditions have portrayed women as less important than men, less deserving of basic life support, or of fundamental rights that are strongly correlated with quality of life, such as the right to work and the right to political participation. Sometimes…these traditions are resisted by the women themselves. Sometimes , on the other hand, they have become so deeply internalized that they seem to record what is 'right' and 'natural', and women themselves frequently come to endorse their own second-class status. (1)

This is also evident in the manner in which women are ingeniously prevented from exercising their choices either in terms of the control they have over their own bodies or even externally over the public sphere. The increasing number of rape and assault cases point to the violation of women's bodies and

the objectification of women as sexual beings implies a complete disavowal of their rights as individuals. And what is more significant is the fact that rape has been found to be "motivated by aggression and the desire to exert power and humiliate. Very often the intention of the offender is more aggressive than sexual" (Pachauri 159-160). This can be exemplified through the incident of the Delhi gang rape case of December 2016 that shook the conscience of India. Susan Brownmiller observes that from "pre-historic times to the present" rape has played a "critical function". It is nothing more than a "conscious process of intimidation by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear" (original emphasis) (15). The aspect of rape is thus connected to not just rape victims but all women indeed, since they are deprived of their freedom and agency to act as autonomous persons.

Gender spatiality also covertly works to create discourses that subordinate the woman as inherently weak and almost invisible. Most often the spatial attributes of gender have been defined in terms of a neat dichotomisation of the private and public spheres of life. Joyce Green observes that the public/private sphere dualism constructs separate gendered social space for men and women, identifying the former with feminine qualities like intimacy, irrationality and sentimentality and placing it in a sharply antithetical relationship to the rational, objective, meritocratic and competitive world of the latter. Women are socially constructed as naturally suited for the concerns of the private

sphere and as unsuited for any public sphere activity and such gender roles reflect a social consensus forged by patriarchal elitism. This dichotomy, which has historically been an integral component of all patriarchies, continues to exist in the classical capitalist and neo-liberal communities forging rigid and separate categories of existence (412). Such a confinement of the woman within the private sphere is directly related to the subordination of women in the society as well.

Such mechanisms indicate how gendered norms can also challenge democratic ideals as a large section of society gets excluded from the mainstream through the play of larger power structures. Accordingly, the benefits of democracy for full social and cultural development will remain available only to a privileged few, solely on the basis of gender. A spatial configuration, thus, becomes absolutely essential for enhancing the woman's representation in the political, economic and cultural spheres of life. Only then can women enjoy full and equal citizenship, imbibing the values enshrined within democracy. Women's empowerment and gender equality foreground the democratic set up and are essential in orienting the nation's development process.

Drawing lessons from the Indian freedom struggle, which to a large extent, exemplified the codes of gender parity by involving a large amount of women who dedicated themselves to the cause of liberation, the present day society can very well aim for a more egalitarian set up that would capture the spirit of the

freedom movement. Mastan Vali opines that in India the "participation of women in political process has been a logical outcome of their involvement in the freedom struggle. "Unlike the West where the women had launched several movements to get political rights, in India the National Movement helped them to enter into the arena of politics" (3). However, women's political role, which is integral towards ensuring the propagation of democratic values remains marginal though the Constitution provides for women's right to vote. As a result, a large proportion of society gets unrepresented and are made to accept their own powerlessness in ensuring good governance and political dialogue. Even while exercising their choice to vote, women tend to be influenced by familial norms and dictates and find it extremely cumbersome to actively engage in party politics. Their number, therefore, becomes minimal even in the Parliament and in ministerial positions. The relative absence of women in several state level and national level policy-making bodies also fail to ensure justice for women who tend to be victimised in various ways. Vali argues that despite the fact that the extent of the involvement of women in the election as voters reflects their majority, "their representation in the various legislative bodies presents an extremely dismal picture which depicts their real absence from the decision making bodies at all levels…It may be stated that women's low participation in politics in India is a product of their exclusion from the social process at large" (3).

The ideal of independence should, therefore, be implemented though the establishment of conditions which promote an affirmative position for the woman. This would mean putting an end to all kinds of discrimination and providing equal opportunities for women not just in terms of Constitutional rights but also in terms of their very right for existence. For instance, Roop Rekha Verma argues that the idea of equality is "the absence of discrimination. Thus understood, equality is the antithesis of discrimination, not of difference. It is consistent with special provisions for the special needs of different categories of people, provided the categories themselves are not discriminatory" (443).

Democracy can thrive only when women actively engage themselves in all walks of life, free of inhibitions and derogatory practices. Indeed, the feminist movement has always been engaged in challenging deep-seated prejudices and political thinking that tend to represent women as lacking any agency to act. The various stages of feminist development have across these years emphasised different aspects pertaining to women's legitimate existence within democratic societies.

 Along with various issues, the lack of political power has been identified as a serious concern that is integrally connected to the institutionalised subjugation of women. This is largely because the lack of political power could also strongly impinge upon the social and economic status of women. It has been argued that the "reality of political power

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remains predominantly masculine; women and men are treated as, and usually feel like, different categories of citizens, while politics continues unhindered to be male-dominated, to a degree directly proportional to the importance of the level in question in the political hierarchy" (Maloutas xii). This only reiterates the fact that there is an "inherently uneasy relation between the functioning of democracy and the gendered identities of its citizens" (xii).

Feminist interventions should, therefore, be geared towards exploring possibilities for the active political participation of women along with redressing the several evils that tend to hegemonise women. There needs to be a clearer understanding of the "nature and cause of persistent inequalities between women and men with the aim of improving democracy" (Sadiqi 2). Such an understanding should encompass the multitudinous differences and patterns of discrimination that are socially engineered to exclude women. This would mean an attempt to re-examine the values and codes that constitute the framework of societal institutions to larger social structures. Though there can be discerned a concerted attempt to subordinate women's interests to male dominance, sustained efforts for resistance, primarily engendered by the goals of feminism, have helped women to emphatically reaffirm their positions within society.

However, the absence of powerful female mobilisation, in terms of the political culture of the nation, seems to prevent the true realisation of the

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democratic ideas and experiences envisaged in the Constitution. Hence, it is extremely significant that contexts and sites have to be identified with the aim of minimising the levels of gender inequality and for reconceptualising the democratic spirit in terms of a policy of gender justice. Therefore, as pointed out by Sadiqi, "understanding gender inequalities leads to reconceptualization in the studies on democracy, which, in turn, leads to strategizing and social transformation" (2). The driving factor should be the fact that "only an efficient and sustained participation of women in politics can improve democracy. This implies that work is needed on the nature of women's participation and ways in which feminist agency can be included in political culture with the aim of attaining social justice" (2).

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Educating to Be Democratic:
Pedagogy as a Strategy

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As per researches in various disciplines, if there could be a magical medicine that every member of a given society could ingest to guarantee a thriving democracy, it will certainly take the form of high quality education for all. Borrowing Professor Seeley's definition that 'Democracy is a form of government in which everyone has a share,'

the essence of everyone being an actor or player in a successful democracy has to be instilled as a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experiences, at a very young age, as this education is a prerequisite for the survival and the success of the democratic society which upholds values like equality, fraternity, dignity of individual, cooperation, sharing of responsibility etc. Besides, a democracy upholds promises of exploitation free existence, equal work opportunities according to abilities and capacities, and fundamental rights that ensure fullest development of individuals and their personalities. Social justice and paramount faith in the worth of the common man which are central to a thriving democracy ensures that there is no domination of power or privilege in a single individual or a group. To live in such a system that envisages fraternity, liberty and responsibility as its working principles, citizens need to be educated and trained which makes education the key to the success of a democratic society. Teachers being the agents of this instrument that enrich the strengths and overcomes the weaknesses of the people, face the daunting challenge of making themselves epitomes of democratic values reflecting the principles of democracy in the classroom, whether be in delivering the curriculum, classroom methodology, administration or organisation. The interactions in a classroom must have the subtle goal of objectively understanding the plethora of social, political, cultural, philosophical, and economic problems, and also assist in forming independent

judgments on complicated problems that would go beyond the individual satisfaction to common good.

Being Democratic: Teacher modelling

Educators are becoming increasingly aware of the need to instill the principles of life in a democracy at an early age and also to develop it gradually with realistic sense of rights and responsibilities in young minds. A learning of this kind has to go beyond slavish obedience to understanding, respectful acceptance and tolerance of the people, systems and practices around. A system that is genuinely democratic allows enquiries and criticism in the absence of which flaws in assumptions and inadequacies of realities will remain uncorrected. Unless the inadequacies are questioned and dissents are expressed, erroneous decisions and outdated views shall remain routinely imposed on people by those in positions of authority. Though dissent is an integral part of any democracy, dissent management is an art that must be taught for which classrooms may be the right place and teachers the best facilitators. Students must get acquainted to values that uphold a democracy in all their day to day interactions within and outside the classroom.   These may include interactions between students, among teachers, between students and teachers or even with the administration.   In other words, every educational institution has a culture of which each stake holder becomes a part. The teacher being the closest representative for the students, it becomes

necessary to take conscious efforts to act this part out.

Socrates has been referred to as one of the greatest teachers of democracy and his method has been referred to as the Socratic method of dialogue. Of late this method has been promoted as a commendable way of developing critical and analytical thinking in modern class rooms. Being a space occupied by a pool of varying talents, knowledge levels and backgrounds, the credibility of this approach comes from the opportunities this method offers for free expression of genuine creative thoughts. In their work *Dialogic Pedagogy: The Importance of Dialogue in Teaching and Learning,* Dr.Skidmore and Murakami observes that the credit for initiating dialogic pedagogy goes to Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher, whose theory has been enormously influential on the tradition of critical pedagogy. In his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, generally considered one of the foundational texts of the critical pedagogy movement, he has drawn a distinction between the 'banking concept of education' and 'problem-posing education'. In the banking concept of education, 'knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider know nothing' (Freire, 1993:53) . In the problem-posing education, students are acknowledged as fellow beings capable of consciousness and intentionality, who are treated co-investors into the nature of reality. Here the teachers enter into a

dialogue with his/her students. This dialogue is considered indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. In his words,

Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem posing education   makes them critical thinkers.   Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely   destroy)   the   intentionality   of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world, thereby denying people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Problem posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in enquiry and creative transformation. Problem posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming, as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality(Freire, 64-65)

Freire's   dialogic   pedagogy   has   been founded on an understanding of knowing as a social activity, although it has an individual dimension. When a teacher becomes the authority who knows and transfers what he/she knows to the students, it socialises them into a state of passivity whereas dialogic pedagogy invites them to participate actively in reshaping their own understanding of reality and demonstrates an alternative mode of communicative practice in the classroom.   The teacher in such a classroom assumes a leadership authority as the leader of the learning process and

also relearns with the students.   He/ she exercises authority in steering the development of the collective learning activity and unlike the authoritarian teacher doesn't demand slavish obedience or resist questioning.   The dialogic teacher's authority has a democratic character. A teacher's competence is here demonstrated in the way the learning process is   directed for the students. Teacher's authority here is earned on the basis of experience and rests on the basis of a respect for the other that bridges the gap between their different social positions. Freire also states that the democratic nature of a teacher's authority also means that not everyone has to speak in the course of a dialogic lesson, but they make a contribution when they have something to add to what had already been said. Here the everyday knowledge of the students is brought into the class room, and validates reflection and critical examination of their experience of the world outside the classroom and is a method that need not be confined to subjects like literacy education and humanities.

Collaborating for curiosity

Classroom practices fostering curiosity have always been lauded ideal though the spatial and temporal constraints leave a significant gap between theory and practice in real time. Research suggests that curiosity enhances retention span and has also been linked to a wide range of adaptive behaviours including   tolerance of anxiety and uncertainty, positive emotions, humour, out of the box thinking

and a noncritical attitude. All these attributes have been associated with healthy social outcomes and more impressively, been kept at the heart of lifelong learning.   To live fully productive lives as contributive citizens of a democracy, young minds must be equipped to find creative solutions for the pertinent problems faced by industry and society. Classroom interactions and pedagogy must foster intellectual life through emphasis on critical thinking and open enquiry, and precision of thought and expression.   This is best developed through collaborative learning.   In his essay 'The Dimensions of Curiosity', the author, using fractals as a modern metaphor for modern sensibilities, states that curiosity is a form of behaviour that encourages travelling along fractal dimensions. A curious mind seeks to explore more than local dimensions, other dimensions of one's physical and intellectual space, failing which one may find oneself ill prepared for the challenges from unfamiliar world views. A citizen of a democracy cannot be spared of curiosity on two grounds here - in developing observations and enquiry, and in broadening ones views to accommodate differences and dissent. Anatole Frances's observation, 'the whole art of teaching in only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of   young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards' may be a good starting point.   Studies indicate five types of curiosity as relevant for professional work too viz. specific, diversive, social, perceptual and epistemic. Social curiosity is the interest to know about other people and cultivating it requires a pluralistic, non-

judgemental way of engagement whereas specific curiosity is the curiosity to engage with specific problems. Developing diversive curiosity helps deal with ambiguity in problem solving and boosts problem solving. Though perceptual curiosity is natural to all of us, lack of it can affect both diversive and social curiosity. A curious mind facilitates genuine enquiry along with deep listening, which promotes intense learning unleashing the power of young minds to take risks. Kathy Taberner, Kirsten Taberner Siggins in their work *The Power of Curiosity: How to Have Real Conversations That Create Collaboration, Innovation and Understanding* states:

For the first time we have a younger generation that has access to more information than the one before it. Older generations can no longer presume to know the experiences of those much younger than themselves. Effective leadership now requires a flatter, more transparent, collaborative approach, because the top down model of leadership no longer works- in the workplace or at home. The traditional knowledge bearers must now adjust, atleast in the area of technology, to sharing this role with their much younger counterparts, and this can be a difficult adaptation- one to which much adults are unaccustomed. In the Information Age, organisations want engagement, collaboration, innovation, inspiration and accountability- skills that are currently expected of leaders, yet not being taught." (xvii)

Beyond the necessity of generating curiosity in young learning minds, Taberner points to a greater challenge that the teacher facilitator has to address in the Information Age-collaboration and an adaptation that the teacher-leader is forced to acquire with his/her younger counterparts. John Dewey the twentieth century American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer whose ideas have been influential in education and social reform, calls education the means of social continuity of life. Life he defines, as a self-renewing process through action upon the environment. He adds that society exists through a process of transmission whereby ideals, hopes, expectations, standards and opinions, and habits of doing, thinking and feeling are communicated from the older to the younger. This renewal not being an automatic process, Dewey warns that, "unless pains are taken to see that genuine and thorough transmission takes place, the most civilised group will relapse into barbarism and then into savagery". Classrooms that aid democratic principles must transmit a communication that insures participation in a common understanding which secures 'similar emotional and intellectual dispositions or 'like mindedness' as sociologists call it. Traditional mode of giving and taking being long outdated and undemocratic in execution, Dewey states that methods and strategies are to be promoted which would effect a sharing of purposes, a communication of interests, as social life is identical with communication and all communication is educative. In these processes of communication,

which he calls an art, both the recipient and the one who communicates are affected, enlarging and changing experiences, resulting in modification of attitudes.   Modern   terminology   calls   this collaborative approach.

