

# INDIA'S DEMOCRACY ILLUSION OR REALITY?

By Philip Oldenburg

**For the last sixty years, since it gained independence in 1947, India has claimed the position of the world's largest democracy. For almost as long, skeptics have seen India's democracy as an Indian rope trick,<sup>1</sup> an illusion in which the superstructure of democratic government—a parliament and prime minister, periodic elections, constitutionally-guaranteed freedoms—hides the reality of on-the-ground authoritarian rule by local landlords, bureaucracy, and party bosses, buttressed by a culture of caste-based inequality, and sustained by India's continuing desperate poverty.**

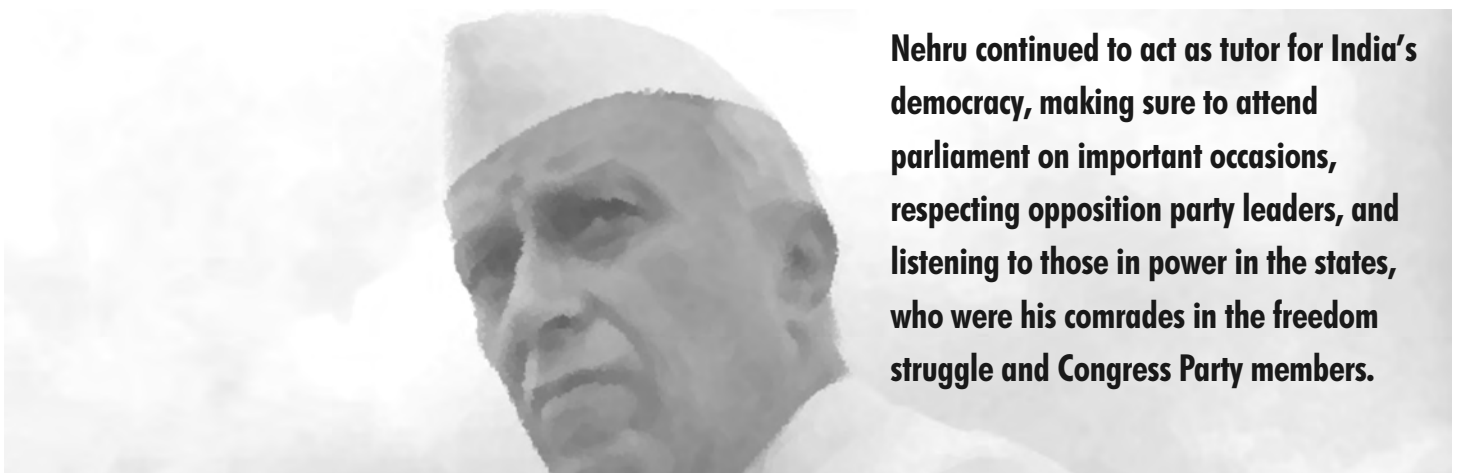
**I**f this is an illusion, it is an impressive one. Within two years of independence, and through open and spirited debate, India produced a constitution that guarantees “fundamental rights,” and a federal and parliamentary system with a significant role for the Supreme Court, which over the years has enhanced its powers in the system through decisions that limit parliamentary sovereignty. From the beginning, there was tolerance of peaceful dissent and a wide range of active political associations. Despite some small-scale Communist-led rebellions, the Communist Party was not banned. There was a vigorous free press.

The 1951–52 elections for national parliament and state legislatures highlighted the bold decision to adopt universal adult suffrage. Despite the high level of illiteracy and low level of education, all men and women twenty-one and older—the age limit has since been lowered to eighteen—had the right to vote. With Jawaharlal Nehru in the lead, the campaign was very lively, with literally thousands of public meetings and processions. There was no doubt that the Congress Party would win the election easily, since it was a mass movement that had brought freedom to the country. It had major responsibility for gov-

erning the country in the five years before the election, but it is significant that Nehru, as Prime Minister, had included important leaders of other parties in the cabinet, including the Law Minister, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the “untouchables,” and S. P. Mookherjee, who later founded the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Even though the Congress won an overwhelming majority of seats in parliament and in every state legislature, it received less than half the vote. Thus, a mandate was given for Congress to rule, and for the opposition to legitimately hold it accountable.

