

Philosophical Foundations of Indian Democracy: Constitutional Values of Liberty, Equality, and Justice

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Abstract

Indian democracy is grounded in a constitutional philosophy that places liberty, equality, and justice at its normative core. Enshrined in the Preamble and elaborated through Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy, these values define both the moral vision and institutional structure of the Indian Republic. Liberty is conceived not merely as freedom from state interference but as personal autonomy compatible with dignity and social responsibility. Equality, while guaranteeing formal non-discrimination, extends into substantive equality through affirmative action and welfare measures aimed at correcting historical and structural disadvantages. Justice emerges as a unifying constitutional imperative, encompassing procedural fairness, distributive equity, and social justice, and is essential for sustaining democratic legitimacy. These values do not operate in isolation; rather, they are mutually reinforcing and continuously shaped by judicial interpretation, democratic participation, and social movements. Within the Indian context, secularism and pluralism further condition the realization of constitutional values by accommodating cultural and religious diversity while preserving constitutional unity. Contemporary challenges such as globalization, technological change, and socio-economic inequalities test the resilience of these principles. A balanced and dynamic interpretation of liberty, equality, and justice remains crucial for deepening democracy and ensuring constitutional governance in India.

Keywords: Indian Democracy; Constitutional Values; Liberty; Equality; Justice; Secularism; Pluralism.

1. Introduction

The Constitution of India lays the philosophical foundation of democracy in the form of liberty, equality, and justice. The Constitution explicitly states that the people of India have established the Republic of India in order to secure to all its citizens liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship; equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation. Democracy has been subjected to many experiments around the globe. Democracy desires well-being for every citizen and has cast its glorious reign for more than fifty decades in India, the largest democracy in the world. The Constitution is the soul and spirit of the nation which ensures the sanctuary for liberty, equality, and justice.

India's experiences with colonialism, occupation, violence, and injustice, particularly against vulnerable groups, provided the imperative for a rigorous and authentic constitutional vision that embraces liberty, equality, and justice as the nation's core values. Constitutional

provisions that guarantee these rights for every citizen of the country not only commit the State to ensuring their attainment but also impose on all who govern the nation the obligation to adhere to the planned parameters required for citizens to enjoy such rights. All three values emerged as a response to the differentiated denial of respect and recognition extended universally on the basis of particular identities, whether caste, gender, religion, etc. Likewise, all three values remain perpetually engaged in the contestation process regarding the scope and content of each conception. The realisation of liberty is a pre-condition for the enjoyment of both equality and justice, while equality is a measure after the welcome attainment of liberty (Nishihara, 2017).

2. Conceptualizing Liberty in the Indian Constitutional Order

The central point of tension in Indian jurisprudence surrounds the core issue of liberty, with its classical formulation as the right to be left alone running into conflict with the state's competing claims to impose regulation over collective interests. The weight placed on individual freedom and autonomy varies not only among different schools of jurisprudence—be they formalistic, functionalist, or purist—but also even within this debate. Among the restrictions permitted by Article 19(2), for example, the prohibition on contempt of court is subject to widely differing views; a narrow conception of the freedom of speech and the eligibility of restrictions going beyond the usual tests of proportionality and over-breadth are only two of the contrasting perspectives held within the Indian Supreme Court (Nishihara, 2017).

The differences in outlook with respect to liberty are further complicated by competing attachments to liberty and dignity, with the freedom to choose, for example, enjoying stringent protection under Article 21 as a matter of personal liberty even as the constitution explicitly articulates a commitment to human dignity as an end of democratic governance. The manner in which both liberty and dignity have reached the courts and impacted the polity at large reveals differing balances; certain historical failures to protect dignity and the continuing infliction of humiliation—be it through custodial violence, the stripping of clothing during detention, or the degrading treatment of migrant labour—oblige the expectation that the state of democracy dignifies the individual cannot be elided through the unrestricted embrace of personal liberty.

2.1. Personal Freedom and Public Authority

In constitutional democracies, individuals remain subject to both limitations and responsibilities imposed by the polity and the state. Secularism, pluralism, and democratic bilateralism also include both liberty as a personal freedom and liberty as an enabling condition that facilitates the unencumbered exercise of individual choices. The state must respect personal autonomy by refraining from unjustified intrusion and must also enable it by creating appropriate institutional, social, and economic conditions. The penal power of the state is the extreme limit of social coexistence and cannot be exercised without relevant justification within a framework of democratic accountability. Public authority must be checked against personal freedom.

