Support for Democracy in India (2005-2012)

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Abstract

Support for democracy in India (2005-2013)

A first cut comparison of the findings from the second round of State of democracy study in South Asia allows us to assess the changes and continuities in popular perceptions of democracy in India. While democracy is reasonably well established both as a procedural phenomenon and as an aspirational element in India’s politics, it remains to be monitored whether the popular perceptions of democracy and support for democracy are stable or contingent on political experiences.

This presentation makes the following main points:

- Indians continue to see democracy more in terms of welfare provisioning than in terms of formal procedures alone;
- The idea of democracy is clearly more approved of than contending ideas of rule by army or rule by religious leaders;
- Side by side with support for democracy, there is some attraction for strong leaders and expert rule;
- Citizens are somewhat divided on whether the experience of democracy is satisfactory or not and dissatisfaction with democracy has increased from 2005;
- Satisfaction with democracy is linked to citizens’ perceptions about the current government, country’s economic condition and one’s own economic condition;
- The young, more educated and those with greater media exposure are more satisfied with democracy;
- People assess India’s democracy as middle order democracy on a scale of 1 to 10 and hope that it will be more democratic in the future;
- Less satisfaction with democracy notwithstanding, trust in key political institutions has slightly increased from 2005.

Broadly, the presentation will try to locate citizens’ assessment in the context of past ten years of Indian politics.

---Suhas Palshikar
Support for Democracy in India

SUHAS PALSHIKAR
Introduction to SDSA Round II

- South Asia study as part of Asian Barometer;
- First Round conducted in 2004-06 and report published in 2008;
- Second Round to include Bhutan and Maldives;
- Field work completed in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka
Why this Study?.....

- To find out stability or otherwise in support for democracy
- To Help in comparative assessment of development in the last decade-----as in case of Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- Contribute to global debates about meaning and functioning of democracy and also about ways to assessing democracies.
Themes of SDSA II

1. Democracy and Governance
2. Perception on Socio Economic Condition
3. Service Delivery through States
4. Citizens’ Security
5. Interest in Politics & Political Participation of Citizens
6. Relations with neighbouring countries.
About the study:

- Survey was conducted in 22 states in India with the help of translations in 12 Indian languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Survey(%)</th>
<th>Census 2011(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13 (Census 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuity from 2005....

- Broad-based support for democracy;
- Representative democracy as the accepted norm;
- Welfare and development as key concerns rather than procedural aspects;
- Along with support for democracy, some attraction for less democratic practices
India: Is there a slide down?

- Support for democracy slightly down
- Context of last ten years?
- Is support for democracy contingent?
- Democracy as the ideal concept/system and as an empirical phenomenon (Pakistan 2004)
Contending conceptions of democracy

- As basic provisions for livelihood: 32 percent
- As political freedoms to protest and participate: 32 percent
- As socio-economic equality: 23 percent
- As free elections to choose rulers: 24 percent

Question asked - Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. If you have to choose only one from each four sets of statements that I am going to read, which one would you choose as the most essential characteristics of a democracy?
Less Preference for non-democratic forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule by….</th>
<th>Representative Government</th>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Strong leader</th>
<th>Military Rule</th>
<th>Religious leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net Approval

|          | + 74 | +8 | +4 | -22 | -46 |

Note: All figures in percentage. Category of ‘No Response’ is set System Missing & Categories of 'Somewhat & Fully' have been clubbed.

Question Asked: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the these alternatives?
Educated prefer Democracy more

Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government

- College and above: 63%
- Secondary education: 55%
- Upto matric: 52%
- Upto primary: 39%
- No formal education: 38%
- Non literate: 27%

Note: All figures in Percentage.
More support for democracy among the young

Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government

- Up to 25 years: 54%
- 26 to 35 years: 47%
- 36 to 45 years: 46%
- 46 to 55 years: 43%
- 56 years and above: 40%

Note: All figures in Percentage.
Satisfaction with the Functioning of Democracy

Note:- All figures in percentage. Categories of ‘very satisfied’ and ‘fairly satisfied’ have been merged together to form ‘Satisfied’ and categories of ‘not very satisfied’ and ‘not at all satisfied’ have been merged together to form ‘Dissatisfied’.

