

PREFACE

In a bid to standardize higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) based on five types of courses viz. *core, discipline specific, generic elective, ability and skill enhancement* for graduate students of all programmes at Honours level. This brings in the semester pattern, which finds efficacy in sync with credit system, credit transfer, comprehensive continuous assessments and a graded pattern of evaluation. The objective is to offer learners ample flexibility to choose from a wide gamut of courses, as also to provide them lateral mobility between various educational institutions in the country where they can carry their acquired credits. I am happy to note that the University has been recently accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC) with grade “A”.

UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 have mandated compliance with CBCS for U. G. programmes for all the HEIs in this mode. Welcoming this paradigm shift in higher education, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) has resolved to adopt CBCS from the academic session 2021-22 at the Under Graduate Degree Programme level. The present syllabus, framed in the spirit of syllabi recommended by UGC, lays due stress on all aspects envisaged in the curricular framework of the apex body on higher education. It will be imparted to learners over the six semesters of the Programme.

Self Learning Materials (SLMs) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. From a logistic point of view, NSOU has embarked upon CBCS presently with SLMs in English/Bengali. Eventually, the English version SLMs will be translated into Bengali too, for the benefit of learners. As always, all of our teaching faculties contributed in this process. In addition to this we have also requisitioned the services of best academics in each domain in preparation of the new SLMs. I am sure they will be of commendable academic support. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders who will participate in the teaching-learning based on these study materials. It has been a very challenging task well executed by the teachers, officers & staff of the University and I heartily congratulate all concerned in the preparation of these SLMs.

I wish you all a grand success.

Professor Indrajit Lahiri
Authorised Vice-Chancellor
Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU)

Netaji Subhas Open University

**Four Year Undergraduate Degree Programme
Under National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) &
Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Political Science
Programme Code : NPS
Course Type : Discipline Specific Core (DSC)
Course Title : Democracy and its Processes
Course Code : 5CC - PS - 02**

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**Netaji Subhas
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**Honours in
Political
Science (HPS)**

Course : Democracy and its Process

Code : 5CC - PS - 02

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Module–1

Unit – 1 □ Democracy : The History of an Idea

Classical and Modern Democracy

Structure

- 1.1 Objective**
- 1.2 Introduction**
- 1.3 Democracy : Its Origin**
- 1.4 Ancient Democracy**
- 1.5 Classical Democracy**
- 1.6 Contemporary Democracy**
- 1.7 Conclusion**
- 1.8 Summing Up**
- 1.9 Probable Questions**
- 1.10 Further Reading**

1.1 Objective

By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with the following :

- Origin and evolution of democracy
- Origin and nature of ancient democracy
- Background, causes and evolution of classical democracy
- Various dimensions of contemporary democracy

1.2 Introduction

Democracy is supposed to be a modern concept ushered with the arrival of modern society. Indeed, modern democracy seems to be a gift of modern society. Modern democracy along with its different forms spread to different parts of the world with the breakdown of pre-modern societies. Elected representatives,

Representative assemblies and representative governments, recognition of peoples' democratic rights, rule of law, sovereignty of parliaments, separation powers and independence of judiciary, freedom of the press—all these signify arrival of modern democracies.

1.3 Democracy : Its Origin

However, the concept of democracy is not a totally new and an exclusive contribution of modern era. It actually appeared in pre-modern societies also. The term 'democracy' first appeared in ancient Greek political and philosophical thought and its first formal expression was found in the city-state of Athens during classical antiquity. But again, invention and usage of the term 'democracy' in ancient Athens does not imply its non-existence in pre-Athenian period. In its rudimentary form democracy was found in the pre-historical period.

It may sound strange but the fact is that scholars have noticed existence of democracy as a form of social decision-making in primitive societies. The first form of democracy in human history is actually primitive democracy. Primitive democracy is that form of democracy that was prevalent among the primitive tribes. Actually primitive democracy was not particular form of state rule with any formal structure of debate and decision-making. Rather it signified essence of democracy in the normal day-to-day lives of the primitive people. Primitive tribal societies were marked by equality, non-subjection to other men and external authorities, participatory decision-making processes, rule of unanimity-based decisions, enforcement of decisions only by customs or general consent etc. Unlike political democracies of ancient Greek or modern periods, the decisions of the tribe were made by all adult members of the community and the decisions taken collectively by all adult members of the community were enforced only by custom or general consent. For these reasons, George Novack has rightly observed that "In its widest sense, democracy is as old as the first forms of human society".

1.4 Ancient Democracy

The idea of democracy was not even unknown to the ancient people of either China or India. In ancient China a persons named Zho emphasized on the importance

of people and Sun Yat-Sen envisioned a republic for China. In ancient India early form of democracy was actualised through the republics. *Gana* or a *Sangha* (such as Buddhist Sangha) Sreni, Puga, or Vrata are different forms of republican politics that existed in ancient India. Although monarchy was the widely prevalent and normal form of the state, still democratic form of institutions were not unknown in ancient India.

Democracy as a form of state rule is supposed to be a Greek invention. Democracy is in origin a Greek word. The word 'democracy' is actually composed of two words—One is 'demos' which means the whole citizen body living within a particular polis, or city-state and the other one is 'Kratos' which means either 'power' or 'rule'. In this sense democracy becomes rule of the people. It may be mentioned here that about 422 B.C. Cleon said: "...That shall be democratic which shall be of the people, by the people, for the people".

It is usually thought that democracy was by origin an European concept as it is believed to have originated in ancient Greek city-state of Athens. Athens is believed to be the birthplace of democracy. Actually it was not Athens but Chios in Ionia which was the first Greek city to tread the path to democracy and that was in as early as in the second quarter of the sixth century B.C. There were free institutions in Chios between 575-550 B.C. There existed some kind of democratic norms and free institutions in Chios.

The desire for democracy which found feeble expression in Chios in the sixth century B.C., got a solid foothold in Athens in the 5th century B.C. The Greek city-state of Athens (which also included both Athens and Attica) may be described as the first known democracy in the world. From the 9th to the 5th centuries B.C., Athens completed the full cycle from monarchy to democracy. In this process the power of the nobility was broken up and developed a political system based on practice of adopting and enacting legislation through democratic procedures.

Athenian statesman Solon laid the foundation of Athenian democracy. Solonial reforms ensured the rights of all Athenian citizens to participate in Assembly (Ecclesia) meetings. All citizens were entitled to attend the general Assembly, which became the sovereign body, entitled to pass laws and decrees, elect officials, and hear appeals from the most important decisions of the courts. Every citizen was entitled to attend and speak at its meetings. Decisions were taken through voting either by show of hands or by secret ballot. Another democratic body was the

Boule. It was the official executive body. It was a group of 500 men. 50 from each of the ten Athenian tribes, who served on the Council for one year. It met every day. Its function was of supervisory nature. The Boule was less powerful than the Assembly but more dignified than the Assembly.

Notable features of the Athenian democracy were its deliberative and participatory nature. It was deliberative democracy in the sense that there existed in the Ecclesia (Assembly) free atmosphere of public discussion and lively debate both on domestic and foreign policies. At the same time, it was a particular form of participatory democracy. Participatory democracy means that particular form of democracy where citizens can directly participate in the decision-making processes of the state. As R. H. Soltan has observed in his *Introduction of Politics* : “The Greek city-states were indeed democratic in the participation of all citizens, not only in the election of officials but in the daily routine of administration and justice...”. The Athenian democracy was indeed a vibrant, direct and participatory democracy. S. Hornblower, in an essay entitled *Creation and Development of Democratic Institutions in Ancient Greek*, has explained peculiarity of the system of participatory democracy as developed and prevailed in Athens. He said: “What resulted was a system of participatory democracy which combined a complexity and sophistication of political detail on the one hand (including a very severe attitude to individual accountability), with the principle of almost total amateurism in the other, in a marriage which remains unprecedented to this day.”

The type of democracy prevalent in ancient Greek city-states especially in Athens had some salient features. Firstly, unlike the primitive democracy, it was political democracy. Political democracy arose by way of doing away with primeval democracy. As regards political democracy it may be said as George Novack has pointed out : “Political democracy is a form of state rule—and the state is a product of the cleavage of society into opposing classes.” Secondly, democracy in Greek city-states especially, in Athens was participatory in nature and marked by participation of all freeman in the common affairs of the city-states. Thirdly, it was deliberative in nature, in the sense, freedom was attempted and it was marked by an atmosphere of free discussion to arrive at public decisions. Fourthly, there was general respect for laws and for the established procedures of the community. Fifthly, it was based on some basic democratic ideas and ideals. The Athenian political ideals were active citizenship, equality among citizens, liberty, respect for the laws and justice and

politics as a collective and rational enterprise. Sixthly, at the base of all these features, there remained a general sense and urge for collectivity, cohesiveness and solidarity. Actually, in Athenian democracy, public decisions were collectively taken. The purpose of political participation and taking part in the debates in the Assembly by the citizens (i.e. freeman) was to achieve cohesiveness and solidarity.

However, its limitations cannot be overlooked. Although its deliberative and participatory nature have been overemphasized overlooking the other side of the coin. As a matter of fact, the right to participate in the election of officials and in the daily routine of administration of justice were confined among a small number of citizens, excluding 'foreigners' (i.e. fellow Greeks from other communities), and slaves. Pointing out this aspect of the Athenian democracy Prof. S. Mukherjee and Prof. S. Ramaswamy have said : "It is argued that the Athenian democracy was essentially incomplete and exclusive for it excluded women, resident aliens (metics) and slaves from the democratic process and treated few alone as free". One particular limitation was its class nature. The Athenian society was a slave society as slavery was prevalent there. Most importantly, slaves, an integral part of the then Athenian society, were excluded from all kinds of political participation. Actually, they were deprived from all kinds of basic human rights. It was actually a democracy of the so called 'free' people of the society and as such a truncated form of democracy. According to Aristotle, it was based on false assumption of equality. Both Pericles and Aristotle defined it as the supremacy of the many over the few.

Decline of the Athenian polis and the rise of Rome did not make much headway in the direction of development of democratic political system. The Romans initially embraced Athenian democratic principles. Although Roman political system was not purely democratic, however, the Senate, the Council (Councilum) and the Assembly were important political institutions of ancient Rome. Rome's contribution was confined in laying the ground-work for a system of civil and criminal law, establishment of a universal code of law, granting citizenship rights to the slaves etc. Although the Romans invented the idea of secret ballot, they could not lay the foundation of a real democracy. Authoritarianism was more pronounced in the Roman political tradition. The participation of citizens in the governmental process was only formal. The Roman political system, rather than being purely democratic, was, a mixture of kingship, aristocracy and democracy.

Thus, the Romans did not make much contribution to the development of the

concept democracy as was noticed in the case of Greeks. Democracy in Greece in general and in Athens in particular was incomplete and exclusive in nature. Still, they are remembered as “historical forerunner of all subsequent democracies in the world”. As Antony Arblaster observes : “For the Greeks did not merely invent the concept of democracy. The concept was devised, or evolved, to describe an evolving reality—the kind of city-state in which the citizen body did actually govern itself.”

1.5 Classical Democracy

Modern democracy is a newer form of democracy which originated and took shape in a new social context. Two distinct phases of modern democracy may be identified. The first one may be regarded as classical democracy and the second one as contemporary democracy.

Actually, classical democracy originated in ancient Greece. Democracy was practiced as a form of state rule in the city-state of Athens in 5th Century B.C. But the modern form of classical democracy can be traced back to the 17th century Europe. New social context, newer type of socio-economic activities, urges and expectations led to the rise and growth of modern democratic thinking and associated political practices. Different revolutionary movements in Europe and America, rise of capitalism and rising expectations of the new social classes, arrival of new socio-political concepts like individualism, liberalism, individual freedom created favourable situation for the rise and growth of democracy both as a concept and as a form of state rule. Essentially, birth of modern democracy is a result of far reaching socio-economic changes as well as changes in outlook and world-view.

In this context, it may be said that the Middle Ages in Europe is generally regarded as the ‘Dark Age’ in human history. It was marked by absence of free-thinking, individualism, rationality as well as democracy. The political thought of the middle ages was curious combination of theology and scholastic philosophy, universalism, the theory of Two Swords, tug-of-war between the ecclesiastical and the secular schools etc. Moreover, the theory of kingship gradually gained ground in the middle ages which, however, was a curious mixture of absolutism, contractualism and celestialism. However, there were sporadic existence of democratic governances in the middle ages particularly in the ‘free’ communes in the urban

republics of medieval Italy, France, Germany and in Holland and Belgium. But these were exceptions to the overall undemocratic atmosphere of the middle ages Europe.

The emergence of indirect, representative liberal democracy can be traced back to the mid-17th Century. It emerged from the ashes of absolutism in the late 17th century. Establishment of modern democracy took over three hundred years starting from the rise of the Dutch Republic in the 16th century and extending upto the American Civil War of the mid-20th century. This development coincided with the formative stages of capitalism. Naturally there was a close interconnection between the formation and growth of capitalism and the arrival of modern liberal representative democracy.

It was a period of great revolutionary changes. 'Six great upheavals' marked the period from the Dutch revolution to the American Civil War. George Novack in his 'Democracy and Revolution' has pointed out that "During the the formative stages of capitalism, six great upheavals marked the decisive steps in the forward march of the bourgeois-democratic revolution." These great upheavals were: (1) The Dutch Revolution of the late 16th century, (2) the English Revolution of the 17th century, (3) the Revolt of the American Colonists, (4) The French Revolution, (5) The February Revolution of 1948 in Europe, and (6) The American Civil War of the mid-19th century. George Novack cites all these historically significant upheavals to substantiate his main point of view that : "Democracy was everywhere the offspring of revolution."

Two interrelated processes helped developing modern democratic system of governance and its theoretical justification. The first one was the far-reaching socio-economic changes associated with the disintegration of feudalism and simultaneous growth of capitalism in Europe. These resulted in the creation of necessary preconditions for the origin and growth of modern democratic system. The second one was the contributions of several eminent political and philosophical thinkers whose writings served and supplied necessary justification for the germinating democratic system. Necessary doctrinal support for rising democracy could be traced in the writings of several thinkers like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, David Hume, Adam Smith, Ricardo, Thomas Paine, Edmund Burke, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and others.

As against absolutism and divine source of royal authority, writers like George Buchanan, the most profound intellectual of sixteenth century Scotland, and others developed the concept of popular sovereignty. They contended that it was the people who were the ultimate source of law and that the Prince was created for the subjects. The doctrine of popular sovereignty laid the basis for democracy. Other important contributions of social and political thinkers enriching the concept of democracy were—faith in constitutionalism, rule of law, individual freedom and rights, toleration and right to dissent, pluralism, limited power, separation of power, faith in liberalism and individualism.

All these ideas which were associated with the growth and practice of democracy. However, the concept of did not appear at the same time and at the same place. The important contributions of the 17th century towards the development of the concept of democracy were individualism and liberalism. In the 17th century, the demand for democracy was intimately connected with individualism and liberalism. Individualism was a social theory favouring freedom of action for individual over collective or state control. It was urgently needed for free enterprise and the pursuit of profit of rising middle classes and associated with laissez faire economy. Laissez faire economy needed abstention by government from interfering in the workings of the free market. Seventeenth century democracy was also intimately connected with liberalism. Liberalism was a political and moral philosophy. Liberalism was based on liberty, consent of the governed, and equality before the laws. John Locke was an early exponent of liberalism and individualism. In his *Second Treatise on Civil Government* he argued for right to life, liberty and property as inalienable natural rights of individual and the central liberal ideas were crystallized in his writings.

Some revolutionary upheavals occurred in the 18th century. 18th century experienced revolutionary upheavals like the American Revolution (1776), the French Revolution (1789) and the Industrial Revolution (from 1760 onwards). Along with these revolutionary upheavals, scientific and technological changes of revolutionary nature resulted in the creation congenial atmosphere for the growth of democracy. Liberty, equality and fraternity—the motto of the French Revolution, attracted the masses. Montesquieu, Rousseau, Bentham became the chief exponents of democratic ideals in the 18th century. Montesquieu wanted to protect individual freedom from all powerful government and he articulated the theory of separation of powers between the three organs of government. He wanted a democratic and

republican political system that would safeguard individual from tyrannical government. Rousseau felt that man was born free but everywhere he was in chains. He believed that good government must have the freedom of all its citizens as its most fundamental objectives. He argued for direct democracy and equality. Bentham, an English philosopher and political radical and an exponent of utilitarianism and legal positivism, was also a liberal democrat. His ideas influenced the development of welfarism.

As a result of their contributions along with Industrial Revolution the French Revolution and the Enlightenment created atmosphere favourable to the growth of democratic thinking. The French revolution popularised the notion of the sovereignty of the people. The notion of the sovereignty of the people actually became the basis for the concept of 'popular sovereignty' which is thought to be a cardinal point of democratic ideology. Moreover, the Enlightenment of the late 17th and 18th centuries emphasized reason and individualism. Along with happiness, progress, reason it also emphasized on liberty and individual freedom. The notions of rationality and individual freedom were associated with the notion of democracy.

Advancement of Democracy in the 19th Century

The 19th century experienced further advancement of democratic theory and practice. The notion of the sovereignty of the people which was popularized after the French Revolution, in the 19th century, took a concrete shape in the form of 'Popular Sovereignty'. Its intellectual roots can be traced back to 17th and 18th century European political philosophy but the American Revolution resulted in a government based on popular sovereignty. Stephen A Douglas, a U. S. politician and leader of the Democratic Party espoused the cause of popular sovereignty in the context of slavery practised in the territories before the American Civil War (1861-1865).

John Stuart Mill, the most influential British thinker of the 19th century, was also one of the most influential thinkers in the history of classical liberalism. Mill was a liberal individualist thinker and fully supportive of democracy. His considerations on Representative Government combined enthusiasm for democratic government with pessimism as to what democracy was likely to do. He supported representative government but his support was not unconditional. He considered it as ideally the best only because there is no other better alternative. He thought that despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians. Mill's

essay *On Liberty* is regarded as the most famous vindication of freedom of thought and freedom of conduct.

