Challenges and Possibilities of Substantive Democracy in India: A Critical Engagement through the ADI Framework

NAVEEN CHANDER, BONOJIT HUSSAIN

Democracy as it Exists in India

We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognises liberty, equality, and fraternity as the principles of life…on the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics, we will be recognising the principle of one man-one vote and one vote-one value. In our social and economic life, we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man-one value - Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar[1]

As compared to those countries and people who have gone through a long period under authoritarian rule (in varying conditions and degrees), if we look at the history of India over the last six decades, we might well observe it to be one of the world's most robust democracies. This can be said for the following reasons:

a) It is based on a constitution that ensures various rights to its citizens against the State and requires a rigorous procedure for any amendments, thereby safeguarding the basic philosophy that

Naveen Chander and Bonojit Hussain are independent researchers based in Delhi. They are affiliated with New Socialist Initiative.

underlies it, which gives individuals a great degree of priority over communities;

b) It is a sustained stable polity without much ruptures, except for two years of State-imposed Emergency[2] in the middle of 1970s, to which the masses responded with clear disapproval, leading to the emergence of the first non-Indian National Congress (henceforth Congress party), which is led by government at the central level;

c) An astonishingly vibrant and deeply institutionalized formal/procedural representative democracy with regular elections in which the poorer sections of the society exercise their franchise overwhelmingly;

d) The demise of what is theorized as "one party dominance" or the "Congress system"[3] in the 1970s and the 1980s, which has definitely given rise to a spectrum of political parties, from extreme right wing to extreme left wing. Simultaneous with this de-monopolization in the institutional political sphere is the growth of mass/social movements all over the country of peasants, workers, Dalits,[4] tribals, et cetera. In other words, a relatively expanded scope of what is termed as "civil society" has also been a visible phenomenon in India. A good illustration of this can be seen in the influences exerted by various civil society formations, in the last two decades, in pushing for many progressive laws like the National Rural Employment Guarantees Act, the Right to Information Act, the Forest Rights Acts, the Right to Education Act, et cetera; and

e) A judicial apparatus that has played a significant role at times to put the government of the day in check. The higher judiciary enjoys the good faith of a large section of citizens and is perceived to be one of the most independent state institutions. However, the same cannot be said of the lower judiciary which is often perceived to be incompetent, biased and "hand in glove" with the political class.

While all these points are not mere assertions, there is a flip side to them, almost a paradox. As democracy "matures" further in India, a fairly

large section of people have shown resilience toward democratic form of rule, and at the same time there are expressed doubts about the credibility of political parties and leaders. In other words, while there is confidence in democracy in general, there is also deep distrust for political parties that are important constituent of democratic process.

Another paradox is the existence and increase in mass poverty, which exists in parallel with mass democracy. It is clear that democracy has been institutionalized along with poverty and deprivation, and successive governments have hardly addressed the issue of poverty and expanding inequality. On one hand, the elite and the privileged perceive democratic processes as an obstacle to the fast growth of the economy, which is reflected in their abysmal participation in electoral processes. On the other hand, the underprivileged who overwhelmingly participate in electoral processes are constantly pushed to vulnerable positions through various "democratically"-instituted State policies.

This further marginalization of the underprivileged has been the case in India for a long time, but has become starkly evident after the neoliberal restructuring of the economy since the early 1990s. Significantly, this process could be initiated only with the overwhelming consent of big capital within India (Kohli 2004). The alliance forged in this period between the Indian State and capital with global capital has, in turn, unleashed processes resulting in further marginalization of poor and working people, rising inequalities, et cetera. In brief, we are witness to, on the one hand, a process of accumulation by dispossession or primitive accumulation led by the State on behalf of primarily private capital, and on the other hand, a crumbling of the democratic institutions under the pressure of this process.

One of the most important paradoxes of democracy in India and in many other transitional democracies is that the State, which is supposed to be the custodian of democracy, is constituted democratically but does not serve the democratic interests (Sinha 2012). In authoritarian regimes, we see a powerful repressive state that often liquidates the political opposition, while in formal democracies as in countries like India, a large number of citizens are pushed to immense vulnerabilities through various State-led policies.

In many parts of India, ranging from large parts of the North East to Kashmir[5] and extended now to the mineral rich tribal belt of Central India, State violence under democratic rule is now part of everyday life. Such violence backed by extra-constitutional laws like the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) in these areas, and through the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002 (POTA) and the Unlawful Act Activities Act of

1967 (amended in 2008) in many other parts of the country, becomes a systematic targeting of sections of the population that largely belong to:

a) the religious minority community of Muslims who are systematically stigmatized by the Hindu-nationalist right wing as the biggest threat to the integrity of Indian nation;

b) "other" ("Mongoloid") races who do not fit into the dominant "Aryan" narrative of "mainstream" India and had contested the territorial boundary of Indian nation; and

c) the adivasis[6] in the mineral-rich forest areas of Central India.

These groups face Indian democracy in very different manners and degrees. As Jairus Banaji (2013) argues, the State "violates its own constitution and does so repeatedly and is probably the biggest violator of the constitution of this country. The State which is supposed to be the guarantor and upholder of the constitution is the biggest violator of the constitution; it's a paradox." The political theories about "democratic waves" hardly manages to grasp or contemplate these extraordinary paradoxes that continuously haunt the claims of India being the largest democracy in the world.

How Do We Approach Indian Democracy?

Democracy as a term, concept, political system, ideology, and history can mean many things in different times and spaces. Historical specificities are as important as the universalizing tendencies in a social phenomenon like democracy. The analytical task at hand is to understand and capture the reality that exists in all its specificities and also its commonness due to various historical processes. This can help us understand why democracy appears differently in most of the world today. To turn it around one can also look at the specific roots of authoritarian regimes. This approach makes us cautious toward the fact that the differences in behavior of democratic countries toward the constitution of demos/"the people" need not be understood in the frame of a normative hegemonic idea.

According to Kaviraj (2011, 9-10), Indian democracy "is peculiar in the sense in which every democracy is peculiar. British democracy shows the peculiarity of never undergoing a revolutionary rupture in its political traditions. French democracy is peculiar in the sense of emerging from a revolution. German democracy is peculiar in the sense that it has to deal

with and resolve its relationship with a long and powerful tradition of authoritarianism. Democracy in Islamic societies has had to deal with the peculiar structures and intellectual legacies of the Islamic tradition." Indian democracy can thus be seen to be peculiar and different in that it emerges as an ideological impulse against colonialism represented by a social force that was internally divided on many axes including caste and religion; it inherited the political structures—not the Constitution—from its colonizers, whereas various aspects of the Constitution were influenced by the various democratic forms known and existing during that time. Of course, all of these aspects were adopted to provide a better Constitution and were argued to be best suited for the Indian condition and to help create a desirable democratic form of state and political system.[7]

The social organization of quotidian life in India is based on very meticulous social engineering structured around the caste system. For a long time, the social ideology of the caste system prevented the conception of an autonomous individual self. So much was the power of this deeply rooted brahmanical ideology that it was kept alive over the centuries across various politico-economic regimes, with all forms of governance sustaining, if not incorporating it. It continues even after the untouchable castes converted to other religions like Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, et cetera. The deep entrenchment of the caste system is evident when we note that until the twentieth century there is hardly a parallel governance system for society. In this sense, when the idea of democracy came with a strong upper caste-dominated nationalist movement, a section of radical Dalit leaders not only praised colonial rule but appreciated its existence, since for them it was the only time in history that laws against caste-mandated social oppression came from the ruler's initiative. They intended to find allegiance and associate with the modern ideas that were brought into Indian society by the British.

If we were to write a script of democracy in India, we would be faced with these many dimensions: that its legal institutional superstructure is inherited from colonialism; its Constitution is influenced by modern democracies from various parts of the world; no existence of any standard precondition that could be understood as central for any possibility of establishing democracy; it confronts a society and culture in which social governance is deeply embedded in a caste system that has survived until today; and while democracy as a desirable form of rule is accepted by and large by the Indian masses, and the kind of democracy that got consolidated has done well on reduction of social inequalities, it has come with the heavy cost of the silencing of the discourse on economic equality. In

fact, the word "equality" has virtually disappeared from public discourse and has been replaced by the language of "growth."

A standard liberal approach would ask why economic equality is necessary to define whether India has become more democratic or not in the last sixty years. In fact, economic equality is not a variable under liberal idea of democracy. With the increasing pressure of global capitalist needs and the corresponding policy orientation of Indian State towards neoliberal restructuring in last two decades, the State has gradually withdrawn from its agenda of welfare and responsibility to provide opportunities to the underprivileged. Massive privatization of basic services, such as health and education, which previously, to some extent, were provided by the State, has accelerated the process of intensifying inequalities. This has been coupled with the phenomenon of an average of 7 to 9 percent sustained growth.