The tension between personal liberty and public authority arises from the need for social coexistence. Individuals do not live exclusively in solitude; they interact through institutions such as families, schools, businesses, and governments. Social norms and public policies emerge from these interactions to govern relationships across diverse sectors. Personal liberty operates within the framework of coexistence; excessive insistence on autonomy can obstruct interpersonal engagement and disrupt the social framework itself. During constitutional debates, the Constituent Assembly was deeply concerned with the interplay between liberty and public authority (Nishihara, 2017).

The relevant section of the Constitution lists activities connected with Freedom of Speech and Expression and Freedom to Assemble Peaceably and without Arms. *S. R. Bommai v. Union of India* reiterates the fundamental character of the democratic process. In association with the Right to Life, it has been held that liberty cannot be construed narrowly and extends beyond a few activities. Being part of political discourse enables an individual to realize one's full potential in society, and thereby national growth. Personal liberty also protects the freedom to enter relationships with those sharing joys, recreations, aspirations, and interacting with the universe (A. Lawrence, 2006).

2.2. The Scope and Limits of Liberty in Fundamental Rights

The idea of liberty protects the person from unwarranted intrusions by government and transcends spatial boundaries. The term "freedom of autonomy" captures the essential elements of liberty protected within privacy and equal protection doctrines a broad individual freedom that situates government in a subordinate position, with authority to act only to safeguard natural private rights (A. Lawrence, 2006). Constitutional provisions recognised by many as libertarian in character sought to limit government institutional capability precisely to promote individual liberty. The Constitution framed by the Framers appeared to them as a Bill of Rights, establishing a government of enumerated, limited powers intrinsically incapable of infringing rights. Eighteenth-century principles of individual freedom and resistance to state power continue to shape contemporary liberty doctrine by statutory and institutional influence that extends the scope of authority and remains faithful to the original understanding of governmental accountability.

2.3. Liberty, Dignity, and the State

Constitutional liberty alongside dignity articulates the state's obligation to safeguard fundamental freedoms. Under Article 21, the state must respect, protect, and fulfil the right to life, which encompasses the right to live with human dignity. Liberty, therefore, emerges as a constituent element of this guarantee and lastingly connects with equal protection and non-discrimination. This cluster of rights anticipates conditions essential for the exercise of personal freedoms. The Court has variously construed dignity as derivative of liberty, the progenitor of fundamental rights broadly, the conditional precondition for liberty, and dignity itself, which inclusively reflects the laws of nature or divinity, pre-existing society and legislation, holds within a lifelong narrative, finds residence in the individual's body, and envisages fulfilment through psycho-emotional and relational aspects (George Wright, 2006). Dignity marks a compass-point for the free pursuit of being human, encompassing the fundamental right for a person to be himself.

The Indian model presupposes freedom and individual choice. The foundational charter complements regret and horror at the episodes of personal liberty extinguished in the colonial era, traits that presumably would not have surfaced without the experience of deprivation. Individuality grazes both the private and the public. The Constitution does not merely guarantee an assembly for collective action but also demolishes the facade from under which the very notion of community could recoil. The very practice of selected and free association nowadays increases the very choice in the public arena, through individual preference expressed neurolinguistically (R. Koslowski, 2020).

3. Equality as a Constitutional Principle

The constitutional value of equality is a core concern of democracy and of the Indian Constitution. Although 'equality' is a term commonly used in discourse on democracy, political theory contains diverse ideas about it. Philosophers have drawn a conceptual distinction between 'formal' and 'substantive' equality (Robb, 2013) depending on how equality should be understood conceptual distinctions between 'formal' and 'substantive' equality arise. Philosophers offer further distinctions among these forms that fit into three broad categories: 'treatment', 'social', and 'opportunity'. Formal equality within the 'treatment'-based dimension, in turn, is interpreted either positively or negatively. The positive interpretation maintains that people must be treated alike in law and policy where these are concerned with courses of action of fundamental importance to everyone (E. Jr. O'Brian, 2010). The negative interpretation emphasizes that people must not be treated differently as long as the status or trait on which differences are based that is, the classification is irrelevant to any currently relevant inquiry.