However, Mill was afraid of majoritarianism. His regards for minority opinion and fear of mob mind and of the tyranny of the crowd is well-expressed in his *On Liberty*. As C.E.M. Joad points out : “He insisted upon the extension of this freedom to ‘cranks’, on the ground that, while nine cranks out of ten are harmless idiots, the tenth is of greater value to the mankind than all the normal men who seeks to suppress him.” Like John Stuart Mill, another 19th century thinker, Alexis de Tocqueville was also afraid of majoritarianism. He observed that “... In America the majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion; within these barriers an author may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them.” [*Democracy in America*, Volume-1, Chapter-XV, (1835)]. He emphasized participation as the hallmark of democracy and it is intimately connected to the idea of political liberty.

1.6 Contemporary Democracy

Contemporary democracy has exhibited different, and sometimes contradictory, trends. On the one hand, there have been spread of democracy and democratic rights and, on the other hand, repeated restrictions and threat to democratic societies. Some of the notable tendencies are :

- (1) **Spread of democracy** : In the 20th century democratic political system spread to the different corner of the Globe. It was not longer restricted to the continent of Europe and America. In the post-second World War period, it spread to other places particularly to the newly-independent states of Asia and Africa. For example, independent India could establish herself as the largest democracy in the world.
- (2) **Extension of adult suffrage** : In the 20th century, universal adult franchise was implemented in the true sense of the term. Previously it was universal manhood suffrage and that too was circumscribed by certain specific considerations. In different countries right to vote was not extended to women, propertyless, and non-white people. In Great Britain in 1918, in USA in 1920, in Australia in 1902, right of women to vote was guaranteed.

In France until 1944, Greece until 1952, and Switzerland until 1971, women were not given the right to vote. Australia although recognised women's right to vote in 1902, did not extend the right to vote to Aboriginal Australian until 1962. In apartheid-era South Africa, non-white people could generally not vote in national election until the first multi-party election in 1994. In this process, adult franchise gradually turned to universal adult franchise by guaranteeing the right of almost all adults to vote in election.

- (3) **Human Rights :** Universal Declaration of Human Rights is another important achievement of the 20th century. It can be considered as a milestone towards strengthening the process of spreading and uplifting democracy to a newer height. It was adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contain 30 Article. In addition to that, the United Nation General Assembly in 1955 authorised two covenants, one relating to Civil and Political Rights, and other to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Both these Covenants became effective in January 1976.
- (4) **Theoretical exercises :** Democracy seems to be an ever-evolving process. It evolved both in practice and in theory. There have been several attempts to theoretically apprehend the evolution of democracy in practice and to develop different conceptual frameworks.
- (a) One such attempt was made by Samuel Huntington who identified the three waves of democratization, these three waves are : (i) in 1828 – 1920; (ii) 1943 – 1962; and the last quarter of the 20th century.
 - (b) Various concepts of democracy has been developed to conceptualize and depict the nature of democracy. Among these concepts mention may be made of (i) concept of procedural democracy; (ii) substantive democracy, (c) deliberative democracy, (d) sustainable democracy, etc.
 - (c) Another trend of contemporary democratic thinking is construction of various models of democracy. Two distinct models of liberal democracy are protective democracy and developmental democracy. Jeremy

Bentham and John Mill were the champions of protective democracy whereas the concept of developmental democracy is found in the writings of John Stuart Mill. There are few other models of democracy such as : (i) Participatory Model (two forms of this model are plebiscitary democracy and pluralist democracy; (ii) Model of Democratic Autonomy as propounded by David Held; and (iii) Marxist Model as found in various versions of Marxism.

1.7 Conclusion

Our discussion on democracy suggests that democracy is an ever evolving process which evolved both in theory and practice. Accordingly different conceptual frameworks have been developed by scholars at different point of time to appreciate the true meaning of the concept.

1.8 Summing Up

- Modern democracy is a gift of modern society.
- Democracy as a form of government is supposed to be a Greek invention. It originated in ancient Greek city state of Athens.
- In Athens all citizens were entitled to participate in the meetings of the Assembly. Athenian democracy was deliberative and participatory.
- However, Athenian democracy was incomplete and not inclusive as it excluded women, aliens and slaves from the democratic process.
- Modern democracy took shape in a new socio-economic context. Two distinct phases in the evolution of modern democracy are : classical and contemporary democracy.
- Classical democracy is characterised by constitutionalism, rule of law, individual freedom and rights, toleration, limited power, pluralism and separation of power and popular sovereignty.
- Contemporary democracy is characterised by universal adult suffrage, universal human rights, emphasis on deliberation and sustainability.

1.9 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Trace the origin and development of Democracy.
2. Write a note on Ancient Democracy.
3. Trace the evolution of classical democracy from 17th to 19th century.
4. Write a note on the advancement of democracy in the 19th century.

Short Questions :

1. Write a note on Athenian democracy.
2. Describe the background and causes that prompted the growth of classical democracy.
3. Analyse the major trends of contemporary democracy.
4. What is meant by primitive democracy?
5. What, according to George Novack, are 'Six great upheavals'?

Objective Questions :

1. What was the most notable feature of Athenian democracy?
2. What were the distinguishing characteristics of the medieval political thought?
3. Why was J.S. Mill afraid of majoritarianism?

1.10 Further Reading

1. Anthony Arblaster : *Democracy, World View*, (Benestve : Open University, Press, 1994)
2. C. B. Macpherson : *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, Oxford, OUP, 1977.
3. George Novack, *Revolution and Democracy*, New York, Pathfinder Press, INC, 1971.
4. S. Mukherjee and S. Ramaswamy : *Democracy in Theory and Practice*, Delhi, Macmillan, 2005.

Unit – 2 □ Debates on Democracy

Structure

- 2.1 Objective**
- 2.2 Introduction**
- 2.3 Debates on Democracy**
- 2.4 Direct vs. Indirect Democracy**
- 2.5 Democracy and People's Participation**
- 2.6 Means vs. Ends**
- 2.7 Procedural vs. Substantive**
- 2.8 Democracy and Human Rights**
- 2.9 Conclusion**
- 2.10 Summing Up**
- 2.11 Probable Questions**
- 2.12 Further Reading**

2.1 Objective

By reading this unit the learners will be acquainted with the following :

- The nature of debates on democracy.
- Various issues of debate.
- The issues between procedural and substantive concept of democracy.
- The relation between democracy and human rights.

2.2 Introduction

Democracy is the primary form of government today. It is also claimed to be the best form of government. Churchill once said “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time

to time.” Does this observation hold true till today? or, on the contrary, is democracy the best form of government.

No doubt, democracy has certain points in its favour. It is claimed to be government of the people, by the people and for the people. This is a very naive definition of democracy. As against this, it is said that “Modern conceptions of democracy are based on the fundamental ideas of popular sovereignty and collective decision making which in which rulers through various ways are held to account by those over whom they rule.” Democracy recognises rights and freedoms of individual, respects and promotes human rights, establishes people’s control over decision-making process, brings transparency in public affairs. It is a form of government based on people’s participation and deliberation. It materialises the dream of representation of citizens and universal participation and ensures accountability of leaders. On the one hand, it provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts, on the other hand it establishes a responsible and accountable government. Transparency, peaceful conflict-management, correction of mistakes, establishment of a free and just society with enhanced dignity of citizens—all these are achievable aims and objectives of a democratic society and governmental system.

But democracy is not unmixed blessing. It has its own drawbacks. It is often said that democracy is the government of the innocent, incompetent and ignorant. Most of the citizens neither have interest nor the ability to grasp the complexities of modern democratic government. For successful working of a democratic government, some sort of idealism, involvement, deliberation and participation, courage, honesty and integrity, dedication, vigilance are required both from the leaders and the ordinary citizens which are however lacking in most cases. It can be fruitful if there is an unbiased and courageous media and independent judicial system unrelentingly committed to fair justice and democratic values. In the absense of these conditions, democratic system turns to be a very insipid and formal. Again, it may be untable form of government. In a democracy leaders keep changing sides which leads to instability. This is which is termed as ‘horse-trading’ and ‘politics of Ayaram-Gayaram’ that leads to instability and may be viewed as a mockery of people’s verdict. In a democracy, decision-making process is rather cumbersome and time-consuming leading to delays even with regard to many vital issues of public life. Moreover, in a democracy, peoples’ representatives, elected for a definite period, are often detached from their electorates. Thus, decisions taken by the representative bodies do not always reflect the opinion and will of the citizens.

Politics of power and money are great hindrances in the way of establishing people's government.

2.3 Debates on Democracy

Democracy has great appeal to almost all sections of people. It has a charming impact on ordinary people and politicians. Today, there is hardly anyone who disagrees with democracy. Still it is essentially a contested concept, and a matter of continuing debate. Since its arrival in ancient city state of Athens till today its forms, nature, end, different manifestations, as well as its relation to other concepts and practices have been matters of continuing debate.

Debates on democracy as a form of government emerged at its initial and classical Athenian phase. It was viewed by thinkers like Plato and Aristotle as a system of mob rule and as a perverted or degenerated form of "rule by many". While Plato viewed democracy as a system of mob rule at the expense of wisdom and property, Aristotle regarded democracy not as a normal form of government but as a perverted form of government. In his view, in normal form of government, power was exercised for common interest; whereas in perverted form of government, power was exercised for satisfying the interest of the ruling class. Therefore, as a form of government representing the 'rule of many' 'polity' was the normal form of government and 'democracy' was the perverted and degenerated form of government. Therefore, since the beginning of political thinking, the purpose of democracy as a desirable form of government was questioned and it was looked with disdain rather than with love.

2.4 Direct vs Indirect Democracy

With the development of democracy as a form of government from its ancient Athenian phase to its contemporary phase, a basic debate that has raised its head related to forms or kinds of democracy. Two basic forms of democracy that have been noticed in its entire phase of development are : direct and indirect or representative. In the ancient city-states of Greece democracy was of direct type whereas in modern times indirect or representative democracy is prevalent.

At the core of the debate between direct and indirect democracy lies the nature of relationship between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign. Direct

democracy is based on the assumption that the people or the citizens of a particular state are sovereign and that the sovereign power of the state should be exercised directly by themselves. They are the direct participants in the management of the public affairs. Direct democracy means power with the people and its exercise by them.

The direct form of democracy prevailed in the ancient greek city-state of Athens. As the first major effort to realise democracy Athens established a vibrant, direct and participatory democracy. It is true that direct democracy, in its truer sense, was prevalent among the primitive tribes. This was actually primitive democracy. But it is not considered a form of state. Democracy as a form of state rule is supposed to be a Greek invention. In this sense, i.e. in the sense of a form of state rule, direct democracy was first noticed in ancient Athens. Athenian democracy was the most celebrated form of direct participatory democracy and, in practice, it signified rule of the people, by the people. The focus of the Athenian democracy was on the participatory character of democracy. All major decisions were made by the assembly to which all citizens belonged.

On the other hand, in indirect democracy people or citizens do not directly take part in the deliberative and decision-making process. Indirect democracy, like direct democracy, implies power with the people, but unlike direct democracy, its exercise is in the hands of representative chosen by them. Here people are treated not as immediate but as ultimate sovereign. The electorate is the ultimate repository of the sovereign power. Conceptually people are source of power and all powers belong to them. They wield those powers not directly but as electorates through their elected representatives. It is the legislature, consisted of the elected representatives of the people, which formulates and expresses the will of the state. Thus, the ultimate sovereign i.e., the people transfer their sovereign power to the immediate sovereign, i.e., the elected representatives and the legislature which is composed of such representatives.

Therefore, the debate between direct and indirect forms of democracy relates to the nature of relationship between the immediate and ultimate sovereign, the methods of exercise of sovereign power as well as respective merits and demerits of both forms of democracy. But the fact is that the conditions of the modern nation-states have led to the acceptance of indirect form of democracy as an unavoidable fact. Direct democracy is inconsistent with highly populated, large modern states.

Modern democracy is representative democracy as the wills of the people are actualised through their elected representatives. Today people govern themselves, not by participating directly in the decision-making process, but by sending through election their representatives to the legislature, who, by turn, would act as the decision-makers. However, some of the methods of direct democracy such as initiative, referendum and recall may be accommodated, to some extent in the broader framework of indirect form of democracy.

But the act of representation of someone on behalf of others is not free from debate. J. J. Rousseau, a great proponent of direct involvement of people, was opposed to representative democracy. He insisted that to be represented is to give up—to alienate—powers that individuals alone can rightfully exercise, for him, it involves a form of slavery—a negation of ‘will’, one’s capacity to exert influence. Similarly, D. H. Lawrence asked ... Who can represent me? – I am myself. I don’t intend anybody to represent me’. On the other hand, arguments in favour of indirect representative democracy is generally supposed to be based on convenience rather than its righteousness or propriety. As Anthony Arblaster has pointed out ‘democrats like Paine originally put forward representation as a means of adopting the democratic principle to societies, such as the United States, which were too large to allow for personal participation by all their citizens’. He also says that ‘For them it was expedient, almost a makeshift, and one that contained obvious dangers’. However, John Stuart Mill supported representative democracy not for its expediency or convenience but for its educative instrumental value. Thus, unlike Rousseau and others, John Stuart Mill considers representative democracy as capable of ensuring freedom and right of self-determination.

2.5 Democracy and People’s Participation

Another contentious issue is people’s participation in democratic process. Does democracy require or can democracy ensure participation of all citizens of a particular nation-state, directly or through their elected representatives, in the deliberative and democratic decision-making process? This question arises as soon as democracy is regarded as majority rule which, by implication, makes redundant or unimportant opinion and participation of some people or group of people for the democratic governmental system to continue. Before the introduction of universal adult franchise many people particularly women, uneducated and poor were deprived

of voting rights. Even after its introduction, enfranchisement in various forms results in deprivation of voting right to various sections of people in many countries. Again, due to various impediments and lack of incentive or inspiration, large sections of people do not feel interested to participate in the democratic process. Disillusionment, deprivation, threat, oppression, severe inequality and sub-human existence—all these negatively affect people's participation.

Moreover, widely prevalent anti-democratic theories do not welcome people's participations in the democratic processes. Thinkers like J. S. Mill or Edmund Burke looked at general masses with disdain as people were regarded as the common 'herd' or 'the swinish multitude'. In the modern elite theories there are deliberate attempt to keep the field of political decision-making restricted among the conflicting elitist groups. In this version of politics, mass politics is considered as anti-democratic. Walter Lippmann felt 'the need to protect the executive and judicial powers from the representative assemblies and from mass opinion...' Writers like Joseph Schumpeter, known as an eminent theorist of democratic elitism, has tried to restrict the scope of political participation in the actual decision-making process only to the elites of societies.

The elitist theory of democracy bases itself on two basic arguments: one is the nature of the decision-making process and the other one is their concept of elitist effectiveness. Firstly, decision-making is described as a process of consensus of elite positions—i.e., negotiations among various groups. Secondly, the concept of elitist supremacy is supplemented by elite effectiveness. As Antony Arblaster has observed: "The core of elite theory was the contention that democracy, in the strict traditional sense of rule by the people, is impossible: all government is government by an elite, or at best one among a number of competing elites." It attempts to limit the role of 'the masses' within the political system and redefines democracy in such a way as to eliminate its traditional participatory aspirations.

Attempts to restrict people's participation in political process is also based on other arguments which also have their origin in the elitist view of democracy. Joseph Schumpeter, in his attempt to redefine the concept of democracy, has actually undermined the participatory aspect of democracy. According to him; (a) democracy has no moral superiority as compared to other form of government and there is nothing about democracy that makes it desirable; (b) democracy is simply a 'political method' and not an end in itself. Therefore discrimination against some section

of the population is not undemocratic; (c) The right to vote does not necessitate all adults in contemporary liberal societies to use this right or participate more directly in the political process; (d) as the masses are too irrational, emotional, parochial and 'primitive' to make good decision, therefore, the participation of the mass of the population is not a good idea. Actually, he is very critical of mass participation in politics. Hence, he concludes that government by the people is neither possible nor desirable. He drastically narrowed the conception of democracy. In his scheme of 'rational' selection of ruler through general elections the mass of people has little role to play on account of the proven ignorance, irrationality and apathy of the people.

2.6 Means vs Ends

There are several contending perceptions of democracy. Distinction between the minimal and maximal perceptions of democracy may be cited as one of such contending perceptions having relevance over ends-means debate on democracy. The minimal perception of democracy highlights the importance of the 'means'; whereas the maximal perception focuses both on the means and the ends of democracy.

The minimal perception emphasises on institutions and procedures of democracy. People having this perception of democracy view democracy as a set of institutions and procedures encompassing free and fair elections, legislative assemblies, and constitutional government arising out of these. Their focus is on procedures such as fair elections, respect for human right and universal suffrage. But the maximal perception of democracy includes both means and ends of democracy. It does not confine discussion on democracy only on the periphery of means but also highlights the 'end' or 'outputs' such as economic equality, justice, fairness etc. Issues relating to working of democracy and how accountability of the elected representatives are ensured draw the attention of the minimal perceptionists. Therefore their focus is on the issues like civil and political right of citizens, universal suffrage and free, fair elections as well as accountability of the people's representatives. On the other hand, maximal perception of democracy emphasises, in addition to issues related with the 'means', on issues like equality of opportunity and outcome, social rights, policy, justice, fairness, responsiveness, public safety, elimination of corruption.

2.7 Procedural vs Substantive

Another debate on democracy is connected with the procedural and the substantive conceptions of democracy. Although not entirely but to some extent, the debate regarding the procedural and the substantive conceptions of democracy is based on the arguments and the issues of the maximal and the minimal perceptions of democracy. The procedural democracy concentrate on mechanisms of democracy, whereas substantive democracy pertains to socially based value judgements.