Two narratives of Indian democracy are then very apparent:

a) The oppressive social structures of caste is challenged and undermined significantly through the formal-institutional logic of the Indian State and by the power of democratic politics,

b) But on the other hand democracy cannot provide an opposition and resistance to the massive inequalities generated by capitalist development. In fact, it can be safely be argued with help of various data that over the years, inequalities have increased by manifold. With the process of dispossession or primitive accumulation, the processes of producing inequalities have become more violent, which has serious consequences for democracy in general. Thus, ours is not only a historical moment which not only has sufficient potential to subvert the democratization process, but it can also seriously alter the concept of democracy as possibly the best form of rule for the propertied classes.

Many political theorists will not include inequality as a multi-layered category that encompasses political, economic, and social aspects. When they assess the development of democracy, they use a narrow meaning of the term "social." In the Indian case, the social implies, for example, the increasing participation of the masses in the electoral process and the social groups that were marginalized in the pre-democratic era, groups that became a significant political force through electoral democracy.

A cursory overview of Indian politics makes it clear that the Congress party that had emerged as the main political force in the anti-colonial

movement and had became the lone mass party by 1920s unambiguously declined by late 1980s. The political and ideological monopoly of the Congress party first got shaken in 1967 by the alliance between socialists and Jan Sangh, the precursor of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is currently the largest Hindu nationalist political party. Then, starting from the post-Emergency general elections, this trend finally consolidated in 1989 with the transformation of "backward" groups into various political parties. Although since the last two general elections the Congress party has been leading the government, it could only do so in alliance with a number of smaller regional parties. The political space, created by the decline of the Congress party, has been filled up by many political forces, but the emergence of three formations is very clear (apart from the emergence of many social movements, and the far Left,[8] in some regions that are economically very poor and populated by people belonging to Scheduled Tribes).

The first and most significant formation which is of concern for the future of democracy in India is the Hindu nationalist political forces and party. The second political force that emerged in the late 1960s and got consolidated in late 1980s are known as the parties that represent the "backward classes." The third force, though very regional in nature yet very powerful in the electoral and democratic sense, is the party of Dalits/Scheduled Castes in India. A number of other political parties that have emerged in many parts of the country can be clubbed together under the rubric of regional parties. We have not mentioned the parliamentary Left, which is also a significant force in the democratic politics because they can trace their existence from before the decline of the Congress party. There are in fact hundreds of parties, including the parliamentary and far Left, but they have not gained much from the decline of the Congress party. An increase in their numbers can be explained by their ability to consolidate the marginal sections of Indian society, which were not under the overall fold of the Congress party and BJP. Social movements too have emerged as important actors, but they are hardly present in the electoral process. They are part of what is termed as "non-party political process in India."[9]

What we have mentioned above specifically in reference to caste and Indian democracy largely captures the reality of the Northern Indian political landscape. But, for various reasons, the interaction between caste and democracy in post-independent India has given rise to a very different kind of reality in most of Southern India. If we were to compare the disintegration, to use the ADI framework (CADI 2012), of the "monopoly complex" and transformation in the existing power relations

therein, Southern India will score very differently on the ADI's liberalization and equalization measures of democratization than Northern India. One of the reasons for this has do with the South's history of massive anti-caste mass movements since the early decades of twentieth century. Ashutosh Varshney (2000) observes that the entirety of Southern India, more and less by 1960s, had gone through a lower caste revolution. The "Self Respect Movement" under the leadership of Justice Party, and then the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (DMK) and its factions, as a non-Brahmin party, enabled them to come to power in the state of Tamil Nadu. Varshney (2000) further suggests that the Communist Party, which came to power in 1957 in Kerala, one of the southern states, was rooted in the lower caste masses. The lower caste politics in other states were strongly present but was not as dominant and hegemonic as it was in the case of the above-mentioned states. In brief, by the 1960s, much of the political discourse and electoral sphere in Southern India had been transformed by the democratic upsurge and empowerment of the lower castes.

Varshney suggests that "the lower castes were always numerically larger than the Brahmins, but were unable to use their numbers before the rise of universal franchise" (2000, 6). Further, Varshney argues that, "socially and ritually, caste has always symbolized hierarchy and inequality; however when joined with democracy along with universal-franchise, caste can paradoxically be an instrument of equalization and dignity" (2000, 4). Varshney states further that in this democratic process, the lower castes "'deconstruct' and 'reinvent' caste history, deploy in politics a readily available and easily mobilized social category ('lower caste') using their numbers to electoral advantage, and fight prejudice and domination politically….It is the upper castes, beneficiaries of the caste system for centuries, which typically wish caste did not exist when a lower caste challenge appears from below" (Varshney 2000, 4). Those who adhere to this view, which compares the emergence of lower caste politics of Northern India with Southern India, say that "even Hindu nationalism, though fundamentally opposed to lower caste politics in ideological terms…has not been able to dictate the terms to northern lower-caste politicians" (Varshney 2000, 4). They opine that "lower-caste parties are against Hindu unity….Such has been the power of lower-caste politics in recent years that it has forced Hindu nationalists to make ideologically distasteful but pragmatically necessary political coalition, on occasions even with lower caste political formations" (Varshney 2000, 4). Such analyses tend to suggest that due to these coalitions, "while Hindu nationalist have indeed come to power in Delhi, Hindu nationalism as an ideology

has not" (Varshney 2000, 4). This broad phenomenon of lower caste political assertion has called a "silent revolution" (Jaferlot 1993).

The point we are trying to make is that we should not stretch too much the question of representation and infer that it has only positive potentialities. India's last forty years' experience with democracy shows that visible political and social democratization, as well as the empowerment and emancipation of the lower castes, may not necessarily entail assurances of further democratization and equalization in the Indian society.

There are others who argue that a meaningful transition to substantive democracy cannot happen while socioeconomic inequalities and their source are intact, making any change brought about by the institution of electoral processes inconsequential. Social and economic inequalities carry with them the possibility of turning formal-institutional democracy into an authoritarian democracy. "Democratic authoritarianism," argues Jalal (1995), is how the Indian situation needs to be seen. The existence of electoral democracy along with structural and other kind of inequalities can best be seen as a combination of "formal democracy and covert authoritarianism" (Jalal 1995, 97), a condition that is perpetuated unless, as Jalal (1995) argues, the marginalized become "capable of extending their voting rights beyond the confines of the institutionalised electoral arenas to an effective struggle against social and economic exploitation, legal citizens are more likely to be handmaids of powerful political manipulations than autonomous agents deriving concrete rewards from democratic processes" (1995, 48). If we look at the reality of the non-elected institutional realm of Indian society, some of these claims can indeed be considered a truism. The hegemony (in the Gramscian sense) of the socially and economically powerful allows the political elite to control the cultural means of a society.

A few years ago, a survey[10] revealed that there is almost no one from Dalit communities in the higher echelons of print and electronic media, similar to the situation in higher education in India. But such empirical evidence is difficult to transform into variables concerning how we think about democracy. While on one hand, the theorization of democracy as authoritarian is a case of stretching too much the definition of both de-mocracy and authoritarianism, on the other hand it also does not recog-nize the "silent revolution" as in itself an important face of the democratic impulse in Indian society over a long span of time. In other words, although the point Jalal (1995) makes is based on strong empirics and has clear theoretical underpinnings, it is precisely those that make liberals question such a theoretical model in the analysis of any democracy.

The standard liberal approach like that of Varshney will raise the same old question, "should we consider socio-economic equality a precondition for democracy?" Such questions come with the argument that there is no casual linkage between democracy and inequalities, i.e., more equality does not necessary mean more democracy. If this question can be asked differently then it demands of us a different understanding of democracy itself. Should we not consider an increase in socioeconomic equality a variable in our analysis of democracy? In the absence of equality at the center of the aims of democracy and democratic systems, a democratic regime can recede to other forms of rule. If people think that the electoral mechanism in democracy can be utilized for other ends, how does this mechanism necessarily ensure that the democratic government will always go by the desires and perceptions of the people? Once elected, the government is not necessarily bound to make choices that bring equality and prosperity to all. It is forced to create certain laws or protect certain rights so that the people do not turn into "dangerous classes" (Chatterjee 2008, 62).

Variables like dignity or participation and other such "checklist variables" are mobilized in such a way that all democracies will look like a forward-marching process, though an unfinished one. A major lacuna in their conceptualization in the Indian case is that they seem to suggest that formal political domination of the upper castes was the primary reason for the entire story of marginalization in society. Following this viewpoint, after democracy made possible the challenging of this domination, it necessarily changed the overall situation in which Indian society is situated. Secondly, a denial of analyzing the relationship among the various spheres of politics, economy, and society makes it difficult to see them on the other side of democracy. Many in India will see the rise of lower castes (other backward castes and Dalits) as a sign of Indian democracy becoming more inclusive and participatory, a claim which can hardly be contested. In what ways will this phenomenon bring egalitarian values to Indian society is still an open question. It has to be mentioned, in any case, that with the emergence of these social forces through the logic of democratic politics with constitutional backing, the monopoly of the upper/dominant caste has been eroded to a great extent, a phenomenon that is in a sense a historic achievement.

