

The World's Largest Democracy?

Article:

Since independence from the British, India embraced two major legacies from its colonial masters and took it to a whole new level. One of them being cricket, the other is of course the Westminster style democracy. Historically, it has outperformed the Britons in both aspects. The Indian cricket team has been one of the most successful ones. And the Indian democracy is called the world's largest democracy (perhaps because China isn't democratic yet). These two facts have been the most decisive contributors to the Indian soft power throughout the world.

And how could anyone not commend the wonders Indian democracy has produced until now. We remember the 2004 Indian Lok-Sabha Elections in which Manmohan Singh (a Sikh) was sworn-in as Prime Minister by Sonia Gandhi (a roman-catholic Christian) under the President APJ Abdul Kalam (a Muslim), in a country where 84% of the population comprised of Hindus. These results were not only accepted but also celebrated in the "Secular-India".

Fast-forward to August 2019. The valley of Kashmir which is the only Muslim-majority state in the Indian Union was ostracized and the political leadership was caged while the fate of its residents was being decided in the Parliament. The constitution was amended in an unconstitutional way. The provisions in the constitution made by the fore-fathers are being called mistakes and blunders of the past. So a country that do not abide-by its own constitutional promises, what is it called? A rogue state perhaps.

This tinkering with the constitution should also be a concern for the Indian public as well. Because honestly speaking, the only thing that has kept India intact over the years is the Indian constitution and the belief of the Indian public in the sanctity of this document. There is not a single thing that unifies the whole Indian population other than the fact that they are Indian Nationals.

The idea of Secular democracy has been hijacked by a semi-fascist regime. The democratic processes are carried out dictatorially. The representation of minorities in the parliament is on an all-time low. Gross acts of violence and human rights abuses against religious minorities are happening uniformly throughout the country regardless of the states. No major action being taken against these hint of state-patronage involved somehow. Isolated cases here and there can be accounted for, but a series of organized mob-lynching against a specific community is something that shows the rising trends of intolerance in "rising India".

But then considering history, one gets hopeless by seeing that the so-called great powers can get away with anything. Whether it's the U.S attack on Iraq or the Chinese communist invasion of Tibet.

Coming back to the Kashmir issue. The reaction of the people of Kashmir is yet to be seen and that reaction will probably describe the intensity of the situation. The deployment of more troops in the valley signify the fear in the minds of people sitting in New Delhi. The question arises that to what extent can a populist majoritarian government modify the very constitution on behalf of which it exercises its power on the land. Should a country be allowed a notable status on the global level if its decisions are unpredictable? What should be done if it does not uphold its own values and traditions?

This shows that how human experiments can go seriously wrong. The immortality of this system was pointed out by Churchill as "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others."

So it's about time that someone came out and say that in order to be the World's largest democracy, one should at least act like a proper democracy.