



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Excellence in education

India Matters



Cambridge IGCSE India Studies Newsletter 15

October 2011

In this issue	Page
Professional Development Training for Cambridge IGCSE India Studies teachers in 2012	3
Exam success in 2011	3
Paper 3 questions for 2013	3
Paper 3 topics for 2014	4
'Asia technology comes clean to provide green solutions'	4
Fact Box 1: gender-imbalanced population	5
'Cabinet approves slum development in 250 cities'	5
'Author Arundhati Roy: India's economic success a "lie"'	6
Fact Box 2: computer and internet access	7
'In India, Dynamism Wrestles With Dysfunction'	7
India Matters – no.16 (Dec 2011) the last issue	8
Appendix: Resource bank – Democracy in India	9

India Matters sets out to support subject teachers of Cambridge IGCSE India Studies, aiming to keep schools informed and seeking to encourage the spread of ideas and the exchange of good practice. Please keep in touch with feedback.

India Matters is published every other month and emailed to every contact address we have in schools which have expressed an interest in Cambridge IGCSE India Studies. All teachers in your school should have a copy so please circulate it to everyone involved. There is no restriction on photocopying.

Martin D W Jones
Product Manager
University of Cambridge International Examinations
1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU, UK
fax: +44 (0)1223 553558
phone: +44 (0)1223 553554
international@cie.org.uk

[The cover photograph shows Rush Hour in Gurgaon, Delhi, March 2011. Think about how and why this might be used when discussing economic development (Theme 2 in Paper 1) and environmental sustainability (Case Study 1 in Paper 2). See also the article 'In India, Dynamism Wrestles with Dysfunction' on p.7 below.]

Professional Development Training for Cambridge IGCSE India Studies teachers in 2012

An online course will run from 23 January to 12 March 2012. Real learning takes place when teachers try out new skills in the classroom, so we have devised a tutor-led seven week course where teachers can do just that. Divided into an introductory week and 3 units each lasting 2 weeks, you will carry out and submit one assignment in each unit by undertaking activities in the classroom. An important component of this course is the use of the discussion forum. Teachers taking part in the course will benefit from sharing ideas, problems and good practice with colleagues around the world teaching the syllabus. For details, see http://www.cie.org.uk/events/detail?event_id=333&nes=1

The closing date for bookings is 21 December 2011.

Exam success in 2011

Congratulations to the first Cambridge IGCSE India Studies learners and their teachers on their achievement:

12.5% grade **A***

35% grades **A* & A**

65% grades **A* to B**

90% grades **A* to C**

These strong results reflect hard work by everyone. We wish everyone good luck with the next stage of their education.

Paper 3 questions for 2013

Following feedback from teachers after India Matters 7 and India Matters 10 (June and December 2010), the syllabus' Question Paper Evaluation Committee has set the questions for the 2013 examination. These have been posted on the eForum. The three questions are:

Transport: 'Developing the railways should be the most important part of India's transport policy.' How far do you agree?

The peoples of India: Assess the view that India has not done enough to promote the needs of its adivasi (scheduled tribes).

India in film: How accurately does Indian cinema portray the levels of tolerance enjoyed in modern India?

You may, if you wish, restrict your investigation to any one film, for example Chak De! India (2007, director Shimit Amin). NB versions of the film are available in English and in Hindi, but candidates must write only in English.

Each candidate picks one question for their Research Portfolio.

Paper 3 topics for 2014

Suggestions have already been made by teachers for the next set of Research Portfolio topics:

- Urbanisation
- India's middle class
- Education
- The Indian diaspora
- India's future direction: East or West?
- Gandhi's place in modern India.

If you have any thoughts on these (pro or anti, with reasons), please circulate them via the eForum for discussion by everyone. Equally, it is not too late to suggest other topics via the eForum. Topics must relate to contemporary India not directly covered by the examination syllabus or already set for Paper 3. With the 'India in film' topic, specific suggestions for the exemplar film alongside the aspect of India to explore would be very helpful.