The empowerment of the abovementioned marginalized social forces must also be considered with two other facts. One, the rise of many of these peasant castes and their relative prosperity is coupled with brutal violence on the Dalit and landless poor in large parts of North India. Second, the "democratic" logic of Indian politics has also witnessed the rise of

BJP, the second largest party in India, which is fascist in its ideology, though it is not called fascist in normal discourse. People do not call it fascist in India as they see BJP's ideology as the nationalist expression of Hindu society. The scope of this paper is limited so one cannot go into further details about this ideology, but it must be noted that the vision of this party goes against the fundamentals of the Indian Constitution. Furthermore, BJP's rise has to be seen as a backlash of, or at least a response to, the emergence of Dalit politics. Some of the recent studies have convincingly shown the penetration of this ideology in various institutions of the State. Their involvement in terrorist activities, of which they then place the blame on religious minorities, is now well documented (Gatade 2013). A jingoistic Hindu nationalist party as a major political bloc has been very much a visible feature of the story of democracy in India. The pattern of electoral alliances between ideologically disparate political forces sharing the same social base, sometimes even forming governments after winning a mandate, can indicate both "participatoriness" as well as movement toward a majoritarian politics.

Even after accepting that democracy as an idea, as a system, and as a historical ideological-political force contains the potential to become a real emancipatory force, it is essential to remember its limitations. Kaviraj (2011, 8) points out these limitations by discussing the historical unevenness of democratic processes and how democratic politics is a field of strategic exchanges between political groups who seek to enhance their own political openings while restricting those of others. Democracy, or rather some features of its institutional design, can become an instrument used by one group to dominate and downgrade others. Finally, because of the separation of spheres in modern society, the democratic political process exist alongside other fundamental processes—such as the growth of capitalist industrialization, which can have contradictory effect—annulling and counteracting the impulses of political democracy by producing serious inequality through processes of economic reproduction premised on exploitation. The idea that democracy and capitalist economies work on parallel principles of "choice" in economic and political life can be seriously misleading (Kaviraj 2011, 8). In the case of Indian democracy the "parallel" trajectories of economic and political life can be very clearly seen. More so after the 1990s when the remaining control over capital by the State has loosen under neoliberal policies. One after another instance these parallel choices of capitalist form of industrialization and mass political process under democracy are seen into conflicts. The forms of these conflicts are varied in different places but they are visible more than before in contemporary India.

At the very core of liberal conventional approaches, which do not like to pose the aforediscussed as a conflict between democracy and capitalism, there lies a denial to look at democracy also as a rule that goes well with the dominance of property owning classes and historically privileged social groups. It is also true that the monopoly of a certain elite social group face challenges and are forced to provide space for elites of other social groups, yet that does not necessarily bring overall egalitarian value to the system of democracy on its own. Democracy as a viable and best desirable form of rule in liberal approaches argues that democracy is ideologically the best political form because all the other available arrangements that can ensure political, social, economic equality are less preferable (Kaviraj 2011, 2). On the other hand, conventional Marxism, argues Kaviraj, is "excessively critical of what it regards as bourgeois democracy treats it primarily as a deceptive institutional arrangement and, in its more extreme variants, regarding democracy as a sham" (Kaviraj 2011, 2).

Kaviraj (2011, 1) argues that like other democracies, there are problems in Indian Democracy, but "there is a special sense in which the existence of democracy in India is itself a problem. The establishment, relative success, and unfamiliar historical elaborations of forms of this phenomenon all go against some of the deepest assumptions of conventional democratic theory." He further finds problem in the assumption that "the rise of modernity produces complete disenchantment in societies" (Kaviraj 2011, 1). Democracy, he argues is in fact "part of the political enchantment of modernity" (Kaviraj 2011, 1) What it does is that it brings a set of new principles of "the political construction of society which leads to exhilarating moments – by making some unprecedented changes possible" (Kaviraj 2011, 1). But at the same time "it also leads to despair by making people expect too much, often by turning the conception of democracy – in some form of naïve thinking – into a secular equivalent of paradise" (Kaviraj 2011, 1).

As Kaviraj further notes, if we go by the methods and techniques of conventional political theory, "Indian democracy seems to defy all the preconditions that theory lays down for the success of democratic government" (2011, 2). This is because, according to Kaviraj, these preconditions "are picked out of the conditions that surrounded the rise of democratic forms in the modern West – namely, the presence of a strong bureaucratic state, capitalist production, industrialization, appreciable levels of literacy, commonality of language, the secularization of society and relative economic prosperity" (2011, 2). Looking at Indian democracy in reference to these preconditions, one has to either conclude that since these preconditions were never met in India it cannot be called democracy at all or maybe we

need to ask – "are these preconditions really preconditions for democracy, or were we led to believe they are by some fault in our thinking?" (Kaviraj 2011, 2). Kaviraj (2011, 2) further argues against the attempts of making the conditions under which Western European democracies arose into the theoretical preconditions for democracies all over the world.

In the history of the West, all these processes of the creation of modernity happened and stabilized themselves before the serious exertion of pressure for democracy and the extension of suffrage began. In India, by contrast, these processes have been going on at the same time and show that the logic of one can seriously affect, hinder, or alter the logic of the other.

So how does democracy and all its functional apparatuses survive and face the pressure of subalterns? Chatterjee (2008) provides us insights to understand the contemporary process and the state of democracy and its linkages with capital. For him, the vast majority of poor, whom he conceptually considers part of "political society," do not directly negotiate with the state and democracy through the formal-structural logic of liberal democracy that often is the case with civil society. He argues that there is "now a new dynamic logic that ties the operations of 'political society' (comprising the peasantry, artisans and petty producers in the informal sector) with the hegemonic role of the bourgeoisie in 'civil society'" (2008, 53). This logic "is provided by the requirement of reversing the effects of primitive accumulation of capital with activities like anti-poverty programmes. This is a necessary political condition for the continued rapid growth of corporate capital" (Chatterjee 2008, 53). The State, "with its mechanisms of electoral democracy, becomes the field for the political negotiation of demands for the transfer of resources, through fiscal and other means, from the accumulation economy to programmes aimed at providing the livelihood needs of the poor" (Chatterjee 2008, 53). Chatterjee says that his thought is based on the work of Sanyal (2007). Sanyal, influenced by Marx, emphasized the fact that for a political rule and government to run, the basic conditions of life and its reproduction must be provided to the people (Chatterjee 2008, 54). Chatterjee adds that "electoral democracy makes it unacceptable for the government to leave the marginalised groups without the means of labour and to fend for themselves, since this carries the risk of turning them into the 'dangerous classes'" (2008, 53).

Thus, "while there is a dominant discourse about the importance of growth, which in recent times has come to mean almost exclusively capitalist growth, it is, at the same time, considered unacceptable that those who are dispossessed of their means of labor because of the primitive accumulation of capital should have no means of subsistence" (Chatterjee 2008, 55).

Some Observations on the Theoretical Perspective of ADI

While it is alright to assess and evaluate how "neoliberal globalization has prevented democracy from being a trustful and consolidated institution in countries which have experiences of the post-authoritarian transition" (CADI 2012, 38), it has two obvious limitations. Firstly, this framework might not be a workable theoretical model to evaluate or assess the whole of Asia since many of the countries did not follow the same route of transition to democracy, i.e., transition from authoritarian rule. India is a classic example that provides basis for a modification of the aforesaid formulation. Secondly, this formulation assumes that the neoliberal economic re-structuring and the corresponding political transformation is that precise moment at which the project of imparting democracy in the mentioned category of countries is prevented or sees a process of reversal. The fact that neoliberalism has created obstacles for democracy is not contested, but this only takes the question one layer deeper and asks us to account for how the neoliberal order could hold sway in these countries that were in the process of transition to democracy. One might need to see the com-ing of neoliberalism itself as the defeat of the socio-political forces that could put a check on imbalances of power. The introduction of neoliberalism is more a visible sign of a clear shift in the nature of the State—from one kind of welfare state, one that was pushing the transition toward democracy, toward a different model of welfare that is targeted to the specific social groups. Thus, what we also need to see is a contemporary history of the State focusing on its transformations.

Another point that needs to be thought of when we start defining a new intellectual framework of democracy is that an overwhelming reference to authoritarianism seems to make liberal democracy almost "naturally" desirable. This has the result of equating the concept or principle of de-mocracy with a particular model (liberal democracy) thus shaping the perspective from which things are viewed in formal liberal democracies. In liberal regimes, like the one in India for instance, problems seem to be identified with "democratic consolidation" or in located inside certain forms or practices. This conception of internality suggests that the issue is one of getting things right within the system, thereby protecting the sys-tem or model itself from critique. In societies like India that do not have the narrative of transition from authoritarianism, it can be forcefully ar-gued that the problem of democratic consolidation can be thought of as being external to the narrow operational frame of liberal democracy. In the contemporary context, this leads us to consider that the existing

framework of democracy that makes liberal democracy the "natural choice" needs to be questioned as well.

