

## **DEMOCRACY IS A CULTURE RATHER THAN A PROCESS**

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### **Introduction**

The term “Democracy” goes as back as to the ancient times. It was first used for the purpose of governing a state in Greece. In Greek language it is divided into two words demos and krates. Demos mean people and krates means power making the word democracy as power of people which implies that people to rule themselves, directly or indirectly through their representatives. Aristotle used term democracy for a government created by number meaning peoples government which he considered his corrupt form of government of polity. Because a democrat government to Aristotle runs through majority of people ignoring the welfare of the minority of people.

In the medieval period, the philosophy of governing people shifted from philosophical to theological form because of spread of Christianity in Europe. This way the states were governed with the influence of church.

With the beginning of modern period it was first Locke who gave, Theory of Consent, to govern the state. This meant that state to be governed by the parliament which was to be created through representation of people. Thus a modern era developed concept of democracy as a system of government. Sealy held that democracy is a government in which everyone has a share. Dicey defined democracy is a government in which the governing body is large organization of entire nation. To McIver democracy is not a way of governing whether by majority or otherwise but primarily a way of determining who should govern and broadly to what ends.

In the study of democracy McIver’s definition clarifies the concept of democracy to better understanding. He held that democracy involved a freedom of choice in electing ruler and the consent of the electors than those who received the mended should above rule. It means that democracy has popular base and hinges upon the consent of the government.

However, the major consent of people is not enough to make a government democratic. The consent of the people must be real, effective and active in order to make a democracy genuine. Therefore, democracy in general is regarded as the rule of majority of the people. Hence Bryce defined democracy as a system of

government in which the will of the majority of the qualified citizens rule taking the qualified citizens to constitute the great bulk of the inhabitants.

It is interesting to note that the concept of democracy creates a conflict on the question of majority and minority representations. In south Asian context the concept of democracy in ethnically diversified society shifted from the process of majority decision making to the demand for ethnic representation in the assembly. Thus democracy has become a separate standard from one society to other society as a means to popular government.

Democracy carries significant values for a political system. It only does not maintain concept of popular participation but also carries with it elements of freedom, equality and rationality. It speaks of popular sovereignty, liberty, social justice, consent, participation, mobilization, expression of thought, fundamental rights and a smooth transformation of power. These values make a democratic society pure and effective for making a state strong enough to provide welfare for its people.

Democracy is also meaningful with its usage. Its prime function is to simulate towards self-education for participation in governmental activities, to open wider horizon for the individual to lead to broadened interest of people in general. It aims at justice and happiness. It is a society of free, equal, active, and intellectual citizens in which each man and woman choose his or her own way of life for himself / herself and also willing that others should choose theirs

Hence democracy has passed through different concepts with the passage of time in the contemporary world. Democracy, generally in West is called by the term "Liberal Democracy" which implies that a democracy in which economic independence are freely permitted for the people to lead their lives according to their will.

The above discussion indicates that democracy has two different sets on the one hand, it is an institution and on the other hand, it is a system. As an institution it represents itself as a culture and as system it functions as a process. Therefore, to find out whether democracy is a culture or a process one has to examine it from both dimensions, as an institution and as a system.

**What is culture?**

Culture relates to the term value systems. It is represented by the group of people who live together in a surrounding of common interest. This value system emerges in the group through the pressure of its society. Society itself is a social gathering which is born out of interaction of two or more persons. For example the first step of society begins from a family which has its own value system within the four walls of its house-hold. Where several families established a large group carrying common value system automatically from where their culture emerge. Hence culture of one grope of people may fiddler from the culture of other group of people. Historically speaking, with the rise of civilization family turned into tribe, tribal turned into large group of people creating governmental system on the basis of different theories of state such as force, matriarchic, social contract and evolutionary. All these theories defined in one way or the other as the concept of governing a society which was taking shape of civilized society. Thus social gathering turning into a state system passed through a long period of time until there appeared concept of nation state. With the treaty of Westphalia (1648) these nation-states emerged and it's own value system and continued with the value-orientation and value-expectation.

As mentioned earlier, these states started their existence as institutions. We have also noticed that institutions carrying value system look towards certain forms and way of life which give them protection with welfare, happiness, justice, equality, liberty and rationality.

Democracy for a state may be considered as an institution carrying its own value system. The democratic value system has already been mentioned earlier with reference to the basic elements emphasizing on popular sovereignty, liberty, social justice, consent, fraternity, participation and mobilization, expression of thought, fundamentals rights and smooth transformation of power.

**Democracy as a Culture**

We are beginning examining democracy as culture. It has already been mentioned above that democracy may be defined through two dimensions, as an institution and as a system. As an institution this consist a combination of values comprising different elements which are essential for a democratic society. Hence democracy as a culture can be studied emphasizing upon its value system considering it as an institution.

**Significance of Culture:**

Culture has a significant impact on the day to day life on its people. Being a custodian of value system, it gives weightage to the lifestyle of particular community it represents. Because for the development of human civilization most important aspect is its value system.

Democracy as a culture therefore also gives weightage to its value system which is defined through its different essential elements. Hence a successful democracy must maintain its value system while being a culture. In an institution which for our discussion is a state system is such kind of functions which stand being very sensitive to perform properly to give an accurate result from this dimension process being a system is equally important that of culture. Hence democracy needs to be analyzed as an institution as well as system for understanding the value system of democratic political society.

