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Abstract
The study intends to explore the relation between democracy and political stability in Estonia and India in a comparative perspective. Democracy and political stability are an indispensable aspect in both national as well as international politics. Political stability is a necessary precondition for nation-building. It plays an important role in strengthening social cohesion, integration and legitimacy within the state. Estonia was under Soviet occupation for nearly 50 years. India experienced the colonial rule of the British Empire for more than 200 years. After becoming independent the consolidation of a democratic political system and governance, providing constitutional guarantees of freedom, equality, justice, rights and ensuring well being of citizens’ are the nation building priorities in both post-Soviet Estonia and post-colonial India. Estonia’s democracy has now crossed two and half decades, but lacking in content. India has established a full democracy in the past more than six decades of its existence showing political stability. Hence, comparing these two democracies help to understand the factors enabling political stability.

Introduction
The ideas of democracy in Estonia and India date back to the early years when the nationalist successfully appropriated liberal democratic principles from the west and infused them into the political context. Estonia and India faced several new challenges such as political instability, economic decline and chaotic social situation before emerging as a democratic sovereign state. In order to recover from the various kinds of instability, the democratic system has been adopted. As a result Estonia and India have been undergoing multidimensional transition. Institutional restructuring, democratization of political system and market-oriented economic reforms have assumed key roles in this process. The democracy and political stability in Estonia and India can be traced through various factors like constitution, political party, party system, electoral system and electoral laws, institutional structure, regime stability, stable government and administration, economic development etc. On the other hand frequent changes of the political system, the irregular transfer of leadership, internal war, violent political riots and consequent instability of the governments has led to political instability.

The post independent Estonia and India have undergone multiple transitions in the form of economic, political, cultural and societal. In 1991 Estonia and India transformed from a socialist state to a capitalist state. A major transformation came about on the economic policy front leading to liberalization, privatization and globalization. On the political front institutional structures such as constitution, president, parliament and political parties which are necessary for stable democracy were established. A multi-party system was developed in Estonia after
independence. In India the post-independence period can be divided into the 'one-dominant-party system' period (1952-77 and 1980-1991) and its transformation into a multi-party system (1977-98). Since independence numerous political parties were formed in Estonia and India. They provide stability by participating in government formation. The aspects of political stability in Estonia and India are institutionalized party system in which there is notable stability and regularity manifested in inter-party competition, parties have strong roots in society, they enjoy a relatively high level of legitimacy among political actors and voters, party organisations are quite strong and independent, fragmentation of party system and coalition building etc. Both in Estonia and India political parties and party system act as a link between people and government.

The political stability in Estonia and India is also maintained by strengthening democracy through the electoral system and electoral laws. Estonian and Indian political parties function within the framework of the electoral system and electoral laws. The Estonian electoral system is established on the national proportionality rule, with a combination of simple quota and a modified d’Hondt method (proportional representation by means of the single transferable ballot system). The electoral system of India is a single member district, simple plurality system (first past the post system). The electoral laws of Estonia and India indicate that the citizen who has attained the eighteen years of age has the right to vote. Since Independence Estonia and India had a regular election. Estonia had six parliamentary elections (1992, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011), five presidential elections (1992, 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2011) and European Union parliamentary elections (2004, 2009 and 2014). India had sixteen parliamentary elections, fourteen presidential elections and various state assembly elections. Since 1991 both in Estonia and India coalition governments have come to power. In the case of Estonia fragmentation and lack of institutionalization, public trust deficit contributed to political stability. But in the case of India the political institutionalization and public trust in government institutions are high despite having huge diversity in society.

The study is thematically organized in terms of theoretical approaches, the evolution of democracy and institutional functionality, and the structural indicators of political stability in Estonia and India.

Democracy and Political Stability: Theoretical Approaches

For the better understanding of the research problem the concept of democracy and political stability is defined. The concept of democracy is defined borrowing Sartori and Vanhanen’s definition, as a set of institutions that together result in democratic government (a procedural or descriptive definition) and as the set of ideals or principles that guide the procedures of a given state (a normative or prescriptive definition). The former focuses on empirically observable public institutions and practices, where the later looks more to the spirit or values that guide them. The term political stability is the extent of effectiveness in maintaining endurance of the political system, the viability of the political regime and durability of its government. Paldam defines political stability as a stable government, stable political system, internal law and order, and external stability.