The most basic criterion of 'formal' democratic equality appears to be 'equal concern and respect' by government (P. Fletcher, 1999). Equal concern requires that government does not regard the well-being of any citizen as more or less important than that of others, and that no citizen has more or less right to the advancement of his or her own welfare than any other. Equal respect requires that government must not value the good of some citizens more highly than that of others and must recognize each citizen as an end. The criterion of 'substantive' equality is conceptualized in several ways: broadly, as equal outcomes, welfare or capabilities; narrowly, as equal access to opportunities; and in between, as a combination of equal outcomes and equal opportunities. Resembling these broad definitional distinctions among the possible applications of equality, the philosophical literature on equality emphasizes dimensions of political equality that might appear to be independent but are in fact interrelated.

3.1. Formal and Substantive Equality

Equality is a multifaceted concept (P. Fletcher, 1999). The constitutional interpretation recognizes formal and substantive equality. Formal equality signifies equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on specified grounds; it imposes a limit on the institution of privileges. Substantive equality recognizes the implications of discrimination and unequal treatment of individuals and groups in a society characterized by structural inequalities. Judicial interpretation has established a non-exhaustive list of a few classes of individuals who could be favoured by state action, but equality-based policy design requires identifying other groups or categories of individuals for whom the State's indifference constitutes discrimination. Furthermore, an investigation of equality across a range of status characteristics, including caste, gender, and religion, alongside the criteria of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in constitutional jurisprudence highlights the non-existence of a single formal-equality paradigm and the requirement of broad-based socio-economic State action to construct a viable policy framework.

3.2. Equality and Social Justice: Reservations, Welfare, and the State

Equality operates as a two-dimensional concept: formal equality and social equality or substantive equality. Courts have interpreted Article 14 of the Indian Constitution as a guarantee of formal equality, ensuring equal treatment to every person, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, religion, sex, or place of birth. The Constitution also mandates affirmative action programmes and explicitly mentions the constitutional guarantee of equality; Articles 15 and 16 permit the State to make special provisions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes in public employment. The State is obliged to eliminate inequalities and to adopt policies and programmes aimed at ensuring a more just society.

Equality of status and opportunity has been related to affirmative action policies, welfare measures, and restrictions aimed at bringing about a social revolution through abolition of social disabilities and alleviation of poverty and deprivation of large sections of society. Consequently provision for reservations has been made in educational institutions, promotional opportunities, loans, and tenders. Reservations have also been debated in the context of access to political office and the judicial system. The provision for educational reservation rests primarily on the need for a citizen to participate in the electoral process (Sampat Kumar, 2015).

3.3. Non-Discrimination and Equality of Opportunity

The principle of non-discrimination serves as a necessary supplement to the constitutional guarantee of equality of opportunity. Operationalised through the Directive Principles of State Policy and implemented via welfare and development schemes, equality of opportunity remains a necessity for disadvantaged groups in socially unequal societies. However, social inequalities persist and have hindered the ability of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to avail of equal opportunity assured by article 16. Discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, disability, caste, religion, or creed continues to adversely shape the opportunities available to persons, impede access, and inflict stigma. The Supreme Court-directive principles have confined the scope of the right to equality of opportunity in matters of public employment to a narrow framework so as not to hinder the progress and development of under-resourced groups, leading to the maintenance of quotas of reservation in public employment.

To give elasticity and expand the horizons of the right to equality of opportunity assisted by the Directive Principles, the notion of a 'disadvantaged group' applicable to SCs, STs, and OBCs in the domain of employment extends to socio-economic and other similar indicators encountered by the other comprehensive sectors like women, transgender persons, the disabled classes and people deprived of their liberty. The struggles, anger, anxiety and their admission to essential services like food, shelter, health, education and personal autonomy in issues relating to hygiene, sanitation, and privacy amongst these disadvantaged segments like the Northern states of Jammu and Kashmir, the North Eastern states of Nagaland, Mizoram and also stretch across the peri-urban, slum and rural stretches echo the existence of still more sections distinct from SCs, STs, OBCs and therefore yet again throw considerable light on the State's insensitivity towards a significant share of the disadvantaged that possibly remains unrecognized within the ambit of the 'disadvantaged groups' itself.

