

Theoretical Analysis of Institutional dimension of Indian democracy

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Abstract:

Democracy stands for that form of government in which ultimate power rests in the hands of common people. Indian democracy is considered to be the largest democracy in the world. In a democratic nation institution plays a very pivotal role. With the establishment of this formal setup, an attempt is made to fulfill the welfare goals for common people. The institutional dimension of India includes political, economic and social spheres of the society that requires the involvement of the common people either directly or indirectly. In order to safeguard the Constitution which is the supreme law of the land, the institutions present in the political sphere of the country perform numerous functions. Economic institutions are inevitable for the country's economic prosperity. Some of these institutions are run by the government of India and some are run by private entrepreneurs. However, institutions in the social sphere are concerned more about those issues of the common people that are either neglected or skipped by the government authority and to bring them into light with the help of strong public opinion or active mass media. Institutions present in India have so far strengthened their base that without them it is quiet impossible to run the State.

Keywords: *Democratic, inevitable, institution, pre determined.*

OBJECTIVES:

1. To examine the significance of institutions in a democratic nation.
2. To analyze the functioning of institutions in social, political and economic spheres of the Indian society.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Why institutions are important for a democracy?
2. What role does institution play in the different spheres of Indian society?

METHODOLOGY:

The present research work is both descriptive as well as analytical in nature. While conducting the study data is collected from secondary sources. These sources include books, research articles and websites.

INTRODUCTION

“Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people.”

The above mentioned lines of Abraham Lincoln can be the best example of the theoretical notion of democracy. Keeping these in mind one can easily interpret common welfare as the ultimate goal of democracy. To pursue this goal, democracy uses the mechanism of institution that represents the theoretical aspect of the concept. In other words, institutions are one of the mechanisms of democracy for realizing its true spirit. Institution is nothing but a formal establishment to achieve pre determined goals. A democratic nation is characterized by the existence of several components such as citizenship, representation, rights, Constitution and others. Effective working of democracy depends upon the realization of these components. The various institutions present in a democracy helps in the actualization of these components. The institutions like parliament, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), planning commission, judiciary, commercial institution like Reserve Bank, Finance Commission, Mass Media, NGO's, social movements and others work under the democratic framework of Indian nation. These institutions play a vital role in the political, economic and social spheres of a democratic nation.

In the political sphere institutions have to act as a guardian of the Constitution with the help of judiciary and protector of public interest with the help of parliament. Similarly in the economic sphere, the institutions have to perform the role of stabilizer to bring about economic growth with the help of various economic institutions like financial commission, commercial sector and others. Again in the social sphere, we have seen the emergence of various social movements, student unions, pressure groups, NGO's and so on for addressing different issues of the society which are not addressed by the mechanisms of government.

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Institutions are those tools of the government that play a very significant role in a democracy. The role played by institution reflects its importance in a democratic nation. Institutions work in the political, economic and social spheres of the country. In order to understand the importance of these institutions in different spheres of Indian society a brief description of their working within the democratic framework of the nation is given below.

POLITICAL DIMENSION:

The political dimension of a society involves institutions such as Parliament, Judiciary, Executive, Opposition party, pressure groups and civil society organizations that deals formally with the concept of power. Most of the time, relation between the formal organs of the government and the informal institutions is contradictory. Yet the ultimate aim of all these institutions is the welfare of common people.

In case of Parliament, which formulates laws and amend them if necessary, represents the will of the people as the laws are formulated to fulfill the wishes of the mass. It is said to be one of the vital organ of the democracy. In the context of India some examples of such legislations are inclusion of Fundamental Rights in the Constitution of India to provide the facility of basic rights to its citizens, provision of Panchayati Raj Institutions which paved the way for the establishment of local level bodies in the country, provision of Right To Information and others.

Secondly, judiciary which is regarded to be the third organ of the government maintains checks and balance because when the laws passed by the legislature goes beyond the provision of the Constitution, then the judiciary can declare those laws to be unconstitutional. In India, Judiciary acts as a guardian of the Constitution which is reflected from the following case of Golak Nath vs. State of Punjab, 1967 where certain basic features of the Constitution are made non-amendable viz. sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, the Federal system, judicial review and Parliamentary system of government.

Election commission is also an important institution of Indian democracy. The Constitution of India as per the provision of article 324 provided the grounds for the creation of an independent Election Commission to maintain the sanctity of the democratic process of election.

Turning theory into reality, the Election Commission of India came into existence on January 25, 1950. The significance of this institution is that it passes moral code of conduct during the time of election, which sets the guidelines to the political parties as well as candidates that ought to follow in the campaigning and in the whole election process for conducting a fair election. Some of the codes of conduct as issued by the election commission of India for the guidance of Political Parties and Candidates are like no party or candidate shall include in any activity which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes and communities, religious or linguistic, criticism of other parties or their workers based on unverified allegations or distortion shall be avoided, refrain from serving or distributing liquor on polling day and during the forty eight hours preceding it, there shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes and Mosques, Churches, Temples or other places of worship shall not be used as forum for election propaganda and others.