Nehru continued to act as tutor for India's democracy, making sure to attend parliament on important occasions, respecting opposition party leaders, and listening to those in power in the states, who were his comrades in the freedom struggle and Congress Party members. The next two sets of elections (held in 1957 and 1962) followed the same pattern, with the Congress surviving the major political crisis that ended with the reorganization of the states—a substantial redrawing of the map of India based on language. In the 1967 election, however, the Congress met defeat in many major states, bringing opposition coalitions to power. The defeat was one factor that caused a split in

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Jawaharlal Nehru, in New Delhi (1954). Photo illustration by Willa Davis.

Original image source: [http://www.wvnorton.com/college/english/nael/20century/topic\\_1/illustrations/imnehu.htm](http://www.wvnorton.com/college/english/nael/20century/topic_1/illustrations/imnehu.htm).

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the party in 1969. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, adopting a populist electoral appeal, swept aside the other Congress splinter, and in the aftermath of India's successful war against Pakistan in 1971, won victories in states lost in 1967 and in several other mid-term elections. Indira Gandhi's actions seemingly re-established Congress hegemony.

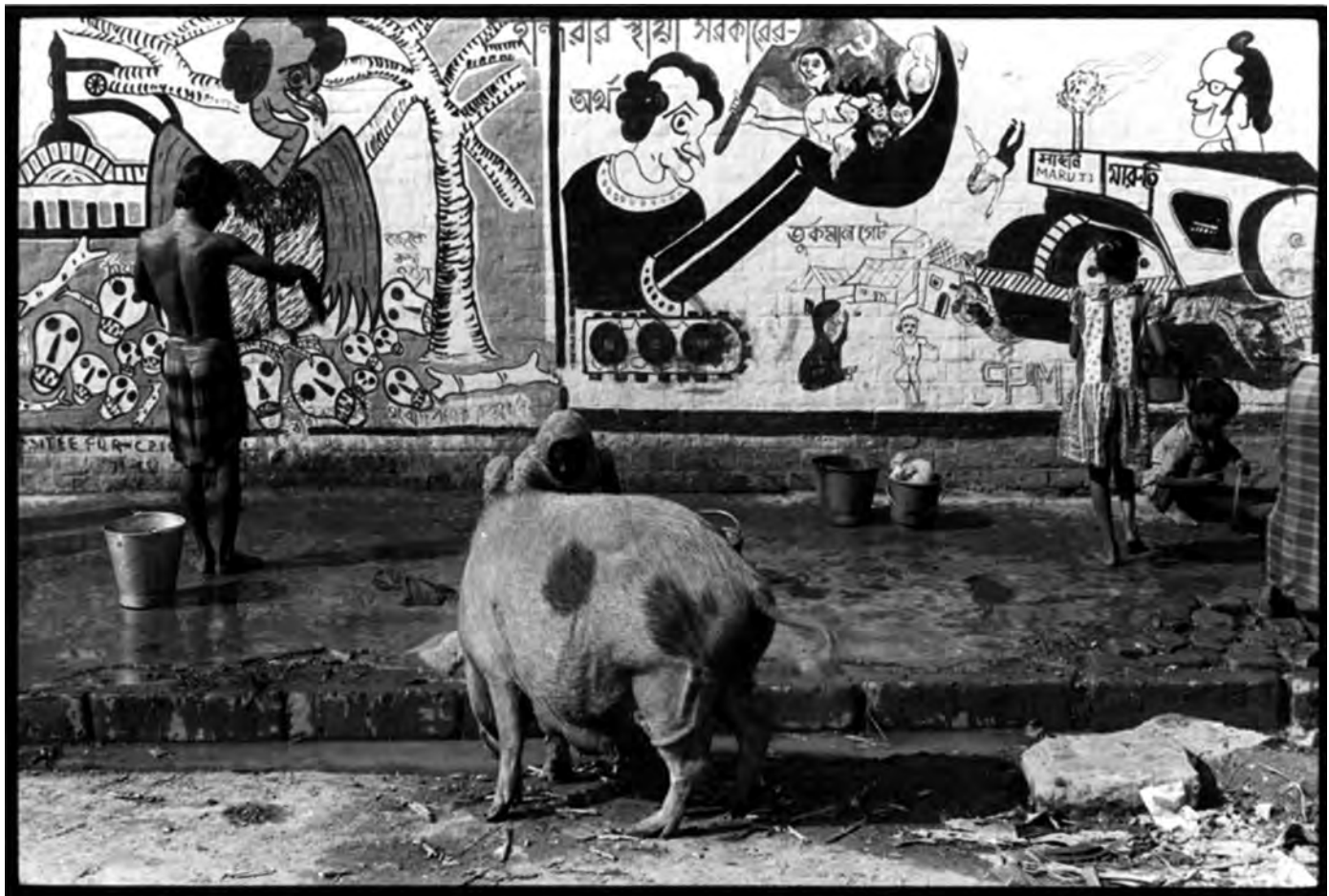
A series of economic and political crises, however, resulted in Mrs. Gandhi, in June 1975, invoking a constitutional provision for declaring a national "Emergency." She jailed opposition leaders, imposed press censorship, and rammed through constitutional amendments to reduce the autonomy of the judiciary and enhance executive powers. Despite very little popular resistance, after a year or so there was considerable disillusionment with the claimed benefits of the Emergency and disquiet with apparent abuses of power. To her everlasting credit, Mrs. Gandhi not only allowed the scheduled election of parliament, but did not interfere with its administration. The election was as free and fair as previous ones, with most opposition leaders freed from jail and the press allowed to function as before.