The concept of procedural democracy is concerned with the procedural aspects of democracy. To be more specific, it concentrate and emphasizes on the procedural aspects of democracy. Therefore, it deals with the formal aspects of democracy. From the procedural point of view, democracy is viewed purely as a set of institutions and mechanisms concerning holding of free and fair elections, formation of legislative assemblies and constitutional governments, assuring accountability of the governments and elected representative and protecting rights and liberties of the citizens. Here procedure is more important than the substance of democracy. Democracy is viewed as a ‘system of institutions’ or an ‘institutional system’ and a mechanism to select ‘the men who are able to do the deciding’. As a result, people are seen simply as ‘producers of governments’– i.e., merely selectors who select who would govern them.

The procedural theory or model of democracy is contrasted with the substantive theory or model of democracy. According to the substantive point of view, democracy is a society composed by truly equal citizens, who are politically engaged, tolerant of different opinions and ways of life, and have an equal voice in choosing their rulers and holding them accountable. As N. Joyal has pointed out “Democracy... should not be seen as confined to the sphere of state and government but also as the principle governing collective life in society. Substantive democracy pertains to socially based value judgements.

The basic assumption of substantive democracy is that democracy must not merely be procedurally democratic but also be functionally democratic. The state is not merely set up as a democracy but it functions as one as well. It is a form of democracy that functions in the interest of the governed. Therefore, guaranteeing right to vote and allowing all citizens of age to vote is not enough. Rather what is necessary to qualify as a substantive democracy is the meaningful exercise of

the equal rights of citizenship. This has to be guaranteed to all. It must ensure a truly equal opportunity to influence governmental decisions.

Procedural democracy and substantive democracy—these two types of democracy are supposed to be opposite. Procedural democracy is regarded as formal democracy where the relevant forms of democracy exist but are not actually managed democratically. But substantive democracy is referred as a functional democracy. Procedural democracy emphasizes on free and fair elections, freedom of speech and expression, and the rule of law and its equal protection to all. But the proponents of substantive democracy argue that all these are necessary, but by no means sufficient. Merely securing legal and political equality is not enough. In a substantive democracy there must be truly equal opportunity to influence governmental decisions and democracy should be regarded as the principle governing collective life in society. In procedural democracy, in comparison to substantive democracy, people or citizens of the state is likely to have less influence. Actually it tries to restrict the scope of political participations in the actual decision-making process only to the elites in society depriving the masses. In contrast substantive democracy encourages equal participation of all groups in society in the political process.

2.8 Democracy and Human Rights

The two concepts—democracy and human rights— have a variable degree of overlap with one another. It is usually assumed that democracy includes human rights. Democracy conceives of a society which not only protect and promote human rights but also makes elaborate arrangements for the protection and promotion of human rights. These two are inter-related and one includes the other.

However, there is no denying of the fact that tensions remain between theories of democracy and human rights over the degree to which one includes the other. Some writers argue that a right to democracy is also a human right. At the basic conceptual level, these two go hand in hand. Democratic system embodies human rights and the latter is essential for the functioning of the former. One complements the other. This being the case, the problem, however, arises when it is seen from the perspectives of different theories of democracy. Different theories of democracy have different stands on human rights, although none of them completely overlook some or other aspects of human rights.

Some of the important theories of democracy are, for example, (a) procedural democracy, (b) liberal democracy and (c) social democracy. These different theories of democracy incorporate different categories of human rights. As Todd Landman has pointed out (a) Procedural democracy incorporates political rights but not civil rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, (b) liberal democracy incorporates civil and political rights but not economic, social and cultural rights, and (c) social democracy incorporates civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It amplifies that procedural definition of democracy affords less place for human rights than social definition. The liberal definition of democracy stands in between them.

Democracy means equality. But to be more specific it means only formal equality. Therefore, its commitment to all types of human rights and actualisation of all these rights for all of sections of people in society is not beyond question. Practically in all established democracies human rights of different sections of people are curbed and curtailed in varying degrees. The degrees to which enjoyment of those rights are permissible are determined by various socio-economic and political parameters. Persecution on the basis of religious beliefs, political opinion and affiliation or ideological positions are not rare in today's world. As a result, democracy, instead of being a procedure and method of reflecting and acting on the basis of popular sovereignty and collective will actually act as a form of state armed with organised, systematic use of force against persons. Various sorts of electoral malpractices, bureaucratic apathies and indifferences, biased media coverage, unresponsive judicial system, repression and discrimination may, in effect, result in deprivation of human right to specific targeted sections of people.

2.9 Conclusion

As a form of government, democracy appears superior to other form of government for protecting, respecting and fulfilling human rights obligations and human rights are accepted as legal and normative standard which judge the quality of human dignity. Democracy must aim at the removal of differences and abolition of discrimination on the grounds of caste, race, ethnicity, gender and creed. Again in multi-religious, multilingual, multicultural society, it must respect diversity and plurality. Attempt at establishing uniformity and setting a particular religion, language, culture or particular version of nationalism and choice of path for development as norm for all sections of people is dangerous trend both for democracy and human

rights. Of course, this aim may not be achieved in formal democratic society. This type of society which is depriver of human rights to a major sections of people may be regarded as formal, not actual, democratic society. Actually, this aim can not be achieved at the expense of human rights.

2.10 Summing Up

- Democracy is a form of government based on people's participation and deliberation. It has great appeal to all sections of people.
- In spite of its universal appeal, it is still a contested concept. From the very beginning the purpose of democracy as a desirable form of government was called into question.
- A basic debate is related to forms of democracy. At the core of the debate between direct and indirect democracy lies the relationship between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign.
- Another point of debate is people's participation in democratic process.
- Still another debate on democracy is connected with the procedural and substantive conceptions of democracy.

2.11 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Write a short note on debates on democracy.
2. What are the main issues involved in the debate between direct and indirect democracy.
3. What are the widely prevalent anti democratic theories and how do they try to restrict people's participation in the democratic processes?
4. Discuss the relation between democracy and human rights.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on the elitist theory of democracy.

2. What do you mean by ends means debates on democracy.
3. Why did Rousseau oppose representative democracy.
4. Write a short note on direct democracy.

Objective Questions :

1. Why did J. S. Mill support resrepresentative democracy?
2. What are the two basic forms of democracy?
3. What does the concept of substantive democracy imply?

2.12 Further Reading

1. Anthony Arblaster : *Democracy*, Berkship, Open University, Press, 1994.
2. Rajiv Bhargava : *Political Theory An Introduction* & Ashok Acharya (ed), Delhi, Pearson, 2009.
3. John Hoffman and Paul Graham : *Introduction to Political Theory*, Delhi, Pearson Education, 2007.
4. M. J. Vinod and M. Despande, *Contemporary Political Theory*, Delhi, PHI, 2013.

Unit – 3 □ Forms of Democracy : Liberal and Socialist

Structure

- 3.1 Objective**
- 3.2 Introduction**
- 3.3 Liberalism and Liberal Democracy**
- 3.4 Main Principles and Characteristics of Liberal Democracy**
- 3.5 Models of Democracy**
- 3.6 Socialist Democracy**
- 3.7 Conclusion**
- 3.8 Summing Up**
- 3.9 Probable Questions**
- 3.10 Further Reading**

3.1 Objective

By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with the following :

- The relation between liberalism and liberal democracy
- Main principles and features of liberal democracy
- Different models of liberal democracy
- Nature and features of socialist democracy

3.2 Introduction

Democracy is a broad concept having many forms, manifestations and ramifications. There is no single uniform pattern of democracy. Actually, there are many forms of democracy. The forms of democracy is determined on the basis

of the yardstick used to classify it. For example, on the basis of the nature of relationship between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign it may be classified into direct and indirect or representative democracy. In a direct democracy, the people directly participate and decide on legislature. The city-states of ancient Greece perhaps best illustrate this type of democracy. The citizens of the states were the direct participants in the management of the public affairs. Such system still exists in some very small provinces (cantons) of Switzerland. On the other hand, in an indirect or representative democracy, a clear distinction is made between the immediate sovereign and the ultimate sovereign. In this type of democracy, the citizens of the state do not directly participate and decide, but they merely elect their representatives to deliberate and decide. The citizens are merely electorate. They are the ultimate repository of the sovereign power; the legislature comprising of the representatives is the immediate sovereign. The elected representatives make laws on behalf of the people and in tune with public opinion. Indirect or representative democracy is the rule of day.

A democratic form of government can also be classified as parliamentary or cabinet and presidential form of government. In a presidential form of democracy, like the United States of America, the President is directly elected by the people and he enjoys real powers of decision-making and execution. This form of democracy is based generally on separation of powers between the legislature and the executive. The President of US is not accountable to the American Congress (the legislature). In a parliamentary form of government, real powers of decision-making lies with the parliament; and the President, the head of the state, is merely nominal or titular head as in India. In a parliamentary or cabinet system of government, the cabinet (the executive) is responsible to the legislature for its policies and acts.

But, from broader socio-economic and ideological point of view, democracy can be classified into two basic forms—liberal democracy and socialist democracy. Liberal democracy refers to a political system in which individual rights, particularly property rights, are given special constitutional protection against infringements and its socio economic system is basically capitalist and non-egalitarian. On the other hand, socialist democracy presupposes socialist economy and egalitarian society and rule of the toiling masses.

3.3 From Libaralism to Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy is a combination of two, originally antithetical, principles—liberalism and democracy. It has a hybrid character. As Andrew Heywood has observed, “...liberal-democratic political system have a hybrid character: they embody two distinct features, one liberal, the other democratic. The liberal element reflects a belief in limited government; the democratic element reflects a commitment to popular rule”. In his opinion, the hybrid nature of liberal democracy reflects a basic ambivalence within liberalism towards democracy. Actually, in their emerging phases these relations were not cordial and accommodative. Rather in their origins, both liberalism and democracy represented two different trends in political philosophy. Liberalism stood for individual, i.e. individual's rights, liberty and property; whereas democracy stood for collectivity, i.e. collective power in the form of majority rule.

Liberalism is a political philosophy and also a programme of social action. It is difficult to define satisfactorily the term ‘liberalism’. Rather, in the words of Max Lerner, liberalism is ‘perhaps the most disputed term of our generation. This is partly due to the loose and arbitrary way the term liberalism has been used in political discussions and parlances. G. Sartori comments’, “Liberalism is a concept so amorphous and changeable as to be left readily at the mercy of arbitrary stipulators”. (Democratic Theory, p-366). Question arises as to whether it is a creed or definite doctrine or simply ‘a faith’, ‘an attitude of mind’ and a ‘psychological attitude’?

In a way, liberalism is associated with individual and individualism. Individual—his rights, freedom and liberty—occupies central place in liberalism and by the same token it emphasizes on freeing individual from state and government's control and repression. In Hacker's opinion, “It is a view of the individual, of the state, and of the relations between them”. It defines relations between state and individual from the standpoint of individual. From this standpoint, liberalism acts as an organising principle of society, a policy of defining relations between state and individual and also a programme of social action. In Encyclopaedia Britannica it has been defined “as an idea committed to freedom as a method and policy in government as an organising principle in society, and a way of life for the individual and the community.” Early liberals felt the need to free the people from authority of feudal lords and powers of the clergy as well as from the restrictions and repression

of autocratic and authoritarian governments. Therefore, the idea of liberty occupies an important place in liberalism. As Derek Heater says: “Freedom is the quintessence of liberalism....”

Still liberalism, which stood for ‘free the people’, however, did not favour democracy which stood for ‘empowering the people’. But the concept of ‘people’ was used in very restricted sense meaning thereby only the owners of property or the propertied classes. The classical liberal theory was committed to the individual’s right for unlimited acquisition of property. Therefore, right to individual property may be regarded as another ‘quintessence’ of liberalism. As a matter of fact, early liberal had ‘fear of the many, the multitude, which is to be a recurring motif in the re-emergence of democracy in the modern era’. Actually they abhorred ‘the beast with many heads’. Therefore, they were concerned about using the concept ‘popular sovereignty’ in a very particular and restricted sense keeping in mind “the interest of the responsible and respectable, without placing an ideological weapon in the hands of ‘the multitude’...”

As a result, instead of welcoming democracy and implementing popular rule and accepting concept of popular sovereignty in its universalist sense, early liberalism rather had an ambivalence towards democracy. On the opposite, it was antidemocratic. As C. B. Macpherson in his *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* has observed: ‘Until the nineteenth century liberal theory, like the liberal state, was not at all democratic, much of it was specifically antidemocratic’. Andrew Heywood has noted that ‘In the nineteenth century, liberals often saw democracy as threatening or dangerous.’

But perception of liberals towards democracy changed with changing perspectives. Classical liberalism fostered capitalism and a free-market economy. It subscribed egoistic individualism and harboured a detest for popular rule, that is, rule of the multitude. But it was also forced to recognise the rise of a large working class. This, in turn, led to reorientation of outlook of the liberals and reorganization of system of governance accordingly. Thus, a liberal state, which did not begin as a democratic one, shook of its ‘fear of the many, the multitude’ and accepted democratic procedure as a method of governance.

This journey results in the arrival of a new political concept and new a political order– Liberal Democracy. Thus originally two antithetical principles come to be mingled in and gave birth of a powerful, longlasting political philosophy and a

particular form of government. Now, 'Liberal ideas and democratic procedures have gradually become interwoven'. Although liberal state did not begin as a democratic one, however, it gradually became a democratic state. Extension of voting rights to the ever-increasing working class and women paved the way for a liberal state to be regarded as democratic state. This new state-form ushering a new method to arrive at collective decisions and prescribing a set of values and behaviour came to be known as liberal democracy or liberal democratic state. Thus a liberal state which initially did not begin as a democratic state, became gradually a democratic state 'with the widening of suffrage bringing in the working class and women into the political fray, and by improved techniques of participation.'

Liberal democracy has to be contrasted from traditional democracy. It has rightly been commented by Professor Sobhanlal Dutta Gupta : "In terms of its arrival democracy in the classical sense is as old as the ancient Greeks in 5th century B.C."⁶ While democracy is an old concept; liberalism is relatively recent one. Again, at the time of its arrival liberalism was not associated with democracy; rather there was an antithetical relations between them. Misgivings about democracy among the early liberals gradually gave way to positive orientation towards democracy. "By the twentieth century", says Andrew Heywood, 'a large proportion of liberals had come to see democracy as a virtue.'⁷ By that time liberal democracy became the dominant mode of rule in several countries in the world. Heywood has observed; 'By the end of the twentieth century, liberal democracy appeared to have vanquished its major rivals'. By the term 'major rivals' he particularly means other models of democratic rule.

3.4 Liberal Democracy : Main Principles and Characteristics

Liberal democracy is based on certain main principles and identifiable on the basis of certain characteristics. B. Goodwin in his book *Using Political Ideas* mentions few ideas as the basis of liberal democracy. The ideas she mentions as the basis of liberal democracy are : (a) supremacy of the people : (b) the consent of the governed as the basis of legitimacy; (c) the rule of law; (d) the existence of a common good of public interest; (e) the value of the individual as a rational moral active citizen; and (f) equal rights for all individuals. Peter H. Merkle, in

his Political Continuity and Change, has enumerated four principles of liberal democracy. These are : (a) government by discussion; (b) majority rule; (c) recognition of minority rights; and (d) constitutional government.

These basic principles, to some extent, characterise the nature of liberal democracy. But these are not enough. In additions, there are certain institutions and procedures which are considered to be essential characteristics of liberal democracy. Some of the characteristic features of liberal democracy are : (a) recognition and existence of individuals rights and freedom of expression; (b) universal adult suffrage; (c) periodic elections based on universal adult franchise; (d) competitive political parties; (e) representative government; (f) openness of public offices to all; (g) a system of political checks and balances; (g) independence of the judiciary; (h) freedom of the press.

Therefore, liberal democracy is not simply a political idea or a political philosophy. It is a way of life. Moreover now-a-days it is seen as a political system. As a political system, liberal democracy exhibits the above-mentioned characteristics. Profesor Alan R. Ball in his *Modern Politics and Government* (p.43) has enumerated 7-fold characteristics of the liberal democratic system. According to Ball these are:

1. There exists more than one political party competing for political powers.
2. Avenue for political power is open, that is, there exists open competetion for power which is, however, conducted on the basis of established and accepted forms of procedure.
3. Entry and recruitment to positions of political power are relatively open.
4. Periodic elections are held on the basis of universal adult franchise.
5. There exists various types of voluntary associations (like pressure groups, interest groups) which are free from close governmental control and they are able to operate to influence government decisions.
6. Civil liberties are recognised and protected as well as mass media are free from governmental control.
7. There exists some form of separation of powers among three branches (executive, legislative and judical) of government and the judiciary remains independent of the other organs (both executive and legislature) of government.

We may say that popular sovereignty, representative government, open competition for political power, existence of more than one political parties and a host of autonomous private associations (i.e. interest and pressure groups), individuals rights and freedoms specifically right to dissent, separation of powers and independence of judiciary are some of the essential characteristics of liberal democratic political system. Many other characteristics may be added to this list. But, according to Andrew Heywood, three central features are:

“Liberal democracy is an indirect and representative form of democracy. Political office is gained through success in regular elections, conducted on the basis of formal political equality—‘one person, one vote; one vote, one value’.

- * “It is based upon competition and electoral choice. This is ensured by political pluralism, a tolerance of a wide range of contending beliefs, conflicting social philosophies and rival political movements and parties.”
- * It is characterized by a clear distinction between the state and civil society. This is maintained both by internal and external checks on government power and the existence of autonomous groups and interests, and by the market of capitalist organizations of economic life.”⁹

3.5 Models of Democracy

Liberal democracy is composed of two components—liberal and democratic. Democracy has an instrumental value to the liberals. But there is no unanimity among the liberals in respect of value they attach to democracy. Some liberals are concerned about its ‘protective’ value and role, while some others are concerned about its ‘developmental’ value and role. As a result different models of liberal democracy have appeared in the political discourse. Prof. David Held in his *Models of Democracy* has identified two variants of liberal democratic model. These are known as ‘protective’ and ‘developmental’ models. Outside the ambit of these two variants of liberal democratic model, he also identified another model which is known as ‘participatory’ model of democracy. Actually, there are two basic models of democracy—the liberal and participatory models. And the liberal model has two variants—protective and developmental.

