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#LongLiveDemocracy

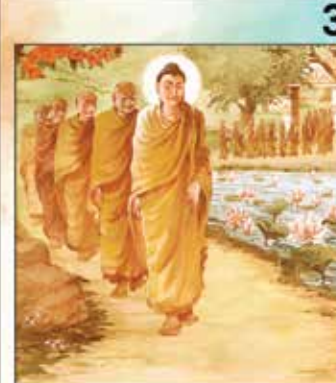
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In Bharat, roots of democracy go back to ancient times

VEDA
The Rigveda and the Atharvaveda refer to participatory institutions like the Sabha, Samiti, and Janasabha indicating early public participation and legislative governance. 'Yajñam Agniḥ' (Yajñam Veda) (The Supreme Being is One, the angles not seen by visible means).

JANAPADA
The Janapada of the 7th and 8th centuries BC mention both Sangha and Republic as forms of governance. Republics led by elected Gopamukhya, were the Samantas who decided matters with public participation. The Lokasabha who ruled over the region of present-day Bihar and Nepal were known for their unique form of governance, was based on democratic principles.

3



BUDDHA SANGHA AND JAIN TEXTS
Historical details of Buddha Sangha and Jain texts show people's role in decision-making, showing strong Lokasabha ethos. The Vinaya-Pitaka describes voting methods, Sanghagana's structure, and election of the Mahasammata.

4

People centric approach & public participation lay at the heart of democratic traditions

ARITHASHASTRA
Vedas emphasized public welfare, rule of law, and multi-layered decision-making in governance. Arithashastra emphasized on these people-centric and just principles.

ASHOKAN INSCRIPTIONS
Samrat Ashoka emphasized responsible, people-oriented governance around 260-238 BC. He spread these ideas through inscriptions across Bharat.

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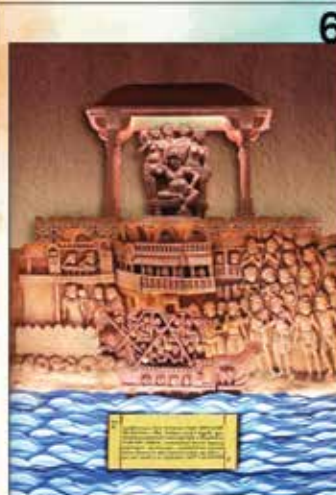
Ethos of Loktantra in Shrenisangha

ELECTIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Democratic administration in India involved electing and holding accountable administrative officials, including guilds and town leaders.

MULTI LAYERED SYSTEM
Across India, this principle often manifested itself as a multi-layered system comprising merchant-guilds (Shreni Sangha), town administration (Nigam), and elected administrative officers like Jethaka (Chief) and Sreshthi (head of an association) governing towns and villages.

TEMPLE INSCRIPTION IN GWALIOR
The Vallabhadraswami Temple inscription describes how Sri-Gopapri, Gwalior of today, was ruled by the Kartapala (chief of the fort), Sri Bhogadeva Aka, and the commander of the fort, Tattaka. The city was administered by Vaviviyaka, the merchant, and Shulbhuyaka, the trader with the support of the members of the Board.

6



7

Inscriptions from Uthiramerur provide guidelines of representation

TEMPLE IN UTHIRAMERUR
The Valluvar Perumal Temple in Uthiramerur, a village in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu.

INSCRIPTION INDICATING PREVALENT PRACTICES
The temple is known for the inscriptions indicating the democratic practices of electing representatives for the village bodies during the regime of Parantaka Chola (907-95 CE). It enumerates the selection process for members, their qualifications, duties, responsibilities, and even the situations in which they could be dismissed from their positions.



8

Consultative practices and community involvement informed governance across time and place

Consultation and Freedom
Shreniya rulers consulted people on taxation, property rights, and local-community issues.

Loktantra in Ishanya Bharat
North-East Bharat has rich traditions of local self-governance through community councils. Examples include Twaka (Assam), Dumas (Sikkim), Khasi (Meghalaya), and Mising (Assam).

