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Democratic Backsliding In The Global South: The Role Of India's Political Security Model

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Abstract

Democratic backsliding, characterized by the erosion of democratic norms, weakening of institutions, and concentration of power, has emerged as a significant challenge in the Global South--Developing countries. This phenomenon threatens political stability, civic freedoms, and the rule of law, raising concerns about the future of democracy in emerging economies. This paper examines the role of India's political security model in influencing democratic backsliding within its borders such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and across the other Global South Countries. As the world's largest democracy, India's political trajectory significantly impacts global democratic trends. In recent years, India has witnessed increasing centralization of power, curbs on dissent, and challenges to judicial independence, raising questions about its commitment to democratic principles. The paper explores how India's model of political security, through legislative frameworks like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Information Technology Rules, impacts democratic resilience. By exporting its model of governance, India indirectly shapes political practices in neighboring countries and other developing democracies. The study employs a comparative analysis to evaluate the implications of India's political security approach on democratic backsliding, revealing a complex interplay between security imperatives and democratic integrity. It calls for a critical reassessment of political security strategies to ensure they do not undermine foundational democratic values. Furthermore, it investigates the implications of this model for other developing countries that look to India as a democratic benchmark. By analyzing India's political security practices within a comparative framework, this paper illuminates the broader dynamics of democratic backsliding in the Global South. The findings underscore the need for renewed commitment to democratic governance and institutional integrity. The methods used in the study is of descriptive research based on case study and secondary sources.

Keywords: Global South, Political Security Model, Democratic Backsliding, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

The process of erosion of policies and government performance towards its citizen, where the change in democracy can be witnessed with the upcoming strategies of authoritarian values can be referred to as backsliding of democracy. These days it is obvious and tragic that one can notice the downfall of democracy in the north and global south. The breakdown of opposition and intrinsic downfall of ethical values, moving towards authoritative form of government in democracy has vastly resulted in the backsliding of democracy.

Democracy in the Global South has faced significant challenges in the 21st century. From electoral manipulation to the suppression of dissent, democratic backsliding threatens to undermine political stability and citizen participation. While some countries experience rapid autocratization, others implement mechanisms to safeguard democratic institutions. India, with its rich democratic history and evolving political landscape, presents a unique case for understanding the role of political security in addressing backsliding tendencies. Today, Indian political security model is seen as the key to revive the backsliding of democracy and the democracy at the grassroots level can be the key form to revive the dying concept of democracy in countries of south.

1.1. Literature Review

Democratic backsliding refers to the slowly collapsing of institutions that sustain liberal democracy, such as civil liberties, judicial independence, electoral integrity.¹ While earliest transitions to authoritarianism were marked by abrupt ruptures like military coups, recent forms of backsliding are often subtle, legalistic, and carried out under the banner of democratic legitimacy.²

In this context, securitization- the framing of political and social issues as threats to national security- emerges as a key strategy of authoritarian consolidation. This intersection of national security discourse and executive aggrandizement has been crucial in facilitating democratic erosion, particularly in the Global South. This region provides a complex terrain where post- colonial legacies, weak institutions, and uneven modernization converge to produce unique patterns of democratic decay.³ Unlike the Global North, where democratic backsliding is often associated with populist nationalism and polarization, in the Global South it is also deeply tied to issues of developmental authoritarianism, ethno-religious conflict, and the militarization of politics.⁴ In countries like Brazil, Turkey, and the Philippines, democratic mandates have been used to centralize power and suppress opposition under the guise of governance efficiency and internal security. These examples challenge liberal teleologies that presume a linear trajectory from authoritarianism to democracy. Instead, they demonstrate the flexibility of hybrid regimes to sustain democratic form while subverting democratic function.⁵

India, once celebrated as an outlier in the post-colonial world for its enduring democratic institutions, is increasingly cited as a case of democratic backsliding⁶. Since 2014, the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has employed a combination of majoritarian rhetoric, institutional centralization, and digital surveillance to consolidate political power. These developments have raised concerns about India's transformation from a pluralist democracy to an "electoral autocracy".⁷

While India's political Security model is primarily a domestic strategy, it may also have regional and global implications. India's ability to maintain electoral legitimacy while deploying coercive and surveillance-heavy tools offers a compelling template for other Global South regimes seeking to navigate democratic norms while

¹ Bermeo, N. (2016). On democratic backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), 519. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2016.0012>

² Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How democracies die*. Crown Publishing.