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thoritarian rule. It is critical to note that Mrs. Gandhi quietly handed over power to the winners, and three years later fought successfully to return to power through democratic means. In the meantime, the constitutional powers of the judiciary had been restored, other changes repealed, and the Congress faced a credible political alternative at both national and state levels. The press rapidly changed into a more active institution, doing investigative reporting and challenging the government in ways it hadn't before the Emergency.

In the four decades since 1977, India's democracy has weathered other crises—the separatist movements in Punjab and the northeast states, for example—without returning to authoritarian rule. Regular elections have been held, and there has been peaceful alternation of power between parties or coalitions six times at the national level and countless times in the states.<sup>2</sup> A free press has become a largely free media, as the government has diluted its monopoly of TV (although it still holds complete control of the radio broadcast system), and information flows freely from abroad, as it has always done. Political parties and non-governmental organizations, ranging from local social action groups to country-wide issue-oriented movements (on the environment, for instance) continue to grow in importance. Individual freedoms of speech, association, and assembly are largely unconstrained.

Currently, the political landscape continues to feature a national parliament that meets regularly, debates openly, but in many ways is fairly weak as a legislative body. Now, twenty-eight states also have regularly elected and functioning legislatures, chief ministers, and cab-



Children, a man, and a woman on the sidewalk in front of a CPI(M) mural (Communist Party India Marxist). A large pig stands in the street. Calcutta, India, 1979 or 1980. William Gedney Photographs and Writings. Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/gedney/>.

## 2004 All-India Vote Percentages for Major Political Formations, by Class

	UPA	Congress	Congress Allies	NDA	BJP	BJP Allies	Left	BSP	SP	N
Upper middle	<b>33</b>	26	7	<b>42</b>	31	12	7	3	4	3,630
Lower middle	<b>36</b>	28	8	<b>38</b>	25	13	8	4	4	4,334
Poor	<b>38</b>	27	11	<b>36</b>	22	14	7	5	6	7,783
Very poor	<b>38</b>	25	13	<b>31</b>	16	15	9	8	5	6,803
Total	<b>36</b>	26	10	<b>36</b>	22	14	8	5	5	22,550

Note: 1. "UPA" United Progressive Alliance, "NDA" National Democratic Alliance, "SP" Samajwadi Party, "N" number of survey respondents.

Source: Yogendra Yadav, "The Elusive Mandate of 2004," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39, 51 (December 18, 2004), 5394.

Chart Source: The Institute of Developing Economies, Discussion Paper No. 98, March 2007, by Norio Kondo, Director, South Asia Study Group, Area Studies Center, IDE.

ments that make policies in crucial areas mainly reserved for the states, such as law and order, education, health, and economic development. Originally, local government institutions were creatures of state government. However, local government has found a place in the constitution, with required periodic elections and a mandate for substantial transfer of resources for development purposes. Elections throughout India have produced literally millions of newly elected representatives, one-third of them women. For the most part, however, substantial financial resources have not been provided to those institutions.