When this is practised, classrooms transform into democratic, collaborative learning spaces, where inspiration and innovation shall be natural by-products. Collaborated efforts serve a great deal towards the expansion of views and curiosity. 2002 Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kanheman in his book *Thinking: Fast and Slow*, shares his experience of collaborative work with a younger scholar named Amos.   He recalls how they enjoyed the extraordinary good fortune of a shared mind which he sees much superior to individual minds. Beyond the   sharing,   Daniel   Kahneman   values   the relationship that made their work fun as well as productive.   He frankly admits that their collaboration on judgment and decision making was the reason for the Nobel Prize he received, which he strongly believes, Amos would have shared with him, had he not died in 1996.

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Evolution of Democracy in India and How Successful it has been

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Abstract

Democracy is considered as the most po pular and civilized form of government in the present age as it is capable of distributing the fruits of freedo m and development amongst the largest possib le numbers. India is the biggest and strongest democracy in the world with one well defined constitution that provides protection of our basic rights. People of colonial India had struggled hard against the imperialist Government for their democratic rights. So it is very natural for India to

decide to have a democratic form of government after independence.

Indian democracy's one of the earliest reference appear in Rig Veda, which affirms that the tradition of republic is not foreign to our country but was a system we have it from the beginning of our history. Democracy is best form of government but it is not with its deficits and critics. Democracy is facing serious challenges in a short span of less than three decades. This is an urgent question on global stage where democracies that until recently seem stable and committed to the democratic ideals of multi party competition, separation of powers between the judiciary, executive and legislator and freedom of press and expression and security of human life all seemed threat today. International interference in national election, the rise of totalitarian leaders, a growing corporate media nexus and rising majoritarianism threaten the very fundamental principles of democracy. Democracy is healthy when the voice of disapproval and variant options are heard and resolves with proper checks and balances.

Keywords: *Democracy, Democracy in Ancient India, Constitution, Majoritarianism, Criminalization, Secularism.*

Introduction

In the words of former US president Abraham Lincoln, Democracy is "Government of the people, by the people and for the people". The

democracy is a Greek word, which is composite of words Demos (people) and Kratos (rule); basically saying power to the people. The legitimacy of democracy lies in the participation of its people. To protect the ideals of democracy worldwide the international day of democracy is observed every year of 15 September. The idea is to review the state of democracy in the world and uphold and promote democracy and its principles. In this context India is the largest functioning democracy of the world today and it is also regarded as the beacon of democracy to the world. Since its inception in 2008 the day has been observed worldwide to raise awareness about democracy, its meaning and significance. Thousands of people and organizations across the world hold various initiatives to promote and protect democracy. The day is an opportunity to reaffirm our shared commitment to protect and promote democracy.

Democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of life. The United Nation describes democracy as a goal as much as a process and it stays only with the fullest participation and support of the international community, national governing bodies, civil society and individuals. The universal declaration of human right lists values of freedom, respect for human right and the principle of holding periodic and genuine election by universal suffrage as the essential elements of democracy. While democracy is also

meant to provide the natural environment for the protection and effective realization of human rights, the democracy and human rights are closely linked and human covenants on these matters are brought to the fore on democracy day.

Democracy has come a long way since the classical times when Aristotle in his classification categorized it as a perverted form of government. Jean Jacques Rousseau's political theory "*Social Contract*" asserted that only the people, who are sovereign, have that all powerful right. Rousseau's concept of general will which had entrusted sovereign power to the masses paved the way for the French revolution with its famous slogan "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" which marked turning point for the rise of modern democracy.

Indian democracy is facing crisis since independence, which include the problem of integration, linguistic reorganization of states, origin of Kashmir issue, refugee problem etc. Thus we see the number of challenges, which the newly independent and decolonized India was facing while adopting the system of democracy. The major problems before India were caste system, poverty, illiteracy, poor health condition etc gave a clear picture. But India is today recognized as the largest democracy in the world. But the questions like 'Should we really have any right to pride ourselves on being a democratic country' and 'Are we really a democratic in the true sense' is a matter of debate.

This article looks into the evolution of Indian democracy and checks to what extent it has been successful.

Evolution of Indian Democracy

Ancient history of India reveals that democratic republics existed even before 6th century BC. One of the earliest instances of democracy in ancient India appears in the Rig Veda, one of the most sacred books of the Hindus. The Rig Veda mentions two democratic institutions called *Sabha* and *Samiti* assembly and the king was elected by these tribal assemblies. The scriptures in Pali language provide a vivid depiction of the republican system of government in Buddhist period 600 BC – 200 AD. The republics were known as Mahajanapadas and among these states Vaishali was the world's first republic. The Licchavis were well known republic of those times and were governed by 7707 rajas who were constitutional monarchs. Nearly 80,000 household constituted the republic which had a parliament (parishad) of 500 members with the president or Raja. The other democratic organization Ganas or Sangas had greater vestiges of tribal organization than the monarchies .Two among the sixteen Mahajanapadas, the Vajji and Malla were sanghas. The Gana or Sanga represent a self governing multitude where the decisions were made by the members working in common. The national historians tended to glorify them by their democratic features. After 6th century onwards, democratic institutions were replaced by the

despotic rule of various dynasties till India come under the direct control of British rule.

Our present form of parliamentary democracy however is partly inherited from the British and partly the result of the genius and foresight of the founding fathers of our constitution. However British rule was also against democracy it was the Government of India act 1935 that laid the foundation of democratic rule in India.

The efforts for giving political freedom to India started from 1946 till it became free in August 1947. The year 1947 saw the birth of new India, a country that stood poised for a new beginning. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India delivered his speech "*Tryst with Destiny*" on the eve of India's independence towards midnight on 14 August 1947. The system of government setup by British no doubt provided the basis for the system we now have in place. The constitution of free India accepted democracy as the basis of ruling the country. The new constitution of 1950 made India a democratic country, post that India decided to have democratic political system.

Even though the democracy in India have survived and even flourished since independence, our democracy has stood the test of time several times. India's first year were marked by turbulent events with a massive exchange of population with Pakistan, the Indo Pakistani war of 1947 and the integration of over 500 princely states to form a unified nation. Democracy in India began with the

anti colonial movement that played a huge role in terms of idea of democracy and our forefathers took a very bold position in terms of going for a universal adult franchise in a country with more than 65% of illiteracy. This laid foundation for world's largest Indian democracy.

Meaning of Democracy in the Indian context

It has been over 70 years of Independence and Indian democracy has gone through several layers of evolution. India had the task of keeping diversity of a subcontinent within a democratic framework. That meant India had to lead the way and embody all that democracy stands for. Indian democracy continues to puzzle many foreign observers and other democratic nations but for Indians since independence it has been a matter of practice. India has survived as a democratic nation since 1947 when it gained independence. With second most population and the 7th largest country by area, India is the largest democracy in the world.

Democracy is a system of government that allows citizens to cast vote and elect a government of their choice. Democracy in India also ensures social and economic equality. India has a federal form of democracy with a government at the center that is largely accountable to the parliament and the state government that are accountable to their respective legislative assembly. Democracy is said to be the best form of governance as it gives representation to every citizen of a country. Democracy engendered greater freedoms of thought

and expression among people. India has five democratic principles "Sovereign, Socialist Secular, Democratic and Republic".

The most obvious observation about democracy as a political philosophy is that its best guarantee the liberty of an individual against the collective power of a state. Democracy also enshrines the equality of all individuals. It is said to best promote merit as against the privileges of riches or birth. It is also important to protect the liberty of an individual from other groups who also have the right to exercise democracy. Here in lies the necessity and the importance of the institutional apparatus of democracy.

One of the most fascinating part of Indian democracy is that it could give the world the idea of live in diversity, which is unique in the world. India is the only country in the world which has maximum kind of diversity but yet we could peacefully coexist for so long without major clashes. Over the last several decades Indian democracy has seen several ups and downs. Yet it has taught the world a number of lessons such as successful working of coalition government, the unpredictability of voter's behaviour, importance of an autonomous and responsive electoral commission and above all the possibility of political sophistication amongst the poorest people etc. Democracy aims to have as many people as possible to vote and also to provide voters with quality and objective information, so

that they can elect the best possible candidates to govern them. In a democracy the government that gets elected by the voters must work upon eradicating social evils such as illiteracy, poverty, communalism, casteism and gender discrimination among other things.

Problems Faced by Indian Democracy

Indian democracy is a wonder to the world, a country of almost 125 Crore people progressing peacefully under democratic system of government. Indian constitution espouses in India that a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic and Republic. It is an unparalleled in the constitutional history of the world. There are serious challenges coming to the fore not only to Indian democracy but also to the whole world. This is an urgent question on the global stage where democracies that until recently seem stable and committed to the democratic ideals of multiparty competition, separation of powers between legislation, the judiciary and the executive, freedom of press and expression and security of human life all seemed threat today. International inferences in national elections, the rise of totalitarian leaders, a growing corporate media nexus and rising majoritarianism threaten the very fundamental principles of democracy today. The constitutional commitment to democracy such as diversity and development for every citizen that the India's founders made currently seemed to be undergoing revision, as

social justice, minority rights and space for independent and free thinking come under threat.

Democracy is arguably the best form of government at the moment, but it is not without its critics. Democracy is healthy only when the voice of disapproval and variant opinions are heard and resolves. In a democratic setup citizen have a say in the functioning of the government through elections giving representation, free media, public pressure, deliberations movements, court petitioning and outreach programs. People vote to elect a government but people then many times relapses into political indolence after election and forget about the critical individual role in running a democracy and ensuring its accountability. They became victims of their private interest.

If democracy is coordinated functioning of the legislative, judiciary, and executive for the benefit of common man protecting the needy and punishing the greedy; but the legislators becoming indulgent and caste, religion and sectarian politics is taking roots in Indian democracy. Executive is increasingly looking for gains and judiciary is overloaded and stretched everywhere. In India bureaucrats writing open letters to Prime Minister and Supreme Court judges saying democracy is in danger is unprecedented for democractic form of government. With capitalist holding foothold on media and using media to promote their agenda, the strength of the fourth pillar of democracy is also under question today.

"A lie does not become the truth, wrong does not become right, and evil does not become good, just because it is accepted by the majority"; a profound statement made by American author, Richard Warner. Most believe that democracy means majority rule, they think that once a party gains majority it has the legal and moral rights to do as it choose and those in minority must either acquiescent to the majority's wishes or bide their time till it is their turn in office. Majoritarianism is one of several mechanism of decision making in democracy. It does not legitimize or sanctify every action and reaction. The notion of majoritarianism will lead to denial of genuine rights of many which will end in dangerous consequence.

The use of majoritarian principle leads to domination and prejudice, whether it is in the case of language or religion. Issue of imposition of Hindi as a single national language to unite the country goes against the federalism and the denial of rights to several states and their people to preserve their cultural and linguistic identity. India being a Union of States with diverse culture and the states itself constituted on the basis of language, it is practically impossible to impose one language all over India. Religion is the other area where the majority principle is being used. Articles 25 to 28 of constitution states that every citizen has right to practice and promote their religion peacefully. It is the understanding that minority voices will be allowed to flourish and they will not be bulldozed. For a real democracy to thrive, it is essential that

ideas and principles of secularism are at its core. The idea that there will be a clear separation between state and religion and there won't be any discrimination on the basis of religion has to be its guiding principle. Hence majoritarianism should be replaced by pluralism which promotes peaceful coexistence with solidarity.

Next biggest issue faced by the Indian democracy is the Criminalization of politics in Indian electoral process and also the investiture of same with cabinet posts. It is one of the primary concern as many politician who is facing charges of murder, rape, abduction, corruption and hate speeches continue to be our legislators. This prevailing trend is destroying the very foundation of democracy. It is nullifying all the constitutional safeguards of democracy and also spoiling bureaucracy and even threatens the judiciary and press. The Supreme Court of India made a verdict that all candidates will have to declare their criminal antecedents to election commission before contesting polls, and termed as "unsettling" about the criminalization of politics in the world's largest democracy. At present the money and muscle power is taking the Indian democracy forward because there is a steady increase over the years in the number of candidates in election who is facing criminal charges. It is a national shame for Indians who boastfully claimed as the largest democracy but cannot stake a claim to be greatest democracy of unblemished representative.

India is a liberal democracy with an effective means of checks and balances. The elected representatives being kept in checks by other institutions like judiciary, free media, election commission which are supposed to be unbiased. These are all critical component of what a democracy is supposed to be. But now we are seeing the systematic erosion of institutions that we regard as bulwarks of democracy. The judiciary has played a major role in protecting the constitution and other institutions. In the eyes of an ordinary citizen, judiciary is a legitimize institution. But Judiciary after all the effort to formally distance itself from the executive after the emergency has come in full circle to face the same questions over its independence that it did back then.