Anubhava Mantapa
Often referred to as the first Parliament of the world this democratic platform for debates, discussions, and expression of views was founded by 15th century social reformer Basavacharya (Karnataka).





9

Democracy at the grassroots across rural and urban localities



Public participation: the cornerstone of democracy
Local self-governance systems, governing bodies like the Gram Sabha (village assembly), Gram Panchayat (village council), Nagar Nigam (town council), and Parishad (council) have played key roles in enabling local communities to manage their affairs.

Various systems of local governance are continuing
Notable examples are Mahara village in Northern India, the Santhol and Gond communities in Central India, and the Kallam community in Southern India. Local self-governance systems are storehouses of democratic values in India.

10

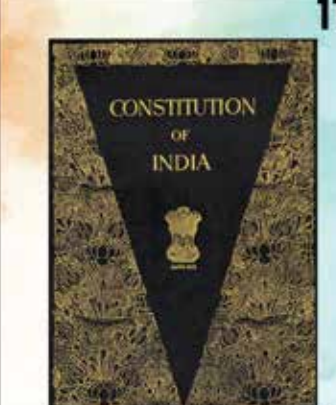
Indians pressurized the British to incorporate participatory demands in 'Reforms and Acts'

Indian Councils Act, 1861 (Morley-Minto Reforms)
The Morley-Minto Reforms, were implemented by the British Government to address growing Indian demands for greater participation in governance and curb political unrest.

Government of India Act, 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms)
Indian leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Annie Besant and others advocated for greater autonomy and responsible government. While these reforms fell short of granting self rule it expanded Indian participation in legislatures, and some voting rights were granted to Indians. It also introduced dyarchy at the provincial level, allowing elected Indian ministers to handle subjects like education and health.

Government of India Act, 1935
Provided for provincial autonomy, with elected Indian governments in provinces exercising real power. The Act proposed an All-India Federation and expanded the electorate significantly, allowing about 10% of the population to vote.

11



Indian Constitution (1949)
Indian Constitution drew several structural and administrative features from the Government of India Act, 1935. It allowed both central authority and state autonomy, while enabling amendments.

12

Independent India and Parliamentary System (1)

Separation of Power
Parliamentary system ensured separation of powers among the executive, legislature, and judiciary.

Independent India's first general election
Held between 25th October 1951 and 21 February 1952, with 1/6th of the world's population as potential voters, making it the largest election conducted at that time.



By 1976, India had conducted five general elections
India was the first post-colonial nation to sustain regular democratic elections.

13

Independent India and Parliamentary System (2)

Emergence of regional and opposition parties
From a single party-dominated landscape in the 1950s, India saw the emergence of strong regional and opposition parties.

Resilient democracy
Despite internal crises (like wars and famines), India maintained electoral credibility, with changes in state governments through ballots.

Increase in number of voters
India witnessed an increase in registered voters from 172 million in 1951-52 to 274 million in 1971.



15

Prelude to the Emergency (2)



May 1974: Protests intensified
17 million railway workers went on nationwide strike, affecting transport and economy. This was the first instance of rail-roko in independent India. The government crushed the strike.



14

Prelude to the Emergency (1)

1972-74: Rampant economic crisis
Rising inflation, unemployment, food shortages, and widespread strikes by railway workers, students, and farmers.

March-April 1974: Student protests
Demonstrations erupted in Gujarat under the banner of Nav Nirman Andolan against rampant government corruption and inflation, leading to the fall of the government and resignation of the then Chief Minister.



16

Prelude to the Emergency (3)

June 1974: Call for non-violent civil disobedience
(Jharkhand) Jayaprakash Narayan led the student's movement in the state of Bihar which gradually developed into a popular people's movement known as the Bihar movement.

Total Revolution (Purna Kranti)
In June 1974 he held a huge rally in Gandhi Maidan, Patna. It was during this movement that JP gave a call for peaceful Total Revolution.



RISE OF THE MASSES

17

Prelude to the Emergency (4)

12 June 1975

On 12 June 1975, the Allahabad High Court found the incumbent winner Smt. Indira Gandhi from Rae Bareilly constituency seat guilty of electoral malpractice, declaring her election to the Lok Sabha in 1971 void.

