

Citation: Dr. Jagrup Singh, "Sekhon Contemporary Indian Republic and Its Current Challenges" St. Soldier Journal of Law and Social Science, Vol. 2:2, July 2026 pp. 1-6

## **Contemporary Indian Republic and Its Current Challenges**

**Dr. Jagrup Singh Sekhon**

Former Professor of Political Science of Guru Nanak Dev University and Visiting Professor, Khalsa University, Amritsar.

India has celebrated its 77th Republic Day with more fervor than in previous years on 26 January 2026. This is the historic day on which India's own Constitution came into effect after the end of the British rule. This is the same constitution that makes India known as the largest democracy in the world. Although the Drafting Committee, with its tireless, hard work, dedication, honesty and intelligence prepared this Constitution in less than three years. But behind this was a long period of struggle, sacrifices, renunciation and endless suffering of millions of people.

Our republic is the first republic in the world that, with the implementation of the Constitution in 1950, granted fundamental rights and many other rights, like justice, equality, freedom, fraternity etc. to all its citizens, without any discrimination or prejudice. The Preamble of the Constitution, which is called its soul, contains all the provisions that are to make India a fully sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic. While framing the Constitution, our Constitution makers had incorporated such constitutional provisions in the Constitution keeping in mind the prevailing conditions and the situations that would arise in the future, so that the current

governments and citizens can face those challenges in the future. Its main purpose is not only to preserve the freedom and democracy but also to make it a force to be reckoned with overtime. The democratic process took root in this country and gradually grew stronger in spite of the major problems like poverty, illiteracy, backward rural economy, caste division and other mountain-like difficulties. The credit for this goes mainly to the Congress leadership of that time and the visionary Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who, with his ability, foresight, and policy of taking everyone along, strengthened constitutional norms and traditions while confronting very unpleasant situations and troubles in the country and the world.

After the establishment of the Republic in 1950, the biggest challenge facing the country was to hold elections to form central and state governments and establish a parliamentary democracy. Despite the country's lack of all kinds of resources, the first general elections in 1951-52 were held very successfully and fairly, laying the foundation of a democratic state. Based on these election results, governments were formed at the center and in the states and the country's first President and Vice President were elected. After this, the Panchayati Raj system was introduced to strengthen democracy so that the foundations of the republic could be further deepened and transformed into a permanent institution. In this way, a new order was established in the country, overcoming the extremely critical internal and external conditions of the 1950s. Given the challenges faced, many national and international scholars had doubts about the stability of the newly formed Republic of India. The main reason for those doubts was that in a country with many shortcomings, divisions, poverty, widespread illiteracy, a very backward economy, as well as major international issues, it was very difficult for this republic and democracy to survive. But with

the understanding of wise statesmen, they resolved all these issues with great restraint and laid the foundation of a strong democracy in the country through major economic, social and many other projects for the progress of the country.

This day is celebrated with great pomp and show every year in the country's capital Delhi, capitals of various states and other places. The event, held in Delhi, showcases the country's progress in military, economic, industrial, science and technology sectors, in addition to various programs and tableaux. Apart from this, an attempt is also made to convey the message of unity in diversity through exhibitions and tableaux of different provinces. In fact, the biggest idea behind starting this event was to display the unity and strength of the republic. The entire country is painted in a new hue, to instill new enthusiasm among the citizens living in India and abroad. From the beginning, a foreign guest (head of state or government) was invited to this ceremony, but this time, two senior leaders of the European Union, Ursula Von Der Leyen and Antonio Costa, are the chief guests. It is worth mentioning here that the Indonesian President Sukarno was the first foreign guest on January 26, 1950.

