Democratic governance is to promote the interest of the people. Due to large size in terms of population and territory indirect democracy has been accepted by modern Nation-States. Political parties and people play a significant role in democratizing the process of governance. Political parties are regarded as the most important institutional mechanism available to the people through which the people can best represent their interests and aspirations. The interest and aspiration of the people are best articulated and aggregated by the political parties. In the Indian context, the absence of associational life, political parties play a crucial role. No doubt in recent years civil society is playing an important role. However, civil society in which the role of voluntary organizations of the people like NGOs, Selfhelp groups, etc is important in democratic governance. As it is difficult for these organizations to keep in touch with each and every problem of the people who live in different areas under different conditions. One more problem faced by the civil society is that, they can only influence and pressurize the government but the ultimate responsibility of formulating public policies is with the elected representatives, who are the members of one or the other political parties. Thus governance of our country is very much affected by the functioning of political parties.

At the time of elections political parties promise a number of policies and programmes, on which they contest elections. Based on these policies
and programmes of various political parties, people may prefer to elect their representatives. Political parties are expected to formulate public policies after getting elected as per their electoral promises. The contribution of political parties to the formulation of public policies indicates their responsiveness in terms of fulfillment of the aspirations of people. For the effective formulation of public policies active participation of political parties is essential. They should have adequate and correct knowledge about the problems of the people while formulating the policies. For this, they should be in close contact with the people, since parties are channels between the people and government. They cannot be responsive to the needs of the people unless they are in contact with the people. Thus, both participation and responsiveness of political parties are crucial in the functioning of democratic governance.

To what extent political parties represent the interests of the people is significant for democratic governance. Participation and responsiveness of political parties indicate the extent of representation of interest of the people. To make the political parties responsive to the needs of the people, popular responsiveness plays a crucial role. As the political parties are regarded as the institutions of representing the people, it is the right as well as duty of every citizen to make them responsive. One of the important and most popular means through which people can control their representatives is through elections. In elections people are given an opportunity to judge and evaluate the performance of their representatives belongs to various
parties. But, peoples' role in political process should not be confined to only to electoral politics. They must have to be more alert and vigilant in between elections. There is no guarantee that always political parties work in the interest of the people. There may be some personal interest or party interest which may overshadow the peoples' interest. Hence, active participation of the people can ensure responsiveness and accountability of the political parties. Responsiveness of people can make political parties accountable and answerable. It contributes to democratic public policy making.

India after attaining independence adopted parliamentary democracy. Political parties have been playing a significant role in Indian democracy though they are not mentioned in the Indian Constitution. Indian One-Party-Dominant System provided stability and consistency of policies. Governance under the leadership of Nehru was satisfactory to a greater extent. Inter-party and intra-party democracy helped to develop consensus on major policy decisions. In the post Nehru era, emergence of leadership of Indira Gandhi with her populist politics weakened the Congress party as an institution. This made other parties not only to follow the populist politics but also compete with the Congress party. Organizational wing of the Congress party weakened since the leader became very dominant. Elections were not held within the party. Everything was decided by a leader in the name of the party high command. The leader of the party became more important consequently Congressmen became answerable to
the leader and not to the people. Though initially, Rajiv Gandhi impressed to revive intra-party democracy of the Congress party. Subsequently nothing was materialized with regard to revival of intra-party democracy in the Congress party.

In 1989 One-Party-Dominant system was replaced by multi-party system. With the emergence of domination of regional parties government formation started to become a difficult task. This led to the emergence of coalition era in India. Democratic governance was further made difficult with the emergence of coalition government primarily due to the problem of evolving consensus on basic issues and problems of the country. Unstable coalitions have affected the policy formulation process of the government. Parties within the coalitions have their own ideologies, policies and principles. With so many differences arriving at consensus on policy decisions has become very difficult. Any small difference of opinion among the members may lead to the downfall of the government. Regional parties have become more significant because national parties are dependent on them in the formation of government as well as working of government. The party/parties to continue in power have to enjoy the confidence of its allies. The Indian experience of coalition governments has shown that one or the other ally of the coalition always gives priority to control or dictate the terms to the government. On the other hand opposition parties are waiting for an opportunity to break the coalition and to attract its allies on its side to form the government. Such politics has reduced government to a
number game. Rarely we find people who really want to serve the nation. Opposition parties are always obstructing the functioning of ruling party/parties to make them unresponsive. If at all it comes to power it also meets the same fate because the party which forms opposition repeats the same to it. It is often said that in a coalition it is difficult to determine where government ends and opposition begins. The opposition of today may be a partner in the coalition government of tomorrow.

Political parties which are to be responsive to the interest of the people are becoming captives of sinister interest. Attaining power have become the main objective of most of the parties. To get power political parties are using all sorts of illegitimate means. Such unlawful acts of political parties make the mockery of elections. It is through the elections the representatives are held accountable, answerable and responsive to the people. But, when the election process itself is vitiated and the leaders are elected by unlawful means then how we can expect responsive government from such leaders. Use of money, muscle and mafia power in elections, booth capturing, rigging, false voting, unfinished electoral rolls, etc., adversely affect the responsiveness of the political parties to fulfill the aspirations of the people.