A historical verdict

Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha in his verdict also barred the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi from elective posts for the next 5 years. This verdict was appealed in Supreme Court.



Change of guard in Gujarat

On the same day, Gujarat Legislative Assembly election results came out. Janata Morcha coalition won 80 seats and formed the government.

18

Prelude to the Emergency (5)

Intensifying opposition

Protests by opposition parties and civil society escalated across the country and also found expression in Delhi.



25 June 1975. Rally at Ramlika Maidan, Delhi

Jayaprakash Narayan held a massive rally at Ramlika Maidan, Delhi, calling for the military and police to disobey "illegal orders" from the government.



19

A dark night in June 1975



25 June 1975, Late Night

President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed signed the Emergency declaration under Article 352, citing "internal disturbance".

Article 352 (i)

Article 352(i) empowered the President to declare a National Emergency if satisfied that the security of India or any part is threatened by war, external aggression, or internal disturbance (later changed to armed rebellion).

20



21

The next morning, 26 June 1975



People wake up to headlines of declaration of Emergency. Announcement on Radio

National Radio broadcast announced the Emergency at 8:00 AM, relaying the news to the people.



22

Emergency in Action Rights Suspended



Suspended Fundamental Rights

The emergency powers mentioned in the constitution, during this time, were further extended to include the phrase "internal disturbance", leading to the suspension of fundamental rights and curtailment of other constitutional guarantees.

Article 14: Right to equality before the law

Article 19: Freedom of speech, expression, assembly, etc.

Article 21: Right to life and personal liberty

Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA)

More than one lakh political activists, journalists, and dissenters arrested.

23

Power supply to major newspaper outlets was cut off

Censorship of content

Once restored, the newspapers were put under heavy censorship and disallowed to publish any news without passing it through government approved censors.

Protests via blank editorials



24

No Habeas, No Hope Courts in Crisis



Forced Sterilization, Climate of Fear



25

Mass sterilization campaign and resettlement drives at Turkman Gate (1976)



Crackdown on Slums in Old Delhi

In April-May 1976, government ordered a crackdown on slums in Old Delhi including Turkman Gate, with mass sterilization campaign and resettlement drives. Bulldozers removed homes, and police forcibly removed residents; local communities resisted but were suppressed.



26

Forced Evictions, Fatal Force



18 April 1976

Police opened fire on residents protesting the demolitions at Turkman Gate. While the government admitted to six deaths, other accounts suggest the toll was higher with independent researchers estimating around 12 fatalities.

Local Media blocked from accessing the location

Local media was blocked from reporting the incident; only foreign outlets like the BBC covered it. A 1976 inquiry found the demolitions politically motivated, and the Shah Commission later called them "illegal" and "callous".

27

Key changes to the Constitution of India made during Emergency period

Introduction of 42nd Amendment Act (1976)

Also termed as "Mini Constitution", it was introduced in Lok Sabha on 1st September 1976 by H.K. Gokhale, the then Law Minister. This act extended Parliament's term from 5 to 6 years.



Directive Principles

It made Directive Principles superior to Fundamental Rights (Article 14 and 19) and added terms "socialist" and "secular" to Preamble.

Deployment of Armed Forces

Article 251A (inserted) allowed the Centre to deploy armed forces in any state for "maintenance of public order".

28

Political Dissent during the period of Emergency

Opposition intensified

Surveillance on political opponents intensified, with restrictions on public meetings and publications. Many opposition leaders were picked up from their homes and sent to jail.

Ban on Protests and Political Activity

Political rallies, strikes, and public gatherings were outlawed, and grassroots workers faced intimidation or imprisonment.



29

Diary of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan



Prison Diary i 1975

July 13

My mood has been a thousand all around me. I am afraid I shall not be in good luck again in my life-time. My life has been a struggle and I am now in the hands of the state.

Solitary Confinement

Jayaprakash Narayan spent 130 days in solitary confinement during the Emergency, with no real human contact apart from guarded medical visits.

Deterioration in Health

His health declined during his extended stay in jail, and he expressed deep despair in his diary.