Protective Democracy

Early liberal like Jermy Bentham and James Mill were the champions of protective democracy. They were concerned about protection of citizens from despotic use of political power. For them, democracy was meant to be protective, in the sense that it was to protect the rights of citizens and safeguard them from the tyranny of state power. As David Held has observed that 'Principle(s) of justification' of protective democracy is : "Citizens require protection from the governors, as well as from each other, to ensure that those who govern pursue policies that are commensurate with citizens interests as a whole".¹⁰

Rudimentary ideas of protective democracy are traceable in the writings of John Locke and Montesquieu. However, the ideas of political thinkers of the 17th and 18th century were not fully developed. James Madison, Jeemy Bentham and James Mill may be regarded as the main exponents of protective democracy. It is true that liberalism emerged in the context of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. But protective variant of liberal democratic model developed in the late 18th and early 19th century in the writings of Bentham, Madison and James Mill. Actually classical exposition of protective democracy could be found in their writings.

These early liberals were reluctant democrats, more liberals than democrats and concerned more about protecting individual, that is, their rights and interests from tyranny of state power. In their opinion, democracy was required to protect citizens from despotic use of political power, and hence, they sought to put limits on the absolute powers of the monarchs and the feudal aristocrats or other groups. Citizens require protection not only from the governors but also from each other.

Protective democracy has some key features. These are :

(a) Sovereignty of the people executable through their representatives; (b) regular elections through secret ballot, open political competition between factions, potential leaders or political parties; majority rule and accountability of those who govern; (c) impersonal and legally circumscribed state powers along with division of powers among the executive, the legislature and the judiciary; (d) centrality of constitutionalism guaranteeing freedom from arbitrary treatment, equality before the law and recognition of other political and civil rights like freedom of speech, expression, association, voting and belief; (e) separation of state from civil society. Thus, protective democracy is based on the idea of popular sovereignty, electoral politics and

representative democracy, legally limited state powers, separation of powers among different departments of government, recognition of citizens rights and liberties, separation of state and civil society or the public and private life of individuals.

Modern version

Modern version of protective democracy is found in the writings of Robert Nozick and Friedrich Hayek. They are known as the New Right and their views are also known as neo-liberals or neo-conservatism. Both Nozick and Hayek have expressed their apprehension about 'an ever more intrusive welfare state in the west'. In the opinion of Nozick the proper role of the liberal democratic state in the future should only be a 'protective agency' against force, theft, fraud and the violation of contracts. In essence, he argued for 'minimal state'. Hayek saw fundamental dangers in the dynamics of contemporary 'mass democracy'. In his opinion coercive political power (resulting from 'the unrestricted will of the majority') can be contained if, and only if, the 'Rule of Law' is respected. In brief, as David Held has pointed out, "At root, the New Right has been concerned to advance the cause of 'liberalism' against 'democracy' by limiting the democratic use of state powers."

Developmental Model

Other model of liberal-democratic theory is known as Developmental Model. David Held constructs this model on the basis of writings of John Stuart Mill. Not protective, but the developmental aspect of democracy was more important to Mill as, he thought, it has positive bearing on the free development of individuality. However in this regard C. B. Macpherson attributes credit also to T. H. Green. In his opinion, both John Stuart Mill and T. H. Green wanted democratic theory to maximize men's developmental power. But it was mainly John Stuart Mill, who being a clear advocate of democracy, understood democracy as a system which allows for the development of an individual's personality. David Held mentions that Macpherson in his *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* points out that like Rousseau and Wollstonecraft before him, Mill conceived of democratic politics as a prime mechanism of moral ... development¹¹. David Held himself observes that : "Liberal democratic or representative government was important for him, not just because it established boundaries for the purpose of individual satisfaction, but because it was an important aspect of the free development of individuality".¹²

Aims and Features

The aim of developmental democracy is to create an informed, committed and developed citizenry. Here promotion of individual interests are not of primary importance although its necessity is not completely ignored. Developmental democracy is based on the assumption that participation and involvement in political life is essential do the 'highest and harmonious' expansion of individual capacities. As opposed to protective democracy, which aims to protect the rights and interests of citizens and safeguard them from the tyranny of state power; developmental democracy is more concerned for the development of an individual's personality. Key features of developmental democracy are : (a) popular sovereignty with a universal franchise; (b) representative government on the basis of elected leadership, regular elections, secret ballot etc; (c) constitutional checks, limitations and division of state power; (d) clear demarcation and separation of functions between legislature and executive and (e) citizen's involvement and participation in political life. All these features are aimed to ensure promotion of individual rights and freedoms, which, in turn, help the pursuit of individually chosen 'life plan' and develop the intellectual talents of people.

Unlike Bentham and James Mill who were reluctant democrats, Mill was a clear advocate of democracy. So for him, liberal democracy or representative government and political involvement and participation of people in political life were essential for the free development of individuality and for their moral development. The 'highest and harmonious' expansion of individual capacities was his central concern. As Wayper has said. "Mill is a democrat above all not because he believes that democracy makes men happier, but because he is convinced that it makes them better".

3.6 Socialist Democracy

There is a good deal of confusion about the relationship between socialism and democracy. Their relationship has been debated, defended, but ultimately defies any satisfactory answer. Two relevant questions in this context are : (a) is socialism compatible with democracy?; and (b) is socialism possible without democracy? These two issues can be addressed and their relationship can be explained both from the theoretical and practical point of view.

There is a great deal of confusion regarding what is socialism as there are varieties of socialism like utopian socialism, guild-socialism, fabianism, democratic socialism etc. As we are not dealing with the subtle differences among these varieties of socialism, we may remain content with some fundamental characteristics that all forms of socialism share. Michael Newman has pointed out three fundamental characteristics of all forms of socialism. These are :¹³

“In my view, the most fundamental characteristic of socialism is its commitment to the creation of an egalitarian society.

“A second, and closely related, common feature of socialism has been a belief in the possibility of constructing an alternative egalitarian system based on the values of cooperation.

“Finally, most socialists have been convinced that it is possible to make significant changes in the world through conscious human agency.”
(Socialism: A Very Short Introduction).

Socialism is usually thought to be not only incompatible with democracy but also basically an anti-democratic ideology. While liberal democracy emphasizes liberty and individualism, socialism emphasizes egalitarianism and collective effort and cooperation. Critics of socialism usually hold that equality and liberty are two contradictory things and socialism, by emphasizing preeminence of equality, actually ignores the importance of liberty and individual freedom. To them, “liberty matters more than equality”. It is held that socialism is basically anti-liberty, anti-freedom, and that is why, anti-democratic. This view has of course been reinforced by Soviet practice during Stalinism and Neo-Stalinism (or Khrushchovism) and Chinese practice during Mao-era and post-Mao-era.

But the advocates of socialism, particularly the marxists, do not admit that socialism is incompatible with democracy. Rather, they believe that socialism immensely expands the horizon of democracy. Under the liberal, or ‘bourgeois’, democracy, it remains confined within narrow, limited sphere; whereas under socialism it becomes meaningful and actual to the larger section of people. The advocates of socialism believe that ‘democracy means equality’ and democracy remains narrow and incomplete without equality. Socialism overcomes formal equality of liberal democracy and it paves the way for advance from formal equality to actual equality. Thus expanding and actualizing the process of democratization, socialism builds newer and developed form of democracy as distinguished from liberal democracy.

Salient features of Socialist Democracy :

Socialist political system has been noticed in the past in erstwhile Soviet Union and various East European states as well as it is still, at least theoretically, found in People's Republic of China. In spite of variations and subtle differences among these states, certain general features of socialist democracy as found in practice may be mentioned in brief. These are:

- (a) Socialist democracy is based on basic premises of socialism. Concept of democracy is inseparable from the basic principles of socialism: equality, particularly economic equality, protection and development of toiling people's interests, socialist ownership of the means of production. Establishment of socialism through goal-oriented socio-economic development works as the bases and direction of democracy under socialism.
- (b) Socialist democracy bases itself on concept of popular sovereignty. People is thought to be the sources of state power. Whether it was former Soviet Union or it is present People's Republic of China constitutionally all power belong to the people. They exercise this power through their representatives bodies like the Soviets of People's Deputies or the National People's Congress.
- (c) The basis of socialist democracy is equality. Socialism emphasizes on both legal and economic equality. Socialist democracy recognises equality before the law, without distinction of origin, social or property status, race or nationality, sex, education, language, attitude to religion etc. It specially emphasises economic equality without which both democracy and socialism remain meaningless and ineffective.
- (d) Socialist democracy recognizes basic rights and freedoms of the individual. It is said that the rights and freedoms of the individual constitute an organic element of socialist democracy. The members of socialist society enjoy various socio-economic and cultural rights, political rights and freedoms, and personal freedoms. Such rights and freedom enable them freely to develop and execute the abilities and talents they are endowed with as well as to participate in various spheres of social and state activities. It is also claimed that active measures are taken to protect the individual and his rights and freedoms.
- (e) Another aspect of socialist democracy is socialist law and morality. Socialist laws and legislation are intended to enable the individual to enjoy his rights

and freedoms to the fullest extent and at the same time impressing on him the need to fulfil his obligation towards society. Law embraces the principles of socialist morality. These two are, though not completely identical, close to one another.

- (f) Socialist democracy is usually associated with single party system and single ideology. Experiences of various socialist systems found in different parts of the world show that socialist political systems do not allow more than one political party to function. Existence and dominance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) as the only political party in the erstwhile Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China (CPC) in People's Republic of China are cases in point. It is claimed that as both the socialist states and their communist parties represent the aims, aspirations and interests of the toiling masses; therefore, people can exercise their democratic rights through them and enjoy their freedoms. Working of the organisational principle of democratic centralism both at the state and at party level provides scope for democratic activities, and exercise of democratic rights in consonance with the principles of socialism.
- (g) At the economic level, socialist democracy is associated with socialization of the means of production. It is pertinent to point out here that one of the cardinal points of liberal democracy is to protect private property of individual and it is considered as the very basis of liberal democracy. Private property is thought to be sacrosanct and inseparable from individual and all rights and freedoms are aimed at protecting and promoting it. But socialism takes a different view. It abolishes private property in the means of production. In socialist view, this step furthers the bases of equality and thus enable larger number of people to enjoy and practice their legally and constitutionally recognized rights and freedoms. It is claimed that by way of doing away with private property in the means of production, which is seen as means for oppression and exploitation, socialism actually makes democracy meaningful and effective and paves the way for more developed and larger democracy.

3.7 Conclusion

Though democracy is most popular and familiar system of government yet over time it assumes a complex nature. This makes it a highly contested concept.

However, despite the forms it takes, it cannot be denied that a democratic government needs to value every individual and protect their rights without which its sustenance in the long run will be at threat.

3.8 Summing Up

- There is no single pattern of democracy.
- From socio-economic and ideological point of view democracy is classified into liberal and socialist democracy.
- Liberal democracy is characterised by individual rights, particularly property rights are given special constitutional protection.
- Socialist democracy presupposes socialist economy and rule of the toiling masses.
- Political scientists have developed different models of liberal democracy, like, protective democracy, developmental democracy.

3.9 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. What do you mean by liberal democracy? What are its main principles and features?
2. Examine, after David Held, the models of democracy.
3. Write a note on socialist democracy.

Short Questions :

1. Mention the main principles of liberal democracy.
2. Discuss the aims and features of the developmental model of democracy.
3. Discuss three fundamental characteristics of socialism.
4. Discuss the characteristic features of liberal democracy.
5. What, according to David Held, is the meaning of the 'protective model' of democracy? What are its key features?

6. What, according to David Held, is the meaning of the ‘developmental model’ of democracy? What are its key features?

Objective Questions :

1. What according to Nosick, should be the proper role of the liberal democratic state?
2. What is the core element of liberalism?
3. What is the primary concern of developmental democracy?

3.10 Further Reading

1. Andrew Heywood: *Political Ideologies* : An Introduction, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003.
2. David Held : *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987.
3. Michael Newman: *Socialism : A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, OUP, 2005.
4. H. Aptheker (ed): *Marxism and Democracy*, New York, Humanities Press, 1965.

Unit – 4 □ Procedural Democracy : Critique of Procedural Democracy

Structure

- 4.1 Objective**
- 4.2 Introduction**
- 4.3 Procedural Democracy**
- 4.4 Main Principles of Procedural Democracy**
- 4.5 Views of Joseph Schumpeter**
- 4.6 Views of Robert Dahl**
- 4.7 Contrast between Procedural and Substantive Democracy**
- 4.8 Conclusion**
- 4.9 Summing Up**
- 4.10 Probable Questions**
- 4.11 Further Reading**

4.1 Objective

By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with :

- The concept of Procedural democracy.
- Main principles of procedural democracy
- The bases of or reasons for advocacy for procedural democracy
- How procedural democracy differs from substantive democracy.

4.2 Introduction

There are different theories, forms and models of democracy. Considerations of different perspectives, perceptions, and aspects dominate the process of conceptualisation and development of different theories, forms and models of

democracy. Therefore, there is no consensus among theorists and model-builders in these respects. However, it may be said that two different and contrasting ideas or concepts of democracy are : procedural and substantive concepts of democracy. In his Models of Democracy, David Held, however, attempts to distinguish broadly between the liberal and participatory models of democracy. According him two variants of liberal democracy is : protective and developmental. Therefore, questions arises whether procedural and substantive notions of democracy are to be regarded simply as ideas, or concepts or models.

4.3 Procedural Democracy

The concept or to be more specific, the model of procedural democracy concentrates and emphasizes on the procedural or formal aspects of democracy. From this point of view, democracy is viewed 'purely as a set of institutions—encompassing free and fair elections, legislative assemblies, and constitutional governments arising out of these'. Here procedures for formation of a government, its accountability and also its responsibility to protect citizen's rights and liberties are important criteria to be characterised as procedural democracy. Procedural democracy, according to Professor Subrata Mukherjee and Sushila Ramaswamy, "involves the mechanism of free, fair and competitive elections by which governments are held accountable and a constitutional frame work that guarantees and protects rights and liberties".

4.4 Main Principles of Procedural Democracy

Procedural democracy relies on five main principles: electoral process, universal participation, political equality, majority rule and responsiveness of representatives to the electorate.

Electoral process : Electoral process is an important indicator of procedural democracy. In procedural democracy elaborate structural and institutional arrangements are made for election of representatives by the electorate. Periodic elections are held to elect the representatives of the people. Therefore, electoral process is at the core of the political system as envisaged by the proponents of procedural democracy. This type of democracy is characterised by voters choosing representatives in elections.

Universal Participation : Universal participation is another main principle of procedural democracy. This type of democracy is characterised by universal participations of the citizens particularly in the electoral process. No doubt, universal adult franchise is a pre-requisite of universal participation. As procedural democracy is basically election-centric, therefore, its efficacy is mainly judged by electoral participation, that is, by voter's turn out in the elections. From this point of view, election data about participation are considered to be important yardstick to judge the success of democratic system. In this respect, India's standing is very high with average voters turnouts are between 50 and 60 per cent.

Political Equality : In consonance with democratic concept, procedural democracy emphasizes on political equality. Like universal adult suffrage, political equality is, again, a prerequisite for universal participation. Political equality means that all persons irrespective of sex, caste or creed, race or religion, rich or poor, have the right to participate in the affairs of the state. It ensures the right to elect and to be elected. Procedural democracy is basically political democracy which can be ensured through political equality. Political equality which, in turn, is based on legal equality, that is, equality before laws and equal protection by the laws, is an important principle as well as characteristic of procedural democracy.

Majority Rule : Democracy is, in essence, a majority rule or government of the majority. But what does majority imply in this regard? Majority may mean majority of votes secured by a political party in the legislative or decision-making bodies or majority of seats won in the election of legislative and decision-making bodies. In general, majority rule means majority of seats won by a political party in the legislature and other decision-making bodies which give them right to rule and decide on behalf of the electorate. It also means that in those bodies issues are to be resolved by voting. Procedural democracy is characterised by voters choosing to elect their representatives in elections and through those elections, government and decision-making authorities are formed at the concerned levels with the support of larger numbers of elected representatives. It is supposed that there shall be more than one political parties, competitors or candidates competing freely for electoral mandate and the right to rule vests on that political party which secures larger number of seats or votes in the elections. Whether it is parliamentary form of government or presidential form of government, it is the majority opinion expressed through electoral mandate that determines the right to rule and decide.

Responsiveness : In a democracy, responsiveness of representatives to the electorate is so important as the election of representative by the electorate. Democracy means not only representative government but it also means responsible government. Responsible government can only be ensured when government is responsive to the demands and grievances of the electorate. When this responsiveness is ensured democracy becomes meaningful and fruitful and it turns out to be popular government.

4.5 Advocacy for Procedural Democracy : Schumpeter and Dahl

The concept of procedural democracy finds justification in the writings of eminent theorists like Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl. While Schumpeter is known as eminent theorist of democratic elitism, Robert Dahl is regarded as the prominent theorist of democratic revisionism.

Joseph Schumpeter :

Joseph Schumpeter's idea is set out in his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. This book is the most influential text in the development of 'the modern elitist theory of democracy' which is alternatively known as theory of democratic elitism. To him, 'democracy is only a formal political organisational principle'. He does not consider democracy as 'an end in itself'; but it is 'a political method'. He defines it as 'a political methods... for arriving at political-legislative and administrative-decisions'. It is a system of institutions' or an 'institutional system'. As he himself says: 'Democracy is not based on certain social values; it is a system of institutions designed for putting political decisions into effect, in which these decisions are made in a competitive struggle for the people's vote'. For him, people are simply 'producers of governments' and democracy is a mechanism to select 'the men who are able to do the deciding'. Thus, the proper role of the people was to choose their ruler through competitive elections, and then leave them to get on with the business of governing.