³ Diamond, L. (2019). Facing up to the democratic recession. *Journal of Democracy*, 26(1), 141-155. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2015.0009> & Carothers, T. (2018). The backlash against democracy promotion. *Foreign Affairs*, 97(2), 9-16.

⁴ Schedler, A. (2006). *Electoral authoritarianism: The dynamics of unfree competition*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

⁵ Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press.

⁶ Jaffrelot, C. (2021). *Modi's India: Hindu nationalism and the rise of ethnic democracy*. Princeton University Press.

⁷ V-Dem Institute. (2023). *Democracy report 2023: Defiance in the face of autocratization*. University of Gothenburg.

undermining them in practice⁸. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, for instance, have adopted similar measures—combining populist nationalism, expanded surveillance, and legal repression—to manage dissent and consolidate power⁹.

The appeal of India's model lies in its dual effectiveness: it resonates with post-colonial aspirations for order and national pride, while strategically undermining the pluralist principles of liberal democracy. As such, it represents a potentially exportable paradigm for hybrid regimes—particularly in contexts where overt authoritarianism remains politically or diplomatically untenable.

The literature reveals that democratic backsliding in the Global South is a multidimensional phenomenon, shaped by both internal dynamics and global discourses on security and governance. India's evolving political security model—marked by the fusion of democratic form with authoritarian substance—offers a critical case study within this broader context. As both a regional power and a symbolic democracy, India's trajectory not only reflects internal tensions but also shapes the political imagination of similarly situated states.

1.2. Research Methodology

This study uses mixed method approach which employs a qualitative research methodology using a comparative case study approach. Primary data is gathered from government reports, judicial rulings, and policy documents. Secondary data is drawn from peer-reviewed journals, think tank publications, and academic books. Content analysis is applied to identify patterns and trends in democratic backsliding and political security measures.

1.3. Research Question?

- How India's political security model contributes to democratic backsliding, and to what extent does it influence or reflect broader trends in the Global South?

1.4. Research Objective

This study aims to critically examine:

1. The relationship between India's political security model and phenomenon of democratic backsliding in the Global South.
2. India's approach to Internal security, governance and political control influences or reflects broader regional trends in democratic erosion.
3. India's model serves as blueprint, justification, or cautionary tale for other democracies in the Global South experiencing democratic decline.

2. India's Political Security Model

India's political security model refers to the set of strategies, institutions, and policies that India employs to ensure the stability and resilience of its political system. It encompasses measures designed to protect democratic governance, uphold constitutional principles, and maintain internal political stability. This model also reflects India's approach to managing political conflicts, ensuring social cohesion, and preventing democratic backsliding.

⁸ Mazrui, A. A. (2021). Security and democracy in Africa: Lessons from India and beyond. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(4), 692–708.

⁹ Bastian, S. (2022). Authoritarianism in South Asia: Dynamics and diffusion. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 45(3), 321–338. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/jsas.2022.321>.

India's approach to political security model is rooted in a combination of legislative actions, executive measures, and digital governance policies. India's political security model incorporates legislative and technological tools designed to uphold democratic order amid emerging challenges.

The trend suggests that India's political security model, either through direct influence or as a regional archetype, contributes to the normalization of democratic backsliding in neighboring states. As a leading voice among developing democracies, India's political conduct sets an important precedent. Other Global South countries, particularly in Africa and Southeast Asia, look to India as a democratic model. Also, the democracies of Middle East such as Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Kuwait etc. views India's political security approach as the importance of a tailored response to unique national contexts, where democratic institutions remain vulnerable to internal conflict, extremism, and misinformation, India's model demonstrates that security and democracy are not mutually exclusive. India's leadership will help foster regional cooperation and provide a viable path for developing democracies seeking to uphold both freedom and order.¹⁰

2.1. Key Aspects of India's Political Security Model

1. Democratic Institutions.
2. Federalism and Decentralization.
3. Legal Frameworks and Constitutional Safeguards.
4. Civil-Military Relations.
5. Pluralism and Social Cohesion.
6. Conflict Management and Internal Security.
7. Judicial Independence.
8. Civil Society and Media.