July 25

Did not feel like writing the last two days. Every night sleep deeper into the walls of Indian democracy is like a nail driven into my heart. I have searched my heart and I can say only one thing.

30

Former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was jailed in Bangalore.

Poetry in jail

He wrote poems frequently while incarcerated at Bangalore Central Jail. His collection of poems highlighting the pain of incarceration and injustice was collectively published under "Kadi Kavein Ki Kundaliyaan".

He also wrote a poem highlighting the one-year anniversary of Emergency

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Post release from jail speaking at Ramlika Maidan

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31

Former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar and political leader Advani Ji also arrested during Emergency



"This gave me peace of mind. It was not possible for me to agree with all that was happening around me. How could one claim that the country's future rested on one single individual? So much of egotism and such selfishness are beyond me."

— Former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar on his arrest

"June 26, 1975, may well prove the last day in the history of Indian democracy as we have understood it. Hope this fear will be proved unfounded."

— L.K. Advani in his diary about emergency



32

George Fernandes and others were arrested on June 10, 1976, in Kolkata and tried in the infamous Baroda Dyanmite case.



"The chains that we wear are symbols of the entire nation which has been chained and fettered."

33

"I will die here slowly, like a forgotten song."
- Snehalata Reddy

Actress Snehalata Reddy (known for Kannada films like "Samskara" and "Chanda Marutha") was arrested on 3 May 1976 and jailed under MISA for refusing to name her associates.

In prison, her health worsened due to neglect, asthma, and harsh conditions—the white, "I will die here slowly, like a forgotten song."

Denied proper treatment, she was finally released on parole in December and died weeks later on 20 January 1977.



34

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, then a young activist, actively participated in the movement (1)



35

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, then a young activist, actively participated in the movement (2)

Organized meetings and distributed literature

Despite peak censorship, he and other volunteers organized meetings and disseminated underground literature. He loaded materials related to the Constitution and the then government's excesses onto trains, ensuring messages reached remote places with less risk of detection.

Wrote articles and reached out to international community

His articles and correspondence were crucial in sustaining the revolt against the Congress government, even as key movement leaders were arrested under the MISA Act. He also reached out internationally, sending underground publications to amplify global resistance.

Adopted disguises

To avoid detection, Narendra Modi adopted various disguises, sometimes as a Swami or a Sikh, effectively evading recognition.

36

Creativity muzzled, Ban on films



During the Emergency, a few voices from the Hindi film industry spoke out publicly against government overreach.

They described facing censorship, arbitrary taxes, and even threats of imprisonment.

Two films were banned

These were perceived as direct or symbolic critiques of the then government and leaders.

37

Underground Movement and the Voices of Resistance



Raj, Laxman in Satyagrah "Barbedwire" - A weekly digest

While the mainstream media, newspapers, and leading names in publishing were put under censor, an underground movement was taking people's voice across the globe.

Many publications had to go underground and were forced to distribute limited editions printed on cyclostyle. Some publications chose to display overt dissent; some chose a satirical route not easily captured by censors.

38

A "classified" protest by journalist Ashok Mahadevan



A classified ad published by Journalist Ashok Mahadevan in Times of India on 28th June 1976, taking a dig at Emergency through clever wordplay which hoodwinked the censors.

The test of the classified

DIOCRACY — D. E. M. beloved husband of T. Ruth, loving father of L. I. Bertie, brother of faith hope, Justice expired on 26 June.

39

Declaration of the end of Emergency on 21 March, 1977. A change of Government followed soon after ...



40

Declaration of Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas

"Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas serves as a reminder of what happens when the Constitution of India was trampled over. It is also a day to pay homage to each and every person who suffered due to the excesses of the Emergency, a dark phase of Indian history."

Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister



41

Post Emergency Revocation : Constitutional reawakening to safeguard democracy

Key Reforms of the 44th Amendment

It restored civil liberties, made Article 21 (life and liberty) non-suspendable even during Emergency, and reduced the Loksabha term from 5 to 5 years.

It also replaced "Internal disturbance" (used vaguely in 1975) with the more specific term "armed rebellion" as a valid ground for declaring a National Emergency under Article 352.