Independent institution like election commission has been very proud of our free and fair elections. The election commission of India conferred with power of superintendence and control of whole electoral process. As a matter of fact, there seems to be absolutely no kind of restraint or control in terms of the kind of allegations that are being hurled at the office of the election commission of India. The manner in which the organization is being used as a tool to further political agendas is atrocious. When bureaucratic institutions like election commission being compromised in citizen perspective the bureaucracy is already delegitimized. That there is already an opinion in people side that, bureaucrats don't work in their interest. People should be worried by politicization until these institution

deliver justice to ordinary citizen. Two things are very important for a constitutional body –one is independence, while the other is transparency. The "model code of conduct" should be made to have statutory backing.

Conclusion

The Indian constitution came into effect from 26 January 1950 after the country gained independence from British, identifies India as a liberal democracy: not merely the rule of the majority as determined by free and fair election, but also a system of government with checks and balances. These exist in the form of fundamental rights for citizens, protection for minorities and socially disadvantaged groups, relative autonomy for historically and culturally distinct regions, all to be safeguarded by an independent judiciary and monitored by a free press.

But after all the turbulent years in India, democracy still exists in its unique form. Arguably it is the best form of government. India has sustained a fairly stable democracy with its checks and balances as compared to other countries having same problem who replaced democracy with authoritarian form of rule. Unfortunately in the last 70 years, these checks and balances have worked imperfectly at different times and it is still continuing. The constitution provides an ironclad protection of our basic rights. But this very protection was challenges in an

unprecedented manner. The announcement of Internal Emergency with immediate suspension of fundamental rights and civil liberties kept the voice of dissent silenced for 21 months. The irony is that the government used the very same constitution to proclaim emergency under Article 352. As a result, the people of India lost their basic freedom and came face to face with fascism. The critiques and historians describe that 21 month long emergency as the darkest chapter in the history of Indian democracy.

India is now facing creeping authoritarianism in forms other than emergency like majoritarian rule, communalism and systematic erosion of institutions of state which can threaten the country's democratic system. The India has managed to remain a secular state for past seven decades. Its citizens fortunately chose not to distinguish between them on the basis of religion, for which our founding fathers fought for. Indian secularism is not the invention of independent India; the concept has a longer, distinguished place in the history of Indian civilization. When we look at history of India we can see rulers have promoted the coexistence of India's religious communities. Emperor Ashoka did so, in spite of his zealous adherence to Buddhism, and the Mughal Emperor Akbar went even further by initiating a fusion of different religion called the Din-ilahi. As a result Indian secularism is the byproduct of a whole civilization and we need a coexistence of all religion in our democratic country.

Does democracy in our country really means the rule of the people, for the people, and by the people as the cliché goes on or is it still rule of the elite with some crumbs thrown to ordinary citizen to keep their mouth shut. For this we need to understand democracy not from the perspective of ordinary citizens but the leaders, who put their time, efforts and money to get elected to serve the people of the country foremost among whom are they themselves. Actually there is not much that distinguish, a dictatorship from a democracy, when it comes to the logic of how rulers rule and how they capture and retain power. The current crisis of Indian democracy is characterized by a total collapse of credibility of political party. The opposition is especially resorted to outright treason just to please their tiny vote bank. The country is being pushed towards a civil war and it needs a major political reform if it is to retain status of being the world's largest democracy.

To some extend democracy of India succeeds in representing, but there are large chunks of people who are staying outside democracy like in India the question of tribal etc. Many marginalized groups who have little economic power and who have little ability to mobilize themselves into collectives are being left out of democracy. Inability of a parliamentary form of democracy for not able to include the weakest section of our society is a matter of debate.

Thus the only solution to this problem is that, we need to provide education to illiterate and

create awareness among the masses to question the authorities and make them motivate them to ask for their rights.

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When the Public Sphere Gets Nationalized

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This article is an attempt to trace the development of the spectator's identity, embarking on the new conceptual realm of self authenticated agency of power maintenance apparatus in the socio-political situations. The emergence of the spectator's theatre reconstructs the national boundaries of narratives on the surveillance agency and political authenticity. The spectators are attributed and even negotiated of power-transfer in the theatre concepts. The ambivalent nature of the spectators demands political viewership and exercises official status whenever situations emerge to exist in the system. A shift to the viewer to a spectator narrates the identity of the new class of spectatorship and generates powerful assimilation in public conceptions. When the spectator quits the individual tastes and assumes the state owned narrative mannerism, the body of the national agency proliferates new organs of surveillance

mechanism. The political organs of the surveillance find new constructs within the pedagogical assemblage in spectators' visibility and interventions in social discourses. The birth of the new class of spectators and their political affiliations narrate structures official authenticity in power circles of the theatre.

Nationalizing the public spheres is the new form of the capitalism. This sort of maintaining strict order is maintained in the school where cameras (CCTV) installation is a sign of terrorism in convenient ruling of the majority. The conceptual break from the passive viewer to a political being is narrated in the name of making a new realm of pedagogical body of the capital structures. The study encroachment of the state owned machines to every sort of middle class domains can be seen as a slight capital flavoured ideology. When the national anthem was played in the private theaters in India it was taken for granted as the process of transparent mechanism to save the public sentiments of nationalism. The formation of the social theories generates the established ideals into new versions of power possibilities. The concept of spectators as agencies of power-maintaining apparatus assumes a 'specific status' in national authentication. The procedures of national anthem, as we assume, will be a concurrent assimilation of spectators' identity. From the illusionary power of spectatorship, the theatres become site power struggles through the 'panopticon' assemblage of power and knowledge.

The capitalistic affiliation to the behavioral patterns in the identities may be one of the mutual understanding and obeying the grand roles. Far from blindly maintaining the order of the state the post capitalist era, where fascism itself manifests through capitalistic intervention, the pedagogical body of the subjects becomes the agency of the political order in the state. The construction of the pedagogical text regulates the inflow of diverse notions, of the level of comprehension. The process of maintenance of the national boundaries and narration even proliferate new conceptions of spectators with pedagogical tissues of stability and order. Since pedagogue's romance is not well tuned in the body of the spectators he/she needs to act with the boundaries of nationalism and state owned ideologies of political domains

Pedagogical body is the construction of the national texts of cultural re-oganaisation to maintain the singular notion of the state. The spectators boundary through the body of the historical time now achieves the post capitalist era a new form of taking responsibility and power to enjoy the adaptability of the textual power. This body is in the form of passive viewer to active spectator never tastes the possibilities of a speculator in the conceptual territories of the state the liberal myths of democracy citizenry and rights are ever become volunteers through the identities are with the body sake in maintaining order through surveillance mechanism through the concept of panopticon by Jeremy Bentham to the classroom schools teaching

public spaces in the gradual process of capitalism gadget formation where individual hidden camera are never becomes obsolete.

Capitalism makes the spectators' body to a finely tuned mechanism of pedagogy; the ordered agency now achieves the position of the fluidities/ improved structural transformation. Such individual who are formed to make the defiant class a new cultural section behaviour in civilian officials of the state . The state pretends to assimilate deviation and pluralities that are mature forms of masks to construct new machineries of power maintenance in our own cultural situation. These bodies haven't been given any deviant power as such, but assimilates forms of authenticity through the modes of analysis of power. Assuming the official citizenry can be seen in the school police cadets in Kerala. These create a text of officials of the state apparatus more viable in our own post capitalist time of power transformation. This official process of the body is the current emergence of all the forms of public domain a new class of moralists even through the capitalist technology emanates. Capitalism is a form of ideological growth in stagnation. The state always incorporates the texts of capitalism to make a new form of domination.

Conditioning the fissures of national boundaries to achieve a wide realm of the state is not an an intention per se the nationalism. Whenever a process deviates, it further leads to new process of capitalistic interventions in the post capitalist era. This process -break continues to exist in the

pedagogical body of the spectators who make the domains a viable sphere to exercise the very tangible forms of power without mechanism. Making the multitude to silent viewers is not alone the problem as the form of romantic nations of intervention here interventions apparently assimilate and achievers are of potential challenge in the official realm. In this context transparency is a trap. All the political forms in mutual assimilation takes place and asserts the transparency the status quo is the only reading of the capital movements in the public domains. Theater is not different from the spectators pedagogic structural growth in to officiating the body in to a targeted sources of power.

Spectators theatre is formed in the mode of tangible state sponsorship when the body obeys attends and ready to censor his /her excess of anti elementary and adjusts into a nice citizen of political maintenance and accommodation. The concept of the spectators theater is re-established in the guise of ideological entropy as sort of maintaining order into the multifaceted viewers in to a well organized individuals who have a common thread of nationalities with a unique cultural identification of visualized format of self. If a spectator is the boundary ,the theatre becomes the state where the orientation of the national affiliation is obligatory when the theatre translates the national imaginaries of self and subjects within the perspective of the spectators . The boundaries of visual affiliation stabilize when the narratives of films are the

common visuals substitute completely or correspond the hitherto ideologies of the nationalities into a state platform of citizenry.

The vast machinery of military ,police officials and the various forms of so called public domains of schools colleges getting overlapped into the space of theatre where the amount of resistance is getting identified as the transgression a violation of the authentic spectatorship of the read nation this shift from the state owned machineries into a public owned spaces is a part larger surveillance project very much established in the ticket counters to the cafeteria in the theaters. The subtle organisation of the technological invasion and the ordinary of the body into a fixed position of individuals is not a new one but the promotion spectator that with nativized sentiments where by reducing the burden of the state owned surveillance machine is an ongoing process of the establishment. In this sense spectator in every time including censorship create a regulated and classified from of mature organ of the established canon of the nationality.

The formation of the new canon of spectators theatre generates visuals gaze and ambivalence in boundaries of narratives in many genres of the theater and film in India this form of national narratives of accumulate boundary and imaginary conception of unique identity lead to visualized from domination in cultural spaces. The emergency of an ordered and disciplined body is a dream of the state in the surveillance narratives of all cultural reserving make it possible even other

situations. In the case of standing up to the national anthem with visuals of tricolour flags running across Indian boundary cultural places make oneself in time with the physical order of citizen and statehood.

The state owned machinery of power maintaining apparatus are getting reduced into a well informed pedagogical body of assembled gathering in the public domain of visual narration. This filtration of power and ideological formation of stability and order may be a larger part of power owned supplied in main stream foundation. The national imaginary and its mandatory part of citizen responsibility is getting stabilized when the multitudes obey and start with commercial aspect of drawing in theatres. This process becomes a national narratives of citizen the public spaces of theatre the subtle formation of the national imaginary to the released read process of national obligation reduce the spectator into a silent space of the disciplined other. Here the order becomes political establishment of the spectator individual who with a specific information of surveillent body in the ticket counter to the theater premises inside the hall and getting tuned to the national anthem whereby making a map of visual narratives in which his /her responsibility increases every now and then.Larger Censorship to the films with anti nationalism,feeling make a slow pace when the censorship accelerates the causes of the censored and celebrator with a well intended aspect of the national portrait.

Now the censorship becomes obsolete the elements of the dictated narratives and its boundaries are narrate with spectator thenive. The so called national narratives of Javan Cinemas like Keerthichakra, Kandahar, and immense films can generate military games in the background .Now the films comes the viewer and make a new theatre of speculating theatre of national season, a national text and texture of authenticator. This shift and development is the result of the ongoing efficient of getting authenticated the state owned objects into a fixed ideology of national order and visual identity. When the national real is a concept to its tangible form ,the spectator carries the state intended textual identity in the domain of the personal all public at large his /her citizenry .The portage of the spectator, disciplined citizen questions interrogates the who never caves the national integration is a plane of public activities. Then spectator theatre moves to higher place when personal tussle with films, fan chatting function now questions and reporting the personal will and chiac to a fit in moments of the larger state sponsored activities of the other. A class of individuals are formed in the shape of surveillance /order body of the state that makes its the multifaceted identifier to the question is how a spectator's view is slowly changed into a speculations of himself a larger matching of correction and takes charges of main order.

Making a well organized system of registering the authoritative stance among the social sphere apparently promotes cultural tension in our

own age of post capitalism through the concept of 'docile bodies' to the controlling genesis .The history of the spectatorship has undergone many changes during the past many years .The culture of the multiplexes air-conditioned surveillance theatres cater the middle and elite tastes of the submissive energy. The tiny traces of the deviant behaviour traits are erased to the ground and the bodies obey according to the abstract roles of the time. The future of the spectatorship lies in the mutual transaction of the cultural situations in the history. Making the spectator authenticity of officialising the context becomes the core of the analysis. The gradual political accommodation of the spectators through the observation to the ticket counters cafeteria slowly enters the theatre hall enticing the feeble identities. The capitalist modification of the spectators identities interventions and crystallizations simply lead to a new modes of post capital demarcation in India.

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The ASER 2019 Report an Eye Opener: A Reflection

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Abstract

This paper tries to examine 2019 ASER report from the sociological point view. The ASER is an annual elementary education academic audit and it is an empirical field work. The attempt has been made to look at the ASER report from the holistic education point of view.   The broad discussion has been taken up to show that what are the other research points can be included in the next ASER report. In fact, education is a broad term and every generation has seen its importance from its own point of view in the history of civilization.   The paper has emphasized on the importance of children's emotional well-being to have a productive human workforce. Ultimately, the goal and aim of the education is welfare of the society and it is also one of the important corrective forces to remove many evil things in the society. The attempt has been made to show how nature is nurture. Through good environment and good education ambiance we can have healthy society.   The paper has examined

briefly about various educational phases and its importance. The paper ends with the hope that strong academic writing and discussion will contribute to the future policies on elementary level education which contributes to the higher education enormously.