The concept of democracy and political stability and its practice in different countries can be traced through various literary contributions in the context of national and international
politics. The western political thought starting from the ancient era to contemporary times has empirical views on democracy and political stability. Plato’s aristocracy, Aristotle’s best possible state, Thomas Hobbes discussions in Leviathan, Rousseau’s egalitarianism, Marx and Engels’s analysis of class struggle are concerned about political stability. In the realm of international relations theory prominent schools of thought such as realism, idealism, liberalism, neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism and constructivism have dealt with the stability of the international political system.

Hansen (1989) argues democracy as a set of political institutions in which power, directly or indirectly rests with the whole of the people. Similarly Vanhanen (1984) described democracy as a political system in which power is widely circulated among its members and in which the status of power holders is based on the consent of the people (Vanhanen 1984: 9-11). Ostrom (1997: 49) put forward a question stating democracy cannot be interpreted by referring exclusively to the concept of force. The power as the focus of inquiry is not coherent with the characteristics of democracy, by studying only power relationships one might conclude and afford an unsatisfactory conceptual language in the subject area of popular societies. Laswell (1950) emphasized that a democratic government is merely a necessary but not a sufficient precondition for democracy. He characterized the democratic scheme of governance by self-responsibility, voluntarization, wide distribution and sharing of authority, impartiality, challengeability and equilibrating tendencies (Laswell 1950: 238).

Robert Dahl (1971) distinguished two different dimensions of democracy, those of public contestation or competition and of participation or inclusiveness; these are assessed according to eight separate institutional guarantees or indices. Later writers like Bollen (1980, 1991), Gastil (1991), and Hadenius (1992) have developed and consolidated these indices distinguishing in turn between the electoral process, its effectiveness and inclusiveness on the one hand and the protection of civil or political liberties on the other. Beetham (1994) broadens the dimensions beyond those of the electoral procedure and civil rights or liberties to include clear and accountable government and aspects of civil or democratic society. He further suggests, making the indices of political equality more stringent by examining the level of effective rather than merely formal equality of political rights and opportunities (Beetham 1994: 2).

On the stability discourse Sengupta (2004) indicates that the matter of stability has not taken a striking space in the public discussion. Recently there has been an increasing interest in the subject among politicians, media and administrators in large democracies like India and elsewhere (Sengupta 2004: 5101). On stability Hurwitz (1973) argues that all things as various individuals attempt to measure the degree or amount of "political stability" present in their particular universe. He further enumerates political stability as the absence of violence, the governmental longevity/duration, the existence of a legitimate constitutional regime, the absence of structural change, a multifaceted societal attribute (Hurwitz 1973: 449). Similarly Pirages (1980) indicates that political stability include absence of domestic dispute and violence which can be manipulated by either consensual (consent application) or autocratic (coercion application) means, that is the "existence of legitimacy of the constitutional order and stability as a multifaceted societal attribute" (Pirages 1980: 433). Sengupta (2004) further argues that political stability viewed in terms of governmental durability in power is one of many conditions of stability in the political arrangement.
Sharma (1989) elaborate stability as in politics refers to a situation of endurance of a political system. In a broader sense it refers to the system’s capacity to survive intact and depends on capacity to deal effectively with the problems confronting it and to adjust flexibly to changing circumstances. In a multifaceted societal attribute, it is the absence of several negative indicators like revolution, violence, political movements opposed to the existing system and the presence of several positive indicators like governmental longevity, constitutional continuity, effective decision making and positive systematic acceptance and support (Sharma 1989: 7-21).

On the other hand Margolis (2010: 326) argues with a different perspective on political stability. Political stability focuses on the state, though the state is only one example of a political object. Political stability is more than state stability. He states the absence of violence approach is intuitive and simple; it reduces the stability to violence, making the approach less a definition than an analogy. It provides little clarity instead exchanging one complex concept for another. Democracy, political stability and economic growth are all reciprocally related. Democracy provides a stable political environment which reduces unconstitutional government change; along with regime stability, democracy offers flexibility and the opportunity for major government change within the political system (Feng 1997: 392). Both democracy and political stability are two sides of the same coin, without democracy, it is difficult to maintain political stability and without political stability, it is difficult for a democratic state to function efficiently.

Evolution of Democracy and Institutional Functionality in Estonia and India

Keohane (1989: 3) defined institutions as persistent and connected sets of rules that prescribe behavioural role, constrain activities and shape expectations. On the other hand (Safferling 2102: 124) argues institutional functionality refers to the internal layout of the interaction and communication of the democratic institutions. There are several participants in the process, each of which has its own role according to which powers and competences are crafted. On the emergence of democracy Silver and Titma (1996) states, democracy emerged in Estonia when the country was in transition towards independence. The political mobilization in Estonia since the onset of perestroika created a population that had experienced a wide variety of democratic participation (Silver and Titma 1996: 3). In support of Silvers’ argument Dowley and Uuekula (1996) indicates that these mass demonstrations, open meetings and political strikes were far different from the mobilized participation (Dowley and Uuekula 1996: 47).