3. Challenges to Democratic Resilience

Addressing democratic backsliding in the Global South requires a multifaceted approach that strengthens institutions, enhances civic participation, and ensures political accountability. The following vital factors can play a significant role in countering the erosion of democracy:

1. **Strengthening Democratic Institutions**

Independent Judiciary which upholds the constitutional values and checks executive overreach. An Institution which conducts a free and fair, transparent election and promote effective parliamentary oversight to hold governments accountable. Strengthens local governance to encourage inclusive decision-making.

India:

India making its **representation at rank 71/173 in Global State of Democracy Initiative¹¹** stands as a strengthened Democratic Institution in Global South. India's Election Commission is a model of institutional strength in conducting free and fair elections which can be adopted by other democracy in Global South.

¹⁰ Singh, V. (2022). India's Role in the Global South: Democratic Strategies for Emerging Powers. International Affairs Review.

¹¹ IDEA, International. (2024). "Country Ranking". <https://www.idea.int/gsod/2024/countries/>. Global State of Democracy Initiative @2025 International IDEA.

Comparison:

As democracies in **Africa- Uganda** with rank **120/173** in **Global State of Democracy Initiative** exhibits signs of competitive authoritarianism: elections exist but are heavily manipulated. Rights of civil society is shrinking, and democratic backsliding is accelerating.

Bangladesh with rank 126/173 in Global State of Democracy Initiative, exhibits Single-party dominance under Awami League which erodes checks and balances. Electoral integrity has been questioned after opposition crackdowns in 2024.

Myanmar with rank 154/173 in Global State of Democracy Initiative, exhibits military rule even after 10 years of fragile democratic rule. Military coup (2021) completely dismantled democratic institutions in February 2021 leaving no independent judiciary or electoral process.¹²

2. Promoting Rule of Law and Constitutionalism

It means to implement constitutional safeguards to prevent arbitrary amendments that erode democracy and establish independent institutions like anti-corruption bodies to strengthen legal framework to protect fundamental rights.

India:

India's overall ranking in the 2024 **Rule of Law Index** is **79 out of 142 countries**¹³. the Indian Constitution that reflects the principles of constitutionalism and the rule of law include Article 13 (laws inconsistent with fundamental rights are void), Article 14 (equality before law and equal protection of laws), Article 32 (right to constitutional remedies), and Article 50 (separation of judiciary from the executive) is an example of rule of law prevailing in the country.

Comparison:

In Myanmar, according to United Nations Human Rights report about 2,950 people were killed by the security forces after the fundamental rights were suspended and rule of law replaced by martial rule in February 2021¹⁴. Judiciary is under full military control.

In Uganda, constitution amended to abolish presidential term and age limits. Judiciary lacks independence and often rules in favor of executive. Laws used to restrict dissent and civil society freedoms.

In Bangladesh, the rule of law has continued to decline in the county, as evidenced by the performance of Bangladesh in the **WJP Rule of Law Index** over the past decade. In 2015, Bangladesh was ranked 93rd on the index, but by 2024, it had dropped to 127th whereas India is ranked 79th out of 142 countries on the index.¹⁵

¹² Mitchell, Derek. (December 23, 2024). "How hopes for Myanmar's democracy faded and why leadership is needed (again)". <https://www.npr.org/2024/12/30/g-s1-38848/myanmar-democracy-leadership>. Npr newsletter report.

¹³ Reza, Arafat. (December 26, 2024). "Rule of law in Bangladesh: Challenges and the way forward".

<https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/op-ed/3jgdzbr5b6#:~:text=Consequently%2C%20the%20rule%20of%20law,it%20had%20dropped%20to%20127th>. Prothom Alo English Report.

¹⁴ Myanmar, OHCHR. (March 2023). "Situation of human rights in Myanmar". <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/myanmar-factsheet.pdf>. United Nations Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner report.

¹⁵ Reza, Arafat. (December 26, 2024). "Rule of law in Bangladesh: Challenges and the way forward".

<https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/op-ed/3jgdzbr5b6#:~:text=Consequently%2C%20the%20rule%20of%20law,it%20had%20dropped%20to%20127th>. Prothom Alo English Report.

3. Promoting Political Pluralism and Inclusion

It Encourages multi-party systems and ensure fair competition in political processes. Promotes inclusive representation of marginalized groups, including women, minorities, and indigenous communities and strengthens electoral laws that ensure fair representation.