4. Justice as a Constitutional Imperative

The Indian Constitution ascribes paramount importance to justice as a normative principle and a constitutional value through its preamble, fundamental rights and directive principles (Nishihara, 2017). The justice principle is essential for the very survival of democracy and the basic structure doctrine, evolution of constitutional law, and the primacy of constitutional values. Justice is understood as being procedural, distributive, and social, and is linked with institutional structure, rights provisions, and the state's obligation to promote social welfare (Singh, 2017). Justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity are all interconnected. The fundamental precept of justice is the emergence of the constitutional state, the rule of law, and constitutionalism as a form of institutional arrangement within a society. Justice can be viewed as the process of redressing grievances, settling disputes, and delivering lawful entitlements commensurate with entitlements such as liberty, equality, fraternity, and dignity, and it can be implemented through certain institutional arrangements. Justice can also be considered as the fulfilment of collective

civilizational aspirations shared by all members of a collectivity, and justice thus constitutes one of the primary motivations for the formation of the constitutional state.

India is said to be endowed with an elaborate institutional mechanism for addressing justice, which comprises several institutions, including the courts, commissions, and bureaucracy, among others. However, the organization structure, accessibility, efficiency, accountability, legitimacy and impairment of these approaches have generated debates over the effectiveness of the approaches. The conventional view positions liberty, equality, and justice in opposition to one another, where freedom denotes the absence of interference by others and the government, thus creating a conflict between liberty and communal welfare or general well-being. Caution is required in examining the question of the relationship among constitutional values from fundamental rights jurisprudence. Liberty, equality, and justice can be viewed in terms of their positive and negative meaning, where positive freedom implies participation in the common good and attainment of self-realization through other.

4.1. Conceptualizations of Justice: Procedural, Distributive, and Social

Justice embodies various concepts, including procedural, distributive, and social. Procedural justice pertains to the legitimacy of institutions in realizing rights; distributive justice concerns allocation among individuals; and social justice seeks the welfare of the public. These definitions retain some autonomy and may be invoked in conjunction or in alternative combinations. Their elaboration below apportions different expositions among the accounts of liberty and equality, correlating evident institutional positions with the ideas of state duties, fundamental rights, and social justice.

The “fundamental rights” enshrined in Part III of the Constitution closely associate with distributive notions, linking compliance to individual well-being, confirmed by the Constitution’s “directive principles” enshrined in Part IV, which foreground social justice (Adindu Onuoha & Nwachukwu, 2017). Social justice embraces welfare measures for public goods and remunerative provisions for individuals with respect to universally defined needs. The “directive principles” delineate the State’s responsibilities regarding justice and social welfare; where “social justice” subsumes other principles, it is designated “socialistic” and placed foremost (A. Welsh, 2004).

4.2. Institutional Mechanisms for Justice: Courts, Commissions, and Governance

Institutional mechanisms perform a vital role in achieving justice, which remains paramount in Indian democracy. Without effective arbiter or mechanism to reach justice, the realization of liberty, equality, or any other value becomes arbitrary. Procedure itself cannot substantiate just resolutions without safeguarding the transacting individuals’ basic right to equitable treatment by institutional mechanisms. Major institutional mechanisms that the state has adopted are the omission of commission machinery, the establishment of democratic governance systems, and the establishment of the judiciary.

The right of access to institutions of justice is explicitly mentioned in Article 39A of the Directive Principles of State Policy. This right is based upon another explicit requirement, namely, providing free legal advice and any other assistance to needy and deserving citizens before the Courts. Judicial redress can be looked at precisely through the perspective which conceives it as a mechanism to furnish justice to a victim of crime. Justice, being a Verbal Noun, pertains to the action of administering justice and carries a basic sense of distribution of different dues. In the perspective of justice as fair distribution of dues and redress for neglect, the wider concept of justice necessarily includes more specific conceptions. The requirement of fair procedure to redress one’s grievances clearly belongs to any of these categories. Therefore, access to democratic

Forums is deemed necessary for furnishing minimum justice to citizens generally and even more essential for vulnerable sections especially (Mate, 2010).

Justice through democratic Forums presupposes a minimum of three other guarantees. First, a charge cannot be treated as proved unless corroborated by some other independent evidence or unless self-incriminatory. Second, administrative decision cannot be construed into refusal of a citizen's right to enter the democratic Forum showing the waiting capacity of the decision. Third, even the executive action taken in the matter of continuance or cessation of the citizenship cannot be construed as a bar in approaching the democratic Forum through the intervention of other statutory or judicial provisions.