In order to provide an understanding on the emergence of democracy Kavlekar (1987: 81) brings forth the argument, democracy implies rule by the people, their consent being obtained through debates, discussions, elections and majority decisions by representative bodies. India is one of the rare exceptions among developing nations in having fostered and sustained a multi-party democracy since independence. On the other hand Ganguly et al. (eds.) (2007) argue the emergence and persistence of Indian democracy are theoretical and historical anomalies. Early theorists of democracy argued that this form of government not only required but was generated by certain social and economic requisites- none of which India possessed.

Sartori (1994), Mainwaring and Scully (1995), and Merkel (1996) works serve as an important contribution to democratic systems and institutional context. They reason that democratic systems are founded on institutional settings. Among these arrangements the ones linked to the type of executive, legislative assembly, political parties, constitution and electoral
system have realized an increasing measure of popularity. The combined effects and concomitants of these institutions have influenced the overall performance and stability of democracies worldwide. Ganguly et al. (eds.) (2007) describe Indian democracy has a success through its institutional arrangements. It delivers a vigorous free press, robust political parties, a working judiciary and an apolitical military. Similarly Adams (2011) explains, in the Indian parliamentary democracy, its executive system is based on the system of popular elected government headed by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister at the centre along with the respective council of ministers wields real executive power (Adams 2011: 238).

The Estonian constitution has given rise to a functioning set of democratic institutions in the contour of a freely elected Riigikogu, an executive branch with the powers clearly defined and restrained by law and an independent judiciary (Smith 2001: 66). Similarly Spilling (2010) elaborates that Estonia’s current political system dates back from 1992 when a new constitution was adopted following a referendum, which provided for a parliament (Riigikogu) and a presidency with limited powers (Spilling 2010: 29). Estonia presents the characteristics of a democracy with stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of law, human rights and respect and protection of minorities (Pettai 2003: 75).

Sartori (1976: 39) indicates that a party system is precisely the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition. Lewis (2000: 123) further enumerates that party systems can be separated by four main precepts, the ideologies of the parties; the extent to which parties penetrate society; the standard of parties towards the authenticity of the government; and the number of parties in the arrangement. The argument of Spilling (2010) elaborates that since independence Estonia has embraced a multiparty parliamentary style democracy that has relied heavily on coalitions to form governments. From 1991 there have been frequent changes of government and various realignments of the government coalition. Despite this apparent political instability, the government has remained politically and economically consistent (Spilling 2010: 32). Despite numerous changes in governments, Estonian did not repeat the inter-war pattern of a rapid succession of weak government. It embarked on a prolonged process of party consolidation and democratic institution building (Tamm 2013: 5).

According to Cheema (2005) free, fair and regular elections constitute one pillar of democratic governance. Such elections confer and maintain political legitimacy because they reflect popular participation and choice in the political process. They are an important beginning step in crafting government of, by and for the people (Cheema 2005: 25). A new electoral law of 1992 in Estonia introduced an electoral system with three tiers electoral committees: the National Electoral Committee of the Republic of Estonia; territorial committees and the polling division committees. The Riigikogu formed the National Electoral Committee on the proposals of councils of counties and major cities. This law introduced proportional electoral rules under a Single Transferable Vote system (PRSTV) (Nunez 2011: 2; Taagepera 2007: 330). The conduct of elections in India after independence became the duty of the Election Commission. It was in 1950 that the Election Commission of India was set up as a constitutional body and entrusted with the task of superintendence, direction and control of all national and state level elections (Katju 2006: 1635). The Election Commission of India has considerable autonomy of action as it derives its authority directly from the Constitution (Singh 2004: 10).
Political Stability in Estonia and India: Structural Indicators

Political stability in India and Estonia can be traced out through various factors like the longevity of the regime, election density ratio (EDR), an increase in the number of parties, strength of ruling party, index of democratization, stable political parties, party system, electoral system, government formation etc. Apart from these stability and fragmentation of party system are considered as vital. Saarts (2011: 88) enumerates the various indicators used by different authors (Bakke and Sitter, 2005; Horowitz and Browne, 2005; Lewis, 2006; Meleshevich, 2007; Rose and Munro, 2009; Tavits, 2005, 2007, 2008) to measure the stability of party systems i.e. electoral volatility, the number of effective parties, the proportion of votes taken by parliamentary parties presented on more than one occasion in the legislatures, the number of new parties represented in the parliament and their average yield of votes in elections, party vote share concentration index, changes in the patterns of bloc competition and dynamics of government–opposition relationships, etc. Further Bartolini and Mair (1990) states that the most widely used measure for party system stability has been electoral volatility.