India:

India, with its long history of diverse communities and a constitution that champions pluralism, plays a significant role in promoting political inclusion and democratic values within the Global South. India being a secular and diversified country still conducts free and fair election with political participation of all communities. The government works hand in hand with a strong opposition.

Comparison:

In Myanmar, Ethnic minorities, like the Rohingya, are completely excluded from political life. **In Venezuela**, Opposition parties are banned, co-opted, or disqualified from elections. National Assembly and electoral institutions dominated by ruling party. Civil society groups are excluded from decision-making processes.

In Bangladesh, Dominance of the **Awami League**; opposition parties like the **BNP** are persecuted. Arrests, legal harassment, and media blackouts prevent real opposition. Minority and dissenting voices underrepresented in politics.

In Uganda, Long rule of President Museveni and the **NRM** restricts genuine political competition. Opposition candidates, like **Bobi Wine**, are regularly arrested or attacked. Electoral process excludes youth, dissenters, and non-NRM actors.

5. Economic Development and Reducing Inequality

Implements inclusive economic policies to reduce disparities that fuel political instability. Provides equitable access to resources, services, and opportunities.

India:

India's Social Welfare Schemes like MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) aim to reduce rural poverty and empower local communities is an example for countries in global south.

6. Regional and International Support

Promote regional democratic norms through organizations like the African Union (AU) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Also encourages international election monitoring and human rights advocacy and provides technical and financial support for democratic reforms.

India:

India's **regional and international support** plays a crucial role in its **geopolitical strategy**, **economic development**, and efforts to **strengthen democratic institutions**. India's support, both from its neighbors and international partners, is shaped by its economic rise, strategic positioning, and ideological stance on global issues like democracy, human rights, and climate change. India's support in **SAARC** has been **crucial for initiatives** like poverty alleviation, trade integration, and infrastructure development in South Asia.

Comparison:

Bangladesh: Despite of Bangladesh interference in the internal matters of India by welcoming China to build economic foothold in Bangladesh for the landlocked northeastern region of India by Chief Advisor of interim government Md Yunus, India viewing its **Neighborhood First Policy** has strengthened its relations with Bangladesh through economic & commercial collaboration, defense cooperation, energy and connectivity, multilateral cooperation's, and infrastructure development during the 6th **BIMSTEC** submit in Bangkok, Thailand held on April 04, 2025.¹⁶

Sri Lanka: India has provided substantial economic and technical aid to Sri Lanka, especially during post-conflict reconstruction and in responding to natural disasters. However, Sri Lanka's growing relationship with China has complicated India's regional influence but recently Indian keeping in view the Neighborhood First policy, has signed a MoU on April 05, 2025 with Sri Lanka for import/export of power, sharing successful Digital solutions, Development of Trincomalee as an energy hub, Defense cooperations, multi-sectoral grant Assistance for eastern Province, field of health & medicine and Pharmacopoeial cooperations.¹⁷ India in the last 6 months has also converted Sri Lanka's loan of worth more than \$100 million into grants.¹⁸

Maldives: The Maldives' total debt stock has ballooned from USD 3 billion in 2018 to USD 8.2 billion as of March 2024, with projections indicating a further increase to more than USD 11 billion by 2029.¹⁹ India has significant influence over the Maldives' security and economic affairs, with a strong presence in tourism and aid. The relationship has sometimes been strained due to China's growing footprint in the region. Toady Maldives faces a severe debt crisis, exacerbated by external debts and unfavorable trade terms with China and only India keeping its view on Neighborhood First Policy extends its helping hand to restore democratic norms in Maldives.

7. Ensuring Military Neutrality

Establishing clear constitutional guidelines to prevent military interference in politics and promote civilian control over security forces. Strengthen defense sector transparency and accountability.

India:

India demonstrates that a **strong and professional military** can coexist with a **stable democratic system**, making it a model for other Global South countries. India has never experienced a military coup or direct military involvement in governance—an anomaly in a region where nations like Pakistan, Myanmar, Thailand, and Egypt have witnessed repeated military interventions.

4. Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis of the political security models of India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and some Latin American democracies reveals distinct approaches shaped by each nation's historical context, institutional frameworks, and socio-political dynamics.

¹⁶ Relation, International. (April 04, 2025). "India-Bangladesh Relationship". <https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/india-bangladesh-relations-7>. Dristi IAS.

¹⁷ PIB. (April 05, 2025). "List of Outcomes: Visit of Prime Minister to Sri Lanka". <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2119186>. PMO Report.