In this way, Schumpeter, firstly, emphasizes the role of people and democratic values. People are simply producers of governments or selectors who select who would govern them. Secondly, he reduces democracy simply as 'a formal political organisation principle' and as a political and democratic method or an institutional

arrangement. As a method, according to him, it is 'that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide the means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. He calls it 'the democratic method'. Thirdly, the significance of Schumpeter's concept of democracy which is based on the idea that people are not rulers, but they are merely selectors or choosers or 'producers of governments' is that it makes elitism compatible with democracy. Free elections induce an element of competition among elite groups and it legitimises competition among governing elites. Fourthly, democracy is hereby viewed as a procedure. It is an exercise to institutionalise and rationalise election of rulers through general elections without having any relations to certain social values. Fifthly, he thus rejects both the doctrine of classical democracy as well as the central proposition of the classical theory that "the people" hold a definite and rational opinion. At the same time he emphasises for a proper recognition of the vital fact of leadership.

In brief, he views democracy as a procedure and defines democracy as a method to arrive at political, legislative and administrative decisions. In this process, the role of the people are merely those of producers of governments. Other side of the same coin is the vital role of leadership which he emphasises by introducing 'the concept of competition for leadership'. He merges these two sides in his concept of democracy as a procedure. Actually in this way he tries to make democracy and elitism compatible.

4.6 Robert Dahl

While Joseph Schumpeter describes democracy from the elitist point of view and makes democracy compatible with elitism, Robert Dahl examines it from pluralist point of view. Both these thinkers viewing democracy from different angles; however, in essence, both of them argue for procedural democracy, or what one may say, democracy as a process.

Robert Dahl, an eminent American political scientist and a leading theorist of political pluralism, views democracy basically as a process. He says: 'democratic theory is concerned with processes by which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders'. He was initially an exponent of polyarchy or polyarchal democracy and later he advanced the theory of procedural democracy. His most recent essays (After the Revolution) discussed the idea of "procedural

democracy” which is properly understood as the latest version of his evolving theory of polyarchal democracy. Dahl coined the term ‘polyarchy’. It consists of two words ‘poly’ and ‘arkhe’. Poly means ‘many’ and ‘arkhe’ means ‘rule’. Dahl uses the term ‘Polyarchy’ to denote the acquisition of democratic institutions within a political system that leads to the participation of a plurality of actors. It refers to the form of government found in contemporary democracies, but it is not the same as democracy. According to Hans Kernan, “Polyarchy, which means ‘rule by many’”, describes the process of democratization, in contrast to democracy itself.”³ (see [https://www.britannica.com/topic, Polyarchy](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Polyarchy)). Kernan also says that “Polyarchy, as presented by Dahl, should be understood as a process by which a set of institutions that comes close to what one could call the ideal type of democracy is developed. Therefore, public power is essential, and authority is effectively controlled by societal organizations and civil associations (e.g. interest group and political parties). Hence, in Dahl’s view, the extent to which those societal actors can and do operate autonomously, as well as independently from the state, will enhance the democratic quality of a polity”.⁴

His concept of democracy (i.e. elections combined with continuous political competition between individuals or parties or both) promote popular sovereignty and political equality by increasing the ‘size, number, and variety of minorities whose preferences must be taken into account by leaders’; but it does not lead to the majority rule. As a matter of fact, “polyarchy is neither pure majority rule nor unified minority rule. It is an open competitive, and pluralist system of ‘minority rule’.”⁵ Moreover, popular participation plays only a peripheral role in Dahl’s early democratic theory. Emphasis is laid on ceaseless bargaining and negotiation between organized minorities “operating within the context of an apathetic majority” rather than extensive mass participation. This ensures leaders responsiveness to the preferences of non-leaders in the decision-making system. He insists that rule by the people’ (popular sovereignty and political equality) is essential for democracy. But political equality and popular sovereignty are not absolute goals, rather these have instrumental value. These two are seen as instrumental means for ensuring the responsiveness of the government to the policy preferences of individuals.

In his *After the Revolution?* in sharp contrast to his earlier works, Dahl’s preference for smaller, more participatory democratic form becomes evident. In it we find, a much stronger emphasis upon the value of direct citizen participation

in political and economic life. But here again, he thinks democratic participation is like popular sovereignty and political equality, purely an instrument for enforcing accountability.

All these shows evolution of Dahl's theory of democracy. It has evolved from his initial theory of polyarchal democracy, to his theory of 'procedural democracy'. A polity to be regarded procedural democracy must satisfies three criteria. These are (a) 'political equality' (including its socio economic prerequisites), (b) 'effective participation' and (c) 'enlightened understanding'. Effective participation roughly indicates popular sovereignty. Thus the first two are familiar extensions of his earlier theory of polyarchy. Therefore, the third one is the additional criterion that Dahl added to his theory of procedural democracy and it requires that citizens have adequate and equal opportunities for formulating their preferences.

Dahl's concept of procedural democracy functions according to the ideal standards, that is, according to five criteria that he has introduced in this respect. The criteria are effective participation, voting equality at the decisive stage, enlightened understanding, control over the agenda, and inclusion. However his vision of procedural democracy does not ignore a variety of issues such as equality, freedom, human development, and human worth. Therefore the procedural democracy is not oblivious of substantive issues. However, Dahl's theory of procedural democracy relies basically on four major principles: universal participation, political equality, majority rule and responsiveness of representatives to the electorate.

4.7 Contrast between Procedural and Substantive Democracy

Procedural democracy has to be differentiated from substantive democracy. Substantive democracy is another form of democracy which emphasizes not procedures but the substantive issues of democracy. According to the theory of substantive democracy 'a democracy is a society peopled by truly equal citizens, who are politically engaged, tolerant of different opinions and ways of life, and have an equal voice of choosing their rulers and holding them accountable. This type of democracy functions in the interest of the governed. Substantive democracy, it is claimed, transform formal democracy to a real democracy. It is also referred to as functional democracy.

Procedural democracy concentrates on the procedures and institutions of

representation rather than on the actual role of the general population. Institution of representation serves as an instrument of accountability. But the drawback of the system is that it also serves, as David Beetham has pointed out, 'as a means of keeping the people at arm's length from the political process, and establishing a division of labour between an elite of professional politicians engaged in politics, as a specialised activity on the one side, and a depoliticised, private citizenry on the other'. Secondly, proceduralist view of democracy slips into 'the fallacy of electoralism' as studies of democracy from this standpoint is restricted to election data, Thirdly, it is not concerned with the meaningful exercise of equal rights. Moreover, procedural democracy is compatible with the results which are always skewed in favour of particular interest and groups.

It is in this context, the substantive view of democracy becomes relevant. This view of democracy does not restrict itself only to the procedural and institutional aspects of democracy as well as to formal legal and constitutional guarantees of equal democratic rights. As N. G. Joyal has pointed out that the proponents of a substantive definition of democracy argue that 'the democratic project is incomplete until the meaningful exercise of the equal rights of citizenship have been guaranteed to all'. Naturally, substantive democracy strives to overcome the formal limitations of procedural democracy. On other hand, it emphasizes that the general population must play a real role in carrying out its political affair. Merely securing legal and political equality is not enough. Rather what is absolutely necessary is having a truly equal opportunity to influence governmental decisions. Thus, the state is not merely set up as democracy but it must function as one as well. As Joyal has rightly remarked: "Democracy, therefore, should not be seen as confined to the sphere of state and government, but also as the principle governing collective life in society."

4.8 Conclusion

As a matter fact, neither the procedural aspect of democracy be overlooked nor the substantive goods be de-emphsized. On the one hand a just process may lead to unjust results, and at the same time, as Robert Dahl maintains when substance takes over process, we are often left with dictatorship. Therefore, what is needed is not a debate between procedure versus substance or priority of one over the other, but a combination of the two to achieve an ideal democratic system.

4.9 Summing Up

- Two different and contrasting concepts of democracy are : Procedural and Substantive democracy.
- Procedural democracy emphasises on the formal or procedural aspects of democracy, which include competitive elections individual rights, universal participation.
- Substantive democracy on the other hand emphasises on the substantive issues of democracy.

4.10 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. What do you mean by procedural democracy? What are its main principles?
2. How does the concept of procedural democracy find justification in the writings of Joseph Schumpeter?
3. How does Robert Dahl view democracy as a process? Do you agree with him?

Short Questions :

1. How is concept of polyarchy related to the concept of procedural democracy.
2. Write a short note on the elitist theory of democracy.
3. Describe the evolution of Robert Dahl's views on democracy.

Objective Questions :

1. What is meant by 'polyarchy'?
2. What is meant by substantive democracy?
3. What is the key element of procedural democracy?

4.11 Further Reading

1. N. G. Joyal (ed) : Democracy in India : Themes in Politics, Delhi, Oxford University, Press, 2009.
2. Robert Dahl : A Preface to Democratic Theory, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986.
3. J. A. Schumpeter : Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, London, George Allen and Urwin, 1976.

Unit – 5 □ Deliberative Democracy : Concept, Characteristics and Forms

Structure

- 5.1 Objective**
- 5.2 Introduction**
- 5.3 Origin and development of the concept**
- 5.4 Liberal democracy and deliberative democracy**
- 5.5 Characteristics**
- 5.6 Different types of deliberative democracy**
- 5.7 Conclusion**
- 5.8 Summing Up**
- 5.9 Probable Questions**
- 5.10 Further Reading**

5.1 Objective

By reading this unit the students will be acquainted with the following :

- The concept of deliberative democracy.
- Origin and development of the concept
- The relation between liberal democracy and deliberative democracy
- Characteristics and forms of deliberative democracy.

5.2 Introduction

Another addition to the treasury of democratic theories and forms is deliberative democracy. In the last quarter of the 20th century, deliberative democracy came to be presented as complementary to traditional representative democracy. Since the 1980's, particularly in 1990's deliberative democracy began to attract substantial

attention from political scientists. Deliberative democracy came to be considered as an important component of modern liberal theorising. New lights were thrown on decision-making, discourse and debate, discourse of citizenship, legitimacy etc. from the point of view of newly-developed theory of deliberative democracy. It thus presents itself as a new trend in democratic thinking within liberal framework.

The concept of deliberative democracy has emerged and developed in the last three decades and considered as an exciting development in political theory. But, as a matter of fact, it has a long history. It was not unknown in primitive society. In primitive societies, all adult members of the community had the right to participate in the collective decision-making process of the community and assemblies were empowered to render judgements. However ancient Athenian democracy which arose in Greece during the sixth century BC. is frequently cited in political literature as the earliest manifestation of classical democracy. Athenian democracy was both deliberative and largely direct because of its participatory character.

Deliberative democracy in its ancient form faced its extinction when in 322 BC Athenian democracy came to an end. Revival of democracy in modern time can, however, hardly be regarded as revival of deliberative democracy. It is true that in parliamentary democracy, parliament has been regarded by thinkers like Edmund Burke as a deliberative assembly and it is also true that deliberation is considered to be an essential part of government. However, the notion of democracy that evolved from the mid 17th century onwards may be different varieties of liberal democracy but can hardly be regarded as deliberative democracy in its newly ascribed sense. Deliberative democracy also falls within the framework of liberal democracy and an important component of modern liberal theorising; still it stands apart from traditional liberal democratic theories with regard to its approach towards procedures of decision-making and legitimacy under democratic system. It emphasizes the practical reasoning of citizens rather than of the people's representatives.

Definition

“Broadly defined, deliberative democracy refers to the idea that legitimate law making issues from the public deliberation of citizens”. It holds that deliberation is central to decision-making and political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. In the opinion of Andrew Heywood it is ‘a form of democracy that emphasizes the role of discourse and debate in helping to define the public interest’. It is believed that people's preferences

are formed during political process and not prior to it. Their preferences should be shaped by deliberation in advance of decision-making.

The theory of deliberative democracy has a normative aspect too in the sense that it is concerned not only with how decisions are made but also with how decisions should be made. It assumes that political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. Actually its intention is to influence the actual political process rather than to state the actual political process. As Professor S Ramaswamy has observed that “Deliberative democracy is a normative theory with an intention to influence the actual political process by improving the popular input into policy by making it as broad based as possible”. As a normative theory its objective is to broaden the base of democracy through discussion and debate among citizens. This, by effect, legitimizes the political process, because, deliberation among citizens paves the basis of legitimacy.

Christy Friend, in her review of Iris Marion Young’s *Inclusion and Democracy*, observes that Young—along with Benjamin Barber, Jürgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser and others—is one of a group of theorists who subscribe to “deliberative” view of democracy,.... holds that democracy is most fundamentally a set of deliberative practices by which people negotiate in order to solve public problems. In this view, democracy is all about persuasion’. The idea of deliberation lies at the core of deliberative democracy. It is its central idea. As has been pointed out by Christian F. Roseboll ‘The Central idea of deliberative democracy is that the basis of democratic legitimacy is the public deliberation of citizens’. It is said that free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy. Thus, democratic legitimacy is produced out of public deliberation and serves as the basis of deliberative democracy.

Deliberative democracy attaches much importance to the idea of deliberation. It acts as the basis of democratic legitimacy. Deliberation is a process and as a process it is concerned with shaping citizens preferences. Citizens preferences are shaped by deliberation and that too in advance of decision making. People’s preferences are formed during the political process, i.e. in a public process of deliberation among free and equal citizens. Therefore, deliberation is concerned with the process of reason giving which should precede political decision-making. But deliberation is concerned not only with the process of reason giving, it is also concerned with its outcome. As Christian F. Roseboll notes ‘Deliberation is concerned

both with the process of reason giving and with its outcomes'. It produces legitimacy and also tends to promote justice.

John Rawls makes a distinction between requirements of deliberation in civil society and official deliberation and, in his view, ideal of public reason only applies to the latter. But Joshua Cohen argues for the ideal deliberative procedure. She points out three features of the ideal deliberative procedure. First, it helps to account for some familiar judgements about collective decision-making, in particular about the ways that collective decision-making ought to be different from bargaining, contracting and other market-type interactions, both in its explicit attention to considerations of the common advantage and in the ways that alteration helps to form the aims of the participants.

"Second; it accounts for the common view that the notion of democratic association is tied to notions of autonomy and the common good.

"Third, the ideal deliberative procedure provides a distinctive structure for addressing institutional questions".

5.3 Origin and Development

The concept of deliberative democracy is rather new in the vocabulary of political theory. Joseph M. Bassette is credited with for coinage of the term 'deliberative democracy. Bassette in his *The Mid Voice of Reason: Deliberative Democracy and Americal National Goverment* (1994) seems to have first used the term 'deliberative democracy, to argue against elitist (or "aristocratic") interpretation of the US Coustitution. Bassette called for a participatory view of democratic politics.

It is generally recognised that this new concept of democracy calling for a participatory view of democratic politics gradually developed through the 1970 and began to take definite shape only in the 1980. But its origin can be traced in early sixties of the twentieth century with the publication of Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. The basic theoretical ideas behind this conception of democracy was worked out by Jurgen Habermas. Later, many other critical theorists joined chorus of voices for a participatory view of democratic politics and developed the key theoretical issues of the concept of deliberative democracy. Christy Friend, in her review of Iris Marion Young's *Inclusion and Democracy*, says that 'Young—along with Benjamin Barber Jurgen Habermas,

Nancy Fraser, and others—is one of a group of theorists who subscribe to ‘deliberative’ view of democracy”. Among the others mention may be made of John Rawls, Jon Elster, Joshua Cohen, John Orygek who have developed the concept of deliberative democracy and its different features and aspects.

Jurgen Habermas is one of the pioneer theorists of deliberative democracy. Unfortunately his contribution to this theory has not received proper acknowledgement. But he laid the basic theoretical ideas behind this conception of democracy. He presented idealised model of rational, consensus-oriented discourse by elaborating an idealized deliberative procedure. In his ‘Popular Sovereignty as Procedure’ Jurgen Habermas reviews the relevance of the radical democratic ideas associated with the French Revolution. In this essay, by way of combining the best features of the civic republicanism and liberalism i.e., the two dominant conceptions of democracy, he attempts to present his own model of democracy which is an idealized model of rational, consensus-oriented discourse. He tries to link political power with the rule of law as well as the participatory characteristics of democracy with due emphasis on institutions and legality. As he himself says “the normative expectation of outcomes is grounded ultimately in the interplay between institutionally structured political will-formation and spontaneous, unsubverted circuits of communication in a public sphere that is not programmed to reach decisions and thus not organized.” He reminds us that “In this context, the public sphere functions as a normative concept”. The arguments and reasons that have held up in the public sphere contrains government officials in constitutional regimes. Pointing out Habermas’s position in this regard, Bohman and Regh say that: ‘Insofar as a broadly dispersed, “subjectless communication” among citizens is allowed to develop an autonomous public spheres and enter into receptive representative bodies with formal decision making power, the notion of popular sovereignty—a democratically self-organising society- is not beyond the pale of feasibility”². Therefore, although he does not completely reject the traditional liberal democratic model and its constitutional regimes and decision making bodies, he adds a new element to it by elaborating an idealized deliberative procedure as its point of departure.