A judicial system at the upper levels—the High Courts of the states and the Supreme Court in Delhi—is respected for administration of justice, though burdened by widespread inefficiency. Some cases take literally decades to decide. There is corruption at the lowest levels.

The players in the system have changed dramatically over the last sixty years. At present, in national elections, the Congress Party gets around a quarter of the vote, as does the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Parties powerful in only one state split the rest of the vote. There are hundreds of small parties and thousands of independent candidates, very few of whom win any seats.

Over time, more and more states have developed two-party systems, many of which have in fact two coalitions, but they are not necessarily the same two parties (or coalitions) that are competing. The Congress remains a force in almost all states, but the BJP's strength is confined mostly to northern and western states. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has won every election in West Bengal since 1977, and in Tamil Nadu, the two major contestants are the two Tamil nationalist parties, the DMK and the AIADMK. Other major parties include the Socialist Party and the BSP—the party whose core is the people once considered outside and beneath the Hindu castes (the Untouchables), many of whom now use the term "dalit" (oppressed)—in Uttar Pradesh; the Akali Dal (party of the Sikhs) in Punjab; the cultural nationalist TDP in Andhra Pradesh; and the RJD (a middle-caste based party) in Bihar.

A pattern of instability in state governments after the 1967 election lasted about two decades. Now, it is not exceptional for state governments to last a full five-year term, and recently several have won re-election. This stability has helped state governments to become more active and effective promoters of programs in education and economic development; they now play the central government for resources rather than being manipulated, as in the past when their local

political footing was less sure. Some instability associated with coalitions surfaced in Delhi after the 1989 election, when a coalition called the "Third Force" (i.e., neither Congress-led nor BJP-led) took power, but soon had to be rearranged. The same thing happened in 1996–98. The BJP-led coalition that won in 1998 came apart, but a new version won in 1999 and served a full term. The Congress-led coalition that won narrowly in 2004 has managed to stay together.

In sum, India appears to have a democracy that functions according to the rules. The country handles external and internal crises well, while accommodating new political leaders, movements, and patterns of political rule and opposition. The ordinary citizen has not been left out: turnout in elections has risen to a present-day figure of about fifty-five to sixty percent of eligible voters, and the percentage of women, people designated "tribal," and other marginal groups has almost reached that of the population as a whole. Turnout percentages of poor and rural voters are significantly higher than the average Indian turnout.

Indian citizens show strong support for democracy. In the 2007 *State of Democracy in South Asia* report, ninety-two percent of a large survey sample believe democracy to be suitable for India; "strong democrats" outweigh "non-democrats" by forty-one to fifteen percent (with forty-three percent as "weak democrats").<sup>3</sup> In Yogendra Yadav's summation: "The idea of democracy has, above all, come to supply the only valid criterion for claims to legitimate rule and, correspondingly, the moral basis of political obligation."<sup>4</sup>

If this is all not an illusion, and India is indeed democratic, then it stands as a mammoth exception that tests our understanding of what makes countries democratic. India has features that most believe make democracy impossible. Although its economic growth in recent years has been high, India remains a very poor country with a per capita income well below the threshold that seemingly demarcates democracies from dictatorships.<sup>5</sup> It has a bewildering number of ethnic communities, separated by language, religion, and caste, with occasionally alarming incidents of inter-community violence.<sup>6</sup> Caste remains a major feature of the social and political landscape with its religiously-sanctioned inequality. India is usually ranked among the world's worst countries when it comes to the prevalence of corruption.<sup>7</sup> The military is strictly under civilian control, and, historically, has never been a threat to stage a coup. However, the military has been

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given power for significant periods and allowed to ignore normal legal processes in certain parts of the country, such as the northeastern border states, Punjab from 1984 to 1992, and Kashmir since 1989. Finally, it has a bureaucracy inherited from colonial rule that—in practice and in the attitudes of its officials—is often capricious, authoritarian, and almost impossible to hold accountable.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly, there are also flaws, perhaps fatal flaws, in India's democracy. Are those many elections truly free and fair, given that in each election there are reports of intimidation, forcible occupation of polling stations, and other irregularities? With literacy and significant education still at very low levels, how can citizens cast their votes effectively? Do programs and policies change meaningfully when new parties come to power? Doesn't the weakness of the rule of law at the lowest level encourage criminalization of politics and increase the difficulty of bringing corrupt officials to justice? Are there not powerful landowning and other classes that dominate and control politics in Delhi, state capitals, and local arenas?