4.3. Justice and Liberty: Balancing Individual Rights with Collective Well-being

The substance of justice connects intimately with the substance of liberty: the two are ultimately inseparable, even if justice is viewed as a second-order concept. A few courts have grasped this point. For example, the Madras High Court observed: "Liberty, therefore, cannot be seen and understood without relating it to the concept of social and economic justice in the socio-economic conditions of the country" (Ray Huhn, 2015). The substance of liberty also relates intimately to the concept of human dignity, which is another value enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Since liberty, justice, and dignity are the three values mentioned in the preamble of the Constitution, the notions of liberty and dignity cannot be viewed independently of the notion of justice. While liberty is, as the Founding Fathers recognised, the most urgent requirement, it might nevertheless be an incomplete concept viewed independently of justice or dignity.

Even if it were a complete concept, it would not suffice to ensure well-being. The other two values play a more important role in systematic efforts to ensure that well-being is achieved. Well-being is distinguished from mere physical survival, and it follows that liberty, if taken to mean mere freedom from restraint or interference, does not secure well-being. Butler & Humaq, for example, observe (Adindu Onuoha & Nwachukwu, 2017) : "The objection, by many, to an unrestrained drive for liberation has voiced the serious concern that freedom, as defined by some seeking liberation, if put into practice, would, in effect, be freedom for the few and bondage for the many."

Ensuring well-being requires resort to the concept of justice, of opportunity rather than equity; and the use of equity rather than opportunity happens in the negative sense of keeping unearned bounty out of reach. The argument then does not simply move from liberty to the two "higher" values of dignity and justice, but the co-equal character of the three values remains established even if systems of piratical distress should require turning specifically and momentarily to justice. The transition from liberty to classical civil liberty and thence to classical freedom materialises only with the substance of these three values simultaneously shaded.

5. Intersections with Secularism, Pluralism, and Democracy

Secularism is a principle that prohibits the State from recognizing any particular religion. Nothing is more religiously sensitive in the Indian constitutional context than secularism. Unlike the Western conception of secularism, which seeks to eliminate religion from public and State activity, Indian secularism expressly recognizes the role of religion in public and State life. In its practice, the objective of Indian secularism is to protect all religions equally, to accord everyone the freedom to propagate and practice their religion, and to seek solutions to public problems and issues even in religious texts. The need for such a conceptualization arose because of the diverse religious beliefs and practices that existed in the country at the time of its independence and

continue today. A detailed interpretation of secularism is elaborated in the Indian Constitution – notably Articles 25-28 (Pirani Hirji, 2015).

Pluralism is a wide notion that encompasses a multitude of views. Pluralism as a specific interpretation of the broader concept of democracy recognizes the importance of pluralism in the realm of group-differentiated rights, known as 'cultural rights'. Democracy presupposes the existence of societal groups religious, linguistic, ethnic, occupational, and other social groups capable of collectively articulating their demands – for effective group representation. The Constitution deals with a multitude of such groups and recognizes their rights for better governance (Singh, 2018).

5.1. Secularism in Theory and Practice

Secularism in India has been a site of political struggle and controversy, emphasizing the equal respect of all religions rather than a separation of religion and politics (Kapur, 1999). Shortly after independence, India adopted a constitution establishing a secular state and a new concept of citizenship. The modern age calls for moving beyond religious disputes and using science and technology to improve society, encouraging rationality and a focus on the common welfare (Singh, 2018). The concept of secularism in India consisted in the establishment of an equal respect for all religions, in contrast with Western concepts of secularism that emphasize a separation between the State and religion. This conceptualization permits the liberal State to retain the jurisdiction to intervene in affairs of religion. India has provided for two constitutive elements of secularism. The first element relates to the accommodation of diversity and pluralism.

Such polity allows citizens in a culturally diverse faith to democratically agree, and consent freely and voluntarily to be governed and continue to be governed as citizens. Respect for diversity embodies the democratic spirit and guarantees unity. Secular ethics can be strengthened by sternly dealing with acts of vandalism and ensuring guilty parties are punished. Secularism, which emphasizes citizens' inalienable rights and the rule of law, helps mount public pressure against sectarian violence and hatred; it rests on the shared history of the nation and is a hallmark of both India's ancient civilization and modern globalization.