Key Words: ASER, primary education, emotional quotient, polices

This research paper is going to discuss about the recent ASER 2019 report to assess Indian education system from the elementary education to higher education. Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam former president of India said that "If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother, and the teacher." This statement aligns appropriately in analyzing the recent ASER report which is published officially in 2019.

The ASER (Annual Status of Education Report-2019) is a national level school survey. It provides a picture of children's schooling and learning for a representative sample and children are selected across India. The ASER report is a focused, empirical kind of research and it is a kind of educational auditing to check how students perform in the school level mainly in rural and semi-urban government schools and also a few private schools. The report is a summative test and the survey has covered almost all the areas of the checks and balances from hard infrastructure like: playground,

sports equipment, library, class room and wash room facilities to soft infrastructure like: teacher and student ratio, teacher absenteeism, students' drop out percentage, lack of teachers' training especially on the new NCERT syllabus, students household information and particular village details etc.

Today no country is lagging behind in the formulation of pro education oriented policy, especially democratic countries' paramount importance in the priority of policy is education and no doubt at all India is also one of the countries strongly believes that education is one of the main pillars of the democracy to achieve egalitarian society. In fact, education is a broad term and it is dynamic and inclusive. In any corner of the world the universally accepted norm of the education philosophy is it is one of the main forces to correct many other social problems.

Since independence education system has changed in India drastically that is evident today. India has reached mere literate status to educated status but the need of the hour is quality of education not just in production terms but in terms of overall development. As a result of education transformation the nature of job, income, consumption and purchasing power parity (PPP), everything has changed in the last seventy years of post-independent India. In 1950 independent India completely depended on the primary sector agriculture and some extent secondary sector, industry. But by 1990s the service sector emerged

as the highest contributor to the overall GDP and this could be achieved only because of rapid transition in the education system. The service sector mainly demands certain skills and knowledge to cater to the need of the industry. India has achieved it beyond anybody's imagination. Paradoxically, it is not be all and end all because unemployment, unskilled youth labor, child labour, poverty, hunger, corruption, depression, suicide tendencies among the youngsters and add to it misuse of social media etc. are posing lot of challenges to Indian education and its stakeholders than any other time.

The primary education is one of the important factors that determine the quality of human resource of the country and it is also one of the bench marks for both the Human Development Index (HDI) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) measures in developing countries. The recent ASER report unveils the dismal academic performance of school children and its pathetic condition. This year's report discloses that there is no any greater changes compare to last year's performance and utter bad performance is glaring again. The test is conducted at the age between five years old children to fourteen years. The schools are selected randomly across the country and the focal point is on simple reading, number recognition and even basic subtraction and division.

The problem of underperformance of school going children is not just a technical problem it is a social problem. This symptom is interwoven with

many aspects and this can be solved only with holistic manner. As popular idiom says a stitch in time saves nine so that proper corrective measures if we take about the underperformance problem at the root level itself than in the branch level the problem can be solved easily. Moreover, the real diagnostic level test or survey should be made in a micro level. How do children spend their study time? What kind of a motivation they get at home? What kind of parental or guardians support they are getting? Are they safe at home and in school? Do they have enough concentration? These questions should be answered meticulously. It looks uphill task but it is worth doing it. At least now if we initiate it one fine day it will take a proper shape. Way back in the 1980s celebrated novelist R.K.Narayan was nominated as a Rajya Sabha member and in his six years entire tenure his only concern was on school children and their heavy loaded school bags and drudgery of homework, as a result of that today at least we discuss about this topic and there are also some necessary changes have come.

Modern day education has designed this way children from three years onwards go to play home and kinder garden or government run Balwadis and Anganwadis. Usually around 6th year children attend first standard and by the time of completion of tenth standard they will be in their adolescence that is 16th year and the next two years pre-university or class 11th and 12th and then appearing for various national and state level entrance exams

to join professional courses. Along with this other degree courses like B.A. B.COM and BBM etc. are also available. By the time when they complete the degree they will be around 22 years to 25 years and that is the age he or she will be ready for work force.

On top of this arduous journey in every step students are tested in their intelligent quotient but they are bypassed emotional quotient check.   In addition to it as mockery life skills courses and soft skills courses are introduced after the degree courses.   The tinkering starts very late and then question arises what did our schools and colleges do? The best impression days are like tender vines and the kind of innocence should not get corrupt for the sake of adults whims and fancies. The huge challenge is what type of education we need now. As Swami Vivekananda said that the education must provide life building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. In fact, these words are guiding principles and self-explanatory for what type of education we should anticipate.

Though there are sufficient data on school going children's household information and economic details that is not sufficient to diagnose the real learning problem. It should be a result oriented survey, precise and concrete one why some students can recollect and reproduce whatever they learn, memorize and recall exactly but why some of them have failed to read even lower classes text books. There may be umpteen numbers of problems like: lack of electricity at home, domestic violence, younger siblings' responsibility, supporting

parental occupations, parental quarrel, nuclear family, drunkard parents and their bad habits, foul and derogatory words and the unsafe neighbors and bullying peer groups knowingly or unknowingly contribute negatively for the development of child's motor skills, social and emotional learning too. This problem has not confined to the rural schools or slums even it applies to urban so called five star urban English medium schools. Even one step ahead many private schools hire full time trained psychologists and councilors. With this type of weak social fabric can we expect strong and healthy India?

The primary education is the back bone of our education system and it is the foundation for higher education. It determines the quality in our higher education and human development index. The best impression days of our children are very precious and in school level itself we should safeguard it because nature is nurture. If we create happy and safer childhood days we can reap healthy adulthood citizens. The ASER report shows miserable performance in mathematics and reading comprehension in mother tongue are not just failure of effective teaching or government policy but there is a failure in creating quality of study hour; need based teaching and lack of emotional support. The core idea of education is to remove the fear in the learner on the contrary today it has created fear, ignorance and chaos.

Similarly, the problem lies in our elementary and higher secondary education level that is in the
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age group of six years to eighteen years. That is from pre-nursery to pre-university. There is no doubt at all successive governments' rope in lot of innovative policies like; Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, 2009 RTE Act, model schools, mid-day meal schemes, nutritional food suppliment, and many other schemes have yielded expected result in a macro level. It has helped in improvement of students' attendance and increase of literacy rate but the crux of the matter not in this type of macro level achievement but it is in the micro level.

For the expected quality in primary education the solution has to come collectively in the society. To keep safer home and safer school for children it involves many stakeholders like: parents, children, siblings, friends, relatives, neighbors, teachers, policy makers, police and local political leadership. They should be sensitized about the children's rights and their safety. In our education system sex education is still a taboo at least it is a high time to create a greater awareness about safety measures such as The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) and Cigarette and Other Products Act 2003(COTPA) etc..

The need of the hour is greater revolution in primary education and it should instill Gandhian values like Nai Talim because it combines knowledge and work. In providing quality elementary education the greater challenge falls on taking the confidence of many stake holders. In

fact, today's children are vulnerable to many types of harassments and abuses. It is not just girls and even boys are also not exception from this heinous crime on children. Many times these crimes are not reported because children they don't know at that movement what went wrong with them and whom to trust and how to inform.   So it is every individual's duty to give safe and happy childhood in this country. There is no doubt at all Indian middle class parents sacrifice many things in their own life in self-financing their children to pursue professional courses especially like medical and engineering. The Indian parents have borne the brunt in the absence of sufficient scholarship and loan facilities. At the same time every child's right to have safe and happy best impression days.

In total, our schools are reflections of our society so our elementary education requires greater social participation. Officially, in a year students in school level attend 220 days and nearly 7 to 8 hours in a day. It may be vary from state to state. It clearly illustrates that students spend their time in school and at home equally in their academic life. There is no any readymade solution for this problem this is a long term process and it is interwoven with many more things. The first and foremost thing is we should create safer environment and positive upbringing then we can expect mathematical and linguistic proficiency. Buck passing at least should stop here and safer schools and safer homes and at large safer society for our little ones should become the national priority next to water food and shelter.

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Politics of Caste and Future of Democratic System in India

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Abstract

The constitution is the fundamental document of any system that functions as a guiding tool, a protecting frame and a supporting instrument to maintain the peace and harmony of democracy. Built on the idealized concepts of human welfare and citizen's security, the constitution suggests methods of life and norms and thereby divides the actions of the government and the citizens in to two: constitutional and unconstitutional. Fundamental rights, obligations and directive principles form the three tier system of Indian Democracy erected on the pillars of liberty, equality and fraternity. The peculiar Indian situations, though demand unity in diversity, could not put this superlative agenda into practice, due to the social stratification legitimized in Indian history and exercised without a good deal of threat even in the current scenario. Religion serves as a cultural instrument in the Indian context: it specifies the behavioural patterns, selections, prioritizations and rejections of the people, in addition to projecting the difference in favour of existence. While on the one side emphasize on the

idea of existence called the attention and invited agreement from every sphere of life in India, on the other, the demand for equality was not underlined by this appeal. Those occupying higher territories in the strata of caste hierarchies found these pleas as redundant, as either they believe in the maintenance of this stratification for their welfare or they consider the call for transformation of society and equality of individuals as unnecessary and the goals, according to them, are already attained. This attitude is not devoid of politics. The underlying politics of caste is one among the prominent deterrents that curtail the rights of the marginalized castes. The current paper examines the different channels in which the politics of caste prevails in India posing challenges to democracy.

Key words: *democracy, caste, fundamental rights, equality*

In a paper titled, "Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development" presented in Columbia University in 1916, B.R. Ambedkar remarked about the peculiarity of the institution of caste as never "un-understood", but as a domain "unexplained"(Ambedkar 1) . Even after a century, the validity of statement remains in currency, or better its validity is intensified, and the intricacies urge intellectual and realistic deliberations on caste. Caste is understood in two perspectives: firstly as the continuation of the ancient social division on the basis of the tasks maintained by communities and secondly as an ethnic category of stratification. Both

these viewpoints envisage caste as a part of structure of the society. Caste is the sub categorization of the religions existed in India; being influential in several areas where it occupies a decisive terrain, caste has been instrumental in making the country as a landscape of graded inequalities. The crucial fact about caste in Indian existence is the insidious presence of it, not only in the consciousness of the society, but its subtle operations that produce politics in the cultural locale of India. One cannot resist the fact that caste is one of the sole reasons for diversity in India. Along with that there are facts that contribute to this fundamental truth about caste; one such knowledge is that the presence of caste and its operations could not be perceived in an innocent manner, as it is a slot for discrimination and it has the dimensions of superiority and inferiority ascribed to the value system that castes uphold. Recognition of the graded nature of privileges and limits would enable the objective understanding of caste and its inherent politics.

The roots of the caste lies in the stratification of ancient Indian society based on Varna, as Brahmin, Kshathriya, Vaishya and Sudra, taking the occupation of the people involved into consideration. Though, if one reflect, it could be identified as a practical classification for effortless identification, when this classification remained permanent, irrespective of the occupation, it was forming a new theory of existence where a certain groups by virtue of their birth, enjoyed the benefits

and others due to the same reason were compelled to suffer from graded inequality not only in history but also in the current times. The most striking aspect of this social evolution is that, this act of marginalization is evaluated as a step of the formation of a well structured civil society. The articulations on this transformed society were the ones of the upper caste people, benefitted out of education, and hence identified as the harbingers of modernity. The politics of knowledge obviously prevented any other readings on this condition and normalized the disparity, ironically planted the seeds of inevitable revolt. The frictions arising out of disappointment , even though were defeated initially, the minority at the centre of caste circle failed to identify the crucial strengths of the majority at the margins and they either exaggerated the actions of those occupied lower strata in the caste line or considered the resistance as a myth and ignored. Not only the resistance, but also the culture, myths, narratives, customs etc. of the marginalized castes were subjected to the castelistic camouflage of the elite. Ambedkar's contributions to pose a threat to this imposed invisibility is worthy of commendation in this context of injustice and inequality.

In the last speech delivered in the Constituent Assembly on 25th November 1949, Abbedkar highlighted on the need to have a democratic government for the people, that functions with the awareness of the evils in the society:

If we wish to preserve the Constitution in which we have sought to enshrine the principle of Government of the people, for the people and by the people, let us resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path and which induce people to prefer Government for the people to Government by the people, nor to be weak in our initiative to remove them. That is the only way to serve the country. I know of no better (Ambedkar 15).

The preamble of Indian Constitution directed the state to ensure and the citizens to fulfill the values of equality of status and opportunity in addition to safeguarding dignity of life of Indians. These ideals are emerged from the awareness of the prevalence of inequality and injustice across the country, legitimized by class and caste superiority. While Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees that rights of Indians would not be denied and protected against all odds, Article 16 offered a balanced treatment in the case of opportunities for appointment and employment. (7) Article 15 has made an elaborate description about the areas where the constitution interferes to avoid discrimination, access to public spaces and use of primary provisions related to water or food. Presumably, later when he was aware of the misuse of provisions to curtail or deny special considerations offered to the challenging categories such as caste or gender minorities response was articulated through Amendments. The Amendments included along

with Article 15 and 16 stating that the statements of equality should not be interpreted in such a way as to make them as tools to deny the special support provided to Scheduled Castes formulate equality a reality (7). Untouchability normalized and legitimized was banned by Article 17 and practicing it was recognized as punishable under this article (8). Again Article 19 recommended freedom of speech and expression and liberty to visit any place in the country which could be put adjacent to the above mentioned articles, as one could not separate equality from liberty. Article 30, stating about the right of minorities to start institutions, Article 46, ensuring the protection to the scheduled castes from exploitation and injustice, and Part XVI identifying special clauses related to certain classes-regarding reservation and Commissions to take care of the interests of Scheduled Castes and Tribes are also constitutional measures in favour of the deprived castes. Along with celebrating secularism, the concern with which the crucial issues of lower castes are addressed, is what makes Indian Constitution a unique document. The less rigid nature of the constitution is what made it as a favourable document to the down trodden castes. Thus constitution acted as a document that promoted the fundamental politics of inclusiveness and affirmed in a written mode that state has the obligation to safeguard the rights of all, in addition to providing extra care to the socially challenged categories.