Asia technology comes clean to provide green solutions

An article of May 2011 on the BBC News website included a spotlight on several Indian companies embracing environmental technologies. This fits well with the article on Pratibha in the resources appendix of *India Matters* 12 pp.10-12:

... Polygenta uses patented technology to recycle plastic bottles to make polyester fibre. Using what it calls the Renew process, clear and coloured bottles take the place of many of the petrochemicals used in standard polyester production.

The Polygenta processing plant in Nashik, India, recycles plastic bottles to make polyester fibre. In other words, it makes clothes out of plastic bottles. The process is more cost efficient and the resulting polyester is of higher quality, the firm claims. As a result, it can charge more for it. The company's current plant operations in Nashik, India, constitute 6% of global sustainable polyester production, it says, a figure the firm hopes will grow rapidly in the coming years with more investment.



... Many of the technologies used in Indian clean tech projects in particular are imported from more developed economies and adapted for the local market. It is this adaptation process, says Mr Tandon, which is the key to success. Working well with local partners, and acknowledging the key role they play – as well as rewarding it financially – is essential. Too many western companies simply export technologies and expect to take home the lion's share of the profit, he argues. Chandra Shekhar Kundur, general partner at Ventureast, a fund manager specialising in Indian clean tech, agrees. "The Indian market is not ready for innovation yet. It's about adopting and adapting foreign technologies and utilising them in the local environment," he says.

[For the full story, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13332528>]

Fact Box 1: The gender-imbalanced population

Preliminary results from the 2011 census show that for every 1000 young boys in India, there are 914 young girls.

In Jhajjar District (Haryana) – which has the greatest disparity – the number is 774 girls per 1000 boys.

THE ASIAN AGE

Delhi | Mumbai | Kolkata | London

Cabinet approves slum development in 250 cities

New Delhi, 2 Jun 2011

The Indian Government on Thursday approved the development of housing and basic facilities in slums across 250 cities with the aim to create a slum-free country by 2020.

The decision to launch the first phase of the scheme for affordable housing for the slum dwellers was taken at the cabinet meeting on Thursday, chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Briefing the reporters after the meeting, home minister P.

Chidambaram said slum development projects under the Rajiv Awas Yojana would be undertaken in 250 cities that have a population of more than 1 lakh.

It will be undertaken across the entire country by the end of 12th Five Year Plan 2012-2017. The scheme aims to help re-develop slums, stop their proliferation and provide a dignified life and property rights to the dwellers, Mr Chidambaram said.

The government will bear 50 per cent of the cost of the projects, the Cabinet committee on economic affairs decided. Mr Chidambaram said Rs. 1,000 crores will be provided as capital for mortgage guarantee facilities under the scheme. An estimated 32.10 million people live in slums in Indian cities. "They will benefit by way of property rights and access to decent shelter, basic amenities and a dignified life," a statement issued here said.

The scheme was given a go-ahead in accordance with the announcement the government had made in June 2009 with the single aim of creating a slum-free India. Under the scheme, the centre will provide financial assistance to states that are willing to assign property rights to slum dwellers for provision of shelter and basic civic and social services for slum redevelopment, and for creation of affordable housing stock, the statement said ...

[For the full article, see <http://www.asianage.com/india/cabinet-approves-slum-development-250-cities-316>]



2/6/2011

'Author Arundhati Roy: India's economic success a "lie"'

For very critical view of the impact of economic liberalisation on India, especially its effects on the adivasi, see the 6 minute 45 second interview with Booker Prize-winning author and anti-globalisation activist Arundhati Roy, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13624077>. This interview was broadcast on the BBC 2 programme 'Newsnight' in June 2011.

Fact Box 2: Computer and internet access

India has 7 personal computers per 1000 people.

2% of India's population has access to the Internet.