The theoretical perspective further suggests that "the transnational capital-led globalization in the name of neo-liberalism changed the basic value of democracy from 'humanity' to 'capital', thus eroding the people's trust in democratic institutions. Under the global gale of neoliberalism, processes of democratization could not but abort the improvement of the quality of life in the society" (CADI 2012, 38) Is there a clear relationship we can see between a particular idea of democratization, i.e., transition from authoritarianism, and neoliberalism? The demise of authoritarian regimes in many parts of the world in late 1980s and early 1990s onward and the transition to some form of democracy in their stead, leads to or forces, owing to structural reasons, the neoliberal policies. The question that we need to ponder on is this: was the transition to some form of democracy very much needed for capital-led globalization, especially by the last decades of twentieth century? If we reverse the proposition, it might be possible to see the institution of liberal democracies instead of authoritarian regimes as being an expedient mechanism for the introduction of economic reforms that the former could not have carried out.

While we consider globalization to be an important feature of the contemporary moment, in our analysis the actions of regimes that are external to them do not get accounted for. A country might be rating highly in democracy indices but it might be promoting conditions averse to democratization is other parts of the world. We have examples of authoritarian regimes developing reciprocal structural linkages with many liberal "democracies." To take an example, the United States of America is heavily dependent on securing oil from states in the Middle East that are clearly authoritarian. The USA is heavily invested in the stability of these regimes, economically and militarily. In most developing countries that are following neoliberal economic policies the gap between the rich and the poor has been growing rapidly. This has often been linked to the Structural Adjustment Programmes advocated by agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The role of these agencies, which are dominated by interests of leading Western states, in fostering conditions of agonizing inequality within and between nation states calls for attention since increasing inequality hinders the process of democratization.

Another issue that is important for us in India, and might well be useful for other members of the Consortium for the Asian Democracy Index (CADI), is the diverse and opposite processes in the three spheres of politics, the economy, and civil society. Here, the interplay between the

concepts of democratization and de-monopolization is called into question. In India, it can be clearly seen that the political de-monopolization process at some levels has helped in the democratization of the political system. But if we look at the economic sphere, we do not find the same process taking place. In fact it can be argued that things have gone in the reverse direction. De-monopolization in economic sphere means that the control of state power on economic sphere should be reduced and new actors should be able to participate. In India, this has happened in certain senses. State control over the economy has been significantly reduced in last thirty years, with the country witnessing neoliberal restructuring and privatization. The license regime is over and through the process of globalization, Indian markets are open for corporate capital. Increasing foreign direct investment and disinvestment of government in the huge public sector has led to Indian and foreign capital coming to dominate the economy. This led to, in recent times, massive corruption in India where often elected members and ministers are involved in tilting policies in favor of corporate capital. In fact, many of such ministries that deal with key sectors of Indian economy are manipulated by big capital. Added to a raiding of the public exchequer (read corruption) is the question of the transfer of resources from the poor to the rich under the current neoliberal dispensation in India. The corporate demands for cheap natural resources are being met, on one hand, by accelerated expropriation and pauperization of marginal peasants and tribal peoples, while on the other hand we are witnesses to massive budgetary cuts in the social sector, which provides basic support (e.g., health) and the main avenues for sustenance and upward mobility (e.g., education).

De-monopolization does not mean the same thing in countries that moved from authoritarian/oligarchic rule to democracy and those with a fairly stable history of being a formal democracy like India. As suggested above, neoliberal economic restructuring in India has resulted in a related growth of cronyism and monopolistic tendencies, both of which are detrimental to democracy since they render institutions ineffectual. If we look at India, we see that once the process of monopolization starts in economic sphere, it gets linked up with having to influence government policies for consolidating advantages, i.e., by lobbying for particular kinds of economic policies. Corporate funding of political parties and ownership of media houses results in effective pressuring of governments to shape policies benefitting these capital-holders. Opponents can also be blocked off, exemplified in the recent media boycott of a particular newly emerging

political group (since they raised the issue of corruption and nexus between the ruling party and one big corporate house that was involved in the production of natural gas). In other words, in indirect ways we can witness the emergence of a complex in politics and economy that could possibly lead to monopolization. Thus, we have to think differently about de-monopolization in a formal democracy.

Furthermore, a major limitation that we were confronted with during our survey is that the questionnaire does not sufficiently capture the Indian reality, an observation that, as we will detail later, our respondents shared with us. Whereas the ADI conceptual framework can be used as a guiding set of principles subject to modification, the questions were insufficiently grounded in the particular reality of India. To give an example, unless we include the reality of caste to understand the democracy and de-monopolization relationship in India, our analysis of it can be misleading. Similarly, it is a challenge to incorporate the regional diversity in India. We cannot expect a homogenous experience of all the social groups and classes in the country, thus it is very important to acknowledge the differences that exist. A number of questions are very general and vague and these questions do not capture the differential attitude of the State toward citizens in different regions. Violence and citizens rights, for example, are such variables that cannot be generalized in the Indian case. While Human Rights Watch terms India as dangerous, it should be noted that not all the regions and social groups face violence by State or non-elected institutions with similar intensity.

Finally, in order to further enrich our understanding of really existing democracy in India, we must try and disaggregate the objects of analysis. The differentiated experiences of people and their relationship with State and democratic process can be captured only when we include variables that can incorporate this diversity of democratic experiences and expectations. Just to give an example, we must find a way to see how people in Central Indian regions experience democracy that is different from the average experience of people in North India. How the people in frontier regions (Northeast and Kashmir) relate with the Indian democracy is very different from the way people in the "mainland" areas do.

To conclude this section, we are of the opinion that while we see de-monopolization as a good working conceptual model, we need to further evolve both specific and general questions together for the ADI project to accomplish its aims in India.

Report on the 2013 ADI Survey in India

Objectives of the Study

This study of Indian democracy, based on the methodology devised by CADI, is an attempt to initiate a closer understanding of Indian democracy while considering the complexity and multiplicity of the Indian context. The histories and realities of Asian societies necessitate such an effort. This pilot survey hopes that the indices arising out of it will enhance and inform the development of a stronger and more relevant methodology for the ADI project. We hope the case of India will further help to problematize certain parameters that may not address Indian and South Asian realities.

Methodology and Problems Encountered

Survey Method and Duration

The survey was conducted between January and May 2013. The survey was predominantly conducted in-person; twenty-four of our experts were interviewed face-to-face. Survey forms were sent through email to three of our experts.

Selection and Profile of Experts

This study, as a part of the ADI pilot test, uses both qualitative and quantitative analyses of data from a survey of twenty-seven experts across different fields and ideological moorings. The respondents were selected primarily on the basis of their "expertise" on relevant issues that may highlight, if not be representative of, the whole of Indian society with all its complexities. Our twenty-seven experts were selected from various fields—social activists, political activists, academics, corporate officers, financial experts, and journalists. They were classified "ideologically" based on the surveyors' "prior knowledge" about the respondents' "ideological" positions and expertise on particular areas and were slotted under the political categories of Left-, Liberal-, and Right-wing. The experts were then distributed to answer one of the three ADI questionnaires corresponding to the three ADI fields (politics, the economy, and civil society).

Difficulties and Comments from the Experts

The predominant difficulty in carrying out the survey was at the level of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were given to many experts but a significant number of them refused to answer, saying that the questionnaires did not address Indian reality. The current set of experts came through despite their disagreements with the questionnaires and particular questions about them. After hurdling this initial difficulty, however, upon persuasion, the questionnaires were filled out by the requisite number of respondents. Due to this impediment, the quantity and expanse of the optional explanatory comments we obtained from our experts are lower than what was expected from the respondents.

It truly must be emphasized that the typical first response to the questionnaire, regardless of the experts' ideological position, was that the instruments do not address Indian reality, thus the experts often found difficulty in assigning a numerical rating as a response to certain questions.

The Survey Results

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show the consolidated results of the ADI pilot survey conducted between January to May 2013 in India. It shows the average of all the subprinciple and core principle scores we obtained across the three ADI fields.

The average (overall) Indian ADI is 4.53 on a scale of 0 to 10. This means that the experts have generally rated Indian Democracy negatively, i.e., below the median value of 5. In terms of the core principles of ADI framework, the overall indices for both liberalization and equalization are modest. While liberalization scored 4.81, equalization fared a little worse at 4.24.

In terms of the three fields of the ADI framework, the Indian political index is highest, with a score of 5, while the Indian economy index is the lowest at 3.67. In between is the Indian civil society index, which scored 4.76.

What follows are brief discussions of the results of the survey per field. More detailed analyses of the results per subprinciples will be done later.