For our further discussion using practical approach we can pick up examples of developing state of Pakistan and developed state of the USA.

Pakistan is fighting with democracy since its inception in 1947. It has passed through continued crises in search of democracy although it succeeded to establish meaningful democracy in its 1973 constitution which had a democratic basis. The assembly which gave the constitution was democratically elected through general elections based in adult franchise. But ironically the basis of election had traditional voting behavior which possessed combined influence of Pakistan political culture being into pluralistic in character as ethno-regional, rulers urban, mass-elite, and religion-sectarian. Further it is also socially diversified. People in general are hardly aware of functioning of democracy as a system particularly in developing nation but if one has to analyze democracy he / she must go into the depth of both, its value system and its functionalism that is its institutionalization and its function as a system. Hence democracy may be considered both as being an institution culture and being system a process.

**Impact of culture on society**

Culture plays a constructive role on society. It involves every members of the society to lead his / her life according to the norm and value determined by its culture.

When the society takes the shape of state, for the purpose of governing it, and creates democracy as its culture, this culture ultimately plays constructive role in running of the state. All those essential elements of democratic culture become source of inspiration for the citizens of the state. Hence with inspiration for the

citizens of the state hence the state comes under bondage of that value system which is essential for a democratically based political society.

The above mentioned points dealing with cultural value system of a democratically based political society must combine together to create a viable political system. Thus the state has to seek all those essential elements from the bulk of its citizenry.

**Democracy as process:**

Our next discussion on democracy is on consideration of its being as process. To study democracy as process we divided it into three steps dimensions; its meaning its significance and its functions

**Its meaning:**

Democracy as a process may be taken up as a system for the purpose of running the state government. A state is governed through representatives of people in a democratic system. It involves the most important aspect for creating and maintaining democracy by the government depending upon the voting behaviors of the people. The voting behavior varies from society to society or even community to community within the population of a state. It has great impact of a given state's political culture. Generally speaking, the population of a particular state has pluralistic political culture resulting into three different kinds of orientations to what Gabriel Almond calls it parochial, subject and participant. These three orientations directly or indirectly, consciously or subconsciously effect the voting behavior of an individual in the state. Therefore, in a pluralistic culture state, democracy has a system which may not properly work. It means the value system of democracy which represents its institutional meaning in definition of its being culture is difficult to be maintained such examples. We may take from a developing state of Pakistan and a developed state, The United States of America. In Pakistan voting behavior largely depends upon jagirdari system, zamindari system, caste system, tribalism, regionalism, or ethnicity. In contemporary political dynamic of the United States such examples occurred with newly held presidential elections. The pluralistic culture of US divided the nation with exploitations of diversity within the unity.

**Its significance:**

The diversifications within the cultural value system in a state makes system or process weak. It implies that the most important aspect within the system is the formation of unity. The moment unity is divided; it directly affects the working of a system. Hence democracy as a system has significant value for running the

government properly and successfully to maintain true democracy which has a basis of its own cultural values.

**Its functions:**

In a state, system functions with help of three unified forces or elements namely authority, Administrative mechanism, and political mobilization and participation of people for a successful democratic system the state must maintain rationalization of authority, specialization of administrative mechanism and full extended mobilization and full participation of the people. Hence these three element can make democracy suffice as a process when it is functioning with its significance value as a system.

**Whether democracy is a culture or a process:**

The above study on democracy, culture, and process indicate that a state with democratic system of government functions on the basis of both culture as well as process. It functions as a culture being an institution; hence it deals with the value system of the society which has combination of different elements of democracy those defined above like respect of sovereignty, liberty, equality and so on. If any one of these is not followed or it given respect and importance in running the state, these are always chance of losing democracy. Similarly democracy as a process is meaningful as it is taken up as a system to run the government carrying social satisfaction based on economic life, liberty and hierarchical formation of socio-cultural values. Consequently, the numerous elections after 1970 failed establishing democracy by keeping itself away as on institution or as a process both the institution and the system went so much wrong that it became victim of militancy regimes since the period of establishing democracy in 1973.

United States of America has very-different history with established democracy of 240 years. It was created with locking concept of consent. It maintained its values with strong sense of its institutional foundation. It functioned in a very systematic method leading to such a period of time challenging the institution setup of democracy, but always maintains its value system in its approach. It is for the first time in America history that presidential elections result has created fear in the citizens with obvious division within the nation on the basis of diversity breaking the unity. The newly elected president is challenging the maker clauses of the constitution defined the value of liberty and equality in first 10 amendments. The world is eagerly looking towards the challenging position for the presidential election whether American democracy stand as the strongest democracy of the world or not.

The two above examples show that democracy is important from both dimensions being a culture or a process.

**Conclusion:**

In sum study of democracy is both interesting and challenging. It is interesting because it is a common slogan for almost all nation of the world. Particularly for those developing national which have emerged after the Second World War It is equally challenging for the reason that in contemporary world its states as an institutions and as a process has been taken with criticalized by the accommodation politically analyst and even general public. Academically and analytically democracy is analyzed from both dimensions as a culture as well as a process. The general public mostly takes up democracy with its value by the challenging demands and support.