Constitution is a document that projected the realization that caste is a reality and a source of social and cultural inequality. From the realm of rule, adherence to the constitution will safeguard the lower caste people from degradation, shame and stigma. But the cultural inhibitions, taboos and prejudices sometimes went beyond this idealized manner of perceiving caste. So the constitutional rights are documented and legally implemented, but their social validity is remained under threat due to the politics of caste working in the socio-cultural context of India. Caste is essentially conceived in two ways in the Indian context : firstly, caste is a subdivision of particular religion, and the norms of mingling and relationships of people belonging to different castes as well as rules related to marriage and birth and death rituals etc. will be under the discretion of that religion ,within the structure of religion and castes under that religion , and secondly caste is a part of social stratification and irrespective of religious differences caste hierarchies are a part and parcel of society's unconscious .If one subscribes to the second conception, any idea that discrimination is restricted to the level of religion where the particular caste is situated is found faulty. This conception about caste makes the existence of lower caste people in India as horrifying because it thwarted the legal claim for equality and respectability of certain groups by the subtle operations of social knowledge that was propagated as traditional understanding, not as the outdated

norms of orthodox religions, nullifying any kind of reforms that constitution envisages.

The social text of this discourse of dalits and other minorities is to be kept for meticulous scrutiny to identify the subtle way of working of the politics of caste. Sunny M.Kapikkad opined that the discussions on religious conflicts are the epic narratives sought to subside caste debates which are more prominent subjects to be addressed in the peculiar Indian context of plurality. This is a solution emerged from the logic of nationalism that conveniently exiled or hidden the presence of the underprivileged groups. The inevitable consequence of this intentional othering is the arrival of Dalit movements such as 'Dalit Panther', or 'Bheem Army' to establish the subject position of the downtrodden (Kapikkad 349). The text was expanded with the direct entry of the marginalized groups into the spheres of politics and to the ruling territories. This, in turn, opened a new chapter of the politics, of representation, not as ordinary citizens but as representative stakeholder. Again, the intellectual capital of the country was restrained to a certain groups through sanskritisation of knowledge and denial of knowledge to the people belonging to margins. When British colonizers offered education to all irrespective of caste, it opened new visas of learning to the hitherto segregated. The inaccessible turned accessible promoted the journey of lower caste people to the world of visibility. The sphere of education has

provided a platform for them to display their intelligence and paved the way for the intellectual and theoretical understanding of caste existence from within. In addition to this, education supported the marginalized economically also.

Contrary to the significant achievements that the marginalized categories have, they still suffer from the degradation under the caste designations. The suicide of the dalit research scholar named Rohit Chakravarti Vemula at University of Hyderabad is a 2016 incident of the failure of education to safeguard the respectability of the lower caste people. As per the data provided by International Dalit Solidarity Network, the number of dalits in India presumably exceeded 200 millions. Here lies the real paradox: the increase in the number, access to facilities and jobs, opportunities and visibility could not offer dignity even to those who were educated. The answer to this paradoxical question is not vested with Dalits, instead the answerable would be the community except the marginalized. The fundamental reason is not the victim consciousness of the marginalized, but the superior consciousness of the other cultural communities that are reluctant to accommodate the marginalized as normal.

In order to recognize what could be done to eradicate its evil nature, caste is to be identified as a solid presence that can make and demolish political structures. This is particularly an important mission if one initiates deliberations on democracy,

specifically on the future of it.   The power to purposefully articulate the requirements is indispensable to enjoy the status to be heard. Recently the lower caste people began political alliances against Brahminical orientations in the ruling circle. The entry of Dalits into the realm of forming political parties such as BSP was a welcoming move though that is yet to attain the goals of bringing improvement to the status of the group.   The most interesting turn in the political climate of India is the recognition of Ambedkar as the most prominent intellectual and political leader to be followed than anyone else especially to the marginalized who sought both theoretical and practical solutions to the humiliation and cultural inequality through his thoughts rejecting Gandhian paternalism and Nehruvian Centralism. Amidst the struggles a few notable names like the one of Rohit Vemula and of Chandrasekhar Asad provided better insights about the future of Indian Democracy contextualizing and problematizing democracy as related to the marginalized. Voices of public intellectuals like T.M. Krishna have offered an interdisciplinary pathway to deal with eliticism and marginalization based on caste. The survival of democracy is vested in the hands of young minds who could visualize that unless caste structure is demolished constitutional values of democracy could not be attained. The politics of knowledge that preserved the graded structure is to be combated with the recognition of historical contributions of lower caste people, the understanding of the vision

behind reservations, the initiation of cultural activities that are inclusive and a reconfiguration of Indian mindset. This is important to establish and maintain justice for the prevalence of democracy in India in future.

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Textual Criticism:
A Process of Monarchy

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What is Textual criticism?

Textual criticism: a general term for the application of logical method to analyzing the relationship between preserved and inferential form of a text , followed by the application of various techniques including critical judgment designed to establish what will ordinarily be the single definitive form of the text, It (textual criticism) is really the foundation of the other sorts of Criticism

"It is the task of textual criticism to collect and study these various writings (copies of the original texts, translations, quotations etc.) in which a text has been preserved, determine the changes that occurred in the wording and arrangement of the text, assess the significance of such changes, and restore, if possible, the original wording or form of the text. If this is not possible, one must decide on the best or most reliable wording and try to account for the historical process through which the text has been arranged. In every case textual criticism seeks to establish a reliable text that can serve as the basis for serious study and reflection." (Harper' s Bible dictionary.129-30).

Textual criticism is a methodology of literature based on manuscriptology .The basic idea of textual criticism is to reconstruct an 'authentic'/ 'pure'text, by comparing as many versions as possible . But by doing this the cultural uniqueness represented by each version is marginalized. This process has to follow a rigorous methodology that includes collection of

manuscripts, their classification and comparison. By following this methodology certain texts are authenticated, whereas certain texts are marginalized, we find analogous process even in literary historiography and other historical discourses which were essential in 'imagining a nation' . Textual criticism has two parts, namely operational section and observational section. They also have known as lower criticism and higher criticism respectively. The present paper makes an attempt to critically evaluate the entire process of textual criticism.

Reconstruction of 'original text' by comparing versions is analogous to the process of abstracting a 'nation' by comparing 'subnationalisms '. In other words we find an 'ideal text ' as synonymous to ideal nation. New historicism problematises the very idea of 'nationalism' by critically examining the process of imagination that works behind it. Hence at the age of new historicism textual criticism must look in to versions and their cultural uniqueness rather than theoretical abstractions .

All versions of a text are unique and distinct at the same time they influence each other and create an inter textual context that could generate multiple meaning . The polyphonic existence of multiple texts should not be crushed down, for external political motives. Higher criticism which moves from the abstracted 'original text' to

culturally variant texts has immense importance at the age of postmodern historiography.

Nation State and Textual Criticism

A Nation is an imagined community. It is constructed by   selecting and rejecting memories this imagination is possible only by overlooking the existing hierarchies of cast, gender, class etc. Nation is imagined as a monolithic entity. This imagination was necessary to fight against colonial domination   the rationale behind the textual criticism, especially in Lower criticism, is quite similar to the National imagination . Both 'Nation' and the 'original text' are tenting to be more Universalistic. Common elements claim more attention than contradictory elements .

This could be proved by closely examining the textual studies   based on the Manuscripts starting from *Cambridge   codex 3* to Masore manuscripts , passing through many centuries the Critical text of *Bible* is reconstructed by comparing many manuscripts collected from varying contexts of time and space . In India manuscriptology gained its momentum during our National phase. Many texts and authors were 'invented' as common heritage to all the Indian people irrespective of their cultural differences, during this period. They include *Ramayana **,** Mahabharatha,* texts of Kalidasa etc. All these texts were referred to an Indian and projected Universality.

Historical Coincidence

Nationalistic thought was extensively emerged in 19 th century Europe. It was facilitated by industrial revolution and renaissance movements of England, France, Spain , Netherlands ,Portugal ,Germany, Italy. In India the history of manuscriptology begins with M. vinternits .it is essay published in 1897 illustrated the possibility of Manuscriptology as a distinct science this paper was presented in the Second oriental international congress held at Paris . The same discussions continued in following years. Textual criticism, as a Universal science, began at London world Academy in the year 1904. The spirit of Renaissance and Nationalism were the driving forces acting behind it.

Critique of Nation State and Observational Section

Nation state conceals many of its internal contradictions. attributing otherness to all 'undesirable' elements ,Nation state s attempted to assume amonolithic identity of its own . Lower Criticism also employs the same methodology in constructing the ideal text all the deviation appears in versions despised as exceptions or the other but all these versions have its own unique positions in the genealogy of the text . These genealogies are neglected in Lower Criticism. But by neglecting the

genealogical positions of the versions, the linguistic and cultural uniqueness of these versions are abandoned forever. By doing this a researcher is, in fact, disregard the innumerable possibilities of cultural diversities that made the versions possible.

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Implementation Challenges of e-Democracy in India

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Abstract

E-Democracy is the smart use of digital tools to enrich and transform the existing e-governance models and practices. ICT profoundly increases the transparency, responsiveness and accountability of the government and offers citizens an additional opportunity to participate in political processes. This results in better political decisions for the whole society. A key challenge for electronic democracy is to maximize the potential that electronic technology provides to better inform citizens and increase their participation in democratic processes. Electronic technology provides the potential for citizens to have much broader, deeper and more-timely access to relevant information about political issues and the operation of democratic institutions and processes. Even now, in the very early days of electronic democracy, citizens can access information about democratic processes to an extent inconceivable a few years ago, provided they have access to the Internet. The problem is now much less the availability of information but the capability and time necessary to utilize it.

Key words: *Election process, Indian electronic voting machine, VVPAT, Cyber-threats to the machine, EVM*

Introduction

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The main goal of e-democracy is the strengthened incorporation of citizens in the political debate. Internet connectivity enables more people to participate in many discussions or debate that may have been previously localized or too high-brow. The digitalization of participation is aimed at improving the transparency and legitimacy of our political systems through democratic engagement. One of the dominant challenges in the present world is securing the safety of digital democracy. It is of utmost importance to carry out a free and fair election. In an expanded country like India, carrying out election has always been a challenging task. Like every election process in the world, Indian elections have also been under many dangers such as physical tampering of the ballot box, booth capturing, etc. The emergence of technology in the election procedure has eradicated these threats. The credit of incorporating technology into Indian election process goes to the electronic voting machine of the country. The Indian voting machines are direct recording electronic voting machines with electromechanical buttons for voters and are non-networked, leaving little option for hacking. The EVM has been augmented with the voter verified paper Audit trail (VVPAT). However, the use of technology in the election process has introduced some other cyber vulnerabilities to the machine. When the concept of safety in the Indian democratic process emerge, the entire nation question the safety of electronic voting machine leaving aside the actual threats caused by fake news, information warfare, social botnets and big data. The fake news, social botnets, big data and information warfare manipulates the thought process of the voters or confuse them. Contemporary technologies, such as electronic mailing lists, peer-to-peer networks, collaborative software, wikis,

Internet forums and blogs, are clues to and early potential solutions for some aspects of e-democracy.

The study shows that the accusations that the EVM being tampered are not valid. The casting of vote through Indian electronic voting machine is quiet safe and moving back to the ballot paper voting system is not a feasible idea to uphold the essence of free and fair election.

Indian electronic voting machines

The election machinery body of India developed the country's EVMs in partnership with two government-owned companies, Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL). There are three different generations of EVMs working in the election process [5]. The electronic voting machines operate on a 7.5 volts battery. It's claimed to be tamperproof, error-free and easy to operate. Indian EVMs have four parts: a control unit, control unit display board, ballot unit and communication between ballot unit and control unit. There is a space assigned for display. In this space, contesting candidates name and symbols allotted to them can be placed. A sepia brown colored button is provided against the name of each candidate. By pressing this button, the voter can record his vote in favor of the candidate of his choice. Alongside of the said button, there is also a lamp for each candidate. This lamp will glow red when the vote is recorded. Simultaneously, a beep sound will also be heard. One ballot unit caters up to fifteen candidates. One control unit can record the votes polled for a maximum of 60 candidates. On the topmost portion of the control unit, there is a provision for displaying

various information and data recorded in the machine, like the number of contesting candidates, the total number of votes polled, votes polled for each candidate etc. are recorded. This portion is called, the display section of the control unit [6]. Possible Attacks EVMs are found vulnerable to cyber threats and tampering of the machine. The following are the kinds of attack that can be done in an EVM which have been proven by a group scientist - Scott Wolchok, Eric Wustrow, J. Alex Halderman, Hari K. Prasad, Arun Kankipati, Sai Krishna Sakhamuri, Vasavya Yagati, Ron gonngrijp [7].

Possible Attacks

EVMs are found vulnerable to cyber threats and tampering of the machine. The following are the kinds of attack that can be done in an EVM which have been proven by a group scientist - Scott Wolchok, Eric Wustrow, J. Alex Halderman, Hari K. Prasad, Arun Kankipati, Sai Krishna Sakhamuri, Vasavya Yagati, Ron gonngrijp [7].

Tampering with the software before CPU manufacture

Extracting the firmware of an EVM or verifying its integrity is not possible as it is stored in the masked read-only memory, inside the microcontroller chips. This creates a difficulty in detecting if the software gets manipulated before it is placed into the CPUs. The CPU manufacturing is done by a Japanese company, Renesas. This company integrates the software into the CPU. The attack can be carried out only if the employer/employee or the company itself can be compromised. The employer

of the company can replace a version consisting of a back door with less chance of being noticed.

Substituting a look-alike CPU

This type of attack can be done when CPUs gets shipped to India for assembling into the control unit main board. Attackers will try to substitute a look-alike CPUs containing software that counts the votes dishonestly. The counterfeit chips are swapped from the real ones in the supply chain or by attackers with access to the assembled machines. These swapping can be done earlier to the assembly by corrupt employees or the courier which transport this. This attack can also take place on the programmable logic devices in the ballot unit. The attacker can construct a look-alike chip consisting of both a radio frequency receiver and a processor.