For a scheme to improve internet access in rural India, see the 4 minute film report of May 2011 from BBC News at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13417079>

The New York Times

'In India, Dynamism Wrestles With Dysfunction'

Jim Yardley

8 June 2011

The New York Times has begun a promising series called "India's Way" which will examine "the messy and maddening road to progress in India". The first article's title is given above, and the cover photograph on this *India Matters* is also from it. Here is a very short extract

... With its shiny buildings and galloping economy, Gurgaon is often portrayed as a symbol of a rising "new" India, yet it also represents a riddle at the heart of India's rapid growth: how can a new city become an international economic engine without basic public services? How can a huge country flirt with double-digit growth despite widespread corruption, inefficiency and governmental dysfunction?

In Gurgaon and elsewhere in India, the answer is that growth usually occurs despite the government rather than because of it. India and China are often considered to be the world's rising economic powers, yet if China's growth has been led by the state, India's growth is often impeded by the state. China's authoritarian leaders have built world-class infrastructure; India's infrastructure and bureaucracy are both considered woefully outdated.

Yet over the past decade, India has emerged as one of the world's most important new engines of growth, despite itself. Even now, with its economy feeling the pressure from global inflation and higher interest rates, some economists predict that India will become the world's third largest economy within 15 years and could much sooner supplant China as the fastest-growing major economy.

Moreover, India's unorthodox path illustrates, on a grand scale, the struggles of many smaller developing countries to deliver growth despite weak, ineffective governments. Many have tried to emulate China's top-down economic model, but most are stuck with the Indian reality. In India, Gurgaon epitomizes that reality, managing to be both a complete mess and an economic powerhouse, a microcosm of Indian dynamism and dysfunction ...

[The cover photograph of this issue of *India Matters* is from this article. For the full text, see <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/09/world/asia/09gurgaon.html?pagewanted=2&r=1&ref=general&src=me>]

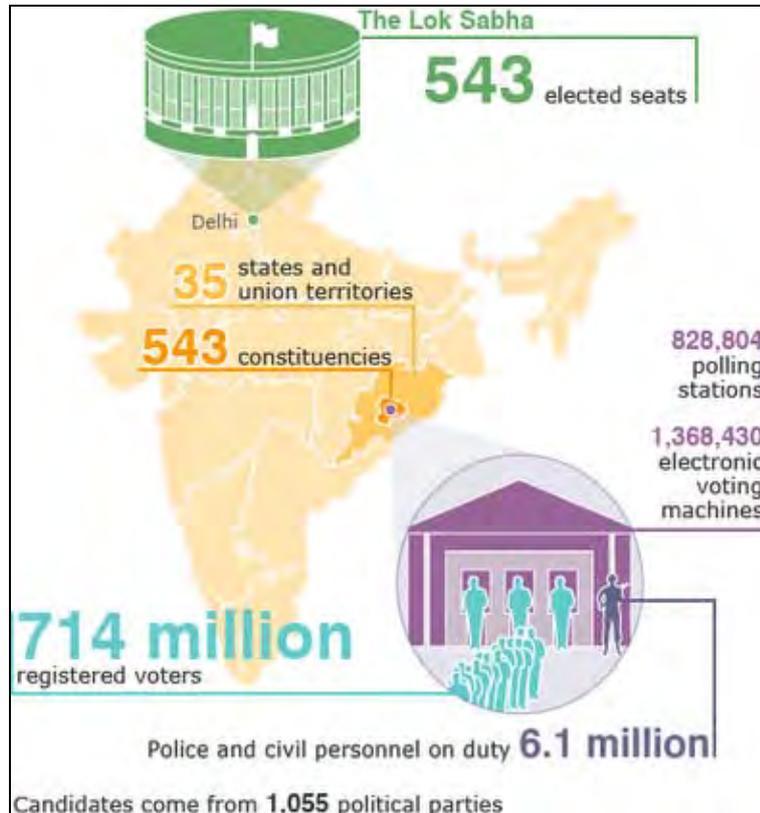
India Matters – No.16 (Dec 2011) the last issue

India Matters has been published every other month since May 2009. Issue 15 is the penultimate issue. The syllabus has been examined for the first time now so live question papers, mark schemes and examiner reports are available to teachers and learners. As the third year of teaching begins, the newsletter has served its purpose. We hope that it has been useful.