In this way, the basic theoretical ideas behind this conception of deliberative democracy was worked out by Jurgen Habermas and also by other critical theorists. Although Habermas worked out the basic theoretical ideas behind this conception of democracy, however, it did not immediately take any definite shape and many of the writers on deliberative democracy even in the late eighties did not appreciate

many of his ideas. Till up to 1970, two main sources for liberal democratic theory were (a) sociological realism (e.g. Schumpeter's elitist theory and Dahl's pluralist models) and (b) the other economic (e.g. the competitive political process on rational choice assumptions) in working out the philosophical details of a conception of political justification based on deliberation and public reason. John Elster developed his conceptions of politics as 'public in nature' and that political deliberation requires citizens to go beyond private self-interest of the 'market'. For him, politics involves a public activity that cannot be reduced to the private choices of consumers in the 'market' and that political engagement requires citizens to adopt civic standpoint, an orientation toward the common good, when they consider political issues in the 'forum'. Gutmann and Thompson, in their *Democracy and Disagreement* attempt to show how deliberation can deal with fundamental moral disagreements. The main concern of Iris Marion Young is how to make democracy more inclusive for disadvantaged groups.

The proponents of deliberative democracy have actually developed different aspects of it. Their differences relate to their different approaches and focuses rather than on the key theoretical issues of deliberative democracy. They are in general agreement on at least this : 'The political process involves more than self-interested competition governed by bargaining and aggregative mechanisms'. They are unanimous in their views in respect of their emphasis on the will of the people and their active participation, open and uncoerced discussion, democratic self-restraint and human rationality.

In deliberative democracy, the citizens see each other as free persons worth arguing with, as persons who can freely make up their minds in the light of good reasons. It emphasizes on the democratic process based on citizens' participation, debate and discussion, rationality and consensus. But it does not subscribe the view of the aggregative model that democracy is simply 'a process aggregating the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials and policies'. Rather in the deliberative model, democracy is a form of practical reason and democratic process is primarily a discussion of problems, conflicts, claims of needs or interests. It is a form of public reasoning, a public process of deliberation among free and equal citizens through which preferences of citizens are transformed and become the basis of democratic legitimacy.

However, the competitive-pluralist theories and models of liberal democracy faced theoretical challenges and the prevailing trend began to reverse itself in the

late 1990s. Actually, certain practical and theoretical issues and reasons were active behind this reversal and at the same time growth of interest about deliberative democracy. These were, according to Bohman and Rehg;

- (1) Broad dissatisfaction with debacle and anonymity of liberal government. The vietnam war, the 1986 student revolt, and the impact of the civil rights movements signalled a shift in the academic perception giving rise to neo-conservatism. There was also an increasing perception that decision making in government was bureaucratic and beyond the control of citizens.
- (2) Revival of interest in participatory democracy and politics played an important role in this respect. As Bohman and Rehg observe “leftist political activism, with its emphasis on participatory democracy, sparked renewed interest in the possibilities for consensual forms of self-government”

Two separate but complimentary trends were at work for the rise of interest in deliberative democracy. One was the theoretical critique of liberal democracy and the other one was the revival of participatory politics. Both these trends gradually developed through the 1970’s

These on-going developments had been, to a great extent, crystalised in the 1980s and concept of deliberative democracy began to take definite shape. But it was particularly in the 1990s that the concept of deliberative democracy began to attract substantial attention from political scientists. It came to be considered as an important component of modern liberal theorising and it presented itself as a new trend in democratic thinking. Important contributions were made in this regard by John Rawls, Joshua Cohen, Jon Elster, Gutmann and Thompson, Iris Marion Young and others.

The proponents of deliberative democracy differed among themselves as well as agreed on many points. For example, Habermas idealized model of rational, consensus-oriented discourse and he elaborated an idealized deliberative procedure. John Rawls and Joshu Cohen were more interested in its different aspects.

5.4 Liberal democracy and deliberative democracy

Deliberative democracy is often considered as an important component of modern liberal theorising. It is claimed that “It is a theory that concentrates

on refining the familiar framework of liberal democracy”. Like liberal democracy, deliberative democracy emphasizes the will of the people and translation of the concept of ‘popular sovereignty’ through active participation of the people in the democratic process of deliberation and debates. Jürgen Habermas, one of the pioneer exponents of deliberative democracy, wants to develop the participatory features of democracy; as in liberalism, he wants to emphasize the role of institutions and law.

However, the concept deliberative democracy differs from some prevailing mode of thinking developed within the broader framework of liberal democracy. Firstly, it differs from the sociological theory of democracy. Two variants of the sociological theory of democracy are (a) the elitist theory of democracy propounded by Joseph Schumpeter and his disciples, and (b) the pluralist model of democracy proposed by Robert Dahl and others. In the first variant, it is assumed, on the basis of empirical findings, that modern democracies are politically uninformed, apathetic, manipulable and popular participation could be downright dangerous. It views citizens primarily as passive consumers and political process as a struggle for power among competing interests. Robert Dahl and others, on the other hand, presented a decentralized, “polyarchal” version of pluralism and gave up much of Schumpeter’s elitism. Still, however, like Schumpeterian view, it retained the emphasis on competition, interest, and voting.

Secondly, another source for liberal democratic theory upto 1970 was the economic theory of democracy. This theory as propounded by Anthony Downs attempted to apply economic categories to politics and it results in developing the model in which competitive political process is seen to be based on rational-choice assumptions as it suggests that parties function as entrepreneurs who compete to sell their policies in a market of political consumers.

All these developments ranging from sociological realism and pluralism to the model of competitive political process on rational choice assumptions took place within the broader framework of liberal thinking. As has been pointed out by James Bohman and William Rehg: “These two developments, one sociological and the other economic, were the two main sources for liberal democratic theory upto 1970.”⁴ The theorists of one of the two major variants of democratic theory emphasize the plurality of citizens interests and the potential for civil strife as citizens are viewed primarily as passive consumers who exert democratic control

primarily through voting and the political process is viewed as a struggle for power among competing interests. Whereas the theorists of other variant takes a more rationalistic view of the citizens but preclude active public deliberation by citizens about a common good.

As against this, deliberative democracy views political process as a search for the common good. It questions the key assumptions underlying the economic and pluralist models. The thrust of the deliberative democracy is on will of the people, human rationality, debate and deliberation, democratic self-restraint, and hope of a public opinion about a common good. “For a democracy based on public deliberation presupposes that citizens or their representatives can take counsel together about what law and policies they ought to pursue as a commonwealth.” Again to quote from Bohman and Rehg: “Deliberative theorists are in general agreement on at least this: the political process involved more than self interested competition governed by bargaining and aggressive mechanisms.” Therefore, it accepts neither the views of self or group interests and resultant struggle for power among competing interests nor a purely economic standpoint and rationalistic view of citizens precluding active public deliberation by citizens as crucial conditions for democracy. Politics involves public activities and hence active participation and deliberation cannot be precluded from the political process and again it cannot be reduced to the private choices of consumers in the market.

It may be inferred that deliberative democracy advances the theoretical critique of liberal democracy and revival of participatory democracy. Jurgen Habermas’s idealized model of rational, consensus-oriented discourse is a case in point. He seeks to combine the best features of the two dominant conceptions of democracy: civic republicanism and liberalism. As Bohman and Rehg have observed: “As in civic republicanism, Habermas wants to develop the participatory features of democracy as in liberalism, he wants to emphasize the role of institutions and of law.” At the same time, they are quick to point out: “Models such as Habermas’s differ from updated republicanism and right-based liberalism by elaborating on idealized deliberative procedure as its point of departure.” Thus deliberative democracy is both a criticism and rejection as well as accomodation of liberal democracy. It develops participatory features of democracy and idealizes deliberative procedures and, at the same time it emphasizes the role of institutions and law. Therefore, it is a queer mixture of both the theoretical critique of liberal democracy and the acceptance of some of the features of liberal democracy.

5.5 Characteristic Features

1. The concept of deliberative democracy is both an old as well as a new concept of democracy. It was old in the sense that deliberative democracy was prevalent in ancient Greece. Ancient Athenian democracy was the ancient form of deliberative democracy. Again it is new in the sense that after its extinction in Athens in 320 BC it has again reemerged and evolved in the last three decades.
2. In deliberative democracy, deliberation is considered to be essential part of government. It emphasizes on the practical reasoning of citizens rather than on that of people's representation.
3. Deliberation shapes citizens' preferences. Deliberation is a process and as a process it is concerned with shaping citizens' preferences. Citizens preferences are shaped by public deliberation and that too in advance of decision-making.
4. Deliberative democracy refers to the idea that legitimate law making issues from the public deliberation of citizens. It attaches too much importance to the idea of deliberation. It lies at the core of democracy.
5. Deliberative democracy assumes that public deliberation acts as the basis of democratic legitimacy. Free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.
6. The theory of deliberative democracy has a normative aspect in the sense that it is concerned not only with how decisions are made but also with how decisions should be made.
7. Deliberative democracy implies a deep and broader inclusion and political equality, whose implementation will eventually promote justice.

In her essay 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy' Joshua Cohen mentions five main features of the formal conception of a deliberative democracy. According to her, these are :

- (a) A deliberative democracy is an ongoing and independent association, whose members expect it to continue into the indefinite future.

- (b) The appropriate terms of the association provide a framework for or are the results of their deliberation. For the members of the association, free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.
- (c) According to Cohen, a deliberative democracy is a pluralistic association. The members have diverse preferences, convictions, and ideas concerning the conduct of their own lives. They also have divergent aims.
- (d) The terms of their association are not merely be the results of their deliberation, but also be manifest to the members of the association as such.
- (e) The members recognize one another as having deliberative capacities like exchange of reasons and acting on public reasoning.

5.6 Forms of deliberation

Ancient form of deliberative democracy was found in Athens. The striking features of the Athenian democracy was its participatory and deliberative character. It developed institutions of deliberation like Ecclesia. It was the basic governing body where every citizen was entitled to attend and speak at its meetings. As a matter of fact, as democracy evolved in Athens and its citizens enjoyed a free atmosphere of public discussion and lively debate on various domestic and foreign policy questions as well as on institutions and personalities.

In modern times, there are different types of deliberative forms. Modern deliberative forums include both governmental as well as nongovernmental institutions. These include legislature, courts, the administration, and civil society associations. Different deliberative forums have different purposes and follow different procedures. For example, there may be deliberation aimed directly at decisions and also deliberation which has no such direct aim. In Jane Mansbridge's opinion, the distinction between the two is of everyday talk and formal talk. Similarly, in Habermas, we find a distinction between the informal public sphere of civil society and decisional publics. The importance of differentiating between these two types of publics in civil society is that they serve different purposes and that in order to do so they must involve different types of deliberation.

There is no denying that civil society is an important forum of deliberation

and as Habermas points out its associations “specialize... in discovering issues relevant for all society”. But we cannot disregard the importance of governmental institutions. Parliamentary and governmental decisions are also important as they reflect the deliberation of civil society. Members of different branches of government (such as legislators, administrators and judges) are also considered to be important forums of deliberation.

In addition to that, election campaigners and voters also provide different forums of deliberation. There are also alternative form of communication which also play important role. Iris Marion Young thinks that deliberative democracy to be inclusive should allow for the use of greetings, rhetoric and narrative as legitimate forms of communication.

5.7 Conclusion

Thus, deliberative democracy aims to reach political decisions through fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. So deliberation turns out to be a necessary pre condition for the legitimacy of democratic political decisions. Such a democracy not only prioritise deliberation in decision making but also encourages competing viewpoints and arguments. In doing so, it actually shifts the emphasis from the outcome of the decision to the quality of the process.

5.8 Summing Up

- Deliberative democracy is considered to be an important component of modern liberal theory.
- In this model special importance is given to deliberation. It is held that political decision should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion among citizens.
- In this model free deliberation is held to be the basis of democratic legitimacy.
- Deliberative democracy implies a deep and broader inclusion and political equality whose implementation will promote justice.

5.9 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Analyse the concept of deliberative democracy.
2. Trace the origin and development of the concept of deliberative democracy.
3. Discuss the relation between liberal democracy and deliberative democracy.

Short Questions :

1. How do you define deliberative democracy ?
2. What, according to Joshua Cohen, are the five main features of the concept of deliberative democracy?
3. Describe the characteristic features of deliberative democracy.
4. Discuss Jurgen Habermas' contribution to the origin and growth of the concept of deliberative democracy.
5. In what sense deliberative democracy can be considered as a critique of liberal democracy?
6. What are the different forms and forums of deliberative democracy?

Objective Questions :

1. What is the core idea underlying the concept of deliberative democracy?
2. Who is the author of the book 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy'?
3. What does the concept of politics 'as public in Nature' imply?

5.10 Further Reading

1. James Bohman and William Rehg (ed) : Deliberative Democracy, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1997.
2. J. S. Dryzek : Deliberative Democracy and Beyond, Oxford, OUP, 2000.

Module–2

Unit – 6 □ Models of Democracy

Structure

- 6.1 Objective**
- 6.2 Introduction**
- 6.3 Meaning of Democracy**
- 6.4 Attributes of Democracy**
- 6.5 Arguments against Democracy**
- 6.6 Models of Democracy**
- 6.7 Contemporary Theories of Democracy**
- 6.8 Some Recent views on Democracy**
- 6.9 Conclusion**
- 6.10 Summing Up**
- 6.11 Probable Questions**
- 6.12 Further Reading**

6.1 Objective

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to :

- Understand the multiple meaning of democracy
- Identify the different models of democracy
- To locate the contemporary feminist, neoliberal and new right views with respect to democracy

6.2 Introduction

The term democracy is no longer tied singly to a form of government. The political coinage of democracy in contemporary times went beyond the territories of an ideal. As a method, it began to imply a set of values and behaviour with

which a decision is concluded by the people. In a way, it also denotes of a particular culture involved in a process of a decision making. As a corollary therefore, the concept invited fierce debates not only in political theory but also in general discussion on politics. Since its formal appearance in the Greek city states of the classical period till contemporary times, the concept and practice of democracy has traversed a long way in political history. From a pejorative implication 'as a rule of the ignorant' by Plato to a 'corrupt form of polity' by Aristotle; democracy as an enduring principle continued to be dominant even in the post modern political landscape. Interestingly, the age old negative connotation of the concept has been replaced with a positive value which is accorded to democracy over time. Though this development is much recent in history and at present, the charge of being labelled as undemocratic is not only uncomfortable but also to be taken a matter of serious offence in global political parlance. Amidst the failure of socialist system within erstwhile Soviet Union and the rising crisis of capitalism in the past years, democracy emerged not only as an universally accepted political system but also perhaps the most successful compelling form of political organisation in history.

6.3 Meaning of Democracy

The concept of democracy was of Greek origin. The term was derived from the Greek word '*demokratia*' in which '*demos*' meant 'the people' and '*kratos*' meaning 'power or rule'. Democracy thus, means 'rule by the demos'. The term 'democracy' was first used in the fifth century BC by the Greek historian Herodotus in the sense of 'rule by the people'. However, the concept was perhaps popularised by Abraham Lincoln Gettysburg Address, delivered in 1864 at the height of the American Civil War. He added both flesh and spirit to the meaning of democracy as government of the people, by the people, for the people. Analysing Lincoln's definition, D.D.Raphael in *Problems of Political Philosophy* observes that all government is government of the people. Hence, government of the people does not convey much. As regards 'government for the people' Raphael argues that a benevolent despotism, as much as democracy, may be government for the people. So the essential idea of democratic government is 'government by the people'. This implies that, in effect, people govern themselves that they participate in making the crucial decisions that structure their lives and determine the fate of their society. This participation can take a number of forms.

In classic sense, democracy means the rule of the people, either directly or through elected representatives. In this meaning, democracy is taken not only as rule of the majority but also involving the spirit of equality. Subsequently, even representative form of democracy also recognises the principle of equality. However, this equality is mainly confined to political equality where equal voting right and right to hold public offices are treated as relevant. In other words, it implies a belief that all people are equally capable of, and have a stake in making collective decisions that shape their lives. In a democracy, no one person's opinion or interest is of more value than the other. Hence, the principle which is practiced is 'one person, one vote'. It is based on the idea of equal moral worth of all individuals and against the exclusion of anyone from the political process. Thus, it is against hierarchy or inherited privileges and discrimination.

Democracy is also widely described as a process of selecting governments. This implies free and fair elections under open, multiparty electoral competition and based on universal adult suffrage. Samuel P. Huntington, who is well known for his Clash of Civilization thesis says that 'elections open, free and fair are essence of democracy'. Democracy as government by the people relies heavily on the wisdom of the people. J.S.Mill in his *Considerations on Representative Government* has mentioned two different aspects that go in the name of democracy. He defines 'pure idea of democracy' as 'the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented'. Mill contrasts this idea of pure democracy with commonly conceived and practiced idea of democracy as 'the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people'. In other sense, democracy as a form of government though called the government of the whole people is only the government of the majority. This majority actually elects representatives since representatives are elected on the basis of majority votes, they cannot by definition therefore, represent the minority. The principle of democracy requires that while all public decisions are taken with the approval of the majority, due regard may be given to the view of the minority. However, in a multicultural society where people tend to vote for the candidates belonging to their own caste, region, religion language or culture etc. they may be divided into permanent majority and minorities. In such a case the principle of democracy requires that different minorities like racial, religious etc. enjoy full freedom to preserve their cultural traits and feel fully safe.

Democracy not merely means a form of government. It also imbibes for a culture in which certain intrinsic human values like that of tolerance, equality, freedom and the like is fostered and retained in society. In a democracy, therefore, it is assumed that there will be a diversity of opinions and interests on almost every matter of common concern. Indeed, this diversity is seen as its main strength and it calls for tolerance for all shades of opinion. A democratic society is also called an open society where there is space for all voices however, unpopular or conventional they may be, to be heard. This requires a range of political freedoms like freedom of speech and expression, association and movement among others which are protected by the state. People must have access to information and be able to protest and freely criticise the government and others in order to make informed uncoerced choices and intervene in the decision making process. Thus, the practice of democracy is unthinkable without rights. Thus, democracies are expected to arrive at a consensus.

6.4 Attributes of Democracy

It is often argued that a democratic method of making legislation is better than non democratic methods in three ways namely strategically, epistemically and via the improvements of the characters of democratic citizens. Strategically, democracy has an advantage because it forces decision makers to take into account the interests, rights and opinions of most people in society. In this respect, an instrumental argument provided by Amartya Sen is that ‘no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press’. The basis of this argument is that politicians in a multiparty democracy with free elections and a free press have incentives to respond to the expressions of needs of the poor.