The fragmentation of the party system is measured through the use of statistical indices like the effective number of electoral or parliamentary parties (ENEP/ENPP), to classify the party systems according to the strength and numbers of parties and study the patterns of party competition like did Blondel (1969) and Sartori (1976), or to combine both approaches. However, the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) is often regarded to be a major parameter for measuring the fragmentation of the party system (Bielasiak, 2002; Lane and Ersson, 1999, 2007; Rose and Munro, 2009; Toka and Henjak, 2005). Chibber and Nooruddin (1999: 46) argue party fragmentation too; in India’s single member simple plurality (or first past the post) electoral system is not driven by increased turnout but the degree of competition between the top two parties in a constituency.

While analyzing political stability the question of how strongly parties and party system are rooted in society is often considered to be essential. Mainwaring and Torcal (2006) proposed using ideological voting as a major indicator. Kitschelt (1995), Toka (1998) and Whitefield (2002) stressed the importance of well-manifested cleavage constellations in society. In Estonia, ethnic cleavage mixed with a communist/anti-communist cleavage has been a fundamental divide in the party competition; socioeconomic cleavage has played a secondary purpose or has been melded with the latter-mentioned dominant cleavages. In the 1990s, an urban rural cleavage was also quite pronounced, but during late years it has lost its reason. Clerical/anticlerical cleavage has played absolutely a marginal role in Estonia, because Estonian society is regarded to be one of the most secular in Europe (Saarts 2011: 96). India’s multi-party system also exhibits the effects of multiple cleavages. According to Rose and Munro (2003), van Biezen (2003, 2005) voter turnout, electoral volatility and party membership are considered to be very informative indicators as well.

Sottilotta (2013) indicates that a broad operational definition of political stability should take concepts and indicators into account such as human development (as measured by the UN Human Development Index); inequality (Gini index); political legitimacy (i.e. the more or less widespread support for the government, be it democratic or non-democratic); constraints on regime responsiveness (i.e. the economic constraints that governments encounter in meeting the requests of their citizens as expressed, for instance, by the total stock of a country’s public debt);
and *regional/international integration* (membership in international and regional organizations or the ratio of total foreign trade over GDP) (Sotilotta 2013: 3). On the other hand, Lijphart (1968) believes that a stable country is characterized not only by a lack of negative indicators such as violence, revolutions, coups and political movements opposed to the political system as a whole but also by positive indicators in the form of continuity of the constitutional order, government longevity, active social support for the political system and the ability of the political system to make effective decisions which could penetrate the society (Lijphart 1968: 77). His approach to the study of political stability synthesizes elements from other approaches variously emphasizing civil strife, government longevity and basic structural changes.

**Conclusion**

Against the backdrop of the above discussion, a few theoretical and methodological gaps are found. Theoretically, the existing democratic studies are mainly focused on western experiences and the post-Soviet and post-colonial contexts in countries like Estonia and India have to be taken further. Moreover, the studies on political stability are yet to consider the diverse debate among the democrats within national and international contexts. Methodologically, most of the available studies focused on analyzing the democracy and political stability discourse in a given national context, having very limited references to transnational or global comparative aspects. Thus the interaction of democracy and political stability in Estonia and India are overlooked.

The study is an under-researched area. In the available body of literature addressing the question of democracy and political stability in Estonia and India is inadequate. Even though there are a seminal literary contribution to democracy and political stability in national and international politics. There is a substantial lack of academic engagements between democracy and political stability in the comparative context. This study will be contributing to the existing scholarly work in different socio-political aspects of Estonia and India. Empirically, the proposed study has national and international implications and can reflect the national discourses in these countries. It can further define the relations between democracy and political stability within and out of these countries. Through this India and Estonia represent in global democratic discourses, but their political stability will be decisive in their relations with the rest of the world at large.

The study examines the abstract conception of democratic ideals and principles historically embodied in the institutions of Estonia and India. The institutions developed from struggles have an exemplary significance for contemporary democracy. The emergence of democracy and the consolidation of its institutions such as a multi-party system, electoral system and government formation along with political stability factors in the post-independent Estonia and India draw a significant academic interest. The specified time period from 1991-2015 is essential as it traces the emergence of new democracy and political stability in Estonia and consolidation of democracy along with political stability in India. The comparative analysis would be undertaken using a few purposive resources, mainly available in India and Estonia.
References

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