Please keep in touch – with each other as well as Cambridge.

Appendix: Resource Bank – Democracy in India

In this issue, we offer resources that might help when teaching Paper 1 Theme 1. Further resources on this theme will be found in *India Matters 4* (December 2009).



The Indian General Election 2009



India's model democracy

Mukul Kesavan

15 August 2007

Considering that when India set out to be democratic, successful democracies tended to be white, rich, Christian and with a single dominant language, its success over 60 years is significant in two ways.

First, it demonstrated beyond argument that poverty, massive illiteracy and diversity on a sub-continental scale were not arguments against democracy. They were arguments for it.

Second, India's Republican democracy is premised on a national myth of pluralism, not the standard nationalist invocation of a shared history, a single language and an assimilationist culture.

If we confine ourselves to South Asia, the most striking difference between India and the other countries in the region is that Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka are countries formally owned by their dominant religious communities.

Thus, Nepal is a "Hindu" kingdom, Pakistan and Bangladesh are "Islamic" republics and Sri Lanka's constitution gives Buddhism and Sinhala, the religion and language of the majority of Sri Lankans, the "foremost" place in the life of that country India didn't go down this road for reasons of history.

Pluralist nationalism in the 19th century was invented as an answer to the specific challenges of contemporary colonialism. It was founded on the claim that the anti-colonial Indian National Congress could speak for the nation-in-the-making because its membership included representatives of all of India's human species.

... [Pluralist democracy] became the cornerstone of Indian political practice because it legitimised the compromises essential for keeping hundreds of jostling identities aboard the good ship India.

... The political culture of the republic consisted of the balancing of special interests, procrastination, equivocation, pandering, tokenism and selective affirmative action: in a word, democratic politics.

Gender, language, religious identity, class and caste were all pressed into India's political mill, but no single identity or principle was used consistently enough to satisfy its champions.

It is a political culture that worked, approximately but demonstrably.

... The reason India is so important to the history and practice of democracy is its success in making a system of representative government work in a bewilderingly diverse country.

This achievement liberates the idea of democracy from specific cultural contexts.

... The only foreseeable threat to India's democratic future is the possibility that a political party like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) might ride a wave of majoritarian sentiment to become the default party of government.

This would threaten India's carefully built pluralist democracy because the BJP, despite its nativist rhetoric, ironically favours a European nationalist idiom, where the nation is home to a majority people. In India's case, this would be the Hindus.

... [In fact, when] a BJP-led coalition governed India for an entire parliamentary term [it] failed to make the demographic majority of Hindus a political reality. The republic's statutes and the rulings of their authorised interpreter, the Supreme Court, make it nearly impossible for political parties to fundamentally alter the basic structure of the constitution.

Besides, the diversity of the electorate forces India's ruling coalitions into such complex electoral arithmetic that the pluralism so crucial to the Republic's well-being is safe for the foreseeable future.

[For the full article, see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6943598.stm]



“ The reason India is so important to the history and practice of democracy is its success in making a system of representative government work in a bewilderingly diverse country ”

CHINADAILY

Indian democracy not a failed experiment

Binod Singh

23 November 2010

... The Indian experiment of a representative government of more than 1.1 billion people is one of the most unique in the world. Even inside China, there are very positive opinions about the Indian experience of peaceful coexistence among different ethnic groups. Leaders as well as scholars speak out about learning from India.