President to act only on written advice of the Cabinet, not the Prime Minister alone, to declare Emergency.

Duration of Emergency to be approved by Parliament within 1 month and renewed every 6 months.

42

Good Governance initiatives promoting inclusion, access and efficiency



Jan Dhan Yojana enabled financial inclusion and Direct Benefit Transfers, MUDRA loans (₹75 lakh crore) supported small entrepreneurs, especially women and rural youth.



Electronic Electoral Photo Identity Card (e-EPIC) Initiatives and platforms to improve digital access.



The Aspirational Districts Programme uses data-driven governance to uplift backward regions. Schemes like JSS Sanjay Mission and Pranchayal Raj strengthen Gram Swaraj by decentralising service delivery.



One Nation, One Election proposed by NITI Aayog aims to reduce electoral fatigue and enhance administrative efficiency.

43

Focus on outcomes and direct citizen-centric initiatives



NITI Aayog's COMF uses performance indicators to track schemes and promote competitive federalism.



Citizen Centric Delivery via Direct Benefit Transfer, ₹88 3.48 lakh crore saved by reducing leakage.

PRAGATI, led by the Prime Minister, integrates grievance redressal and project monitoring, improving responsiveness.

Online grievance portals enable real-time complaint tracking and quicker response from authorities.

44

Government of India has taken various steps to popularize the understanding of the Constitution and Legal Rights

Citizen's Duties Awareness Programme (CDAP)

Reached over 465 million citizens Engaging multiple ministries, states, and judiciary CIO-based digital villages campaign 2,426 sessions across 330 districts reaching 4.84 lakh villagers

DRSH Scheme : Legal Literacy (from 2020)

Focuses on holistic access to justice through webinars and community outreach

So far, reached 2.30 crore beneficiaries till February, 2025

Government of India Act, 1935

Legal Awareness & Outreach Campaign Covered 6,70,000 villages, 4,100 towns 1,623 Legal Mega Camps held benefiting 7.56 million people

Empowerment of Citizens Campaign

Extended reach into prisons and childcare institutions

In 2023-24, 30,043 legal camps organised, impacting 1.146 million citizens

45

More transparency and accountability enforced in electoral processes

Technology Enabled Processes

(VVMs with VVPATs are now used nationwide with mandatory verification of 5 VVPATs per constituency since 2019, ensuring auditability

Webcasting from polling stations, started in 2014, now widely used (Tripura 2018, West Bengal 2024), with 100% coverage planned for Bihar 2025

Mandatory Declaration, Stricter Enforcement

To ensure more electoral transparency criminal records of candidates, are now published. Stricter enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct and social media regulations reduces misinformation and unfair practices



46

Strengthening Democracy: More inclusion of women in electoral process

Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam

Historic Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam passed by the Parliament to ensure greater participation of women in policy making at National and State level

Women and third-gender voter turnout has increased, the women's voter rate rose from 928/1000 (2019) to 948/1000 (2024), with women out voting men in 19 states

The Women's Reservation Bill (2024) ensures 33% seats for women in Parliament and State Assemblies, effective post-delineation in 2029



47

Historic Election and Massive Turnout in Jammu and Kashmir: CELEBRATION OF DEMOCRACY

A record voter turnout, the highest in decades: A powerful reaffirmation of faith in democratic processes Democratic resurgence visible in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections

This turnout, particularly in the Kashmir Valley, reflects how constitutional integration has empowered citizens to participate in shaping their future

Post revocation of Article-370, institutional participation surged especially in the Valley

69.69% voting in Phase-3, percentage of women turnout higher than men



48

India is the Mother of Democracy

Shri Narendra Modi

Hon'ble Prime Minister's address at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly September 25, 2021



"I am representing a country which has the distinction of being named as the 'Mother of Democracy'."

We have had a great tradition of democracy for thousands of years. Our diversity is the hallmark of our strong democracy.

A country that has dozens of languages, hundreds of dialects, different literatures, cuisines. This is the best example of a "Vibrant Democracy"



Ministry of Culture
Government of India

49



#LongLiveDemocracy