5.2. Pluralism, Minorities, and Cultural Rights

The Indian Constitution recognizes and accommodates pluralism in society. To achieve this objective, it provides for individual rights and minority rights. Individual rights are guaranteed under the Fundamental Rights chapter (Part III), and minority rights are provided for in Articles 29-30 and a few other provisions. Furthermore, Articles 46 and 340 assure special protection to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections. Unlike the individual rights provided to all citizens, minority rights can be claimed only by a person belonging to a community identified as a minority. Hence, minority rights are also termed "group rights," which are supplementary to fundamental rights. Minority rights can enable the empowerment of minority communities. The Constitution does not lay down any definition of "minority." However, Article 29(1) indicates that a minority community can be formed based on religion, race, language, or script. Each of these categories is further explained in detail.

There are provisions for linguistic minorities in different parts of the Constitution, especially in Articles 29, 30, and 347. This Article grants a right to establish and administer educational institutions of one's choice to both educational and linguistic minorities. The difference between cultural rights and freedom of speech is that the latter is economically linked to material property. Linguistic minority communities also enjoy additional educational rights beyond these rights. Article 30(1) is not merely a fundamental right but a constitutional right

designed to protect and promote a minority community's language and culture everything has affected well-being personal freedom political freedom social justice economic justice social politics religion culture discriminatory policies protection enforcement protector Government negligence (Pirani Hirji, 2015).

5.3. Democratic Bilateralism: Participation, Deliberation, and Accountability

The normative political theory underlying participatory democracy connects collective decision-making through active participation of citizens with their maximum liberty, since citizens are better placed to know their welfare and freedoms. The process requisites enabling deliberation determine a democratic posture towards norms grounded in freedom, equality and justice. Public deliberation requires the relevance of information to the decision at hand, knowledge of the decision context and its consequences, prior formation of opinions based on the competing propositions of the alternatives, the resolution of conflicting premises shared by all individuals concerned by the decision, and two distinct periods to consider the public domain of the decision and the period leading to its finalization, where they share alternatives but not decisions that remains private until the last moment of reflection. Therefore, deliberation can only occur after participation has been achieved. Decision-making can be understood in relation to two complementary dimensions: the density of claims within each subject and the plurality or spectrum of these subjects. The first dimension requires a mapping of the claim space and the patterns of claims to identify those habits of claim making that are likely to remain stable, despite shifts in the considered population. The diversity of claims within the same domain can therefore remain limited, but the claims may remain diverse, both demographically and ethnologically, and also with regards to topic, modality and sphere.

Participatory mechanisms irregularly expose citizens to the normative state. The design of the mechanism shapes the intensity, type and framing of this exposure. Most mechanisms target the claims made to government, where citizens possess important choices concerning alternatives, criteria and evaluative dimensions of the decision batch. The participation-popular sovereignty-liberal rights nexus provides an additional layer of systemic reflection on these mechanisms. Diverse and path dependent options have emerged to provide for greater citizen exposure to the claims of non-governmental external actors. Public authorities shape collectively binding frameworks when establishing the rules for deliberation through a chain of participatory venues, which operates with a degree of autonomy. The triple interface sustained by the notion of democracy defines how liberty, equality and justice remain at odds and how a search for balance occurs, often through the main operational variable, which remains vague. Moreover, deliberation is hardly mentioned, even in constitutional contexts explicitly designed to explore its potential.

6. Prospects for Liberty, Equality, and Justice

Liberty, equality, and justice form the philosophical foundation of the Indian Constitution as basic features of democracy. The articulation of these fundamental constitutional values must consider the challenges and prospects facing India, as forces posing threats to them abound. Important constitutional documents, debates, and landmark Supreme Court cases reveal unresolved tensions within and interactions among liberty, equality, and justice that deserve further scrutiny. The uncertainty surrounding these values has only increased since the Constitution was adopted, yet a broader understanding of them can still yield fruitful insights into their future viability as constitutional guarantees.

The Constitution's commitment to liberty, equality, and justice rests on the foundation of secularism, pluralism, and democratic bilateralism. Secularism establishes the boundaries of state

authority and dictates the relationship between religion and public life, while pluralism acknowledges the existence of multiple social identities and constructs institutional, political, and legal mechanisms to accommodate them. Democratic bilateralism emphasizes the need for citizens to shape the state's organization and operation through participation, deliberation, and accountability. Each pillar addresses a set of moral ideals that the Constitution endorses and that individuals pursuing their fullest development must observe. Pluralism safeguards opportunities for individuals and groups to engage in practices deemed necessary for their structural, material, and moral wellbeing and fulfillment. Each ideal expresses a constitutional commitment explicitly or implicitly necessary for the effective realization of liberty, equality, and justice through an enduring public discourse that shapes collective and individual experiences. Failure to acknowledge and address these commitments impedes and constrains the pursuit of liberty, equality, and justice within constitutional democracy.