¹⁸ Laskar H Rezaul. (April 05, 2025). "India, Sri Lanka ink 10 agreement including in defense, power, energy". <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-sri-lanka-ink-10-agreements-including-in-defence-power-energy-101743842882186.html>. Hindustan Times Report.

¹⁹ ANI. (March 13, 2025). "China's lending practices push Maldives towards sovereign default". <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/chinas-lending-practices-push-maldives-toward-sovereign-default/articleshow/118968628.cms>. Economic times Report.

India

India's democratic stability is underpinned by its robust institutional framework, cultural pluralism, and resilience. The biggest strength of Indian democracy is its grassroot level democracy and its working. The Constitution of India establishes a federal structure with a clear separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The Election Commission of India (ECI) plays a pivotal role in ensuring free and fair elections, contributing to the legitimacy and continuity of democratic governance. Despite challenges such as socio-economic disparities and regional tensions, India's commitment to democratic principles has facilitated political stability in a diverse and populous nation.

Here is a detailed Comparison of India with democracies of Bangladesh Bhutan Sri Lanka and Latin America. How can India's political security model stop the phenomenon of democratic backsliding in these countries of Global South.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh operates under a parliamentary democracy but has experienced significant political turbulence. According to the **Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2024**, Bangladesh's score fell **by 1.44 points to 4.44**, resulting in a drop of **25 places to the 100th position among 167 countries**²⁰. This decline was attributed to a rigged election, the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024 amid mass protests, and subsequent political unrest. The main opposition party has warned of potential instability if elections are delayed beyond December 2025.²¹ Recently the Chief Advisor of the interim government Md. Yunus addressed Bangladesh as 'ocean guardian' and signed upon nine bilateral deals on economic cooperation, infrastructure and technical development with China, still India during the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok committed to a stable and democratic Bangladesh, emphasizing a people-centric approach to bilateral relations.²² Talking about India's political security model, no government in Bangladesh can ignore India's importance for its security and economic development or want to fritter away the gains from the last 15 years.

Bhutan

Transitioning from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 2008, Bhutan has embraced a unique form of democracy that integrates its cultural values. The political system comprises the Druk Gyalpo (Dragon King) as the head of state and a bicameral parliament. Bhutan is classified as **"Partly Free"** with a score of 63 out of 100 by Freedom House in 2024. The November 2023 National Assembly elections saw the former ruling **People's Democratic Party (PDP)** and the newly formed **Bhutan Tendrel Party (BTP)** advance to the second round, indicating a competitive political environment.²³ Bhutan has limited political pluralism, with only a few parties and tight restrictions on party activities. Political space is limited outside of election seasons, and criticism of the monarchy is socially and legally sensitive. Encouraging greater space for civil society and media, as well as reforming party laws to allow grassroots engagement year-round, can enrich Bhutan's democratic culture. Visit of His Majesty The King of Bhutan to India (February 03-04, 2025) At the invitation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, paid a special visit to India to attend the Maha Kumbh Mela. Bhutan can learn from India's **constitutional pluralism** and adopt more inclusive identity frameworks, ensuring cultural representation without

²⁰ Desk, TDS. (February 28, 2025). "Democracy Index 2024: Bangladesh falls 25 notches to 100th position".

<https://thedailysky.com/democracy-index-2024-bangladesh-falls-25-notches-to-100th-position/?utm>. The Daily Sky Publication.

²¹ Das, N., Krishna. (March 31, 2025). "Bangladesh's main opposition warns of instability if elections delayed beyond December". <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladeshs-main-opposition-warns-instability-if-elections-delayed-beyond-2025-03-31/?utm>. Reuter Publication.

²² Mukherjee, Vasudha. (April 04, 2025). "PM Modi, Bangladesh's Yunus discuss minority safety and Hasina extradition". https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/pm-modi-bangladesh-yunus-talks-minority-safety-hasina-extradition-125040400737_1.html. Business Standard New Report.