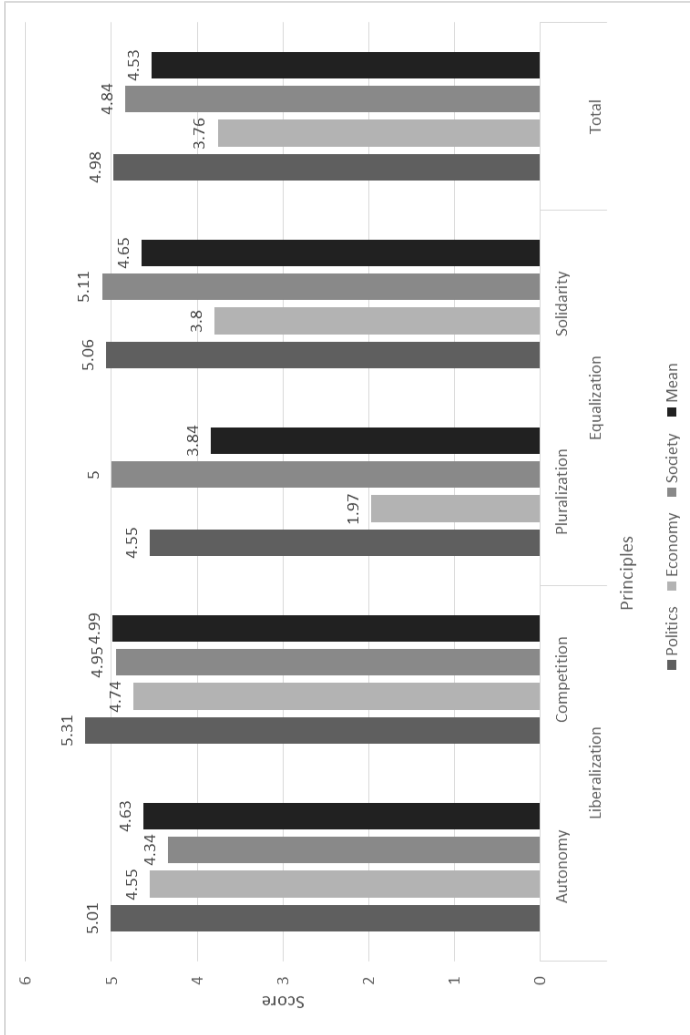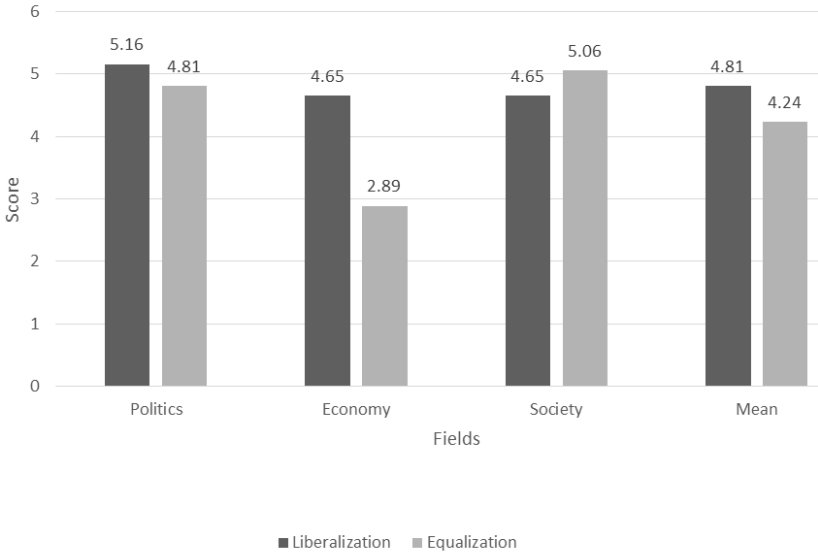Figure 1.1. Overall Results of the 2013 ADI Survey in India

Figure 1.2. Core Principle Scores by Field, 2013 ADI Survey in India

Politics

The results of the Indian politics survey, structured on the basis of the four ADI subprinciples (autonomy, competition, pluralization, solidarity) is provided in figure 2. The overall scores of autonomy, competition, and solidarity did not differ much, with respective scores of 5.01, 5.31, and 5.06. However, the score for pluralization was relatively lower at 4.55. The respondents under the Liberal category tended to give high scores (above 6) to indicators under all four subprinciples. On the other hand, the respondents under the Left category tended give low scores to the indicators under all four subprinciples, ranging from an average of 4.44 (in competition) to 2.29 (in pluralization).

Figure 2. Scores in Politics Per Subprinciple and Respondent Category
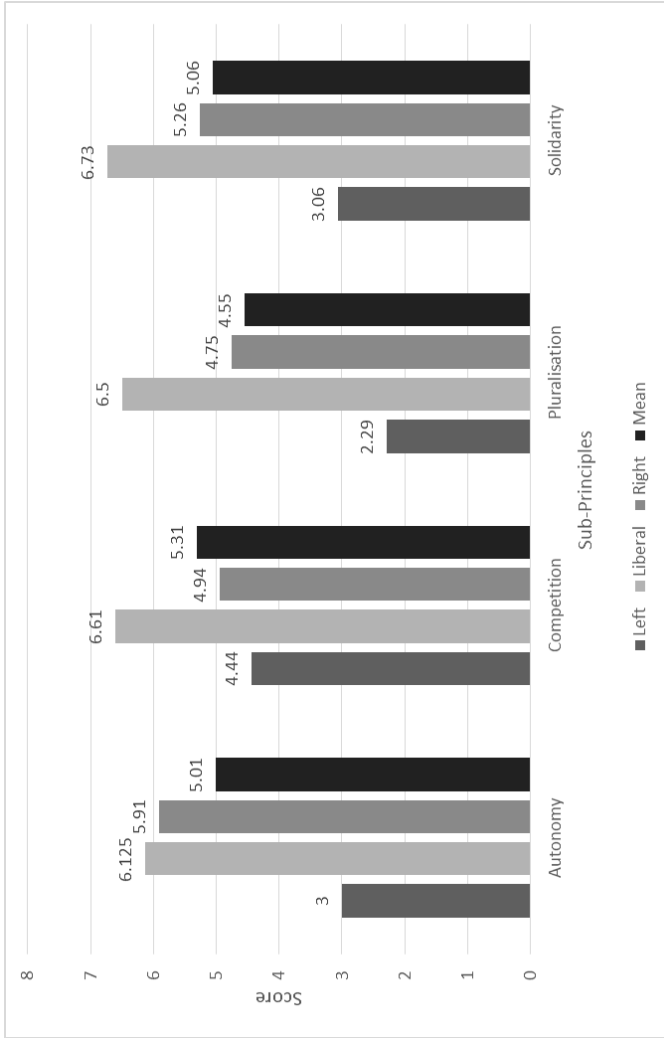
Economy

The results of the Indian economy survey can be seen in figure 3. In the economic field, the subprinciples of autonomy and competition, though tending toward negative (below 5), showed better average scores (4.55 and 4.74, respectively) than that for solidarity (3.8), while the results for pluralization can be said to be extremely poor. Economic pluralization indicators were rated very poorly by respondents from all three categories, with the overall score being 1.97. Still under economic pluralization, the Left, Liberal, and Right respondents gave average scores of 2.33, 1, and 2.6, respectively.
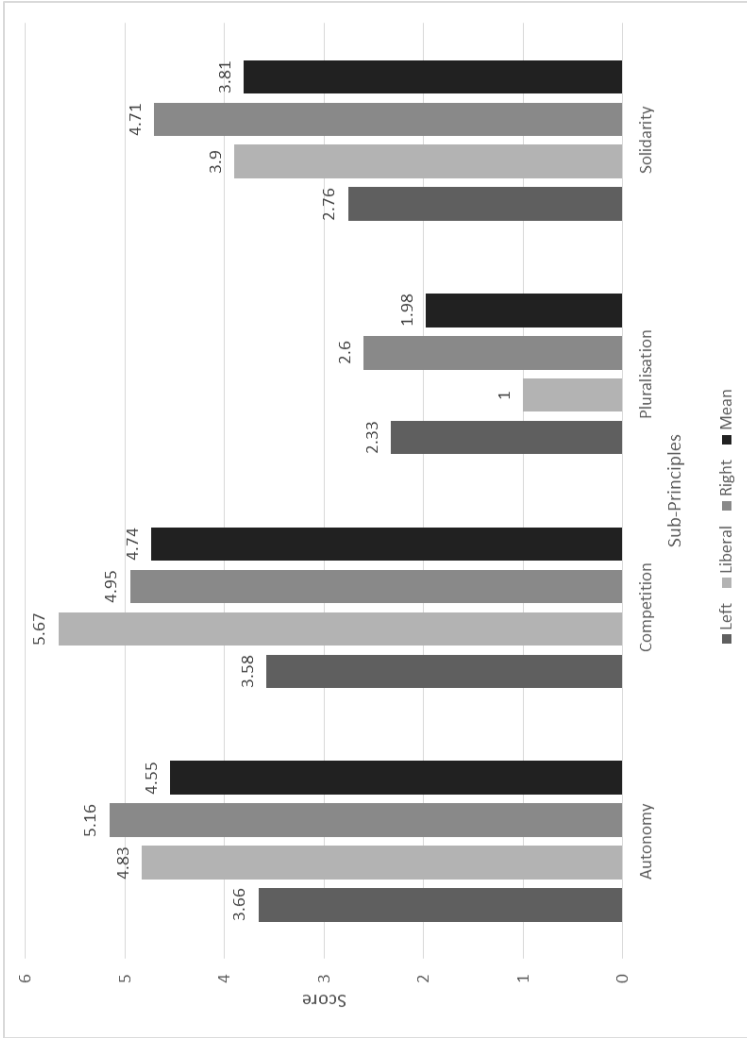
Civil Society

The results of the Indian economy survey are shown in figure 4. The average scores for all the subprinciples in the field of civil society are average to below average. The scores for competition and pluralization, hovering around 5, are slightly better than the scores for autonomy and solidarity, which are at 4.35 and 4.65, respectively.

