

India after Independence: Challenges and Issues

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Abstract

India is an independent country since August 15, 1947. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of independent India, a sovereign secular democratic country. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation accepted no office of India. India has a Hindu majority, a large Muslim minority, and numerous other religious minorities also. From 1950 to 1980 India followed socialist-inspired policies. Beginning in 1991 the significant economic reforms have transferred India into one of the largest growing economies in the world. Today there is a general awakening among the people regarding equal rights in the eyes of law irrespective of caste, creed, sex, and religion. The far-reaching changes in the socio-economic, political, scientific, legal and intellectual life of this great nation have brought a dignified place to it even in international scenario. The present paper tries to highlight the post independence scenario of India, its challenges and issues.

Keywords: Independence, India, Secular, Governance, Democracy.

India became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth on 15th August, 1947. Concurrently the Muslim majority northwest and east of British India was separated into the dominion of Pakistan, by the partition of India. The partition led to a population transfer of more than 10 million people between India and Pakistan and the death of about one million people. Nationalist leader Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of India and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel became the Deputy Prime Minister of India and its Minister of Home Affairs. But the most powerful moral leader Mahatma Gandhi accepted no office. The new constitution of 1950 made India a secular democratic state. It has a Hindu majority, a large Muslim minority, and numerous other religious minorities including the Sikhs and the Christians.

Aims And Objectives

The present paper has some aims and objectives. These aims and objectives are as follows:

To show the post independence scenario of India in the field of socio-political aspects.

To highlight the challenges faced by India in bringing the present state of development.

To show the changes brought about in the political field of India.

Methodology

The proposed study will be to collect materials, to arrange systematically and the missing line between present and past. It is also proposed that for the preparation of the study the researcher has used the historical and descriptive methods. Both primary and secondary data have been used to carry out the present paper.

In the 'Comity of Nations' on August 15, 1997 India had one more leap in its march ahead. It had completed more than five decades of its independent existence as a democratic polity. In these sixty eight years we have seen far reaching changes in the socio-economic, political, scientific, legal and intellectual life of this great nation. Notwithstanding the innumerable problems that afflict us, we are proud of our polity, which nurtured the roots of democracy without any wavering unlike many neo-democracies. There is no doubt that this itself is a significant achievement in the life of a nation, especially if we compare our experience with that of other nations/states that achieved

their independence during this period and which have already fallen out of democratic governance.

India faced religious violence, casteism, naxalism, terrorism and regional separatist insurgencies, especially in Jammu and Kashmir and north eastern India. The nation has unresolved territorial disputes with China, which in 1962 escalated into the Sino-Indian War, and with Pakistan which resulted in war in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999. India was neutral in the Cold War but purchased its military weapons from the Soviet Union while Pakistan was closely tied to the United States.

India is a nuclear-weapon state having conducted its first nuclear test in 1947, followed by another five tests in 1998. From the 1950s to the 1980s India followed socialist inspired policies. The economy was shackled by extensive regulation, protectionism and public ownership, leading to pervasive corruption and slow economic growth. Beginning in 1991 the significant economic reforms have transformed India into one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Today India is a major world power with a prominent voice in global affairs and is seeking a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. Many economists, military analysts and thinkers expect India to become a super power in the near future.

However, a nation like India cannot afford to be static and it has to be dynamic and has to learn to realize itself structurally and functionally as it passes through the experience. Hence, it is a significant occasion to make a proper assessment and an objective analysis to review its past and reform itself to meet the challenges of the 21st century. During the last five decades India can be proud to have safeguarded and enlarged the gains of freedom. We can also claim to have achieved significant progress in the diverse and interconnected spheres of democratic governance among the various institutions such as the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. We can be legitimately proud that the constitution could ably demonstrate that it is an ever enduring document that we have adopted by ourselves. But at the same time, the assertion of caste, the resurgence of religious chauvinism, the erosion in the functioning of the political system and the escalating levels of political corruption, instability of governance at the Union are a few phenomenon that remind us to think twice before we enter into the next millennium.

However, there is a growing feeling among all the sections of the people of this country, that there is a need to have wide ranging debates and discussions and to review the overall functioning of our polity. It becomes all the more important especially as our accomplishments fall short of the noble values and ideals embodied in our constitution and in the context of the fast deterioration of values in politics and business.

The main purpose and aim of the present study entitled India after Independence: Challenges and Issues is that in order to strengthen the emerging economic imperative and the modalities, it is important to have a free and frank academic debate at the national level to update ourselves. Taking into consideration of these perceptions the contributors of various articles wrote on various aspects of the functioning of the democratic polity in India during the last fifty years. It was to fill in this gap that the present work has been undertaken. The style of the study is such that it should be interesting to both the social scientists and the general readers. A great effort has been made to present the ideas in an unbiased form as soon as possible.

Before independence our country was at the mercy of her foreign rulers. They did whatever they liked for the good of their own country. After India's independence much has been done to improve the condition of the masses. Some of the important achievements of free India made during the last fifty years are as follows.

In the economic field unprecedented progress has been made. Our five year plans have been successfully completed. Many multipurpose projects have been taken in hand. Bhakra Nagal, Hirakud and Damodur Valley projects have been completed. Many new factories have been started. Sindri Fertilizers Factory, Haldia Fertilizer Complex, Barauni and Guna Fertilizer Factory, etc. are producing chemical fertilizers. Important steel plants are fulfilling our requirements of steel. The per capita income has been raised. Our exports have been increasing in different spheres. The difficult food problems have been solved. Today there is enough food for all.

Power generation has also been increased in several folds. A net-work of ordinance factories has been established and most sophisticated weapons for the defence of the country are being

produced. In 1989 India successfully fired Agni, a long range missile. Since then 'Akash' surface to air long range missile, 'Trishul,' 'Nag' and recently 'Prithivi' surface short range missile have been launched. This shows further advance in the growth of the country's science and technology. Rapid advances have been made in the field of electronics and comprehensive programme of computerization is also under way. Thus gradually, but steadily, we are achieving self-sufficiency and stability in the economic field.

Free India has also made rapid advance in the field of science and technology. Atomic energy has been successfully used for power generation. India successfully conducted underground atomic tests for peaceful purposes. Now India is nuclear power nation. The launching of Aryabhata, Rohini, Apple, INSAT-1 and INSAT-1(D) satellites marks the entry of India into the space age. India Space Organization had completed four launchers of the Satellite Launch Vehicle-3 (SLV-3) for Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicles (ASLV) and two developmental PSLV. With this India became the fifth nation in the world capable of launching 1000 kg satellite in its intended orbit. Now it is ready to enter the GSLV programme through which India will not only have vastly improved telecommunication capability, but also satellite monitoring capabilities which will be of great value of our security.

Revolutionary changes have also been brought about in the political field. Our country is now Sovereign Democratic Republic. All citizens have equal rights in the eyes of law irrespective of their caste, creed, sex and religion. To bring democracy to the villages, Panchayats have been established and Panchayati Raj has become a reality. The launching of the Jawahar Rozgar Yojna is another revolutionary step to improve the conditions of the rural poor. There is a general awakening among the people. They have begun to understand their rights and duties. We may find men in the street discussing various political problems with great interest. Thus we are enjoying the fruits of freedom. We may hold our heads high due to the success of foreign policy, which has raised the prestige of the country.

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