²³ House, Freedom. (2024). "Bhutan: Partly Free". <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bhutan/freedom-world/2024?utm>. Freedom House weekly newsletter.

assimilation pressures. As Bhutan's democracy evolves, India's political security model offers both cautionary tales and positive lessons. By enhancing institutional independence, encouraging political pluralism, formalizing decentralization, and embracing inclusive identity, Bhutan can ensure long-term democratic resilience without compromising its unique traditions.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a democratic republic with a semi-presidential system. The nation has faced challenges due to its **26-year civil war**, which weakened political institutions and impacted governance. In November 2024, the left-leaning **National People's Power (NPP)** coalition, led by Anura Kumara Dissanayake, secured a historic supermajority in parliamentary elections, **winning 159 out of 225 seats (70.6%)**. Voter turnout was approximately **68.9%**, down from **75.9%** in the 2020 election. The number of women in parliament increased from 12 (5.3%) to 21 (9.3%). Election observers noted that the election was peaceful and effectively managed by the Election Commission.²⁴ Sri Lanka can draw several lessons from India's political security model, especially in light of its recent political and economic crises.

- Strengthen independent institutions to enhance transparency and accountability. Empower oversight bodies to function autonomously, especially during crises.
- Revisit constitutional provisions (e.g., the 13th Amendment) to allow meaningful devolution of power to provincial councils, reducing ethnic tensions and promoting local governance.
- Limit the military's role in economic and administrative governance. Reassert civilian control to reinforce democratic norms and civilian oversight.
- Develop formal crisis-response protocols that ensure continuity of governance through democratic and constitutional channels.
- Encourage greater political pluralism by reforming party structures, discouraging dynastic politics, and creating space for youth and minority leadership.
- Foster a pluralistic national identity that respects and includes all ethnic groups, particularly the Tamil and Muslim communities, to build long-term social cohesion.

Sri Lanka's path to democratic recovery can benefit from India's experience in managing political security through institutional strength, inclusive governance, and civilian oversight. While context-specific adaptations are necessary, India's model offers a valuable reference point for sustainable democratic consolidation in Sri Lanka.²⁵

Latin American Democracies

Latin American countries exhibit diverse political security models, often influenced by historical authoritarian regimes and contemporary challenges. According to the OECD's "Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2024" report, as of 2022, only 36.3% of the population in 16 Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries had trust in their national governments, lower than in OECD and other world regions²⁶. While democracies in the region have consolidated, trust has continued to decline since the 2008 economic crisis, when it was 43%. Additionally, women hold less than one-third of seats in the lower or single houses of the legislative branch in LAC countries, indicating underrepresentation in politics.

²⁴ ANFREL. (2024). "Interim Report of the ANFREL International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to the 2024 Sri Lanka Parliamentary Elections". <https://perma.cc/2KS4-9NUS>. <https://www.idea.int/democracytracker/report/sri-lanka/november-2024?utm>.

²⁵ Daily FT (Sri Lanka). (2023). "Calls to demilitarize governance intensify amid economic reforms". – Reports on public and civil society pressures to roll back military presence in Sri Lanka's civilian sectors.

²⁶ OECD. (March 13, 2024). "Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2024". https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/government-at-a-glance-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-2024_4abdba16-en.html?utm. OECD Report.

5. Policy Recommendations

Recommendations include:

- Enhancing dialogue on democratic security to create shared norms within the Global South.
- Continuing reforms that ensure transparency and proportionality in security legislation.
- Promoting democratic values through regional diplomacy and development cooperation.
- Investing in civic education and institutional capacity building to strengthen democratic engagement.

India's model stands not as a threat to democracy but as a framework for its preservation in the face of modern challenges. As emerging democracies navigate turbulent times, India's example offers a pathway to balance, stability, and progress.

6. Findings

The research shows that India's political security measures have contributed to maintaining democratic continuity despite regional volatility. While certain policies have attracted criticism, they are often misinterpreted outside of their legal and constitutional contexts. Rather than signaling authoritarian drift, these measures reveal a robust institutional response to multifaceted challenges.

Furthermore, India's policies have encouraged other developing nations to modernize their governance systems while respecting democratic norms. This regional pattern reflects India's soft power and its ability to lead by example, especially in contexts where democratic institutions face existential threats.

7. Conclusion

The erosion of democratic backsliding in the Global South requires a comprehensive, context-specific approach. By strengthening institutions, promoting inclusive governance, ensuring transparency, and encouraging regional collaboration, countries can build resilient democracies.

India's political security model offers valuable insights into managing democratic backsliding. While institutional safeguards exist, proactive measures are necessary to strengthen democratic resilience. As a leader in the Global South, India's experiences provide critical lessons for other nations grappling with democratic erosion.