Epistemologically, democracy is thought to be the best decision making method, on the grounds, that it is generally more reliable in helping participants to discover the right decisions. Because democracy brings a lot of people into the process of decision making, it can take advantage of many sources of information, and of the critical assessment of laws and policies.

It is further argued that democracy tends to make people stand up for themselves more than do other forms of rule. This is because under democracy collective

decisions depend more upon the will of the people than those made under monarchy or aristocracy. Hence, in democratic societies, individuals are encouraged to be more autonomous.

Finally, some have argued that democracy tends to enhance the moral qualities of citizens. When they participate in decision making they have to listen to others and they are also called upon to justify themselves to others and they are forced to think partly in terms of the interests of others. Hence, some have argued that democratic processes tend to enhance the autonomy, rationality and morality of participants.

6.5 Arguments against Democracy

Critics of democracy can be classified into two groups namely those who are dissatisfied with a particular kind of democratic practice and seek to deepen it and those who are critical of the democratic principle as such. A key objection to democracy is that, it produces incompetent and inefficient governments. According to Plato, democracy is inferior to various forms of monarchy, aristocracy and even oligarchy on the grounds that democracy tends to undermine the expertise that is necessary to properly governed societies. In a democracy, he argues, those who are expert at winning elections and nothing else will eventually dominate democratic politics. Most people do not have the kinds of talents that enable them to think well about the difficult issues that politics involves. Hence, the state will be guided by very poorly worked out ideas.

Hobbes argues that democracy is inferior to monarchy because democracy fosters destabilising dissension among subjects. From his perspective, individual citizens and even politicians are likely not to have a sense of responsibility for the quality of legislation, because no individual makes a significant difference to the outcome of decision making. As a consequence, citizen's concerns are not focused on politics and politicians succeed only by making loud and manipulative appeals to citizens in order to gain more power.

Even J. S. Mill for all his defence of democracy and political participation considered majoritarianism and mediocre government as the biggest weaknesses of democracy. Not only does majoritarianism exclude minority voices but it lowers the standards of the government. Subsequently, people with a lower level of

intelligence perform the most important task of legislation and administration. Mill suggested a number of institutional mechanisms to counter these ills. Mill was particularly concerned about the opinion of minorities, the experts and the geniuses who are sidelined when the majority principle is applied. Mills philosophy thus, combines a value for participation and equality with elitism, where governance is seen as the task of the educated and the experts.

Elite theorists went a step ahead in expressing their dissatisfaction of the democratic functioning and argued in favour of the inevitability of the elite rule. Elite theorists consider a functioning democracy impossible because of the inevitability of concentration of power. Classical elite theorists like Pareto and Mosca says that political power in every society has always been in the hands of a minority, the elite, which has ruled over the majority in its own interest. These elite manage to dominate because they possess exceptional skills specially the psychological attributes and political skills of manipulation and coercion. They are far better organized than the masses and also possess qualities which are considered valuable and hence, use it to justify their privileged position in the society. Michels noted, how despite socialist principles, the actual working of the decision making process tended to concentrate power in the leadership due to bureaucratization and centralization. Not only did the leaders not consult the working class members, the decision taken were often contrary to their interests.

Rajeev Bhargava argues, that the merit of these critiques lies insofar as they expose the myths of democratic practice by exposing who actually wields power. But in considering this concentration of power as inevitable, these critiques affirm a belief in the natural inequality among human beings and are pessimistic in nature.

6.6 Models of Democracy

Democracy is often treated as a homogenous and unambiguous phenomenon. It is often assumed that democracy as practiced in western societies is the only legitimate form of democracy. In reality, however, there are a number of rival theories or models of democracy, each offering its own version of popular rule. This highlights not merely the variety of democratic forms and mechanisms, but also more fundamentally, the very different grounds on which democratic rule can be justified. Even liberal democracy is a misleading term, as competing liberal views

of democratic organisation can be identified. The different models are discussed in the following manner :

1. Classical Democracy
2. Protective Democracy
3. Developmental Democracy
4. People's Democracy
5. Participatory Democracy
6. Cosmopolitan Democracy

Classical Democracy

The classical model of democracy is usually associated with the city states of ancient Greece. It is the most celebrated form of direct participatory democracy. Amongst the city states, the most discussed one happened to be the system of rule that developed in Athens. The salient features of Athenian democracy can be summed up in the following manner-

- (A) Equal participation by all freemen in the common affairs of the polis (city state) which was regarded as an essential instrument of good life.
- (B) Arriving at public decisions in an atmosphere of free discussion and
- (C) General respect for law and for the established procedures of the community.

The form of direct democracy that operated in Athens during the fourth and fifth centuries BC is often portrayed as the only pure or ideal system of popular participation. Athenian democracy developed a very particular kind of direct popular rule, one that has only a very limited application in the modern world. Athenian democracy amounted to a form of government by mass meeting. All major decisions were made by the Assembly or Ecclesia, to which all citizens belonged. This meet takes place atleast forty times a year. What made Athenian democracy so remarkable was the level of political activity of its citizens. Not only did they participate in regular meetings of the Assembly but they were in large numbers, prepared to shoulder the responsibility of public office and decision making. The most influential contemporary critic of this form of democracy was the philosopher Plato. Plato decried democracy because the people were not properly equipped with education to select the best rulers. Aristotle identified democracy as the rule of the many,

that is, of the more numerous members of the community, particularly the poor ones. In his classification of the governments into normal and perverted forms, Aristotle placed democracy among perverted forms since it signified the rule of the mediocre seeking their selfish interests, and not the interest of the state. on a practical level. However, the principal drawback of Athenian democracy was that it could only operate by excluding the mass of the population from political activity. Participation was restricted to Athenian born males who were over 20 years of age. Slaves, women and foreigners had no political rights whatsoever.

Protective Democracy

The idea of democracy as evolved in the 17th and 18th century was very different from that of classical democracy of ancient Greece. Democracy then came to be viewed as a mechanism through which the public could participate in political life and protect themselves from the encroachments of government. Hence, it is called Protective Democracy. It was protective in the sense, that it was meant to protect the rights of citizens and safeguard them from the tyranny of state power. The emergence of liberalism as a doctrine and the newly emerging bourgeoisie middle class had placed limits on the absolute powers of the monarch and the feudal aristocracy of the European state from 16th century onwards. With the emerging new doctrine of individualism, the notion that all individuals are free and autonomous masters of themselves and makers of their own destiny were popularised. Individuals are primarily rational and self interested beings intend on pursuing their desires and goals. What individual requires are the basic condition to pursue this self defined goals. Liberals identify these conditions as rights of life, liberty and property which are fundamental and inviolable in nature. The emergence of liberalism is linked to that of capitalism and market society. That is why, property is understood as a fundamental right. An individual's property is considered an extension of the self and an individual is the masters of his/her own self.

In the 17th century John Locke argued, that that the right to vote was based on the existence of natural rights and in particular on the right to property. If government, through taxation possessed the power to expropriate property, citizens were entitled to protect themselves by controlling the composition of the tax setting body; the legislature. In other words, democracy to mean a system of government by consent' operating through a representative assembly. Political participation in a representative democracy means to control the government and ensure the protection

of individual liberty. Through franchise and competitive elections individuals choose representatives who then form governments on the majority principle. Political decisions can be made only by these representatives and the people can keep a check on the representatives through periodic elections.

The idea of protective democracy is perhaps best understood in the views of two of the key spokesmen of 19th century English liberals J.Bentham (1748-1832) and James Mill (1773-1836). In their hands, the protective theory of liberal democracy received arguably its most important elaboration: the governors must be held accountable to the governed through political mechanisms (the secret ballot, regular voting and competitions between potential representatives among other things) which give citizens satisfactory means for choosing, authorising and concluding political decisions. Through these mechanisms it was argued a balance could be attempted between might and right, authority and liberty. But despite this decisive step, who exactly were to count as individuals and what would be the exact nature of their envisaged political participation remained either unclear or unsettled in the Anglo- American world.

Thus, protective democracy is but a limited and indirect form of democracy. In practice, the consent of the governed is exercised through voting in regular and competitive elections. This, thereby, ensures the accountability of those who govern. Political equality is thus, understood in strictly technical terms to mean equal voting rights. Moreover, this is above all, a system of constitutional democracy that operates within a set of formal or informal rules that check the exercise of government power.

Even though the model of representative democracy was based on the principle of equality, in early liberal democracies, franchise or political equality was in effect restricted to a few. It is worth noting that in all early democratic systems of modern western world, the idea of democracy was not based on universal adult franchise rather restricted male citizens had the right to vote in elections. In France, adult male suffrage was abruptly introduced in 1848, but they could not set up a parliamentary government on an enduring basis till 1871. In Britain, parliamentary government had been established on an enduring basis since 1688 but the bulk of male citizens were not granted franchise till 1867. Female franchise has been operative in the United States since 1919, in Britain since 1928 in France since 1945 and in Switzerland all women got their right to vote as late as 1971.

Developmental Democracy

Democracy in the late years also exhibited its concern with the development of the human individual and the community. This gave rise to quite new models of democratic rule which can broadly be referred to as systems of developmental democracy. The most novel and radical model was developed by J.J.Rousseau. In many respects, Rousseau's ideas mark a departure from the dominant liberal conception of democracy. For Rousseau, democracy was ultimately a means through which human beings could achieve freedom. What gives Rousseau's model its novel character, is his insistence that freedom ultimately means obedience to the 'general will'. Rousseau makes a distinction between the will of the individual ie. the particular will and the will of the community, ie. the general will. Particular will may either be inclined towards general will, or it may turn against it. When an individual is motivated by his momentary self interest, he is acting against the general will. It is called his 'actual will'. On the contrary, when he decides to act in the common interest ie, according to the general will, he is acting on his real will. In other words, real will involves self discipline in the interest of the community. It also serves the individual's real and long term interest which cannot be separated from the common interest. General will is therefore, harmonious. It reflects the real will of all members of the community. In Rousseau's view, such a system of radical developmental democracy required not merely political equality but a relatively high level of economic equality.

Rousseau's theories have helped to shape the modern idea of participatory democracy taken up by New Left thinkers in the 1960s and the 1970s. Infact at the heart of this model is the notion of grassroot democracy. This implies a belief that political power should be exercised at the lowest possible level. Nevertheless, Rousseau's own theories have been criticised for distinguishing between citizen's true wills and their felt or subjective wills. The danger of this is that, if the general will cannot be established by simply asking citizens of what they want since they may be guided by their self interest, there is scope for the general will perhaps by a dictator claiming to act in the 'true' interests of society. According to A.Heywood, Rousseau is therefore, sometimes seen as the architect of so called totalitarian democracy.

However, along with Rousseau model of developmental democracy can also be rooted in the writings of John Stuart Mill. For Mill, democracy is essentially

an educational experience as it enhances the political understanding of the citizens and helped them to achieve a higher level of personal development. For Mill, a representative system must create maximum space for people to take part in the functioning of the government and not restrict their involvement by merely allowing them to vote. He considered participation important because it develops the confidence of the people in their ability to govern themselves. That is why, he suggested for broadening of popular participation arguing that the franchise should be extended to all except those who are illiterate. In the process, he suggested, that suffrage should also be extended to women. Mill was however, aware of the dangers of democracy. He rejected the idea of formal political equality. Following Plato, Mill did not believe that all political opinions are of equal value. He feared that democracy always contains the threat that individual liberty and minority rights may be crushed in the name of the people. Mill's particular concern was that democracy would undermine debate, criticism and intellectual life in general by encouraging people to accept the will of the majority, thereby, promoting uniformity and dull conformism. He believed strongly that majority is not always right and wisdom cannot be determined mere quantitatively. So, he supported the idea of deliberative democracy or parliamentary democracy.

People's Democracy

The concept of people's democracy is usually related to the Marxian tradition which analyses political system mostly in terms of class character. Marxists criticise the prevalent form of liberal democracy because it harbours the capitalist system in which the majority of people comprising workers is deprived of power. Liberal democracy exclusively serves the interests of the bourgeoisie ie. the capitalist class. Marxists therefore, dubbed liberal democracy as the bourgeois democracy. In spite of its vast paraphernalia of representative institutions, liberal democracy hardly serves the interests of the people on whose behalf power is exercised. Marx believed that with the overthrow of capitalism, democracy is likely to flourish. He was highly sceptical of liberal or parliamentary democracy and viewed it essentially as a bourgeois or capitalist democracy. He had anticipated that after the socialist revolution, bourgeois democracy would be replaced by a 'commune system'. Communes were envisaged to be small communities who would manage their own affairs and would elect their delegates for the larger administrative units like districts and towns. These larger units would in turn elect their delegates for the still larger administrative

areas, like national administration. This system is described as 'pyramidal structure of direct democracy'. They were described as 'people's democracies' in order to distinguish them from western type liberal democracies. According to O.P. Gauba, this term was adopted to indicate a new type of democracy. Conventional use of democracy stands for liberal democracy which is based on a specific procedure of government formation. Hence, it may be identified as 'procedural democracy'. On the other hand, people's democracy focuses on the substance of democracy ie. safeguarding the interests of the ordinary people. Hence, it claimed to be identified as 'substantive democracy'. In its view, interests of the working classes is coterminous with the interest of the people.

This form of democracy was developed in the 20th century in communist states like that of former Soviet Union and China. However, in erstwhile Soviet Union democracy owed more to the ideas of V.I.Lenin than it did to those of Marx. Although Lenin's 1917 slogan 'All power to the Soviets' had kept alive the notion of commune democracy, in reality power in Soviet Russia quickly fell into the hands of the Bolshevik Party. In establishing itself as the vanguard of the working class the communist party claim to represent the genuine interests of the proletariat and thus, guide it to the realisation of its revolutionary potential. However, in doing so, what really turned out to be a major weakness was that this model failed to build any mechanisms for checking the power of the communist party.

Participatory Democracy

The major idea behind the democracy includes the authority of governance to rest upon people themselves. That is how the journey of democracy began during classical age of ancient Greece. However, when the size of a democratic community expands geographically with a variety of composition in terms of race, religion, language and culture, etc the distance between the people and their representatives is likely to widen. While elitist theory do not places much significance to citizen's participation as one of the necessary condition of democracy, the model of participatory democracy repudiates it. Participatory democracy emphasises on political participation of people as the basic principle of democracy. Political participation, however, refers to active involvement of individual and groups in the governmental processes affecting their lives. The chief exponent of this form of democracy was Rousseau in whose hand the doctrine of popular sovereignty gained ground.

In participatory democracy citizens themselves play an active role in the process of formulation and implementation of public policies and decisions, their activity is called political participation. Conventional mode of political participation is called voting, contesting for public office, campaigning for a political party or contributing to the management of a community project like public safety, cleanliness drive or the maintenance of a public park etc. Interestingly, an act of opposition or public protest also involves political participation. They are the manifestation of a strong awareness of public interest.

The present day champions of participatory democracy argue that representative democracy give little opportunity to its citizens for any significant participation in the decision making process. In modern large scale states, the objective of participatory democracy are sought to be achieved through (a) Decentralisation of administration in which many decisions are left to local communities, as in the case of expansion of Panchayati Raj in India; and (b) Extensive use of referendum as prevalent in Switzerland.

In contemporary political theory, citizen participation is sought to be justified mainly on three grounds :

- (a) Instrumental view : It asserts that citizen participation is aimed at promoting or defending the interest of the participant.
- (b) Developmental or educational view : This holds that citizens participation enhances the participants general moral, social and political awareness.
- (c) Communitarian view : This justifies participation on the ground that it contributes to the common good.

However, the limitations of participatory democracy cannot be ignored. Firstly, the champions of participatory democracy insists only on increasing citizens participation within the existing democratic system. They do not suggest any alternative system for its implementation. Secondly, the advocates of participatory democracy seem to be too optimistic. Beneficial results of public decisions, policies and programmes come very late. Ordinary people are not always endowed with adequate patience and insight that would enable them to make a correct assessment of the situation. If they are encouraged for too much participation, they may take their grievances and disputes to streets, and disrupt normal life.

Cosmopolitan Democracy

With globalization extraordinary changes have taken place in international politics. The first half of the 1990s championed the idea of democracy but its efficacy as a national form of politics came to be questioned. David Held, in his article, on Cosmopolitan Democracy has identified the emerging world since 1990s to be doubly faced. On the one hand, it has fostered the extension of democracy and on the other; it has revealed tensions within nation states. He argued that, cold war by imposing limited autonomy to states had managed to suppress many forms of domestic conflict. However, with an end to it domestic discord reopened.

Infact, David Held has pointed out several impacts of globalisation on the recent functioning of democracy. He argued that, first; the locus of political power no longer rests with the national government rather it is shared by diverse forces and agencies operating at regional, national and international levels. Secondly, 'self determining collectivity' no longer confines itself within the single nation state alone. Political communities both within and across are now beyond the reach of individual nation state. Thirdly, the operatives of the states have become so complex with international and regional interaction that it affects the autonomy and sovereignty of a nation. Finally, the late twentieth century witnesses a world where transnational actors and forces cut across the boundaries of nations in diverse ways. Subsequently, it is found that the powerful states make decision not just for their people but for others as well. Such overlapping spheres of influence, interference and interest creates dilemmas at the centre of democratic thought. This worldwide development opened up the possibility of a cosmopolitan democracy.

According to David Held, cosmopolitan democracy involves the development of administrative capacity and independent political resources at regional and global levels as a necessary complement to those in local and national politics. So cosmopolitan democracy would override the states in defined spheres of activity which have visible transnational and international consequences and call for regional or global initiatives for democratic legitimacy.