Let us sketch responses to these questions and link them, in general, to underlying anti-democratic features. To begin, let us consider the integrity of elections. An autonomous Election Commission, one of the most respected institutions in the country, conducts elections and its record has been remarkably good. The electoral registers the Commission compiles can be quite inaccurate, and may contain many names of those who have died or moved; other names are missing. However, political parties and ordinary citizens have ready access to the rolls and are able to challenge or add names. Currently the rolls are being computerized, and anyone with an Internet connection can check them. The Election Commission has a code of conduct for election campaigns that regulates the hours of public meetings, requires financial and criminal record disclosure by candidates, recognizes parties and assigns them symbols, and attempts to regulate expenditures. Although expenditure rules are routinely flouted, it is not clear that this affects the outcome. Early on, money to buy votes for particular leaders flowed quite freely, but as voters gained confidence that the ballot was truly secret, vote-buying produced unreliable results and became less important.

On polling days, the Election Commission has full authority to mobilize government employees, such as teachers and security forces, to conduct the election. Most elections have violent incidents, including murdering candidates and ballot box stuffing. These occurrences have declined in recent years, however, as security has tightened; polling is on multiple days for up to a month. In cases where an election has been "countermanded," a fresh poll is held weeks later, with additional security—and invariably there is no further problem. Vote fraud still exists in a few areas, but even then affects only a small percent of the vote total. All voting is on Indian-designed and Indian-manufactured electronic machines. This has accelerated the vote count results, but even before these technological advances, elaborate pro-



Man and dog sleeping under a 1980 election-time wall poster of the CPI(M).

*William Gedney Photographs and Writings. Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/gedney/>.*

cedures were in place to make sure ballot boxes were secure and votes counted fairly.

Uncontested elections are rare at national and state levels. The range in ideology, policy, and social base of the winning parties is quite large. Communists have ruled West Bengal for thirty years, and in Kerala, a Communist-led coalition has alternated with a Congress-led coalition for almost as long. There are parties with cultural nationalist agendas, religious parties, and parties centered on particular castes that have ruled solely, or in coalition, in many states and in Delhi.

Election campaigns are wide open and thoroughly reported in the press. Spirited discussions also occur on TV. Face-to-face contact of candidates with voters remains at the heart of the campaign, however, with countless speeches and snippets of discussions during the three-week, eighteen-hour day sprint to polling day. This lessens the significance of education. Male voters with little or no schooling are practiced in judging what a candidate says and remembering it. As a rule, women do not attend meetings or hear speeches, and if uneducated, they have more difficulty than peer males understanding issues. Still, considerable empirical evidence exists that regardless of gender, most people no longer vote according to the dictates of husbands, or caste leaders, or even those with economic power over them. The secret ballot makes an enormous difference.

People appear to act rationally when they vote—not wasting their vote on candidates who have no chance of winning. They frequently throw out incumbents (about fifty percent), and usually disregard boasts of accomplishments and promises of good things to come, such as roads, electricity, or fertilizer supply. Local issues count more than national issues, except in extraordinary elections like 1977. The poor value the vote as one of the very few ways they can exercise even the smallest amount of power. Typically, they are utterly dependent on their landlord or their boss in a shop, with no recourse to laws, or even public opinion, if they are made to work long hours without decent pay, let alone other benefits; they are often beaten. They have no influence when it comes to getting proper health care or other government benefits. But with the assurance of a secret ballot and usually an uncertainty about who is leading, they find rich and powerful candidates begging for their vote.