6.1. Globalization, Technology, and Rights Protection

India's constitution proclaims the nation a sovereign democratic republic, yet the reality is more complex. The unification of diverse cultures, religions, and languages, accompanied by endemic poverty and illiteracy, nourishes separatist and anti-establishment frontline movements. Globalization and the adoption of new information technologies further complicate the task of dignified governance. The forces of capitalism both economic and communication support the growth of mercantile politics for annihilating the already fragile democratic polity. In areas gripped by insurgent violence, the text of constitutional provisions stands suspended. Periodic imposition of emergency provisions puts more than half the country's geographical area beyond the reach of crucial fundamental rights, yet there is tranquillity everywhere. The establishment, however, fortifies itself by incessantly telling the people that India is the most vibrant democracy, injecting a note of irony because constitutional democracy depends upon the people's participation (Alan Samson, 2016).

The inadequacy of enforced constitutional safeguards generates discontent and public, print, and electronic awareness to seek rights beyond those incorporated in the Constitution. A mere twenty-five years ago, such connectivity appeared improbable, if not impossible. Every human being possesses forth-rights against states that constrict human survival in India—be they agricultural or industrial states for the Nation State hampers existence and development. The very fact that right is the converse of obligation raises questions regarding entity. Similar is the case with some organization demanding rights, for the privileges of organizations be they agricultural industrial, religious, social, or political occur within the ambit of human existence.

6.2. Social Movements, Welfare Rights, and Social Transformation

The transformation of constitutional practices through social movements has emerged as a key issue across many democracies worldwide and is gaining increasing attention in India as well although such examination is still at a nascent stage. Movements that mobilize citizens toward collective action to demand redress for perceived injustices and pursue social transformation are prominent in the life of the Indian republic. Therefore, an understanding of how social movements interact with the constitution heralds a better apprehension of societal conditions and citizen aspirations within this affluent constitutional democracy, drawing a more complete picture of its trajectory since the constitutional founding.

An openly social-movement perspective draws on the deliberations of the constituent assembly, which offer insight into prevailing societal conditions, citizen concerns, and anticipated conditions and challenges for foundational republican institutions. Recurrent themes of movement patterns, organizing venues, and government biases towards specific movement types

and issues have emerged. Even though the juridification of social-movement demands occurs occasionally in other nation-states—as witnessed in Françafríque, Brazil, and even the United States; these legislative and constitutional battles remain central to Indian public life, revealing how social movements engage with foundational constitutional principles. Such a perspective sheds light on the traditional dichotomization between activism and constitutionalism and suggests that more systematic and foundational reflection on the constitution itself, along with the further specification of foundational principles in light of constitutional practices, might enable a more balanced relation between these two categories to emerge. Social movements including anti-colonial, civil-rights, and, more recently, anti-corruption movements—stand out as dominant organizing and mobilizing vehicles, pursuing demands for protection and enhancement of constitutional provisions and principles. In these specific circumstances, the theme of “collective mobilization” becomes particularly pertinent (Das Acevedo, 2016).

7. Conclusion

The philosophical foundations of Indian democracy reveal unresolved tensions among the constitutional values of liberty, equality, and justice, clarifying the nature of these values, their significance, and the mechanisms for promoting them through appropriate policies. International comparisons of democratic experiments in India and elsewhere suggest that, in a world of diverse democracies inspired by different historical circumstances, normative reflections on the desirable scope of constitutional values, the sense of urgency attached to their promotion, and the conditions that enable their progressive realisation, remain relevant and inescapable despite increased pluralism.

Clarifying these issues is important because deepening democracy requires better understanding of liberty, equality, and justice as goals for reform; an up-to-date account of their historical evolution; and a fresh appreciation of the distinctive connection between these values when viewed as constitutional principles that must interact to fulfil the normative promise of the constitution. Building a more participatory and deliberative democracy such that the interactions among freedom, equality, and justice are more effectively managed could deliver large benefits across diverse democratic polities (Nishihara, 2017).

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