Let there be no doubt that the Indian brand of democracy is sustained by strong criticism inside and outside the country on the issues of governance and public goods provision. And we do acknowledge that India's human rights record is far from perfect, and there have been way too many incidents of communal, sectarian and ethnic violence for a successful democracy to live with.

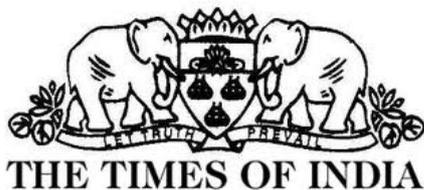
However, India's development as a democracy since its independence six decades ago has been largely peaceful, considering that many successful democracies were established after revolutions, wars, or even the slaughter of native populations. One can see what has happened in Africa, where the experiment of democracy has a very different track record.

... In a developing country like India, where the old and new structures, norms, and values are coexisting and only gradually integrating with modern liberal democracy as practiced by Western countries, it is too early to conclude whether democracy has failed India or India has failed democracy.

There is no doubt that the degeneration of politics in India and the values it has engendered have infected the country's public institutions and also tarnished the country's hope to be a model for Third World countries. But the recent performance of the Indian economy has signalled a very positive trend and it is never too late to correct the mistakes of the past.

... Contemporary Indian society is still striving to promote social justice, economic progress and widespread political participation by adopting necessary reforms to modernize its social, political and administrative institutions.

[For the full article, see http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2010-11/23/content_11593476.htm]



Is India really a democracy?

Arvind Kejriwal

27 May 2010

At the heart of all problems lies the politics of the country. We opted for democracy as our political system. But I have been wondering for quite some time - how democratic is Indian polity?

Indian polity has failed to provide solutions to the common man's problems. If a government teacher plays truant or does not teach properly, can the parents do anything about it? Or if a doctor in a government hospital does not treat properly or does not give medicines? What can a poor person do if the ration shop keeper openly siphons off rations? Or what can any one of us do if the policeman refuses to register my FIR or registers a false case against us?

We cannot do anything about it. We can only complain to higher authorities who do not act upon our complaints. So, the citizens do not have any control over government employees.

We also do not have any control over government funds. Sundernagari, a slum in East Delhi does not have a secondary school, water, sewer, etc. The people have been demanding these things for ages. But the government says there are no funds. But the government made fountains worth Rs 60 lakh a few years back.

... So we, the citizens of India, do not have any control over government funds. Government money is our money. We pay taxes. Even a beggar on the street pays tax - when he buys a piece of soap, he pays sales tax and many other taxes. All this money belongs to us. And we have absolutely no control over it?

We also do not have any control over government policies or the kind of laws passed by our legislatures. Recently, the government introduced Nuclear Civil Liability Bill. It seeks to cap the liability of a foreign company to just Rs 500 crore in the event of an accident on its nuclear reactor. It will have no criminal liability. I thought the government was playing with our lives. Almost selling our lives. And why is the government doing this? Some companies seem to be lobbying for this Bill. And we, the people of India, have no say in it?

So, we have no control over government employees, government funds, government policies. Is this democracy? Just vote once in five years and then plead before the same people who you voted to power? Or plead before the officials who take salary out of your taxes?

We have a democracy of elections to elections. After winning an election, the parties become brazen and arrogant. They would do all wrong things and if you question them, they would say - why don't you change the government next time? But that would be five years later. What do I do right now? I am suffering right now.

Right to Information is a small concrete step in making our polity more democratic. In this bizarre democracy of elections to elections, it has given power to the people to "just question" the governments. Is it not time to move a step forward and demand some kind of direct participation in government decision making? Is that possible?

[For the full article, see

<http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/for-the-people/entry/is-india-really-a-democracy>]



Indian democracy has an ugly side

Gideon Rachman
18 May 2009



“A billion people, in a functioning democracy. Ain’t that something.” George W. Bush’s awestruck musings on the wonders of Indian democracy will be echoed all around the world this week.