There are, of course, large numbers of poor people who vote, and in India, the voter turnout of the poor is now higher than that of the non-poor. The contrast becomes most clear when the very poor are compared to the very rich, or illiterates to college graduates. The reverse is true in developed countries, including the US.<sup>9</sup> And they get results. The most recent example is the party that won the 2007 state assembly election in the giant state of Uttar Pradesh (185 million inhabitants), which is led by an ex-untouchable woman named Mayawati, who captured a majority of the seats—mainly with the votes of the poor.<sup>10</sup>

India's society is socially fragmented to a high degree. For example, even if we ignore the fact that Hindi, the national language, composed of mutually unintelligible dialects (in addition to literary and film dialogue forms), is spoken by a minority of Indians. In any given electoral constituency, with a few exceptions, no community, whether caste or religious, has a majority, so cross-caste, and often cross-religion alliances must be created to win. Some of these alliances are horizontal, with middle-level farmers uniting, while others are vertical, between landlord groups and their farm workers, for example. Caste and religious groups, especially in local arenas, are often divided into factions, which can further complicate support. In some villages, and even in larger areas, powerful men organize followers into armed gangs to intimidate the lower classes. In some areas (mainly in the tribal belt of east-central India), these oppressed people have been organized to resist by workers of a coalition of revolutionary parties. In most of India, however, politics of all kinds—including democratic electoral politics—is more a matter of shifting alliances, countervailing groups, and leader-follower relationships based on the personal characteristics of the leader.

Efforts to create class-like movements on a broader level—farmers' movements, for example—have been unsuccessful, and the caste associations that became prominent in the early years of independence have faded from the scene. In no state, much less at the national level, are there institutions that pull together even economic interest groups for effective political action. There are multiple and competing business associations, and Communist, Congress, and BJP parties mainly control trade unions through affiliating federations. Feminist, environmental, and other social movements have some impact on politics,

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Tribal women casting their vote in Andhra Pradesh.  
Source: *India Perspectives*, July 2004, a publication of the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.

using such tools as demonstrations and litigation, but they usually steer clear of electoral politics. The rich, and even the urban middle classes, manage to advance and protect their interests in large measure through networks of kinship and common institutions, such as schools and colleges, social clubs, and professional associations. This form of interest-group politics by well-positioned groups is typical of not only India, but of all democracies.

Corruption in the court and criminal justice systems most certainly distorts the rule of law and the implementation of government programs. Although many politicians have criminal cases pending against them, very few have been convicted and almost none have exhausted their appeals. The serious “mafias” (the word is used in India) that are involved in smuggling, illicit drugs, alcohol, and other protection or extortion rackets and that control politicians, exist in relatively few cities. In certain government departments, corruption is endemic—contractors and others pay bribes shared by officials and politicians who control their transfers and promotions. That said, the national-scale or even state-level corruption in which *policies* are bought and sold is rare.

Democracy in India is not a façade behind which one finds dominant classes or other societal institutions that exercise power. India is not very different from other democracies in the extent to which the bureaucracy governs without much day-to-day accountability. Colonial rule was built on a very small, elite corps of administrators whose task was primarily to maintain order. When independence came, those who did not quit were allowed to continue, but they had to prove their loyalty to the new political order, and to the leaders they had put in jail just a few years before. At the same time, the tasks of government expanded enormously, as the promises in education, health care, and,

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The photo caption: A MAMMOTH TASK: An election official climbing onto an elephant on his way to duty at Nartap in the Guwahati constituency on the Assam-Maghalaya border. Elephants, horses and country boats are being used for carrying the electronic voting machines and other material to the remote areas of Assam. Election is being held for six Lok Sabha seats in the first phase on Tuesday in the northeastern State.

—Photo: Ritu Raj Konwar. Source: *The Hindu*, April 20, 2004

most of all, economic development, required a much-enhanced bureaucratic apparatus. Unlike many Third World countries, the balance of power between elected politicians and bureaucrats in India favored the politicians, and that advantage has not been lost.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to most post-colonial countries—Pakistan presents a particularly vivid comparison—India’s military has been kept firmly under civilian and political control. Because the military also needed to demonstrate their loyalty to the new political leaders, when fighting erupted with Pakistan in Kashmir at independence, and a border dispute with China in 1962 ended in war, the military had an important national security mission, which it had been taught, in the British tradition, would be undermined by involvement in politics. The Indian government also was aware of the need to keep the military budget firmly under civilian control. Coups in many Third World countries have been associated with armies controlled by particular, often minority ethnic communities. Although Punjabis, particularly Sikhs, were disproportionately represented in the army at independence, they were still a small minority, which was further diluted as the navy and air force expanded.