Substituting look-alike circuit boards

Swapping of a dishonest CPU with the real one is difficult as it needs desoldering and replacing the surface mounted chips. This difficulty can be overcome by replacing the entire mainboard with a dishonest one to manipulate the votes. Making a new board is found to be easy because of its simple design and functions. This procedure needs opening the control unit, exchanging out the snap-fitted board, and rewiring the cable to the display unit. The vulnerability is that the system treats its components as trusted components. The attacker can manipulate the votes by replacing the circuit board in the ballot unit which dishonestly responds to the key presses or by replacing the display board in the control unit.

Substituting look-alike units

The problem with the Indian EVMs is that there is no practical way to verify whether the EVMs used are authentic or not. This lacking feature indeed helps the attacker to build identical looking but dishonest control units or ballot units and substitute them before the elections. The same vulnerability mentioned in the above sub-section is a main threat to the EVM. The machine trusts the connection between the components. The attacker can perform the action by inserting a device between the ballot unit and control unit. By this, the attacker would be able to successfully intercept the key press signals and replace the votes.

Dishonest display attack

In this method, the real display board is replaced with a dishonest display board. In an election process, the vote received by each candidate is shown on the display board. A hidden microcontroller is placed under a dishonest display board that intercepts the vote total and substitutes a fraudulent result. The dishonest display detects electrical signal from the control units when the EVM tries to display the election result, this controls the 7-segment led digits. The received information is used by the display unit to manipulate the real overall number of votes. In the last stage of this attack, it calculates and shows plausible but fraudulent vote counts for each candidate. To complete this process, attackers must communicate with the EVM to favor chosen candidate with predetermined margin in the election process. The communication signal is sent through many different ways such as Bluetooth.

Clip on memory manipulator attack

Dishonest display attack is done by replacing the real hardware unit with a dishonest look-alike component whereas clip on memory manipulator attack includes only the temporary application of new hardware. This device clips directly to the EEROM memory chips which are responsible for recording the votes inside the EVM. This attack provides two ways to manipulate the vote: stealing the vote and violating the ballot secrecy. The real EVM is designed in a way, ballot stuffing is limited by the time constraint feature that takes twelve seconds to place a vote from the preceding votes, so in a minute, only five votes can be placed not more than that. But the clip on memory manipulator hardware bypasses this time constraint restriction, so the attacker could stuff the electronic ballot box with any number of votes. In India, sometimes counting of votes is done weeks after voting. so this attack can be done when EVMs are kept at safe rooms. This hardware has a rotatory switch that selects the number from 0 to 9 and the attacker can use it to pick a favored candidate in any of the first nine ballot position. This way an attacker can steal the vote. When the switch is placed to positions 1–9, the clip-on device executes a vote-stealing program. The program runs in two phases: first, it reads the vote data and calculates how many votes to steal from each candidate; second, it rewrites the list of votes, stealing votes as calculated in the first phase. The stealing of votes takes only milliseconds per vote hence the entire attack can be done in several seconds.

Threat identification and resolution techniques

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The attacks mentioned above are possible but is not going to happen in the coming years as the election commission of India has laid down a strong administrative policy to tackle these threats. All these manipulation can be done if a huge number of employees get corrupted or the shipment company gets compromised. As the EVMs of India are stand alone and non-networked system, this feature eliminates the centralized hacking of the machine. The EVMs are randomized before transportation to the polling booths. The success rates of these attacks are very less as the attacks need huge amount of investments and cannot be carried out in a large scale. As a reason attackers would prefer the other kinds of attack which manipulates the thought process of the voters and this method avoids the chance of getting caught and can be done easily.

The introduction of voter verified paper Audit trail (VVPAT) has further minimized chance of tampering the machine. VVPAT is a method that displays the feedback to the voters. It is an independent verification printer machine, which is connected to the electronic voting machine. It allows voters to verify whether their vote has gone to intended candidate. The machine works when the voter presses the button in the ballot unit. The ballot unit sends the signal to the VVPAT machine to print a paper slip. The printed paper slip consists of the name and symbol of the candidate, which voter has voted. It allows the voter to verify his/her choice. After displaying to the voter from a glass case in the VVPAT for seven seconds, the printed ballot slip will be cut and dropped into the drop box in the VVPAT machine and a beep sound is heard. VVPAT machine can be accessed only by the polling officers. This machine helps the voter to detect if the EVM is tampered [8].

Administrative security

A strong administrative security to an extent can tackle cyber space vulnerabilities. The commission has clearly drafted the procedural checks and balances aimed at preventing any manipulation of EVM. EVMs are always stored in a secure room and guarded twenty four hours by the armed police. A prior notice is given to the political parties to be present while unlocking the secure room. Soon after unlocking the store rooms EVMs undergo serious checking of which First Level checking (FLC) of the EVM is carried out by BEL and ECIL. FLC is done transparently in the presence of representatives of the political parties and the entire process of the checking is video graphed. In the process of FLC a mock polling is carried out and the sequential print out of the result is produced to representatives of the political parties. To avoid the further manipulation of the machines before the election, the EVMs are randomized twice using a computer software, first for the allocation of machines to assembly constituencies and second to polling stations in the presence of candidates or their representatives before they are distributed for use in individual polling stations. The randomization is carried out through EVM Tracking Software (ETS) by the DEO in the presence of the representatives of political parties/candidates and Central Observers deputed by the ECI for complete transparency. The lists of EVM containing the serial number of EVM allocated to a particular polling station are provided to the political parties/candidates. The next step involved is candidate set, it's done in the front of the candidates or their representative and in the front of the commission observer. Again a mock poll is conducted after the

candidate setting. At the time of candidate set various compartments are sealed using multi-level threading as:

Thread seal is provided to the candidate set and power pack section of the control unit, after the setting of contesting candidates and installing the battery respectively.

After fixing the ballot paper thread level seal for the ballot paper screen of the ballot unit.

Two thread seals for ballot paper cover of the balloting unit. The second process of randomization of the control unit and ballot unit is done by the returning officers after the multi-level thread sealing. Later these control unit and ballot unit are stored in the secure room in the presence of the candidates or their representative and the commission's observer. The reopening of the strong room is again done in the presence of the candidates or their representative and the commission's observer on the day when polling parties are dispatched to their respective polling stations. Once again a mock poll is carried out on the actual poll day by presiding officer in the presence of candidates or their authorized agents. The presiding officer after the mock election seals the result section/bottom compartment of the control units, green paper seal for the result section and thread level seal for inner door of the result section, bottom compartment and for the connector box for the cascading ballot unit. After the actual poll, the EVMs are sealed with paper seals and packed plastic boxes and the EVMs are stored, locked and sealed in the strong room in the presence of the candidates or the representatives. These representatives are allowed to guard the strong room till the counting begins. These rooms are under the surveillance of the police and CCTV.

These rooms are opened only in the presence of respective people[9].

The actual threat

Attacking of EVM cannot be done in a large scale. So as a reason a favorable output can't be determined. Recent trends of attacks in political warfare are fake news, information warfare, hacking electoral web page. These attacks don't manipulate the input of the machine. It manipulates the thoughts of voters and the trust in a candidate. Cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns have become tools of yesterday's game. The present world have technological advances in artificial intelligence, automation and machine learning, combined with growing availability of big data have set a new platform for sophisticated, inexpensive and highly impactful political warfare. [10] There are several attacks belonging to this categories but this paper focuses mainly on the fake news, social botnets, disinformation and propaganda, and big data.

Recent trends of attacks in political warfare
Fake News

Fake news is defined as those news articles that are deliberately and verifiably false and would mislead readers. These kinds of news are distorted signals uncorrelated with the truth. Fake news are produced in the market because it is cheaper to provide than the authentic signals because consumers cannot verify the authenticity of the distorted signals and these consumers enjoy the partisan news and they create "echo chambers" or "filter bubbles" where they would be insulated from contrary

perspectives. Fake news may generate utility for some consumers, but it also imposes private and social costs by making it more difficult for consumers to infer the true state of the world-for example, by making it more difficult for voters to infer which electoral candidate they prefer[11]. A recent study from the Ohio state university " Fake news may have contributed to Trump's 2016 victory", according to the report fake news had substantial impact on the voting decisions of a strategically important set voters during the 2016 U.S election [12].

The reason for fake news gaining importance is weak barrier to entry in the media industry and ease in setting up of a website. This web content can easily monetized through advertising platform. Fake news cannot completely convince the voters but it can confuse the voters.

Social botnets

A botnet is a network of internet-connected devices, which may include PCs, servers, mobile devices that are intentionally infected with a common type of malware by cyber criminals to perform automated tasks on the internet without the actual knowledge of the users[13][14]. These social botnets automatically run accounts on social media. The usage of botnets was noticed during the US presidential election. One of the five tweets regarding the presidential election was posted by Twitter botnets. The Elections in Europe are another victim which saw the usage of botnets, these botnets re-tweeted or shared news on social media. Social botnets are used as an amplifier for fake news, disinformation created by the media outlets. The social botnets enhance the visibility of stories

and indirectly make certain groups popular on social media by inflating follower number [15].

Disinformation and Propaganda

Disinformation and propaganda are tactics that created an impact on election outcomes. These tactics are not new, but carrying out these techniques through the internet came into existence since past few years. These are used to spread the false information of their opponents using internet for a and social media in order to shape public opinion. The technique is utilized by creators of fake news, by taking a complex case, remove some important facts, transform the whole story and then promote it under an attention-grabbing headline. The spread of news around the social media is done by social bots and amplifiers[16].

Big data as a weapon

Big data is an evolving term that describes a large volume of structured, semi-structured, unstructured data that has the potential to be mined for information and used in machine learning projects and other advanced analytics applications [17]

The threats hidden in the data collection are broader than social media sector. The entire industry of data brokers has emerged to meet growing demand by collecting and selling individual's personal data. The big data miners assemble information from public records, web browsing histories, online purchases and other web sources. They use this information to analyse the individual's taste, political attitude and other personal

attributes. The information compiled is very valuable to the political campaigners, to attract the votes, to create echo chambers and filter-bubbles. The big data helps the fake news and political advertisements to reach the specified interest groups, thus, by limiting the reach of any contrary information. In recent times, Artificial Intelligence(AI) and Big Data technology used by the companies decide which content and advertisements to appear on user's display screen- search results, news feed and timelines. Social media companies can manipulate their algorithms for disinformation campaigns to reach the users effectively. This kind of tool was used in the campaign of U.S- 2016 election. A firm, Cambridge Analytica has claimed to create personal profiles on two hundred million Americans. The company excavated the individual's data to micro-target in the 2016 United States election. The same pattern was found in the United Kingdom during the Brexit referendum [18].

The tactics and tools like fake news, social botnets, disinformation and propaganda don't work individually. It always works together to achieve the main objective. These techniques provide a sheer volume of information to the voters which make them difficult to focus on. Big data and artificial intelligence badly assist these tactics to work. These allow them for microtargeting of communication so that the processed data what people receive, is limited to a filter bubble of the like-minded [19].

In a technologically advanced world, most of the population depend heavily on the internet as a source of news. A survey by Hunt Allcott and Matthew Gentzkow claims that 14 percent of American adults viewed social

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media as their most important source of election news [20]. They don't question the authenticity of the news, suspect that is from an incredible source and conclude the received information to be factually true. The acceptance of the news psychologically enables them to re-transmit with the rest of the population, so that the friends, family, group of people are up to date with present news. This action makes furthermore readers believe the news is from a reliable source, due to the fact that it has been shared by many.

The noxious of the above-mentioned attack is that the victim doesn't realize it has been infected and can't hold these attackers responsible for the infection. The reason why these attacks aren't visible is because it doesn't alter the internal state of the machine, only infects the decision process of voters. Contaminated information doesn't necessarily persuade the voters but it can make the decision making complex.

The allegations made by many political parties regarding the hacking of EVM could have been true had there been a strong administrative policy not in existence. Hijacking and hacking of few machines are possible, but it cannot be carried out on a large scale as there are millions of EVM in India. These factors make Indian EVM to be the safest machine to carry out a free and fair election.

Indian EVMs are found to be superior to other EVM models in the world. Even though being superior in the model it is still vulnerable to attacks. If the election commission of India improves the security of EVM a little then there will be no doubt regarding the fairness of the democratic process. It is not the EVMs rather it is the

actual threat mentioned above which creating havoc is in the democratic process. The election commission of India should work with social media companies to arrive at a proper timely solution to prevent the democratic system getting poisoned.

Conclusion

There are claims by Indian political leaders to move back to the ancient technique of voting system known as ballot paper system. The ballot paper system has more threats and vulnerabilities in conducting an election efficiently. The return of the ballot paper system brings back the threat like booth capturing, ballot stuffing etc. In order to avert these threats and to carry out a free and fair election, using of the Indian electronic voting machine is the optimal option.

The strong administrative and technical security makes the Indian EVM and election process to be superior and safer. The Indian voting machines are direct recording electronic voting machines with electromechanical buttons for voters and are non-networked, leaving little option for hacking. The last resort of attack on the machine is, tampering of the internal state of the EVM. This is strongly countered by the administrative policy of the election. Getting back to the ballot paper system is not a feasible and sensible idea.

There exist, a higher threat which lies in the election campaign process, the manipulation of the decision processing of the voter. The election commission and respective authorities should arrive on immediate countermeasures to tackle the actual threats mentioned in the paper. Free and Fair elections are a prerequisite for an increasingly for any democracy.

