

## India at 50 – Achievements and Failures

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India has celebrated its golden jubilee of independence. In the last 50 years its achievements have been remarkable on various fronts but failures have been equally noticeable. Its unity and integrity have been intact despite various subversive and fissiparous tendencies. Indian economy has been moving towards higher rates of growth but the gap between rich and poor have been also widening over the years. Various progressive legislations have been made but the implementations have been equally tardy. If solutions have come forward to certain problems new problems have not lagged behind which has posed serious challenges to the Indian polity, economy and society.

After independence, India started with one of the best constitutions in the world under the towering personality of Jawahar Lal Nehru. It was imagined by the West that India will fall apart and not remain united in the coming years. But it has proved wrong. It is one of the greatest achievements of India that it remained one nation despite multiple diversities. It has shown to the world how unity in diversity is practically possible in India. India has proved to be one of the largest and successful democracies in the world. Our democracy has kept on maturing through its successful functioning. Indian people have shown the political wisdom. Once they rejected the anti-people rule of emergency imposed in 1976 by the then leader, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. At the same time the centralized politics of earlier years gave rise to regional movements and subversive elements started posing serious threats to India unity and integrity.

Indian polity has gone under basic transformation. In the initial years one party rule led by Congress used to dominate the political scene but in recent years polity has been polarized. Now two other political combinations, *i.e.*, National Front and BJP have started playing decisive roles along with the Congress. As a result political instability is always there at the Centre which have adverse effects on the Indian economy. Since 1989, we had four elections. It is really our failure at running coalition and minority governments. And the worst thing happens is that the governance suffers and long term programmes, policies and reforms remain at half way only.

India has been doing very well on the economic front. From the importing of foodgrains we have become self sufficient in food production, thanks to the green revolution. India laid emphasis on setting up of basic and heavy industries during Second Five Year Plan. Our greatest strength has been on adopting mixed economy system in which public sector and private sector coexist. Growth rate has been gradually moving to higher side. We have moved from import substitution to export led growth. Now we have opened our economy to the

global market through liberalization and privatization proves started by new economic policy. But many areas remained underdeveloped. India's greatest failure has been on the infrastructure development. Power, roads, telecommunications remained far behind which became obstacles in the path of fast rate of growth of economic development. Failure has also been on the distribution of fruits of economic development. Poverty remains one of the biggest problem today. More than 40% of Indian population remain below poverty line. Population has not been checked drastically. The rate of growth of population is still too high. It is 2.1% which eats up the fruits of economic development as national resources are limited. The poverty needs to be attacked directly. Efforts have been made to eradicate poverty but implementation has been very poor. It was said once by late Rajeev Gandhi that a rupee spent at national level reaches to the common man as 15 paise.

The failures at the social development have been tremendous. Though the literacy rate has increased since independence but still half of the population is illiterate. The literacy among the women is still worse. It is only 36%. Compulsory primary education has been a neglected area. It was to have taken place 10 years after the Constitution came into force. Nevertheless, India has a reservoir of scientific manpower. India is among the top five in scientific manpower in the world. It has become self reliant in missile programmes and remote sensing satellites. It has produced Agni, Nag, Trishul and launched successfully few missiles which is helpful in telecommunication, weather forecasting and mapping of natural resources.

Human development has not been quite satisfactory as it could have been. Basic health facilities are not up to the mark. Infant mortality rate is still too high. Status of women is low. It has been rated very low in the Human Development Report. The solution to the social problems like dowry, violence has been distant reality due to the growing moral derogation, apathy and cynicism among people. Corruption, criminalization has been eating the social fabric of society. There has not been a long term solution to these social problems. Institutions have been eroded and interference is on the increase.

We have reasons to celebrate our 50th year of independence. It provides us opportunities to review the developments in the last fifty years. India is proud of its achievements but the failures need urgent attention and needful actions, especially, India has to give more importance to the denting problems of poverty, illiteracy and population explosion. India has to grow strong in the coming years in order to meet the new challenges and correct the past mistakes. Then only we can fulfil the dream and vision of the great freedom fighters who gave their lives for the cause of independence. It has to recover from the moral degeneration and

apathy as soon as possible which can help in solving the major problems facing this nation.