Mains Practice Question

Q. "Indian democracy will disintegrate under the burden of caste, communalism, regionalism, economic disparities, linguistic jingoism and other economic challenges." Examine the factors that contributed to Indian democracy's resilience despite these challenges. (250 words)

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Approach

- Briefly explain the challenges faced by India post-independence in the introduction.
- Mention the factors that contributed to Indian democracy's resilience.
- Conclude by giving a foundational basis to resolve such challenges.

Introduction

India got independence in a hostile environment which posed huge challenges for a newly born nation. There was mass poverty, illiteracy, hunger, poor industrial and agricultural base to support a large population. Moreover, there were demands for linguistic reorganization of states leading to rise of secessionist trends. Thus, it was predicted by political analysts that Indian democracy will not survive under such conditions.

However, it was India's strong commitment to its democratic principles that India not only survived as a nation but also emerged as a leader of third world countries.

Body

Following **factors** contributed to Indian democracy's resilience:

- **Strong leaders:** It was only because of strong leaders that India could steer its path to democratic glory.

  - Pt. Nehru led India's foreign policy in the cold war era and adoption of policy of Non-Alignment.
  - Sardar Patel was instrumental in post independence consolidation of more than 565 princely states. It was their dream to give India its respectful place in the comity of nations that it deserved.
- **Indian Constitution** is a vibrant, dynamic and evolving document. India's commitment to its constitutional principles like secularism, federalism, social-economic & political justice, proved to be the foundational keystone of Indian democracy.

  - Flexible nature of our constitution helped in **countering regionalism,** Article 371 was introduced to allow special status to certain states. Similarly, new states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand were formed to counter the regional deprivations.
  - Similarly, Article 17 directly **abolished untouchability** thus countering strong rooted **casteism** in society.
- **Legislative actions:** Even though with limited success, drastic changes were introduced in the form of **land reforms** to address **socio-economic disparities** after independence.

- **Official Languages Act, 1963** provided for the continued use of English for official purposes along with Hindi, even after 1965. This was to address concerns of non-Hindi speaking states.
- **Decentralization of power:** 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992, gave constitutional basis for local self governance. This opened up possibilities for people to directly participate in the process of democracy.

- **Strong institutions:** Institutions like **Supreme Court of India** regarded as the guarantor and protector of fundamental rights of the citizens proved instrumental in **resolving major disputes** that emerged due to diverse and conflicting demands of various groups.

  - **National Integration Council** formed in 1961 as a government advisory body to address the problems of **communalism, casteism and regionalism.**
  - **National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH)** helped in providing assistance for the physical and psychological rehabilitation of the child **victims of communalism.**
  - **National Commission for Minorities** was formed to address any discrimination against minorities. Also, **Sachar Committee** in 2005 was formed to assess the **socio-economic disparities** faced by minorities.
  - Committees like **Rangarajan Committee** 2004-05, **Tendulkar Committee** in 2009-10 were formed for **estimating poverty** in India.

Conclusion

Democracy cannot sustain merely by institutions and leaders, it is the people who themselves have to get empowered and responsible for their rights and obligations towards the nation. Even the modern day challenges to Indian democracy like communal disharmony, regionalism, linguistic jingoism, etc can only be tackled if we abide by the Indian civilizational values of **tolerance, multiculturalism and pluralism.**