

ISSN 0970-7247

THIRD CONCEPT

English Monthly
Annual Subscription Rs.200

Vol. 38

No. 449

JULY 2024

Rs. 20.00

- ❖ **75 Years of Indian Constitution: Introspection**
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Vol. 38 No. 449 JULY 2024 Rs. 20.00

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Published, Printed and Owned by
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Fractured Mandate and Democracy

Fractured mandate on June 4, 2024 reveals that democracy in India is not only sustaining but has been thriving. Mainstream media projected the results as positive-sum game for all political parties. Obviously lot depends on the way one understands it: the glass is half-full for some, whereas half-empty for others. Reality could be deciphered that Indian democracy has been maturing in spite of irrelevant comments about it in some segments of international media. Voters of India deserve unlimited appreciation for the same.

History and the erstwhile global literature have hardly ever located a democracy which could be declared as a 'perfect democracy'. Democracies have been praised but advised in myriad of ways to achieve perfection with policy interventions and engineering state's institutions. Indian democracy has never been an exception to this fact over the last 75+ years; yet it has number of reasons to pat itself to be the mother of all democracies.

Onset of '*amrut kaal*' has seen India as the fastest growing economy to be the fifth largest by September 2023 and scheduled to be the fourth or third largest by 2027 or 2030 as claims are being made. India has the distinction of being the fourth country to reach successfully on the Moon. Its Solar Mission "*Aditya*" is on its way to explore the star that has traversed over 15 lakhs kilometers. "New Delhi Leaders' Declaration" of September 10, 2023 is the proof of India's expanding global outreach and international personality with diplomatic prowess and soft power showcasing. Major powers like, USA and France have spread red carpet welcome to Indian Prime Minister. Policy interventions at domestic level are innumerable with positive statistics all-over the media. These are to name a few, to earmark India's success story. Yet, the voters decided to send strong fillers to the ruling alliance that their vision of 'New India' is much more different than 'Government's Vision.'

Post-results, most important take-away for political parties are not one, rather many: firstly, electoral democracy is as uncertain and unpredictable as game of cricket; secondly, mere attractive narratives and rhetoric cannot deliver power, concrete works on ground zero are becoming increasingly relevant and decisive; thirdly, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, therefore, leadership must resort to corruption-free governance; fourthly, in democracy what matters most is the perception of the people regarding the parties and the candidates contesting and not the narratives built by parties to corner the votes; fifthly, vote-bank politics may be an influencer but cannot help bag power in the long-run; sixthly, no leader should dream of dictatorial power, it has limitations too and people have established it once again, probably second time after the emergency of Indira Gandhi; last but most important, alongside caste, religion has developed as another infrastructure of Indian politics, as decisive factor.

Citizens are the real king-maker and not the leaders either with massive majority or with small-little seats. Accordingly, political leadership across political parties must realize that they can fool 'some of the people, some of the time' but not 'all the people, all the time.' Indian politics is fast moving from 'populism' to 'people' in its processes of governance. It makes it imperative to comprehend as far as dynamics of Indian politics is concerned: the way the nature and processes of governance have been changing; the way prevalent electoral processes have contributed towards strengthening democracy; the way digital technology has contributed towards re-engineering Indian democracy in almost all walks of nation-state's life. Fractured mandate has many more lessons for political parties as well as policy analysts within Indian democracy. There are strong signals to mitigate mediocrity from Indian politics.

— BK



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