The findings of the present study are as follows:

1. Power politics has affected the participation of political parties. For getting power political parties do not hesitate to adopt any illegitimate means. Politics has become a number game reducing the
importance of performance by political parties. With the emergence of coalitions every party gives priority to forming alliance and maintaining that alliance with a view of getting power for it. Personal interests and party interests have become so important that interest of the people is subordinated.

The use of money, mafia and muscle power have devalued the accountability of political parties to the people. With the help of money and mafia power some candidates get themselves elected. In many places some criminals themselves are entering politics. Some parties take the help of criminals to win elections. As a result of this political parties give less importance for reforming their functioning to promote the wellbeing of the people.

2. The nature of party politics affected democratic governance in India. Different issues, policies, programmes, personal factors and style of functioning of parties affect party politics. Party politics has not only affected the electoral process but also has affected the functioning of parliamentary democracy. Most issues of public importance are being politicized in India. The corruption scandals in 1990s to the women’s reservation issue, etc., were considered from the perspective of the partisan point of view.

Both intra-party politics and inter-party politics are affecting democratic governance adversely. With the emergence of coalition governments there was also a change in the nature of party politics.
The party which forms the government takes the support of a number of regional parties. Obviously, every party in the coalition is attempting to promote its party interest. These parties come together and agree for Common Minimum Programme not to serve the nation but to share power. The ruling party/parties are compelled to take its allies into confidence. With the decline of national parties, regional parties have become strong. Regional parties are pressing for the fulfillment of their demands. If their demands were not fulfilled they may bring down the government. This is what happened to the NDA government in 1998. If at all small regional parties within the coalition get united, the party giving support from outside may become a threat to the survival of the coalition. Here, we can mention the examples of National Front in 1989 and United Front governments in 1996.

Parties outside the coalition are always waiting for the opportunities to bring down the government. Often the opposition parties have negative approach to the policies introduced by the coalition government. Their main motive is to make government ineffective.

3. Intra-party democracy also has some effect on democratic governance. We cannot strengthen the organizational wing of political parties unless and until democracy within the political parties is revived. It is the organizational wing of the party which
keeps the party in touch with the needs and aspirations of the people. The leaders of the party should not be chosen by the party high command but should be elected by the members of the party. But, in India what we generally find is that, most of the time the leaders are chosen by party high command. As a result they feel responsible not to the people but to the party leader. A large number of people are mainly dependent upon the leader for party tickets. Such a state of affairs has weakened the political parties in India. So revival of intra-party democracy is essential.

4. Lack of strong coalition culture adversely affects democratic governance. When consensus is built among the political parties policy making not only becomes democratic but also effective. But, with the differences in ideologies, programmes, policies, etc. it is difficult to arrive at consensus. There is need to strengthen coalition culture which ultimately contributes to evolve consensus. This will strengthen democratic governance in India. Cooperation, coordination and accommodative spirit are the prerequisites for strengthening democratic coalition governments.

5. Democratic governance is further affected by the nature of debate and discussion that take place within the Parliament. Parliamentary proceeding are mainly affected by the power struggle, party politics and disruptive elements. Poor attendance, floor crossing, shouting slogans, etc., not only disrupt the policy formulation process but also
result in waste of time and money. The scenes inside the Parliament are not conducive for the effective formulation of public policies. There is need to improve the quality of debate in the Parliament. For this proper training of the leaders is required to maintain the standard of debates and discussions. The members who are assigned with the great responsibility of representing the aspirations of people are expected to behave responsibly. There should prevail some norms for proper controlling of the behavior of leaders in the Parliament. Unless and until we improve the quality of debate in the Parliament, we cannot hope of effective democratic good governance.

6. There is wide gap between what political parties pursue about governance and what they practice. This is especially found in the era of coalition governance. Since 1998 NDA was talking about good governance mainly based on transparent, accountable and responsive government but in practice its efforts were very little in this regard. Not only NDA and its partners but almost all parties in one or the other way are talking about good governance. But, in practice how responsibly they talk in the Parliament is very vital. If political parties are concerned with the good governance and about the welfare of the people, it is not only when they get power but also when they are in the opposition they have to function responsively to promote good governance. Therefore, good governance should be above party politics. Good governance has become the concept to be
included in the parties' manifestos for mobilizing the electorate. Every party has to internalize it in its actions. What is needed is practice by political parties according to their promises in the election manifesto.

7. Lastly and most importantly, we should not neglect the role of people in democratic governance. The important responsibility of ensuring democratic governance rests on the shoulders of the people. But, the studies have revealed that by and large popular participation is not very satisfactory in India. Civil Society in India is not very much active. Some NGOs, pressure groups, self-help groups, etc., are playing an important role in giving education and information to the people about their rights and responsibilities. But, their scope is very limited in nature.

People have to come forward and organize themselves and be vigilant, informative and active in politics. They should make political parties responsible for their performance. But, popular participation in the democratic governance is not satisfactory primarily due to the kind of party politics that prevails in India. As a result of this people are losing confidence in the political parties and some times developing political apathy. People should realize that unless they are active participants to evaluate the deeds and misdeeds of government periodically, democratic governance cannot be strengthened. Ineffective popular responsiveness results in the dilution of democratic governance.
This study is not conclusive but it point to the need for extensive and intensive understanding of the role of parliament in the democratic governance in India.