Executive branch of a government maintains stability in a democracy. Parliamentary laws are subjected to executive approval. In case of India, bills passed by both the houses of parliament are sent to the President of India, the executive head, for his approval after which they got the status of a law. He can also use his veto power to show disapproval over a particular bill which he considers inappropriate. Gyani Zail Singh, the seventh President of India, for the first time used “pocket veto” over a bill passed by the Indian Parliament in the year 1986.

ECONOMIC DIMENSION

While discussing about the economic dimension of Indian democracy we can cite the examples of Finance Commission, various commercial sectors like Government Banks, Private Banks, co-operatives and others that play a significant role for stabilizing the economic growth of the country.

Constitution of India laid the provision for the establishment of a Finance Commission in the country under article 280 which came into existence in 1951. Its main function is to recommend measures to the President of India relating to the distribution of financial resources between the Union government and the State governments. Finance commission helps the government to take efficient decisions regarding financial issues of the country which leads towards a stable economic growth and development in the country. Till date fifteen Finance

Commissions are setup which consists of one chairman and four other members. The present Chairman of the Commission is N.K. Singh who was the former revenue secretary of the State.

The other economic institutions like the commercial sectors would help the government by giving financial assistance to the various projects and policies that are adopted for fulfilling the desire of the common people. The facility of financial assistance is not mere available to the government bodies rather it is available to common individual of the country also. It provides opportunities to the common people for their financial security. Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), National Housing Bank (NHB), Allahabad Bank, Bank of Baroda, Central Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, Federal Bank Limited and others are some of examples of such commercial sectors that are functioning in India.

SOCIAL DIMENSION

In case of the social dimension of democracy we can talk about the Non-governmental organizations, Media and Press, the various social movements and others that raise those issues of the people that are mostly overlooked and place it before the common platform so that they will get proper attention and treatment by the legal authority.

Media is one of the essential social organizations of democracy because it closely scrutinizes the activities of the government and presents it before the people. Media acts like a watch dog in modern democracy. It provides a common platform to raise issues and grievances as well as to opinions and suggestions. It facilitates the process of molding strong public opinion in the country which is an essential condition of a vibrant democracy. It is very important to have a free and independent media for sustaining democracy.

In regard to popular movement it can be said that sometimes the activities of government in the name of development may turn authoritarian. For example, construction of a multipurpose dam is regarded as a process of development by the authorities of government but in most of the cases it involves large scale displacement of the indigenous people, loss of their identity, inadequate provision of rehabilitation etc. In Indian context movements such as

Narmada Bachao Movement, Chipko Movement, Anti-Arrack Movement, Kittiko-Hachchiko movement are worth mentioning in this regard.

Non-governmental organization is an essential component of democracy because it brings those issues into focus of the government that has been neglected by the State. Along with this it also takes several steps for the development of people as well as to protect the various democratic ideals for example setting up of various educational institutions, organization of awareness campaigns and others. Some of the prominent NGO's of India are Akanksha Public Charitable Trust, Association for Leprosy Education, Rehabilitation and Treatment-India (ALERT), Child Rights and You (CRY), Plan India, Annamrita-ISKCON Food Relief Foundation, Association for Non-traditional Employment for Women (ANEW) and others.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

In the conclusion it can be said that institution helps the democracy to run efficiently, but in the present context it is seen that due to various evils like corruption, red-tapism, favoritism, nepotism, dynasty rule and others the mechanisms of government are not being able to perform their functions in a desired way. If we take the example of the working of Judiciary, it is seen that a number of cases are still not solved or pending before the High Courts and the Supreme Court of the country. Working of these institutions largely depend upon the political executive. Most of the political leaders either have criminal background or involve themselves in criminal activities. It compels the judiciary to come out with an active role which is known as Judicial Activism.

Institutions are not being able to work properly in democracies because of the political interference. Most of the leaders of political parties are guided by the interest of high class powerful section of the people living in the society. Judiciary has to work efficiently for the success of institutional dimension of democracy. Because of the expansion of institutional dimension of democracy new institutions such as National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Schedule Caste and National Commission for Schedule Tribe came into being. This is a positive development in democracy. But though they are good at their spirit yet they are not being able to achieve the goal as they are not able to function independently. They have to work under the political pressure which hampers the

spontaneous growth of these institutions, which acts as a hindrance in the path of true realization of democracy. Most of the social organizations like Non-governmental Organizations, Mass media have become much more money oriented. It means they are driven towards the factor of money rather than towards the welfare of people. In short, they become less committed towards their real objective i.e. welfare of common people. But all of them are not of the same character, there are still some social organizations which are committed towards their ultimate end of welfare. In the contemporary time, the emergence of globalization, capitalist structure of the nation etc. bring threat towards the working of democratic government in the world. In spite of all these obstacles democracy is still prevailing in many parts of the world. The principles of democracy should be culminated by the countries as without it people have to face various problems that the middle-east countries are facing.

In a democracy public opinion plays a very significant role but till it is not a major factor. Majority of the people are illiterate as well as unaware regarding the working and recent developments that took place in a democracy. So, it can be said that just by criticizing democratic institutions of the world, people cannot attain the true spirit of democracy. For this purpose, they have to act positively along with the various institutions to protect the ideals of democracy as it is said that people gets that government which it deserves.

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