Analysis of the Survey Results

The ADI survey was conducted at a very important juncture and one needs to be a bit cautious to what extent that immediate context is reflected in the data. We will have to distill the broad understanding from the current data and compare the data with a future survey so that we can capture both the immediate and short-term trends in Indian democracy as well as more long-term shifts and transformations. Having said that, we will still need to look at the current context to help us in correctly interpreting the data.

The period we are concerned with here is between 2004 and 2013, almost a year before the general elections of 2014. This period, for the study of Indian democracy, is interesting and complex in many ways. This period can be divided into two timeframes: 2004-2008 and 2008-2013. In 2004, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), led by the Congress party, defeated the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by BJP. Looking at the aggressive "shining India" campaign of BJP-led NDA, this was a significant and surprising victory for the Congress party-led UPA, whose leading campaign slogan was "aam aadmi ka haath, Congress ke saath" (the common man is with the Congress). The UPA government again got re-elected in the general elections of 2009. Thus, we can call the first term of this government (our first period), from 2004-2008, as UPA-I, and the current term (our second period) as UPA-II.

Figure 3. Scores in Economy Per Subprinciple and Respondent Category

Solidarity
- Mean: 3.81
- Right: 4.71
- Liberal: 3.9
- Left: 2.76

Pluralisation
- Mean: 1.98
- Right: 2.6
- Liberal: 1
- Left: 2.33

Competition
- Mean: 4.74
- Right: 4.95
- Liberal: 5.67
- Left: 3.58

Autonomy
- Mean: 4.55
- Right: 5.16
- Liberal: 4.83
- Left: 3.66

Sub-Principles

Legend: Left, Liberal, Right, Mean

Score (axis: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

UPA-I came to power with a promise of a strong welfare agenda. One of the significant results of the election was the coming together of the Congress party and the left parties that together formed the government, which set up a national common minimum programme and a National Advisory Committee (NAC). The NAC, with a significant number of liberal-left people, opened up the discussion for acts/schemes that can be considered social welfarist in nature. This process, pre-2008, was central in putting together a number of laws and policies such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Forest Right Act, and the Right to Information Act.

Looking at the trajectory of post-1990 neoliberal reforms, these rights and pieces of legislation were very significant. Many other such schemes like Right to Education and Right to Food, Land Acquisition Bill were in the pipeline. In some ways, this shift toward strong social policies since 2004 under UPA-I, besides fulfilling some electoral promises, can partially be attributed to the presence of the left parties. Certainly, some of these popular schemes, policies, and acts made UPA-II possible, but by that time, it did not have the support of the left parties, since the latter had withdrawn its support because of a nuclear pact between India and United States. The brief years of UPA-I reflects how the longstanding demands of and pressure from social movements and civil society allowed these groups to have some stake in government through various institutional and non-institutional ways.

Although the welfare state trend continued after the general elections of 2009, we can see certain other phenomena gaining more prominence. Some significant issues that rose to prominence are the nexus between the business and political classes, between bureaucracy and political class, and in many instances between business/corporate interests and those of the bureaucracy as well. These resulted in the subversion of the aforediscussed policies, especially those that touched upon the interests of elected representatives and those of the business/corporate houses. Some of the key positions in the governments and state bureaucracy were decidedly in keeping with the interest of the corporate class.

Post-2009 Congress party-led UPA-II was scam-ridden; such a situation was unparalleled in the history of post-independence India. Ministers, bureaucrats, and other elected and non-elected people in the State machinery were clearly seen subverting institutions and their functions. At another level, especially in areas where both Indian and global capital had shown interest, e.g., the mining sector, the State and local governments undermined their own processes and polices; these years saw violent events and mobilizations by the people, who demanded their rights over land, forest, water, minerals, and other avenues of livelihood.

Figure 4. Scores in Civil Society Per Subprinciple and Respondent Category
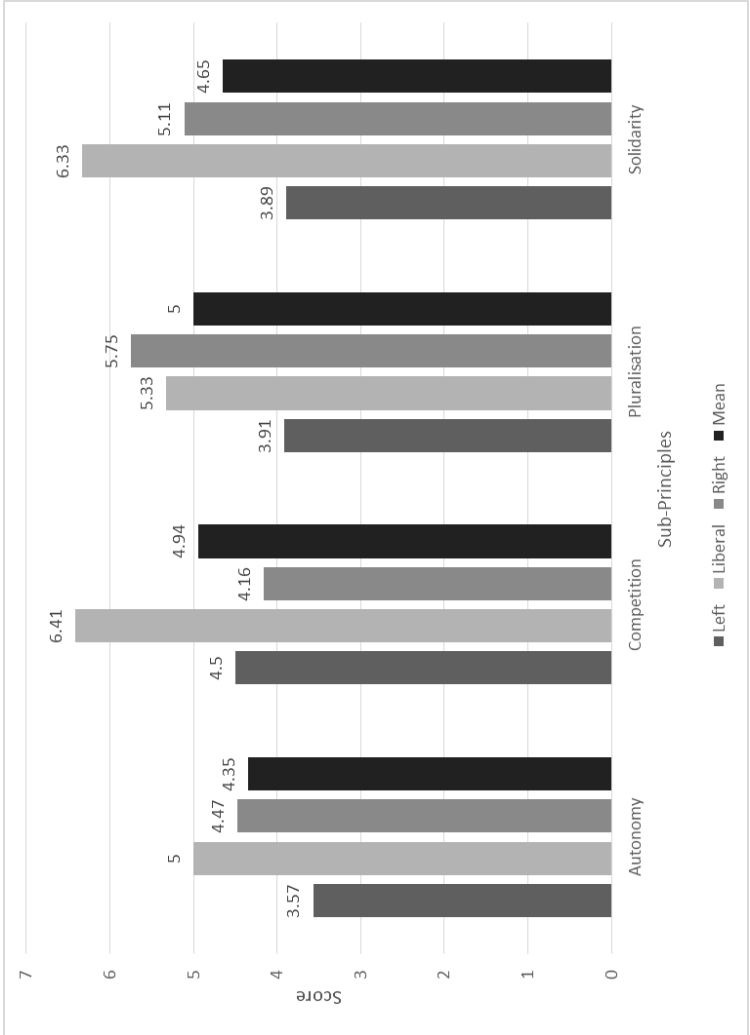
The State in general has played a significant role in massive extra-economic extraction of surplus on one hand, and accumulation by dispossessing people on the other. Though the actual beneficiaries were the rich and the corporations, the State and its apparatuses played a central role in executing and accelerating their enrichment. This post-2009 landscape of Indian politics thus saw movements for people's control over resources and also massive anti-corruption movements in the wake of many gigantic scams such as the Commonwealth Games scam, the 2G Spectrum telecom scam, and the allocation of coal mines scam.

Corruption, as it is popularly termed these days, is something that has played a very integral role in the accumulation process in India—recent years were not the first time that we witnessed the movement against it in society. The political class has been implicated in corruption before, but the scale and spectacle of it post-2009, especially in 2010-2011, was very different, both in nature and in its organization. After so long, the entire political class and state apparatus was brought into question. The media made it a spectacle. Massive mobilization has been witnessed against Congress party-led UPA II. What is interesting, and indeed requires further research, is the way media, both electronic and print, became "hyper-activated" on the issue of corruption.

Interestingly, the cases of corruption that were highlighted and which determined public discourse were the ones in which the political class was seen as the beneficiary. When big corporate capital was exposed, certain section of the media did not publish news about it at all. The discourse was manufactured in such a way that the State, political parties, public executives, and the bureaucracy were projected as the culprits. But the well-known role of corporate capital in conspiring and organizing the popular anti-corruption unrest against the State actors and political class was systematically avoided. Thus, there was a scandal after the exposure of the Radia tapes (for details of the scam see Chaudury (2010) and Varadarajan (2010)), which reveal the nexus between senior journalists and politicians lobbying for certain corporate houses, is not even in public memory anymore; people do remember many old cases of how politicians were involved in corruptions.