... Political scientists have spent years demonstrating that democracy rarely survives in poor countries. India is a triumphant exception to this rule. Despite the fact that a quarter of its population live below the poverty line, the country has been a functioning democracy for almost the entire period since independence in 1947.

Indian democracy is indeed a wonder to behold. But this fact can lead to some unwarranted starry-eyed conclusions about the country. At this moment of euphoria, four common notions about Indian democracy deserve to be doused with a little scepticism.

First, it should be remembered that the country’s democracy is not always a beautiful sight. Manmohan Singh, the 76-year-old prime minister who has just won re-election, is a charmingly intellectual and courtly figure. But while Mr Singh is an impeccable frontman, the country’s politics has a much sleazier and more disreputable side.

In most countries when politicians are slammed as “criminals” this is simply vulgar abuse. In India, it is often the literal truth ... 128 of the 543 members of the last Indian parliament had faced criminal charges or investigations, including 83 cases of murder. In

a poor society, gangsters can and do use muscle and money to force their way into parliament.

Second, just because India is a democracy, it does not follow that it will automatically side with fellow-democracies around the world. Mr Bush's interest in Indian democracy was more than purely intellectual. The former president made a conscious decision to form a strategic alliance with India – and to cut the country a special deal over nuclear weapons – because he felt that democracies should be natural allies.

The Americans are carefully building a new special relationship with democratic India, partly to counterbalance authoritarian China. It is certainly true that relations between the US and India have been getting steadily warmer, driven by commerce, Indian immigration to America, the English language and – to a degree – common values.

But India is a major power with its own interests and distinct take on the world. It will not automatically fall into line with Western policy on sanctions against Iran or a world trade deal. And if realpolitik dictates, India will cosy up to a dictatorship, such as the Burmese military junta.

The sleazy side of Indian democracy has led to a third common notion – popular in the authoritarian parts of Asia: the idea that democracy imposes a sort of tax on India. For many years, it was held that India suffered from a “Hindu rate of growth” because of its inefficient government. Growth in recent years, which has increased to an average of 9 per cent, should have put paid to that idea. But it is still true that, for all the virtues of its political system, Indian governance has failed hundreds of millions of people. Rates of poverty and illiteracy are much higher in democratic India than in authoritarian China.

Euphoria about modern India has led to a fourth mistaken idea: the notion that democracy has given the country a deep and unshakable stability. It is certainly true that the political future of China looks more uncertain and alarming than that of India. But India still faces serious threats to its internal stability ... The threat of terrorism is now so severe that this month's [Premier League cricket] tournament had to be relocated to South Africa.

... While terrorism can be blamed on outsiders, India is also facing a serious internal insurrection. The notion of Maoist guerrillas roaming the countryside sounds like it belongs to another age – and is certainly at odds with the image of a modern India of commuter airlines and high technology. But over the past five years the Naxal insurgency has grown in strength – attacks on trains, mines and industrial sites are on the rise.

It is indeed marvellous that a country that is so large and so relatively poor can manage a peaceful, democratic transition. The new Indian government should also be able to

use its stronger majority to renew the process of economic reform. But there are still some unappealing realities just behind the beautiful facade of Indian democracy.

[For the full article, see <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9ec96146-43d6-11de-a9be-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1PWp1mR3J>]



Ladakhi women queue to vote, 2009 General Election.



India: A corrupt dynasty or democracy?

India's former finance minister says "dynasticism" played a leading role in fostering culture of political corruption.

Jaswant Singh

31 March 2011

Is corruption crippling India? At first glance, such a question seems absurd. After all, India has had a functioning democratic order since before 1947, and its economy weathered the recent global economic crisis when most others faltered. Yet a combination of factors that have mushroomed over time has raised serious concerns about the threat that corruption poses to the very fabric of the Indian state.

Of course India is not experiencing any Arab-style "youth quakes" in response to the current corruption scandal plaguing the Congress Party-led government, nor is it likely to do so. India's economy continues its robust 8.5 – 9% annual GDP growth - the envy of many.