**Question asked:-** On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in India? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied?
Satisfaction with Democracy: a Comparative Perspective

Categories of ‘not very satisfied’ and ‘not at all satisfied’ have been merged together to form ‘Dissatisfied’.
Dissatisfaction has grown and Can’t Say Answers have declined.

Are fence sitters more likely to be disgruntled?
Satisfaction with Democracy & with current government

Note: All figures in percentage. Categories of ‘very satisfied’ and ‘somewhat satisfied’ been merged together to form ‘Satisfied with Current Government’ and categories of ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ and ‘very dissatisfied’ have been merged to form ‘Dissatisfied with Current Government’. ‘Can’t say and No Response’ is system missing.
Also the categories of ‘very satisfied’ and ‘fairly satisfied’ have been merged together to form ‘Satisfied with Democracy’ and ‘not very satisfied’ and ‘not at all satisfied’ have been merged to form ‘Dissatisfied with Democracy’

Question asked: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the [name of president, ruling current government]? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied. (Probe further whether very or somewhat).
Question Asked: How would you rate the overall economic condition of our country today? Is it Good, Bad or so – so. (In case of good or bad probe further whether Very good or good and if bad then probe further whether Very Bad or Bad).
Satisfaction with democracy and satisfaction with own economic condition

Satisfaction with democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied with own economic condition</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Dissatisfied with own economic condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staisfaction with own economic condition</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All figures in percentage. Categories of ‘very good’ and ‘good’ economic condition have been merged together to form ‘Satisfied’ and categories of ‘Bad’ and ‘very bad’ have been merged together to form ‘Dissatisfied’ and those who said “so so “ are in moderate category. “Can’t say and No Response” is system missing. Also, the categories of “very satisfied” and ‘fairly satisfied’ have been merged together to form ‘satisfied with Democracy’. Question asked:- As for your own family, how do you rate the economic situation of your family today? Is it good, so-so, bad. (In case of good or bad probe further whether Very good or good and if bad then probe further whether Very Bad or bad)
Satisfaction with Democracy increases with Media Exposure

Note: All figures in percentage. Figure are only for Satisfied with Democracy.
Level of Satisfaction with Democracy among Religious Communities

Note: All figures in percentage. Figure are only for Satisfied with Democracy.
People were asked to place the country on the ladder moving from Highly Undemocratic (1) to Highly Democratic (10).

On an average people ranked India at number 5 for the present time.

But for the past, they placed India at 6th Place on the ladder of Democracy.

Showing optimism, they said they would place Indian Democracy at 7th place on the ladder.
Support for Democracy: Declined

Note: All figures in Percentage.

Question asked: Which of the following statements comes closest to your own opinion?
1. Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government
2. Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one
3. For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a nondemocratic regime
Minority compared to Majority prefer Democracy more

- **Majority**
  - 44% prefer Democracy
  - 16% prefer an authoritarian government
  - 29% express no opinion (CS/NR)

- **Minority**
  - 52% prefer Democracy
  - 16% prefer an authoritarian government
  - 22% express no opinion (CS/NR)

**Note:** All figures in Percentage.
Higher the Education Level Higher the Support for Democracy

Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government

Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one

For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a nondemocratic regime

Note:- All figures in Percentage. Rest is Can’t Say
Support for Representative Government has Decreased

Note:- All figures in percentage.
Support for Rule by Representative Government

Note: All figures in percentage.
Support for Rule by Religious Leader

Support for Military Rule

Note: All figures in percentage.
Support for Rule by Strong Leader

Support for Rule by Experts

Note:- All figures in percentage.
Maximum distrust in local Government

Note: All Figures are in percentage
Trust in State Apparatus

Note: All Figures in percentage.
Figures are only for Trust category.

Trust in SDSA 2013

Trust in SDSA 2005