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Digital Democracy:
A Study on online political participation

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Abstract

This purpose of this study is to increase knowledge about citizens' online political participation in contemporary democracies. This study discusses mainly on topics including the central concepts of online political participation, e-petitioning and online anonymity democracy in the form of participatory and deliberative democracy. The objective of this study is to gain knowledge about citizens' online political participation in contemporary democracies. When political participation moves online, it becomes interwoven with a central characteristic of the internet; anonymity. Once a greatly debated topic regarding the secret ballot, online anonymity has now revived a discussion about the effects of anonymity on human behaviour, or more specifically, political behaviour in terms of online political participation. This study also sheds light on how citizens use anonymity within the context of e-petitioning and political discussion.

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Introduction

A democracy requires the involvement of citizens. In a representative democracy, the power of the decision-makers is delegated to them by the people, an arrangement implying that rulers should listen to citizens. For this to be possible, there must be ways for citizens to express their will and make their voices heard. The most common and basic way to participate is by voting in elections, but engagement can take many other forms than this.

It would be difficult to imagine the internet not having an effect on the ways that politics is expressed, depicted, conducted, communicated, and reflected upon. Digital communication certainly affects politics, yet it does not necessarily change politics fundamentally. To investigate the impact of the internet on politics, more empirical investigation is needed instead of theoretical speculation. History has shown that technology is not always used in the ways that the inventors planned, and the internet perhaps makes this lesson clearer than ever as people experience both positive and negative effects of the medium [1]. Also, the internet has changed and redefined the character and practices of political engagement and anything else would be odd since the internet has contributed to transformations on all levels of contemporary society. Certain characteristics of the internet have contributed to this change: information access, diversity and decentralization, interactivity, individual communication possibilities, and unlimited

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communicative space. Furthermore, all of the aforementioned communication can occur at instantaneous speed. Nevertheless, while politics only covers a tiny area of internet usage, the invention and adaption of various internet tools "make it easier for the political to emerge in online communication" [2].

Online political participation

Many different forms of political participation are now practiced online. A collection of creative forms of political participation appears to surpass the traditional distinction between private and public life [3-4]. The possibility of political participation online can encourage new groups of people to engage in new forms of expression and open up the political process for more types of political behaviour [5]. Citizens have the option to visit political blogs, search for political information, follow news online, participate in discussion forums, or organize e-petitions [6].

The different communication channels online facilitate communication where individuals can express their views more openly and freely, as a verbal political commitment [5]. Social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have given citizens tools to disseminate information and express political preferences using methods not previously possible [7].

Starting from the introduction of the mass-circulated printed press in the nineteenth century, the media has been interlaced with power structures, both promoting and limiting civic participation, for a long period of time. Radio, television, the personal computer, and the internet have all been thought to have democratic benefits. This

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technological determinism is a basic fallacy and discredits the impact of socio-cultural settings. When internet research began to emerge in the 1990s, theorists either predicted an astonishing positive development for democracy or saw doom and gloom in their crystal balls, anticipating the end of democracy [8].

On the one hand, optimists argue that the internet mobilizes citizens and promotes political participation by offering new pathways to participation and engaging people otherwise characterized as passive [9-10]. Pessimists, on the other hand, view the internet as a distracting medium, luring people away from more meaningful forms of participation, thus reducing social capital and generating passive citizens [11-12]. Normalizers represent a third viewpoint indicating that the internet is merely reinforcing participatory trends by mainly involving those already interested in politics. In this view, online political participation is for the already converted, politically active citizens, and therefore fortifies existing power structures and widens the gap between the active and inactive without transforming the way of doing politics [13]. These diverging views result from an older dichotomy between technological determinism (i.e., optimists and pessimists) and social determinism (i.e., normalizers) [13]. This debate on the impact of the internet on political participation has also been described as two competing hypotheses: the mobilization hypothesis and the reinforcement hypothesis [14-15].

The types of activities regarded as online political participation seem to be constantly expanding, resulting in a broader palette for citizens wanting the make their

voices heard. The internet has revitalized classic forms of participation and given rise to entirely new forms. Optimists have hoped that the internet can help fulfil the ideals posited by deliberative democracy and participatory democracy, since some of its features seem promising from these perspectives. However, empirical findings regarding the effects of the internet on political participation are mixed. Critics argue that many forms of online participation are ineffective and might even be detrimental to democracy by reducing levels of, more effective, traditional offline ways of political participation. Regardless the effectiveness of online political participation, it can be seen as expressions of opinion worthy of further study within political science. In order to limit the scope of this compilation thesis, I concentrate on two particular forms of online political participation: e-petitioning and online political discussion. This is partly because previous research has urged scholars to specify the varying kinds of participation being analysed to make a clearer distinction between actions rather than summing several activities under the catchall term online political participation. Moreover, it seems impossible to study all forms of online political participation within the framework of one thesis. In the next section, I discuss the rationale for analysing e-petitions and online political discussion in particular as a part of online political participation research [13].

E-petitions

Petitioning is an old form of political participation, with its roots tracing back to the thirteenth century. The right to petition is the an important in democracy and is probably the oldest political right of citizens. The most

recent developments in the right to petition are closely related to the rise of the internet as a communication medium connecting the public and political institutions. The first e-petition system established by a parliament was the Scottish "e-petitioner" in the year 2000.

The acts of creating or signing an e-petition are generally defined and recognized as acts of political participation in the literature [16,17,18]. Electronic petitioning is simply an online variant of an older form, with the main difference that signature gathering is done digitally online instead of offline using pen and paper. Classification of petition signing as a manifest form of political participation, in line with voting or donating money to political parties [19]. However, political discussion, in turn, is not necessarily defined as a form of political participation; for example, urges scholars to differentiate between political participation and political communication and argues that political discussion is a form of political communication, not political participation [20]. In Brady's opinion, political discussion is not to be regarded as political participation, since such participation should be deliberate attempts to influence others and their decisions [21]. Similarly, view political discussion as a predictor of online political participation [22]. Other scholars define political discussion as a less formal form of political participation than petitioning but still categorize it as political participation [17-18, 23]. Also, political discussion is to be regarded as an action and a form of latent political participation and can be described in terms of civic engagement, closer to more manifest forms of political participation and more manifest than pure attention to politics [19].

Importance of e-petitioning

E-petitions represent a form of democratic innovation, a technologically mediated avenue for political participation [24]. For citizens, petitions have three main functions; they give them a chance to protect rights and interests, they provide influence in politics in general, and help mobilize people for a given cause [25, 26]. E-petitions have the potential to achieve policy change, and, if successful, they can strengthen civic-mindedness and political efficacy among citizens [27]. I identify three main reasons behind the rising scholarly interest for e-petitioning. First, e-petitions are growing in popularity as a form of political participation [28]. Second, several countries have introduced formal e-petition systems linked to parliaments in recent years, thus institutionalizing e-petitioning on a governmental level [29, 30]. Third, as petitioning is transforming from offline to online, a data-driven approach to study petitioning behaviour is now possible [31, 32].

On the one hand, critics write off e-petitions as slacktivism with little or no impact on politics [33]. In this view, e-petitions might represent an example of "sham democracy," where they are claimed to have policy influence when in reality they do not. Others dislike e-petitions because they actually might have an influence on policy and therefore interfere or stop governmental policies from being realized. Also, some scholars have more optimistic views on e-petitions, describing them as one of the most successful e-democracy tools ever, at least in terms of mobilizing large quantities of citizens [34]. This debate over the merits and perils of e-petitioning

illustrates disagreement about what the actual impact of e-petitions ought to be in a democratic political system [35].

In general, governmental e-petitioning platforms mainly have an agenda-setting function, and in contrast to other democratic processes (e.g., online voting), do not have any binding political consequences. In this line of thought, e-petitioning platforms are intended to complement, rather than replace, representative democratic institutions. Thus, e-petitioning is an easy and low-cost instrument for tapping the political opinions and interests of citizens [36]. Moreover, e-petitioning represents a safe "playing field" from the perspective of representative democracy, since decision-making power remains in the hands of elected politicians [37].

Petitioning as a democratic instrument

The term petition is not generally well-defined and its meaning varies between countries, institutions, and levels of government [38] [39]. A petition has been defined as a formal request to a higher authority (e.g., parliament or other authority) signed by one or a number of citizens [40]. We can define petitions as requests to a public authority with which citizens try to "change public policy, call for an official statement, or evoke a certain act by a public institution." In another way, we can define petitions as formal requests to an authority, usually a governmental institution". By using a wider definition, petitions targeting private corporations or actors are not excluded [41]. Hence, petitions targeting political actors or institutions are a form of political participation [42].

Petitions can be understood as a form of asymmetric communication between an individual or a

group on one side and an institution on the other. A petitioner forwards a matter of concern to an addressee who may react [43]. Petitions can be distinguished from mere expressions of opinion since they have the purpose of changing policy, evoking a certain act, or calling for an official statement [44]. Scholars generally position petitioning between representative democracy and direct democracy in the category of advocacy democracy, where acts of participation are aimed at influencing the decisions of elected representatives. Petitioning is, in this view, a possibility for citizens to participate in policy formation, even though final decisions are still made by elites. Therefore, petitioning mitigates the risks of weakening existing democratic institutions. In petitioning, citizens' concerns are legitimized by a "strength of numbers" strategy, where the number of signatures determines the petition's weight or representativeness of public opinion [45].

Challenges for e-petitioning

Despite the potential of combining modern technique with one of the oldest forms of political activity, e-petitions have received criticism and present challenges on both a theoretical and practical level. The force or potential impact factor of an e-petition is usually determined by the number of signatures. However, it remains difficult to determine how representative public opinion expressed via e-petitions is. E-petitions do not necessarily represent the general will of the people [46]. They worry about the lack of deliberative features in formal e-petition systems and suggest that political parties supporting e-petition systems demonstrate a symbolic
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willingness to listen to citizens. These are all possible negative scenarios for democracy as a whole if e-petition systems fail in the eyes of citizens.

Online political discussion - a cornerstone of democratic politics

Most democratic theorists would agree that engaged discussion about public matters and a talkative electorate are essential in a healthy democracy. Some scholars even call political discussion "the soul of democracy" since it has been resonated with democratic theories for centuries [47-50].

Discussion among citizens can contribute to better-informed opinions and foster civic engagement, and frequent political discussion in cross-cutting networks has the potential to increase interest in politics and social tolerance. Political discussion is a key element in democratic societies where citizens are supposed to make informed decisions on issues of civic importance. Political discussion has been found to increase political knowledge, and it is believed that a democratic system where citizens engage in discussions could increase both the performance and the legitimacy of that system [51]. On the contrary, a lack of meaningful and regular political deliberation results in poor public policy and political alienation. Scholars have argued that providing citizens with opportunities to deliberate about policy issues is an effective response to high levels of disillusionment and disenchantment with the political process. According to this thinking, critical discussion grounded in information and reasoning should create enhanced public opinion, which, in turn, influences actions of elected officials. The internet seems promising to deliberative democrats in

particular, since their view of democracy emphasizes the need for citizen discussion about policy issues, rather than mere aggregation of opinions [52]. The importance of political discussion in a democracy is summarized as:

> "It is through political conversations that members of society come to clarify their own views, learn about the opinions of others, and discover what major problems face the collective. Through such conversations, political participation is made possible, enabling citizens to affect the practices and policies of their elected leaders and ultimately ensuring a democratic process of governance" [51].

Political discussion provides information shortcuts to voters and can activate latent political attitudes. Moreover, persuasive political discussion might also alter citizens' attitudes and presumptions. Another important role for political discussion is to construct trust across social divisions, hence contributing to participation in mutual political activity and reciprocity among discussants, producing a more vibrant society. Nevertheless, political discussion does not always produce positive results for democracy. It may result in unintended consequences, biases and further fragmentation of already polarized societies. Discussion can either build consensus among participants or cement political predispositions. Conflicting findings call for further exploration of the characteristics of political discussion.

Political discussion is one of the political participation forms that optimists hoped would be promoted by the internet by extending it beyond social

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networks and making information instantly available [52]. As democratic theory took a "deliberative turn", the internet became especially interesting to scholars due to its potential to fulfil some of the characteristics of an ideal public sphere envisioned by deliberative democrats. The internet has features which might be favourable to democratic discussion between citizens because it: enables many-to-many communication, bridges time and place, enables easy transmission of large quantities of information, gives citizens easier access to the public sphere, is of horizontal nature, and lowers the (social and economic) costs of publication [53]. In other words, it erodes physical, psychological, and social barriers which can have a restrictive impact on offline political discussion. Online, citizens can engage with authorities and participate in their own pace. Moreover, large numbers of people can be involved in political discussion online; participation can be scaled up without producing costs of physically bringing people together.

> "The unique characteristics of the Internet enable citizens to produce, comment on, edit, remove, and recommend portions of a global dialogue. This has set it apart as a medium with the potential to transform the democratic landscape at large and expand the public sphere" [51].

Even though the internet is potentially expanding the public sphere and increasingly functioning as an arena for political discussion, online discussions have been criticized for causing polarization and lacking in deliberative quality. Findings show that forum design matters because it has effects on the deliberative quality of the online discussion [54, 55]. One of the

characteristics of the internet, anonymity, seems to be challenging for the quality of online discussion. This has fielded interest from scholars since democratic discussion traditionally does not occur between anonymous participants, yet many online discussions characterized by anonymity [56].

Anonymity in participation and communication

Given that political participation is moving online, it becomes intertwined with a central characteristic of digital communication: online anonymity. This characteristic is perhaps the most prominent of several important psychological components distinguishing the internet from the offline world [57]. The subsequent chapter discusses the concept of anonymity, starting from its definition to its potential effects on communication and, consequently, political participation. Here, I identify merits and perils of anonymity from the literature. The aim of this chapter is to review previous research on anonymity and to argue for a need to take anonymity into account in online political participation research. An understanding of anonymity becomes relevant for my research query as the internet arguably has made it easier to perform acts of political participation anonymously. Given the dearth of research on anonymity in political participation, I take a wider approach to the concept of anonymity in this chapter, by referring to findings from disciplines such as social psychology and communication studies.