... But disparity and discontent are rising, driven in part by food-price inflation, which recently topped 20 per cent year-on-year ... Manufacturing growth has turned sluggish, and the fiscal deficit has risen above 5 per cent of GDP ... Moreover, almost one-third of the country's administrative districts are now affected by extreme left-wing "Maoist" violence

... But, on top of all these woes sits corruption, crippling all the organs of state and reaching into its highest offices.

Throughout the Indian parliament's recent winter session, the opposition (I am a leader of its largest party, the BJP) demanded a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to enquire into a seemingly endless series of public scandals. The government, however, would not concede on this point, and the opposition refused to relent.

The outcome was paralysis: an entire session of the parliament ended with not a single item of legislative, governmental, or other business completed. This unprecedented impasse led many to wonder whether it portends even worse political immobility to come. Indeed, during the standoff, prime minister Manmohan Singh, returning from a G20 meeting, expressed concerns about the "future of India's parliamentary democracy".

Singh's dire pronouncement was most likely born of the unhappy ending to the parliament's session. But it was also the consequence of scandalous misconduct at India's telecommunications ministry where some \$30 billion may have been syphoned off through corrupt practises, gross mismanagement of the Commonwealth games, and many other instances of governmental corruption.

... Many high officials display wilful disregard for the letter of the law and flaunt their defiance of its spirit. Their corruption is debilitating not only India's parliament, but its democracy as well.

The plague of 'dynasticism'

Perhaps corruption has gained the upper hand because India's system for redressing grievances has become so sluggish. Indians also seem to be losing regard for each other; they are abandoning the sense of fellowship that marked the country's earlier years of struggle. But, without a fundamental sense of solidarity with one's fellow citizens, no parliamentary democracy can function.

There is also a growing sense that India has forgotten how to accommodate dissent, that alternative viewpoints are considered entirely irrelevant. As a result, the government views disagreement as a "disservice", a rebellious challenge that must be crushed.

... In such an atmosphere of contempt for opposition, corruption grows and festers. And it is corruption, combined with a loss of accountability, that is eroding the checks and balances of India's democratic order. As a result, what remains of representative institutions is an empty shell of residual decision-making, with bribery being the only real conversation of government.

The "dynasticism" that has taken such a firm grip on much of Indian politics plays a large role in fostering corruption. After all, inherited political power is the very antithesis of democracy because accountability is no part of it. And when accountability is absent, both the cunning and the aggrieved feel that they must turn to corrupt means to make their concerns known.

Preserving hereditary privileges invariably means that rules and governmental processes get bent, if not made wholly subservient to dynastic concerns. Today, all of India is paying the price.

[For the full article, see

<http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2011/03/2011328141557707216.html>]



Why India is in dire need of electoral reform

Soutik Biswas, India correspondent

28 June 2011



Faith in politicians has eroded in India

India's democracy is facing serious challenges.

Nearly a third of MPs - 158 of 543, to be precise - in the parliament face criminal charges. Seventy-four of them face serious charges such as murder and abduction. There are more than 500 criminal cases against these lawmakers.

These MPs hail from across the political spectrum.

Twelve of the 205 MPs or 5% of the lawmakers in the ruling Congress Party face criminal charges. The main opposition BJP fares worse with 19 of 116 - or more than 16% - of its MPs facing charges. More than 60% of the MPs belonging to two key regional parties, Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party - who profess to serve the poor and the untouchables - face criminal charges.

Then there are allegations of rampant vote-buying by parties, especially in southern India.

The Election Commission [seized](#) more than 600 million rupees (\$13.3m; £8.3m) in cash in Tamil Nadu in the run-up to the state elections in April. It believes that the money was kept to buy votes.

