



**LOK SATTA**  
*People Power*

## **Indian Political Dynamics**

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The purpose of a government is to make it easy  
for people to do good and difficult to do evil.

**William Gladstone**

# Democracy – Myron Weiner’s Four Conditions

- Competitive elections
- Political freedoms for all
- Peaceful transfer of power and no retribution
- Real power with elected governments

# Elements of Democracy

- Liberty
  - Self governance
  - Rule of law
  - Empowerment
  - Self-correcting mechanisms
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# Nature of Our Democracy

## Genuine

- Elections
- Liberty
- Change of governments
- Political contention
- Independent judiciary

Contd..

## Nature of Our Democracy

Deep rooted

- 1977 verdict
- Peaceful transfer of power
- Dalit and OBC empowerment
- Balanced federalism
- Local governments taking root

Contd..

## Nature of Our Democracy

### Stable

- Constitutional authorities
  - Strong bureaucracy
  - Tradition of neutrality of civil services
  - Impressive administrative infrastructure
  - Bipolarity in most states
  - Stable conditions at the Union level
  - Broad consensus on most policies
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## Free and Fair Elections

- Disaggregate volatility
  - Broadly reflective of public opinion
  - Ruling parties and powerful candidates do lose
  - Rejection vote common
  - Strength of Election Commission
  - No state-sponsored rigging
  - Neutrality of civil servants
  - Compensatory errors even when there are defects
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# Big Political Questions

## Communal divide

- Transient
- System has resilience
- Bombay 1993 and 2003 are symbols of India  
– not Gujarat 2002
- Judiciary is strong
- Civil society is vigorous
- Political process is safeguard

Contd..

# Big Political Questions

## Economic Reform

- Political consensus available
- Process irreversible
- Continuity of policy
- Stridency not to be confused with substance
- Young Indians (71% below 34 yrs of age) in favour of markets
- Rule of Law and sanctity of contracts - record is mixed
- Political games do cause delays  
(eg. disinvestment)

Contd..

## Big Political Questions

### Regional divide

- North and East lagging behind South and West
- But problems not intractable
- Effective rule of law, population control and infrastructure will alter the scenario

# Corruption

- Rooted in electoral funding problems
- Centralization
- Slow and tortuous judicial process
- Poor accountability systems

## But Things are Improving

- Telecom sector
  - Railway freight
  - Improved highways – rapid execution
  - 5-6% growth still sustained
  - 20% of all judges removed in Maharashtra
  - Population control in Tamil Nadu, AP etc
  - Governance and control of corruption are on the agenda
  - States competing for investment and growth
  - Young people are ambitious, educated and hungry for success
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# Recent Political Reform Initiatives

- Disclosure of candidate details
- Political Funding Reform Law
- Changes in Rajya Sabha election
- Strong anti-defection provisions
- Limiting the size of the council of ministers
- Women's representation in legislatures
- Empowered local governments
- Balanced Federalism
- Improvements in voter registration etc.
- National Judicial Commission

Contd..

## Recent Political Reform Initiatives

- Removal of corrupt judges
  - Right to Information Law
  - Citizen's charters with compensation for delays
  - E-governance and convergence of services
  - Reigning in bureaucracy
  - Fast track courts
  - Local courts for speedy justice
  - Procedural reform in Law
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# Window of Opportunity

- Demand for reform
  - Relatively sound private economy
  - Demographic changes
  - Large, skilled, young, low-cost manpower
  - Communications revolution
  - Improved transport
  - Power sector reforms in progress
  - Road blocks to growth being removed
  - Stable polity
  - Mature financial system
  - National mood upbeat
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“Politics encircles us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries”

- *Mahatma Gandhi*