The outrage against corruption on one hand diminished the credibility of Congress party-led UPA, but on the other hand what emerged out of it was a discourse that can move potentially in two directions. The first direction is intertwined with an overarching political discourse, which will have its effect on the functioning of institutions under democracy—the idea of clean and good governance. Second is the possibility of the emer-

gence of an idea of social democracy that includes the former but goes beyond it. The emergence of "Aam Aadmi" (common man) as a discourse generally, at this juncture, reflects the combination of these two aspirations/orientations in the Indian polity. At this moment, the progress of democracy carries both these possibilities in India.

One more important phenomenon that had made a significant impact in 2009-2013 was the massive mobilization against the Delhi rape case that occurred in the end of 2012. Similar to the response of anti-corruption movements, large urban constituencies got mobilized in a manner and scale never seen before.

To sum up, the events during these two periods that precede the conduct of the ADI survey in India are symptomatic of an active political and civil society, an immensely powerful corporate class whose interests are in a nexus with those of the political class. An active political citizenry and growing inequalities, along with a possibly divided state apparatus, might fail to always find a balance between two mutually contradictory phenomena—an emerging political and an economic right wing. The world of Indian democracy is full of both opportunities and threats.

This suggests that to some extent the process of democratization progressed because of some of the initiatives under UPA-I, which had initiated the potential of transformation in the existing relations of power in the fields of politics, economy, and civil society. Of course, the degree and the scale of this transformation did not carry the potentialities of democratizing rapidly to all the fields. The longevity and durability of such a process also depends on a corresponding process in all the fifty-seven indicators contemplated by the Asian Democracy Index. Furthermore, the characteristics of UPA-II show that the way a system within which democracy works is not a given—it is actually volatile. Thus, our survey has to be contextualized in this volatile and active political time in which all of the fields considered by the ADI have been affected.

Before we get into further discussion and explanation of our survey data, we must mention that the respondent categories were chosen with their ideological leanings as prescribed in the current ADI methodology. Except in some cases, those who were categorized as Left scored very critically, with marks on the lower side of the 0-10 scale, the Liberals tended to score on the positive (above 5) side, and the Right scored less "enthusiastically" than the Liberals but more "optimistically" than the Left. The Left seem to consider democracy in India to be a near-sham, Liberals celebrate it and find it possibly the best system available, and the

Right locate themselves the middle of this Left-Liberal pendulum. Nevertheless, it seems that the Right find their relationship with democracy quite troubled.

With this set of respondents, the aggregate score for the core principle of equalization is relatively low (4.24) in comparison to the overall score of the core principal of liberalization (4.81). The equalization score, according to the ADI framework, signifies the "quality of democracy" and the achievement of agents "in terms of gaining actual resources within a certain system" (CADI 2012, 45). The two subprinciples of equalization, pluralization and solidarity, shows the extent to which "monopoly over resources [have weakened]" and the "available means to de-integrate the monopoly of resources," respectively (CADI 2012, 45). In this light, given how in our survey liberalization scored slightly better than equalization, we can say that Indian democracy is not doing well in terms of pluralization and solidarity. But this cannot be generalized in each field. Under equalization, the most glaring contrast can be seen in the field of economy. In this field, the score is 1.97 for pluralization and 3.8 for solidarity. What does this tell us about Indian democracy? If we go by the ADI framework, the weak scores of pluralization and solidarity in economic field suggest the absence of the "fair distribution of economic resources leading to both economic and social-political democratization" (CADI 2012, 65) and the means by which "inequality is institutionally addressed" (CADI 2012, 70). Furthermore, the low pluralization score supposedly suggests the existence of economic monopoly, disparity among regions, inequalities in income, assets and employment (CADI 2012, 65-69).

In this context the score in the field of politics under the core principal of liberalization, and specifically the subprinciples of autonomy and competition, is a good contrast. The score is 5.01 in autonomy and 5.31 in competition in the political field. The subprinciple of political autonomy tells us to what extent the citizens are independent from government, in terms of the "degree of state violence," the "degree of civil liberties," the "degree of freedom to organize political groups and undertake political action," and "the degree of freedom and political opposition" (CADI 2012, 47-49). Meanwhile, the subprinciple of political competition refers to other forms of political freedom such as universal suffrage, rule of law, fair and competitive election, et cetera (CADI 2012, 50-52).

The field of politics shows that the transition from the colonial to postcolonial democratic system has been stabilized with a differentiated experience by people in different regions, whereas this has not necessarily resulted into equalization in the economic field in any region. In one way,

the enactments of rights and the empowering of citizens under UPA-I, coupled with an economic system characterized by growing inequalities, is one definite trend of democracy in India. The State is central in both of these narratives of Indian democracy.

In the final sections of this paper, we will look at the scores per sub-principle in each field. Considering that the questionnaires were considered as far from Indian reality, both by the respondents and surveyors' own observations, it will be presumptuous to utilize the data generated in terms of different variables as 'representative' of Indian democracy indices; further analyses of the data carries with it the possibility of misrepresenting the existing Indian context. However, if one supersedes the impediments arising from the questionnaires, the data can be used to make the following broad sketches about the India context.

A final word before the analyses: even if the overall score is below *5* on the 0-10 scale, one has to consider, while evaluating such scores, that the responses not only "reveal" the existing realities of Indian democracy but also inform us of the respondents' expectations of an "ideal" democracy. In short, their evaluations also merge with their own idea about the kind of democracy that they want.

Autonomy

The autonomy index in politics is relatively good, standing at *5* on a scale of 0-10. The autonomy in the economy field is at *4.56*, while it is at *4.35* in the field of civil society. From the differential data in the respective fields, it is clear that the scores to the items under autonomy in the economic and civil society fields are inclined toward negative evaluation, while those in the political domain can possibly progress toward a higher index as the current score stands at the median.

In the field of politics, it is remarkable to see that the item on state violence has scored low (meaning high incidence), obtaining only a *3.55* overall score, whereas the rest of the items, which deal with the degree of civil liberties, degree of freedom to organize political groups and undertake political action, and degree of freedom for political opposition have scored relatively highly (meaning high degree of these freedoms) with overall scores of *5.22, 6.55,* and *4.77* respectively.

The state violence score is informed by the different attitude of the State toward certain regions, sections and groups, as has been outlined in the previous sections. The corresponding reality of this score can be captured

in the following words of one of the respondents: "In conflict zones (border areas and Central India) many who are incarcerated are in prisons because of their political beliefs. Government has also been involved in extra-judicial killings (euphemistically called 'encounter killing')."

The belief that the other freedoms under political economy are well-guaranteed by the State has to be qualified. There are exceptional areas, e.g., in Kashmir and parts of Northeast India, where there are ongoing movements for self-determination, as well in Central India where there is a civil war going on between State forces and the Maoist guerrillas, which has resulted in suspension of all the freedoms mentioned in the items above therein.

In the field of economy, the autonomy score is 4.56, lower than the median. It is considerably difficult to validate this score as a representative figure because out of the three items under economic autonomy, the first item, which looks into political power/elite's influence on private companies, does not address Indian reality. It was strongly felt by the respondents as well as the surveyors that a reversal of this particular question will be more relevant for India. Perhaps it is important to pose a question here considering the spread and speed of private company/economic elite penetration into the political structures of the country.

Protection of basic labor rights received an average overall score. Considering the fact that India has some of the best labor laws in the world, one would have expected higher score, but the current situation says otherwise. Since the 1990s, with the onset of liberalization, while very progressive labor laws exist, the violations of the same have become a rampant everyday reality. The State has drifted away from its pre-1990s role as an arbitrator between labor and capital. Its interests are now intertwined with those of private capital, thereby becoming complicit in the violations of its own laws.

The autonomy score in the field of Civil Society is relatively low, at 4.34. The score reflects the paradox of social autonomy in India. Social activities are fairly free from state interference, yet in response to items concerning freedom in relation to the market and basic human development level and tolerance, the scores from our respondents are expectedly low. The data reflects existing conditions of illiteracy, intolerance, and poverty; India's human development index is currently lower than Sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, in a study conducted by the UNICEF, eight million children in India have never stepped inside a school, while 80 million have dropped out without completing basic schooling (The Hindu 2013).

Competition

Similar to the autonomy scores, the competition index in the political field, at 5.31, is relatively better than the same in the fields of economy and civil society, which have scores of 4.74 and 4.94, respectively. From the differential data in the respective fields, it is clear that the scores in the items under competition in the economic and civil society fields are below but close to the median.

In the political field, the guarantee of electoral rights and freedom of expression, as well as the occurrence of regular free and fair elections rates impressively high in the eyes of our respondents. However, as far as the item on implementation of government policies by its agencies is concerned, the response from the experts are substantially negative, confirming the "political common sense" about government agencies. While non-elected bodies based on family heritage or military power are not seen by our respondents to have an influence on political power, many experts have pointed out that corporate groups (both domestic and foreign) do have undue influence on the government.