In an US embassy cable leaked by WikiLeaks in March, an American official was quoted as saying that one Tamil Nadu party [inserted cash](#) and a voting slip instructing which party to vote for in the morning newspapers - more innovative than handing out money directly to voters. The party concerned denies the charge.

Independent election watchdogs believe that candidates routinely under-report or hide campaign expenses. During the 2009 general elections, nearly all of the 6753 candidates officially declared that they had spent between 45 to 55% of their expenses limit.

After the recent state elections - in three states and one union territory - elected legislators declared that the average amount of money spent in their campaigns to be only between 39% and 59% of their limits in their official declarations. A total of 76 legislators declared that they did not spend any money on public meetings and processions.

There is something seriously amiss in the state of democracy in India. That is why, most believe, the country urgently needs electoral reforms.

India's most respected election watchdog [Association For Democratic Reforms \(ADR\)](#) has rolled out a pointed wish-list to clean up India's politics and target corruption. I am sharing some of them:

- Any person against whom charges have been framed by a court of law or offences punishable for two years or more should not be allowed to contest elections.
Candidates charged with serious crimes like murder, rape, kidnapping and extortion

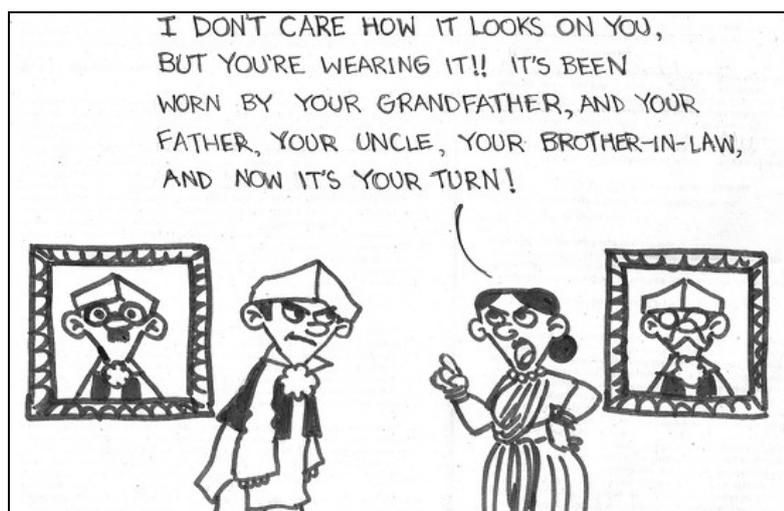
should be banned from contesting elections. India's politicians have resisted this saying that opponents regularly file false cases against them.

- To stop candidates and parties seeking votes on the basis of caste, religion and to stop divisive campaigns, a candidate should be declared a winner only if he or she gets more than 50% plus one vote. When no candidate gets the required number of votes, there should be a run-off between the top two candidates.
- Voters should have the option of not voting for any of the candidates.
- A law against use of excessive money in elections by candidates.
- Despite the clamour for the state funding of elections, it is still not clear how much elections cost in India. Political parties do not come clean on their revenues and expenses, and until there is a clearer picture of how much they spend, it will be difficult to fix an amount. So political parties should give out verifiable accounts, which should be also available for public scrutiny.

The desire for electoral reform is not new. Since 1990, there have been at least seven hefty comprehensive government-commissioned reports for such reforms. The [Election Commission of India](#) has been saying since 1998 that candidates with pending criminal cases against them should not be allowed to contest.

If there is an overwhelming consensus about these reforms, why have governments sat on it for more than two decades? Ask the politicians.

[For the full article, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13692575>]



Cartoon from 'WSJI Debate: Do Dynastic Politics Hurt Indian Democracy?', *The Wall Street Journal India*, New York, October 2009
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125559182680386969.html>



Cartoon 'Goondagiri and Paisapower still matter to win elections', from an article of 2009 on the blog Vjai.com

<http://vjai.com/post/102336007/goondagiri-and-paisapower-still-matter-to-win-indian>