The politics of the present day has a big difference from the politics of the country from early years of independence. Although this phenomenon started during the time of Indira Gandhi, but there has been a major shift since present government came into power in 2014, especially after 2019 win. The politicians and statesmen of Jawaharlal Nehru's time were products of the freedom struggle and other mass movements. Many of them were high-ranking scholars, intellectuals, and common people whose main goal was to establish a system that was in line with Mahatma Gandhi's vision of freedom. The politics for them was a noble medium of public service. They were completely dedicated to the

people and society. At the same time, the main objective of the ruling Congress party and government was to lift the country out of poverty, illiteracy, backwardness, etc. and establish a developed and all inclusive state. The ruling party knew that without major economic progress, political stability and brotherhood the country and society cannot move forward. Therefore, despite many difficulties, the government took many big decisions which included the implementation of the Five Year Plan, the construction of large industries, educational institutions, dams, etc., which laid the foundation of a new India. Efforts were made to create economic and social equality through many other decisions of the government. The aim of all these efforts was to lay the foundation of a strong republic in which every citizen could enjoy the rights guaranteed in the Constitution. For this purpose, the Congress and the governments led by it made their sincere efforts till they were in power.

The republic has seen many ups and downs since 1950. The biggest threat came in the 1960s when the country's political and economic conditions became very volatile. These included the wars with China and Pakistan in 1962 and 1965, the deaths of Prime Ministers i.e. Nehru in 1964 and Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1966, severe food shortages and crop droughts, the falling value of Rupee, rising prices and the weakening of the Congress Party, with defeat in 9 states in the 1967 elections. But the 'Green Revolution' brought about by the country's farmers and the strong leadership of Indira Gandhi brought the Republic out of these challenging situations. The second major threat to the Republic came in June 1975 when Indira Gandhi imposed a state of emergency in the country. In such circumstances, the republican democracy became dependent on the mercy of the ruling class. However, the elections held soon after in 1977 and the political

developments that followed brought the republic back on track. But since then, the changing nature and structure of politics continued raising many worrisome questions in the working of the Republic.

The major reason for this situation is that the people who entered politics during this time and thereafter were not like the politicians the country had before. They entered politics solely for the purpose of gaining power and they prioritized their own interests and those of their party over the interests of the people and the country. Many of them seized power through undemocratic means and caused great damage to the Constitution, the Republic, and constitutional institutions. These people and their parties have committed a grave violation of democratic norms and used power only for their own benefit. Rather than, resolving the issues of the country and democracy, they were busy dividing society by playing politics of castes, religions, communities, languages, regions and many other narrow and parochial issues. The ideological absence of these politicians and the parties has led to the country's politics becoming entangled in continuous splits and defections within the parties. For these politicians, the pursuit of power is the greatest of all. This is why the Republic now appears to rest on the power of the state, not on the will of the people. Now even elections have become a mere show and have fallen victim to money, muscle power, propaganda and many other undemocratic methods. All the governments promise to improve the electoral system, but nothing seems to be happening on the ground. If this trend continues, the day is not far when people will lose their interest in participatory process. This day will be a wake-up call for the Indian Republic.

Although this problem of democracy and democratic process has been going on for a long time, but the last 12 years

of the Narendra Modi government have raised many issues about it. People have raised many questions about the present-day changing nature of democracy and the working of the republic. After examining all the details, it is evident that the government wants to weaken the Republic and establish a new regime under a well-planned strategy. Constitutional institutions have been continuously being weakened and at the same time, a different kind of pluralist ideology is being brought forward by gradually weakening the objectives given in the basic structure of the Constitution. The decisions of the country's highest court are being overturned by the Parliament by force of majority. The process of making laws by the Parliament in the country is completely opposite to the Nehru era and laws are being made and implemented by force. At present, the specific reform of voting rights (SIR) has become a huge challenge for democracy. The country's constitutional institutions and agencies are being openly used to suppress the opposition parties and dissidents. Government control of the media, the fourth pillar of the Republic, have crossed all limits. Fear has spread everywhere in this republic, with the muzzling of the voice of opposition parties and their leaders. Efforts are underway to remove the common man from the political process by severely weakening public interest laws like the Right to Information, MGNREGA, etc., enacted during the Congress rule. Along with this, many questions have arisen about the future of the country's minorities in this Republic. It seems that the current republic is going in a direction completely opposite to the thinking of the framers of the Constitution. It is very clear that if this trend continues, the Indian Republic and democracy will face great dangers in the coming times and will create great hardships for the citizens.