Most important, though, was the success of the Indian democratic system in resolving crises involving states with different languages and cultures, and dealing with the economic crisis of the mid-1960s. The army faced insurgencies in peripheral states, but never had to deal with a law and order problem the government could not handle. Each time the military was *not* called upon for domestic purposes—notably not even during the Emergency—the less likely the chance of subsequent intervention.

The absence of a military coup, or even the threat of one, is one explanation for why India remains a democracy. It is less clear why India has maintained a democracy while remaining below the theoretical threshold of development that many political scientists see as crucial for sustained democracy. Using quantitative data, scholars have shown that almost all countries at the lowest level of development are autocracies, and almost all countries at the highest level of development are democ-

racies. Development that breaches the threshold does not necessarily produce democracy. However, when a high development country becomes democratic, it nearly always sustains its democracy.

Charles Boix and Susan Stokes make a persuasive argument that “democracy is caused not by income [the measure of development] per se but by other changes that accompany development, in particular, income equality.”<sup>12</sup> As India has developed, its inequality has increased only slightly and remains at the comparatively low figure, as measured by a Gini coefficient of consumption, of 30.5 in 2004–05.<sup>13</sup> Smaller Gini coefficients indicate greater equality of income and wealth distribution. Significantly, in the countryside, the small farmers have increased in number and in percent of landholdings at the expense of marginal farmers and large landowners. In urban India, the middle class has expanded at the most rapid rate, especially in recent years. India is exceptional in this as well: for example, the Gini indexes of Nigeria, China, and Brazil, are, respectively, thirty-four percent, thirty-seven percent, and seventy-eight percent larger than India’s, which indicates substantially greater inequality.<sup>14</sup> It is quite possible that India’s democracy helps explain the difference. When the poor can vote effectively, government is more likely to ensure that they get a more substantial share of the benefits of development.

The income equality argument does not sufficiently explain why India was able to build a democracy when others failed. The best probable explanation of why India is democratic today is that it had a functioning democracy yesterday. Particularly for a country like India that is struggling to develop and manage huge societal and cultural change at the same time, the success of democracy builds on its ability to solve those problems, as demonstrated by its earlier successes.<sup>15</sup> The 1977 election, or possibly the first half of 1980, when Sanjay Gandhi seemed to be leading the Congress Party towards a more authoritarian program, marked crucial “roads not taken” moments. Before then, although democratic institutions had been established and worked effectively, there was a good chance democracy would break down.<sup>16</sup>

Nehru's personal role in setting India firmly on a democratic path has been noted, but Nehru himself got his opportunity from being the "first among equals" in the Congress movement that transformed itself into a party of governance. That nationalist movement is unique in the colonial era for its longevity, the depth and breadth of its roots in the populace, and the general extent to which it was internally democratic. Founded in 1885, for thirty-five years the Congress was essentially an annual gathering of the elite of India's educated class who had petitioned the British to grant rights to their citizens in India. As the British resisted change, the Congress debated among themselves and demanded rights from the Raj. Then Gandhi transformed the Congress into a mass movement with a permanent governing body and a revolutionary constitution. He then led movements of civil disobedience in the early 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Each of these drew in larger and larger numbers of followers. The new Congress organization ensured that they were represented in the highest councils by leaders with local support, as well as by Gandhian or other nationalist credentials. As a movement for independence, the Congress was inclusive and included rich and poor, socialists, and Hindu nationalists. Only those who rejected nonviolence were excluded. Gandhi's respect for the rule of law was such that while he claimed to be the judge of which laws he would follow, he insisted that he be condemned in court for breaking those laws. Although Gandhi and his trusted lieutenants effectively ran the Congress from above, the annual sessions and the debates on policies were exercises in free speech.

The second leadership generational transfer brought Jawaharlal Nehru in, with Gandhi's support, even though Nehru's views on socialism and modernist development contradicted Gandhi's own ideas favoring village-level economic self-sufficiency and the belief that the rich should hold property as "trustees" for the poor. Over generations, the Congress developed a style of leadership and internal functioning that fit well with democracy. It developed momentum derived from effective action with an unrivalled network of support that reached minorities, women, and the rural poor. These political attributes served India well when independence came in 1947.