Anonymity – the non coordinability of traits

Why is it interesting to analyse anonymity? The internet's ever-increasing importance in society combined with the

ease of anonymous communication, are factors that help to make the subject interesting. Historically, anonymity played a relatively minor role in a world where the potential audience for anonymous communication was limited. The internet has made anonymous communication more common and enlarged its reach to an audience consisting, at least theoretically, of an infinite number of people. In pre-internet eras, anonymous communication was more expensive and time consuming than today [58]. At the same time, digital technology facilitating anonymous communication coexists with technology promoting identification using tracks that citizens leave behind when browsing the web. Anonymity can be seen as something that is built into the properties of the internet and therefore worthy of study for scholars seeking a deeper understanding of the internet's democratic potential.

Thus, the concept of anonymity is central in discussions concerning the internet. Analyses of the political, economic, psychological, and legal aspects of the internet are often associated with the medium's ability to offer anonymity to its users [59].

Theories relating to anonymity

Studying online political participation is essentially about studying human behaviour, and as anonymity is a social construction and, theories from social psychology have discussed anonymity of human behaviour in groups. Three theories in the literature seem relevant to online anonymity: deindividuation theory, the social identity model of deindividuation effects, and the theory of the online disinhibition effect. According to deindividuation theories, deindividuation is a psychological state of

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decreased self-evaluation and decreased evaluation apprehension causing antinormative and disinhibited behaviour [60]. Thus, deindividuation describes a state where self-awareness and individual identity is lost [61]. Deindividuation is one of the most cited effects of social groups, and deindividuation theory aims to explain expressions of antinormative behaviour in the form of lynch mobs, hooligans, and violent crowds. Deindividuation theory asserts that group size has an effect on anonymity; in larger groups members experience a stronger sense of anonymity which results in more antisocial behaviour. Deindividuation theory focused on the negative effects of deindividuation and posited that the state led to acts of aggression and other deviant behaviours. It has also been used to explain antinormative behaviour in anonymous computer-mediated communication although this context can seem to be far from the maddening crowd and some scholars argue that deindividuation theory cannot fully explain disinhibition in computer-mediated communication. However, empirical testing of the deindividuation theory has produced inconsistent results. In several studies, deindividuation was not enough to induce aggressive behaviour; rather behaviour was dependent on normative cues associated with groups and the situational context of a specific situation. The social identity of deindividuation effects (SIDE) model was introduced as a critique of deindividuation theories [62, 63, 64]. In contrast to deindividuation theories, the SIDE-model posits that anonymity can reinforce group salience and conformity to group norms. Thus, when people are placed in groups and interact anonymously, they are more likely to identify themselves as part of the group, rather than as unique individuals, and will consequently conform to group

norms. Moreover, the type of anonymity mattered; visual anonymity was found to have effects, whereas physical and personal information anonymity did not. In other words, anonymity can foster group identification and conformity to social group norms. In environments where people are more anonymous (e.g., in crowds and online), antinormative behaviour can be guided by norms that emerge in specific contexts. Hence, anonymity can produce both prosocial and antisocial behaviour, depending on contextual factors. According to SIDE-theory, anonymity enhances the salience of social identity rather than personal identity when people feel they are part of a group [65, 66]. Anonymous persons with salient ties to the group will perform according to what their social identity dictates due to the heightened sense of social identity. "Rather than lose themselves in a crowd, de-individuated persons will look more to the social aspect of their identities to guide their behaviours". Thus, the SIDE-model predicts conformity to specific social identities rather than conformity to any general norms. In essence, the SIDE model deviates from deindividuation theories in that it proposes that deindividuation causes human behaviour to become more, not less, socially regulated. The SIDE-model makes a distinction between two aspects of anonymity when defining the cognitive and strategic sides of the SIDE-model. The cognitive dimension of the SIDE-model refers to how anonymity of or within the in-group can promote the salience of a group identity. This means the sense of who we are is affected by the online representation of ourselves and others. The strategic dimension of the SIDE-model argues that reduced accountability to outgroups due to anonymity to these can allow behaviour that could be sanctioned by the outgroup [51].

The online disinhibition effect refers to the tendency of some people to self-disclose or act out more frequently or intensively online than they would do in person [67]. The term is used for online situations when people say and do things they would not normally do face-to-face; they feel less restrained and express themselves more openly. Disinhibition is difficult to define but has been vaguely described as "any behaviour, characterized by an apparent reduction in concerns for self-presentation and the judgement of others" [68].

Conclusion

This study started from the assumption that democracy faces problems in form of declining levels of traditional political participation. To some extent, citizens seem dissatisfied with the way democracy functions, yet they still support democracy as a principle of government. To counteract declining levels of political participation, ideas originating from both participatory and deliberative democracy have been combined with the emergence of the internet, raising hopes for a revival of the connection between citizens and politics. This study focused on e-petitioning and online political discussion as potential solutions to improve the relationship between citizens and democracy. Furthermore, to widen the focus, analysed both formal and informal political participation, given citizens' increasing use of informal channels for participation.

The decision-making power is still in the hands of elected representatives. The use of e-petitioning and online political discussion illustrates a citizenry with an interest in politics, and perhaps also a citizenry turning to these forms to express dissatisfaction with the lack of

input given in traditional political participation. Based online, these two forms of participation give citizens the choice to activate themselves politically whenever and wherever they want to rather than having the time and place for their participation determined by others. Participating in e-petitioning and online discussion can be done individually, from the comfort of one's own home, which lowers the threshold for participation. Moreover, these activities can usually be performed anonymously, further lowering the threshold for participation. Thus, these innovations can increase the level of participation and expand the toolbox of political participation.

However, this study has shown that anonymity is not necessarily causing a low quality of discussion online. This highlights a need to examine other determinants of discussion quality. Although the quality of discussion does not always live up to the high standards of deliberation, and despite few e-petitions actually led to policy change, the opportunities to influence the political agenda has perhaps never been greater. Also, by allowing more voices into the public sphere, these innovations have the potential to level the playing field and empower individuals on the cost of established political actors, organizations and parties.

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Health Care Sector in Kerala:
An Overview

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Health is wealth because of its multifaceted benefits which have a far reaching effect on our lives. Healthy people compose a better society. Health is a productive asset that influences economic development significantly. Many factors influence health status and a country's ability to provide quality health services for its people. Democracy has historically played a little role in driving global health. But new research shows that democracy is becoming more important as the health needs of the low and middle income nations shift from infectious diseases to non -communicable diseases. Between 1980 and 2016 the democratic experience of a nation was more responsible for reduction in mortality from cardiovascular diseases, transportation injuries, cancers and most other non- communicable diseases. The opposite is true for HIV, diarrhoeal diseases and most other communicable diseases where democracy matters little.

Democracy improves health directly because democratic governments are more protective of media freedom and the sharing of health information, more open to feedback from constituents and interests groups and more willing to use feedback to improve the quality of government health care services.

In India health care is managed at the state level. Over the last six decades, the Indian states have had

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varying levels of success in health outcomes. Notably Kerala has consistently been a prominent outlier with better health outcomes in a number of areas compared to most states in India. The tradition of government support for health development has been a catalyst for the advancement of health care in the state. The health care system is considered to be the principal factor for attaining the high level of health status in Kerala. In many respects Kerala's health status is almost on a par with that of other developed economies. Kerala's achievements in health have already been acclaimed all over the world and several international agencies has described Kerala model of health as 'good health at low cost based on social justice and equity'. There are many socio economic conditions unique to Kerala which have been postulated to make this health model possible.

In 2011, Kerala attained the highest Human Development Index of all Indian states based on its performance in key measures.

- Lower infant mortality rate of 12 per 1000 live births in Kerala vs. 40 per 1000 live births in India.
- Lower maternal mortality ratio of 66 per100,000 live births in Kerala vs.178 per100,000 live births in India,
- Higher literacy among both males at 96% in Kerala vs.82% in India and females with 92% in Kerala vs. 65% in India.

The health gains made in Kerala can be attributed to several factors including strong emphasis from the state government on public health and primary health care (PHC), health infrastructure, decentralised governance,

financial planning, girl's education community participation and a willingness to improve systems in response to identified gaps.

The spread of education exemplified by the high literacy rate and the health care system are believed to have contributed to the low infant mortality rate. Dr Thankappan of the AMCHHSS illustrates this by saying, "The spread of education has obviously heightened people's health consciousness which explains why 95% of pregnant women get antenatal care and 92% of deliveries are institutional. Similarly the immunisation coverage of children between 12 and 24 months (diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus89% oral polio vaccine 89%, measles77%,BCG 95%) is among the highest in the world". All over, the world indices such as infant mortality have shown an inverse relationship with female literacy.

The state still has the highest overall life expectancy at birth, at 74.9 years for men and 77.8 for women according to the Sample Registration System (SRS) Sep.3, 2019. The reason for the better statistics in life expectancy is the better investment that successive governments have made in public health and education. Moreover there is an increased awareness of the literate people of the state in matters of hygiene, vaccinations, nutritious food and the professional medical help undergone when required along with easy access to primary health. The effective implementation of the public distribution of food through fair priced ration shops played an important role in improving nutritional status.

The universally available public system in Kerala has also contributed to the high health status of the people. A three-tier system of self-governance was established, comprised of 900 villages (panchayats), 152 blocks, and 14 districts . The current Primary Health Care system consists of sub-centers, primary health centers (PHC) that support five to six sub-centers and serve a village, and community health centers(CHC). The sub-centers serve the smallest population and do not have inpatient capacity, while PHC facilities serve about 26,000 citizens and provide maternity services and limited inpatient services, and CHCs provide care to approximately 230,000 individuals. In 2012, there were 23,940 PHC centers in Kerala

Under the new system, the PHC centers and their referring sub-centers were brought under the jurisdiction of villages in order to engage more closely with the community to identify and implement effective changes to respond to local health needs and encourage the use of PHC centers and sub-centers as the first point of care . Communities were brought together to determine which health topics were important and needed attention, with selected topics ranging from strengthening PHC facilities to improving water and sanitation safety . This decentralization resulted in physicians and community members working together and many facilities undergoing significant renovations to address community priorities. As another component of the new system, individuals, especially in lower socioeconomic groups, were encouraged to utilize public health centers. Particularly in villages with strong panchayat governance, there have been

improvements in access to medications and health outcomes, as well as increased patient utilization of care at PHC centres. Kerala has also continued to innovate to meet the needs of more vulnerable populations including establishing a Weekly Iron and Folic acid Supplementation (WIFS) Program and Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) to benefit adolescent health .

Kerala had long ago recognised the importance of palliative care as can be seen from the growth of community-based care units. . Kerala has also extended the definition of palliative care to include the long term chronically ill and even the mentally incapacitated. Health professionals having expertise in palliative care extend their services by offering specialised out patient service and domestic care to the needy chronic patients. . The volunteers in these units after training provide psychological, social and spiritual support.

Kerala's formal palliative care policy, is the only state with such a policy, the community-based Neighbourhood Network in Palliative Care (NNPC) project that employs an army of volunteers and the government funding for these local community based care units Kerala's palliative care network contains over 100 units. Palliative care initiatives in Kerala can broadly be categorised into five sections. The first segment functions under the monitoring of government agencies as well as local self government institutions, and this official initiative makes use of ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers. National Rural Health Mission

(NRHM) serves as the co-ordinator for this. Another major stream is run by registered charitable trusts, and this is the forerunner in the state with grass-root level initiatives in North Malabar regions through 'neighbourhood network groups'. These community based organisations (CBOs) are purely volunteer driven.

In recent times, political and religious organisations also play a dominant role in this initiative. The third category is in association with hospitals and under the supervision of health care professionals. The chronic and incurable patients are provided with separate facilities and adequate emotional as well as mental support is offered to them. The service of counsellors and psychologists are also provided to equip them to face the inevitable. Institute of Palliative Medicine located in Kozhikode is the beginner in this stream. Specialised home care initiative for supporting the bedridden patients is the fourth segment of the palliative initiative. Here besides a staff nurse, volunteers and field staff will also be included. Student volunteers also extend their service to this team. The fifth section is the patient- outpatient (IP-OP) care by utilising the existing facilities in hospitals. The care system is also funded largely through local micro-donations of as little as Rs 10 per month.

The inherent vibrancy and resilience of the Kerala health system was evident during the major challenges the state faced during the Ockhi cyclone in 2017 and the unexpected floods in 2018. There were very few incidents of waterborne and vector borne disease during Ockhi cyclone and the floods. A few deaths took place owing to rat fever. Two episodes of Nipah virus epidemics hit the state during 2018 and 2019. Within no time the health

department tackled it with commendable courage. The efficiency with which Kerala managed to control Nipah epidemic that affected the state within the shot span of six months had been widely acclaimed all over the world.

Given in this context, Kerala's response to Covid-19 has been remarkable. Kerala has been publishing daily updates about quarantine tests and hospitalisation. With strict travel restrictions and other measures in place, daily hospitalisation of suspected cases have shrunk considerably in Kerala and the number of patients daily discharged after a negative report and subsided symptoms outnumber the former consistently. Timely dissemination of surveillance data was an effective way in which the government of Kerala managed to keep panic under check and gain the confidence of the community.

Despite these health improvements, Kerala's PHC system is facing a number of challenges. The epidemiological transition towards chronic disease , erosion of public health funding, and the continued presence of private health care at much higher cost have pushed the health system to its limits. The rise of non-communicable diseases like obesity, cancer and CVD in the state has also challenged the healthcare system. Overall, Kerala has made significant strides through investing in infrastructure, decentralized governance, and community engagement. . Kerala's collaborative work across public and private sectors, interdisciplinary coordination and cooperation across all levels of government has set the bench mark for all stakeholders to adhere to in the future as well.

Conclusion

Democratic institutions and practices can affect human development in multiple ways including population health and wellbeing. The democratic decentralized health care system in the state thus helps to increase the levels of equality in health. Though many challenges remain, the rectification of short comings can make the health services function more effectively delivering better health system performance and outcomes.

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