In the economic field, our respondents have a negative evaluation of corporate transparency in our country. In India, corporate governance is rather opaque; as one of our respondents put it, "corporate operations are incredibly obscured from public society." The issue of fairness of competition between companies was regarded to be controversial, with our respondents opining that the question corresponding thereto is too vague for the Indian condition. A separation of the item on fairness of economic activities and activities of private companies might have resulted in different rankings. Those asking about the fairness of economic activities should be wary of merely focusing on the activities of private companies. The current CADI formulation fails to capture broader questions of economic activities, especially when one considers the glaring exclusion of religious minorities, Dalits, and other lower castes.

The civil society competition index is at 4.94, closer to the median but still on the negative side, but slightly better than that of the economy field. The representation of society by civil society organizations (CSOs) is ranked fairly high. If one takes into consideration the broad nature of CSOs, the index is fairly representative. On the other hand, when we look at the indices of capability, transparency, and diversity of voluntary association, the figures pull down the overall competition index on the lower side of the median. As one of the respondents rightly identified, on paper, CSOs participate openly in the political debate/s, but their ability to influence

policy formulations are disproportionate to their participation in meetings and discussions on policy matters.

Pluralization

The index of pluralization in the fields of politics and civil society are 4.55 and 5, respectively—close to the median. However, the same index in the economic field is glaringly low at 1.97.

As regards political pluralization, it is widely accepted that the Indian legislature is expansively representational, save in terms of women's representation. Thus, pluralization in the political field is, expectedly, relatively high.

The low economic pluralization index captures the glaring economic inequality in India. The gap between the rich and the poor is on the rise, even while more billionaires and their assets are on the rise too, especially over the last twenty years since the liberalization of the economy. India has maintained a high economic growth rate, but this has not led to reduction of inequality—indeed, the situation is quite the reverse. Moreover, as some of the respondents stated, the exclusion of certain groups like Muslims and Dalits from economic power is a glaring reality. Employment opportunities are also determined by caste, gender, and religion. Discrimination based on these social identities are extremely widespread in all sorts of labor markets, and more than often take the form of exclusion from well-paying jobs and the concentration of the marginalized in marginal and low-paying jobs.

In the civil society field, the pluralization index is at the median, with lower-than-median overall scores in the items regarding media, information dissemination and access to cultural facilities, but higher-than-median scores in the item concerned with power distribution in the society. While India has a very diverse, abundant, and vibrant media presence, it is a fact that, as one of our respondents says, the media is dominated by a few big families, whose hold is in different media sectors, ranging from print to electronic. In addition, the key posts in the media are dominated by Hindu upper caste males (as studies that were done to understand social composition of the media have shown). Together, these two factors create a situation where neither the growing pauperization of the masses (as evidenced by the suicides of more than 200 thousand farmers in a span of fifteen years) nor the humiliation of the socially oppressed rarely become an issue in the Indian media.

Solidarity

Solidarity scores in the political field are, in some accounts, very interesting, and they raise many issues that need to be seriously researched. Under political solidarity, there are items that deal with the degree of political participation, affirmative actions and the state of socially marginalized groups, credibility of democratic institutions and democracy in general, and the public's trust in democracy as a desirable system. The overall thrust of these items seems to be finding a symmetry in both the credibility of State institutions and trust in democracy. The responses of our respondents defy such a search for unity in perceptions. Although the overall score in political solidarity does not show this fracture, a disaggregation of the scores in the items under this subprinciple makes it very clear.

The average score in the item about people's trust in democracy is significantly high at 7. On the other hand, the average score in the two items that deal with the credibility of the democratic institution, at 3.88, is the lowest among the attribute scores under political solidarity. Certainly, over the years, peoples' participation in elections has been on the rise; a significant percentage of the voters come from the poor. Thus, the people do trust in democracy as a system because they participate in elections and may participate in other possible activities that deal with decisionmaking. However, they do not trust the government and they do not trust the parliament/legislature. This reflects the recent occurrence of anti-corruption movements and agitations, which indicate peoples' general distrust of the government but also their aspiration for a better governance system, though they are fairly unsure about the institutional form in which that system can best be acquired.

In the field of economy, the solidarity score not only corresponds to, but also helps explain the poor results in pluralization in economy. It is evident that the lowest field subprinciple score is that of economic pluralization, at 1.97; economic solidarity's score, at 3.81, is not much higher. The issues that economic solidarity deals with are related largely to labor rights, social security, corporate surveillance, and the state of inequality alleviation. Among the scores to the items corresponding to these, there is one possible misleading result, in our opinion—that which deals with the matter of the unionization of labor. As was already been mentioned earlier, in India, the unions are active only in the formal sector. More than 80 percent of the labor force is in the informal sector, where there is hardly any union presence. Labor law violations are committed mostly against those in the informal sector. All the unions in India are representative of

less than 5 percent of the workforce. If we were to ask about labor unions in India while keeping this reality in mind, the average score in economic solidarity might have been less than what it is now.

Lastly, let us discuss civil society solidarity. The scores in the items under this field subprinciple tell us that the Indian social security system is very ineffective, labor has no say in management matters, and there is no public monitoring of corporate activities. In fact, there is no system through which such monitoring is possible. Similarly, there is no concept of labor having any say in management matters. On the contrary, the last two decades have seen the rise of a regressive attitude of various elected and non-elected functionaries of the State toward labor-related issues. The last two decades have been the period of massive contractualization, insecure tenure, and "hire and fire" policies. For monopoly to emerge, the control over labor is essential. In fact, as hinted upon here previously, the history of the emergence of liberalization in India starts with the dismantling of labor movements in 1970s and 1980s. Thus, there is a direct correlation between neoliberal policies, "growth," and reduction in labor rights. This phenomenon in turn affects not only economic democracy, but also substantial political democracy. In other words, as our data mostly verifies, in India today, inequalities are not only sustained but also produced.

Notes

1. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, Chairperson of the drafting committee, in an address to members of the Constituent Assembly, on November 25, 1949.
2. A state of Emergency was declared in India by the Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi on June 26, 1975. It was lifted in 1977.
3. The idea of the "Congress system" or one-party dominance was first discussed by political scientist Rajni Kothari (1970). While using a frame of comparative politics, he theorized that Indian political democracy is a different political system that cannot be understood by the dominant Western models of that time. Indian political democracy was described by Kothari as a one-party dominant system because Congress was voted time and again with an overwhelming parliamentary majority on plurality (not majority) of votes in democratically contested elections. It was based on a peculiar pattern of government-opposition relationship that produced a party system with difference, which provided an interesting alternative to other existing party systems.
4. Dalit is a political category that includes many castes considered "untouchable" in Indian society. In the Constitution they are clubbed under the category of Scheduled Caste, though not all those within this category are "untouchable." In order to bring about social equality there are constitutional provisions on affirmative action/reservation.
5. Both these regions are frontier areas and have a loaded and violent history of secessionist movements, which have continuously contested the making of India as a nation-state after independence from British colonial rule. The Indian state has dealt with these

conflicts in more than repressive ways, thereby unleashing the deployment of "literal" suspension of "normalcy" in these regions in the decades since the 1970s. However, the Indian state has "successfully" managed to retain electoral democracy in these areas.

6.   Adivasi is term is used in India for indigenous people, though this term does not capture the reality of these people. In one sense it can be said that these people are those whose livelihoods are dependent on forest land and water and do not lives in cities. Adivasi in some sense can also mean the "primitive" communities, though a large number of them have a history of indentured labor in colonial plantation economies and large numbers of them are constantly migrating to various cities in order to find livelihood. A substantial population of Adivasi women now work as domestic workers in cities like Delhi. Adivasi in the Indian constitution are given the status of Scheduled Tribe and are entailed to reservation based on affirmative action.

7.   While the form of parliamentary system was taken from British government, the institution of an independent judiciary and fundamental rights were taken from Unities States; federal structure with a strong center from Canada; directive principle for state policy from the Irish constitution; emergency provision and suspension of fundamental rights from the Weimar constitution of Germany; amendment with 2/3 majority in parliament from South Africa; and the idea of fundamental duties from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, among others.

8.   "Far left" is generally used to describe underground armed groups that follow Maoist revolutionary strategies of protected warfare. They are also known as Naxalites or Maoists. The largest underground armed party is known as the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

9.   This term is not much in use today, but for a long time it was used to "refer to the movements and social struggles that burst forth on the scene in the 1980s, broadly speaking" (Nigam 2000, 2). More specifically, this category was used by Indian scholars, "to refer to a series of responses to problems in the formal political process that prevented the interests of a whole range of social groups and many significant issues from getting translated into the electoral calculus of party politics" (Nigam 2000, 2) (see also Kothari 1984).

10. The survey was designed and executed by Anil Chamaria, a freelance journalist, Jitendra Kumar from the Media Study Group, and Yogendra Yadav, senior fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. The survey mentions that there were no Dalits and Adivasis among the top 300 journalists. See "Upper Castes Dominate National Media," *The Hindu*, June 5, 2006.

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