If India had not begun with that precious inheritance, it is doubtful that its democracy would be the reality it is today. That reality is clear in the unwavering commitment to democratic practices, especially in elections, and in the effective control of the military and bureaucrats. With the exception of the Emergency of 1975–77, the crises in the federal system, the ethnic and revolutionary insurgencies, and wars with India's neighbors have been handled without damaging the democratic system, although the government has been responsible for severe violations of civil rights in the localities concerned, some of them quite substantial states, like Punjab and Kashmir.

As in all democracies, groups and some individuals wield a very wide range of power vis-à-vis government, but even at the local level there are only a few places where landlords or dominant castes can consistently get their way. In state and national government, it is the political party system that shapes most policy—not big business, or external powers, or a religious institution. In recent decades, there has been an impressive mobilization of the poor and previously marginalized groups, including the lower castes and women, which has been reflected in voting, in participation in local government, and in the leadership that has come to power. If India continues to grow economically at a rapid pace, the final foundation piece for a stable democracy will soon be put in place. ■

## NOTES

1. See Lee Siegel, *Net of Magic: Wonders and Deceptions in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) for a discussion of the magicians' "rope trick."
2. Not counting the rearrangement of coalitions in 1990 and 1997, and with a fresh election in 1999.
3. In Pakistan "non-democrats" (forty-one percent) outweigh "strong democrats" (ten percent), with "weak democrats" at forty-nine percent.
4. Yogendra Yadav, "Politics," in Marshall Bouton and Philip Oldenburg, eds., *India Briefing: A Transformative Fifty Years* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 31.
5. See: Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, "Cultural and Economic Prerequisites of Democracy: Reassessing Recent Evidence," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 39, 4 (Winter 2005), 87–106.
6. See: D. L. Sheth, "Society," in Marshall Bouton and Philip Oldenburg, eds., *India Briefing: A Transformative Fifty Years* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).
7. See: Transparency International India, *India Corruption Study 2005: To Improve Governance*, <http://www.cmsindia.org/cms/events/corruption.pdf>, (accessed July 7, 2007).
8. See Myron Weiner, *The Child and the State in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
9. See the Wikipedia entry on "voter turnout" (accessed September 20, 2007): "In developed countries, non-voters tend to be concentrated in particular demographic and socioeconomic groups, especially the young and the poor. However, in India, which boasts an electorate of more than 670 million people, the opposite is true. The poor, who comprise the majority of the demographic, are more likely to vote than the rich and the middle classes." For representative India data, see the important chapter by Yogendra Yadav, "Understanding the Second Upsurge: Trends of Bahujan ['majority'] participation in electoral politics in the 1990s," (Francine R. Frankel et al., eds., *Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 120–145.
10. See Yogendra Yadav and Sanjay Kumar, "Poor Man's Rainbow over U.P.," *Indian Express* (online edition), May 18, 2007; the data show that forty-one percent of the poor, and only fifteen percent of the rich, voted for the Bahujan Samaj Party.
11. For an important argument on this issue, see Fred W. Riggs, "Bureaucrats and Political Development: A Paradoxical View," in Joseph LaPalombara, ed., *Bureaucracy and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 120–167.
12. Carles Boix and Susan Carol Stokes, "Endogenous Democratization," *World Politics* 55, 4 (July 2003), 540.
13. See Surjit S. Bhalla, "Misconceived Ideas—Income Inequality," *Business Standard* (New Delhi), July 7, 2007, <http://www.business-standard.com/economy/story-page.php?tab=r&autono=290320&subLeft=3&leftnm=3> (accessed July 7, 2007).
14. UNDP, *Human Development Report 2006*, Table 15, <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/pdfs/report/HDR06-complete.pdf> (accessed July 7, 2007). The report does not note precisely what the Gini index is measuring (income, consumption, wealth?).
15. See Atul Kohli, ed., *The Success of India's Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
16. For the general analysis of democratic breakdowns (and "reequilibration," which is what happened in India in 1977), see Juan J. Linz, *Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). For a pessimistic view of the survival of India's democracy even after 1977, see Ainslie Embree, "The Emergency as a Signpost to India's Future," in Peter Lyon and James Manor, eds., *Transfer and Transformation: Political Institutions in the New Commonwealth* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983), 59–67.

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