6.7 Contemporary Theories of Democracy

Pluralist Theory

Pluralist theory of democracy is based on pluralist concept of power distribution in society. Pluralist model appears in two forms- one treats democracy as competition

between plurality of elites and the second treats democracy as negotiation between pluralities of power centres in society. While the first is based on assumptions of power concentration in the hands of variety of elite; the second is based on the assumption of power distribution amongst a variety of groups. The first systematic development of pluralist theory can be traced in the work of James Madison entitled *The Federalist Papers*. Unlike the most liberals, Madison argued that unchecked democratic rule might simply lead to majoritarianism, to the crushing of individual rights and to the expropriation of property in the name of the people. He stressed upon the multiplicity of interests and groups in society. He believed unless each such group possess a political voice, stability and order would be impossible. He therefore, proposed a system of divided government based on the separation of powers that offered a variety of access points to competing groups and interests. Thus, the system of rule which he envisaged is often referred as Madisonian democracy.

The most influential modern exponent of pluralist theory is Robert Dahl. Robert Dahl in his *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956) developed a model of democratic process which he described as polyarchy. According to him, polyarchy means a rule by many, as distinct by rule from all citizens. The key feature of such a system of pluralist democracy is that competition between parties at election time, and the ability of interest or pressure groups to articulate their views freely, establishes a reliable link between the government and the governed and creates a channel of communication between the two. Robert Dahl has given the theory of polyarchy which holds that democratic government must take into account interests of many groups in society compulsorily. Dahl's study of local politics in New Haven, USA explored how decision making is done. Based on his conclusions and observations, Dahl suggested a model of democracy where various groups participate in decision making. Infact, he suggested that there is widespread dispersal of power among various interest groups and these groups compete and negotiate as per their issue-areas. Thus, polyarchy to Dahl, refers to a model of democratic decision making where multiple groups participate in decision making without anyone of them dominating. Infact, the pluralist theory calls for the revision of the democratic theory itself. In its view, policy making is actually done neither by the representatives of a coherent majority, nor by an autonomous and unresponsive elite, but is the product of the interaction among various groups. This theory goes to the extent of claiming that since public policy is largely an outcome of the bargaining among groups interested in a given policy issue, the form of government becomes almost insignificant.

On the other side, the system of rule by multiple minorities may simply have been a device to prevent the majority from exercising political power. According to A. Heywood, a further problem is the danger of what has been called 'pluralist stagnation'. This occurs as organised groups and economic interests become so powerful that they create a long jam resulting in the problem of government 'overload'. In such circumstances, a pluralist system may simply become ungovernable. Finally, there is the problem identified by Dahl in later works such as *A Preface to Economic Democracy* (1985) notably that the unequal ownership of economic resources tends to concentrate political power in the hands of the few and deprive it from the many. This line of argument has given rise to neopluralism.

Arnold M. Rose's *The Power Structure* reflects Dahl's conclusions on power distribution. He studied the policies of the National Associations of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce, the two bodies that represent economic elite. Rose, unlike Dahl concludes that plurality of elites, relatively small, are operating in different spheres. Dahl and Rose reached more or less the same conclusion and suggest pluralism as the basis of power distribution. However, while Dahl does not hint at elite within the respective groups, Rose tends to hold that there are pluralities of elites who are competing. Rose sounds like Schumpeter who talks of decision making amongst competing elites. Rose's pluralism suggests elite pluralism.

Elitist Theory

Elitist theories were originally developed in the field of Sociology to explain the behaviour of men in a social setting. Their implications in the field of politics posed a challenge to democratic theory. This was in turn revised by several thinkers. Broadly speaking, the elitist theories hold that every society consists of two categories of men namely the elite or the minority and the masses or the majority which is governed by the elite. This theory argues that masses are unintelligent and apathetic and elite are organised, capable, intelligent and have leadership qualities.

Classical elitists, such as V. Pareto, G. Mosca and R. Michels believed that democracy was no more than a foolish delusion because political power is always exercised by a privileged minority namely the elites. Pareto and Mosca conceptualised general perspective on elite rule and view society divided into elite and non elite. They pointed out that elite provides leadership and are capable of rule. Michel

carried out the study of oligarchic phenomenon in political parties. In his study, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, he analysed the inner dynamics of decision making and power distribution of European Socialist Parties and Trade Unions with particular emphasis on German Socialist Party. According to him, democracy requires organisation in the form of parties to represent the masses because of vastness and complexity of society, which will not allow any other way of democratic participation. Political parties operate through structured organization with leadership, full time politicians and officials. Due to division of labour, hierarchy and control, decision making and resource allocation becomes confined in the hands of a small group of leaders. This produces rule and control of small elites. Michels calls this as 'Iron Law of Oligarchy'. This means any organization is bound to degenerate in elite rule.

Whereas classical elitists strove to prove that democracy was always a myth, modern elitist theorists have tended to highlight how far particular political systems fall short of the democratic ideal. A distinction can be drawn between two sets of elitist theorists. The early elite theorists argue that due to omnipresence of elites in every society, there is no possibility of any other form of government than rule of the elite either through circulation of elite or Iron Law of Oligarchy. They deny the possibility of democracy as rule of the people. Pareto, Mosca Michels and Ostrogorski are champions of this position. There is a second group of elite theorists, who argue that despite elite being present as the leaders, competition between elites and elections at periodic intervals give sufficient chance to the people to express themselves and this choice of elites represents democracy.

Karl Manheim's *Ideology and Utopia* upheld the possibility of democracy even when they agree the presence of elites as a fundamental reality in society. He maintained that though policy formulation was in the hands of the elite, the very fact that the elites can be removed in elections make the people master. He thinks that this very limitation is sufficient proof of democracy and accountability of elite. In fact, Manheim's views reflect an attempt to reconcile theory of political elites and democracy.

Joseph A. Schumpeter in his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942) pointed out that the forms of government should be distinguished by their institutions, specially by their methods of appointing and dismissing the supreme makers of law and policy. This implies that firstly, in a democracy political decisions are

taken by the 'leadership', and not by the people themselves. Secondly, there is a free competition among the leaders for winning people's votes. In other words, the role of the people is reduced to choosing their rulers from the competing elites. Schumpeter does not allow any moral content in democracy and treats it merely as market mechanism where voters are only consumers and the politicians act as entrepreneurs. Hence, this theory is often called the economic theory of democracy.

Following Schumpeter, Anthony Downs too developed his model of competitive elitism. Downs argued that a system of open and competitive elections guarantees democratic rule because it placed government in the hands of the party whose philosophy, values and policies correspond most closely to the preferences of the largest group of voters. Thus, while early elitist theory of democracy in the hands of Pareto, Mosca Michels and Ostrogorski was elitist, in the hands of Mannheim and Schumpeter, it acquired the characteristics of competitive elitist model, where elites compete for vote. Therefore, democracy simply turns out to be a political method which acts as a means of making political decision through competitive struggle for gaining popular votes.

Marxian Theory

The Marxian theory of democracy revolves around three major thrust areas firstly, a critique of the bourgeois democracy, secondly, theory of dictatorship of proletariat and thirdly, social democracy leading to a classless society.

Marxists challenge the liberal conception of the state as a neutral body. There are two strands of thinking about political power in the writings of Marx and Engels. In the first instance, Marx declared in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) that the state and its agencies are the instruments of dominant class interest. Following an instrumentalist view, the Marxists argue that a liberal state is actually an instrument of the bourgeois rule where there is no equality, no freedom and hence, no democracy. According to them, the bourgeois democracy is a class democracy dominated by the bourgeoisie. In the second instance, Marx and Engels talk about the 'relative autonomy of the state' from the dominant class. The practice of parliamentary democracy and the compulsions of elections do lead governments to respond to some demands of the working class majority. But for Marxists, this is at best a short term measure because the state cannot go against the long term interests of capital.

Marxists acknowledge the emancipatory potential of liberalism because it rejects hierarchy and affirms the equal moral worth of all individuals. That is why, it appears that Lenin is not opposed to democracy as such, but only bourgeois democracy. Democracy provides a meaningful means for equality. Lenin considered democracy as significant step for achieving 'formal equality', ie. 'equality of labour and wages' and equality in ownership of means of production. This is the stage of dictatorship of proletariat, where democracy is realised not as a class concept but as people's democracy.

In his claim to recall liberal democracy as bourgeois democracy John Plamenatz in his work entitled *Democracy and Illusion* had advanced the following arguments-

Firstly, in the context of inequality of wealth and resources, power and influence will be possessed by those who acquire capacity to possess them through education and other such entry.

Secondly, in the context of large organisations, power and influence belongs to the leaders than to rank and file

Thirdly, in the context of social inequalities, leaders soon acquire ambition, privileged position and lose touch with their followers

Finally, power and influence is exercised by those who have information and wealthy are better placed to get information and control its distribution. According to Plamenatz, due to these reasons, democracy is not real in liberal capitalist society.

6.8 Some Recent views on Democracy

Feminist view

Feminist critique of democracy rests on the following major arguments-

1. The liberal distinction between the public and the private
2. Gendered division of labour
3. Under representation of women in political institutions
4. Democratic theory being insensitive to the realities of women's lives.

The liberal distinction between the Public and the Private

Feminists argue that relation between men and women is based on unequal

power relations and this is mainly due to the liberal distinction between the Public and Private. Family and the household is a part of the private sphere and hence, kept out of politics which solely lies under a public domain. Once being outcast from politics, women's interest therefore, were placed out of democratization. Women's labour subsequently was not regarded as productive enough to constitute paid labour. Domestic arena therefore, turns out to be a site of unequal power structure and therefore, an arena in need for democratization.

Gender division of Labour

According to Janaki Srinivasan, gendered division of labour and power in the private sphere is linked to the unequal distribution of political status and power in the public sphere. Western countries have the longest history of democracy, but even there women were the last category to get the right to vote. Most political thinkers explicitly excluded women from the category of citizenship on the grounds of their natural inferiority and incapability.

Under representation

In contemporary democratic system women despite their political equality continue to be grossly underrepresented in political institutions and decision making structures. Further political equality has been undermined on the grounds of sexual, social and economic inequality.

Democratic theory being insensitive to the realities of women's lives

Democratic theory fails to realise that substantive equality for women have to be of a distinctive kind. It understands equality mechanically as mere removal of differences. So, formal political equality recognizes no difference among people and socio-economic equality understands difference as a disadvantage and seeks to remove them. But the idea of disadvantage is based on a notion of comparison which is always based on a particular standard.

Neoliberal view

The neoliberal view was favoured by public choice theorists like James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock. They contend that elites and their allies will tend to expand the powers of government and bureaucracy for their own interests, and that this expansion will occur at the expense of a largely inattentive public. Only those interest groups that are guided by powerful economic interests are likely to succeed

in organising to influence the government. Furthermore, they argue that such interest group will tend to produce highly inefficient government, because they will attempt to advance their interests in politics while spreading the costs to others. Thus, neoliberals argue that any way of organising a large and powerful democratic state is likely to produce serious inefficiencies.

However, the neoliberal account of democracy also shares certain inherent limitations. First, citizens in modern societies have more ambitious conceptions of social justice and the common good than are realizable by the minimal state. The neoliberal account thus, implies a very serious curtailment of democracy of its own. Second, the neoliberal approach ignores the problem of large private concentrations of wealth and power that are capable of pushing small states around for their own benefit, and of imposing their wills on populations without their consent. The assumptions that lead neoliberals to be sceptical about the large modern state imply equally disturbing problems for the large private concentrations of wealth in a neoliberal society.

New Right view

The post 1973 decade saw substantive economic difficulties for most advanced industrial countries including Britain and France. Economic growth and relative prosperity received a severe blow in these countries compared to their preceding decades. These new conditions provoked a rightward electoral shift in the majority of western democracies. These rightward shifts were pronounced in Britain and USA and were associated with a grouping of ideas and movements collectively termed as the “New Right”. It is difficult to specify the term “New Right” as it has been variously applied to government public policy and administrations. Infact, the term cannot be used to refer to any particular ideas, theorists and politicians since there is not one simple and coherent set of principles but rather several not necessarily linked together.

Kenneth Hoover recognises three main set of ideas within liberalism that have its influence on the arguments forwarded by the New Right. First, liberals defend the superiority of the markets in producing economic prosperity and political freedom. These “traditional liberal values” may be reduced to an emphasis upon the individual, a limited role to the state and support for market processes. Secondly, following public choice analysis emphasis is given on application of economic

techniques and assumptions to political and social behaviour. Therefore, constitution should be redesigned to control public spending and market practices to be introduced in the Public Sector. Thirdly, liberalism embraces the ideas of “liberarians” who promote a more trenchant version of liberal economic and political principles but which remain a distant subgroup of liberalism.

However, here it must be noted that liberal values are not the only ones associated with New Right. There also exists a set of moral and social arguments too. According to A. Heywood, New Right theorists are keen advocates of the free market, believing that economies work best when left alone by the government. They have focussed upon the danger of what has been called ‘democratic overload’. This overload, on part of the government can be seen to be a consequence of the electoral process. Thus, according to Samuel Brittan, electoral politics amounts to a self defeating process in which politicians are encouraged to compete for power by offering increasingly unrealistic promises to the electorate. Voters are attracted by promises of higher public spending because they calculate that the cost will be spread over the entire population. According to Brittan the economic consequences of unrestrained democracies are high levels of inflation fuelled by public borrowing, and a tax burden that destroys enterprise and undermines growth. New Right theorists therefore, tend to see democracy in strictly protective terms, regarding it essentially as a defence against arbitrary government rather than a means of bringing about social transformation.

6.9 Conclusion

Discussion on democracy thus, suggests that there are divergent views on the very nature and desirability of democracy. The concept had traversed a long way to indicate a mere political system to a way of life in contemporary times. The demand of democratization at all levels of life had broadly extended its jurisdiction and tends to develop a culture based on equality and collective decision making. It calls for an end of authoritarianism at all levels of institutions, be it social or political. However, democracy as a way of life could flourish only when a higher level of tolerance, on part of the individual and institutions are encouraged, so that the voices of the opposition could be raised as comfortably and seriously like the established voices of the existing society. Till then, democracy would just be

a fish out of water which may be sustained by artificial means but at the cost of sacrificing its very essence.

6.10 Summing Up

- Democracy not merely means a form of government alone. It also imbibes for a culture in which certain intrinsic human values like that of tolerance, equality, freedom and the like is fostered and retained in society.
- Democracy as a method of making legislation is better than non democratic methods in three ways namely strategically, epistemically and via the improvements of the characters of democratic citizens.
- Critics of democracy can be classified into two groups namely those who are dissatisfied with a particular kind of democratic practice and seek to deepen it and those who are critical of the democratic principle as such.
- There are a number of rival theories or models of democracy namely Classical Democracy, Protective Democracy, Developmental Democracy, People's Democracy, Participatory Democracy and Cosmopolitan Democracy.
- Apart from models there are several contemporary theories on democracy like Pluralist Theory, Elitist theory, Marxian Theory and so on.

6.11 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain the meaning of democracy. What are its attributes and disadvantages?
2. Analyse how the elitist theory has critiqued the principles of democracy?
3. What is People's democracy? Why does it regard liberal democracy as bourgeois democracy?

Short Questions :

1. Examine the different models of democracy.
2. Analyse the contemporary theories on democracy.
3. Explain the contemporary views on democracy.

Objective Questions :

1. What does Andrew Haywood mean by pluralist stagnation.
2. Why did plato oppose democracy.
3. What do the New Right theories mean by demaocratic overload?

6.12 Further Reading

1. Held, David, *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge : Polity Press, 2006.
2. Heywood A. *Politics*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd. 1997.
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Unit – 7 □ Political Participation

Structure

- 7.1 Objective**
- 7.2 Introduction**
- 7.3 Meaning of Political Participation**
- 7.4 Factors affecting Political Participation**
- 7.5 Types of Political Participation**
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- 7.7 Voting Behaviour**
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7.1 Objective

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to understand :

- The meaning of Political Participation
- Types of Political Participation
- The notion of non participation in the realm of politics
- Factors affecting the voting behaviour with special reference to India
- How the political participation of women are changing with the interaction of different dynamics of politics

7.2 Introduction

The nature of electoral politics signifies the maturity and efficacy of democracy in a country. Liberal democracy sees citizenship as the principal prerequisite of the democratic system where the citizens act as an active participant in the processes of decision making around public policy. This is based upon the principles that citizens should be considered the best judge of their own interests. They are capable of making social and political decisions and also hold the key to political influence through the media of participation, discussion, voting and through the movement towards political equality. This perspective obliges elective representatives and public servants to be cognisant of the values, beliefs and needs of the citizenry, to cultivate necessary levels of political competence in the citizenry and to activate those sections of the citizenry who generally fail to articulate their views. This therefore, suggests for participatory processes to avail the requisite political need. Thus, political participation turns out to a cornerstone of democracy and the primary mechanism through which citizens influence political officials and hold their governments accountable. So, it provides the ideological and philosophical bases for the relationship between a state and its citizens.

Ajit Chaudhuri in one of his article has highlighted three inherent conflicts that citizens' participation entails. Firstly, public policy in modern societies is complicated and decision making around it requires expertise, vision and strategy. At the same time, modern societies see value in extending the democratic base of such decision making through participation but participation is inherently contentious, confused and conflicting. It is rarely possible to maximise both these value preferences. Secondly, meaningful citizen participation affects power relationships in society by increasing the role of ordinary citizens in decision making, and thereby simultaneously reducing that of the elite. The view that reduced power differentials would lead to better public policy and therefore, to better governance is in sharp contrast with the view that the maintenance of differentials is a precondition to social order and that the elite are better able to handle society's decision making responsibilities. Thirdly, participation requires participants who are motivated to act. Empirical evidence suggests, that such motivation is negligible among the general citizenry but high among organised interest groups looking to use apathy around public decision making processes to bend policy towards their

aims. Needless to say, that any decision on the usage of participatory processes has to take into account the above stated three dilemmas and adequately address them for a better planning, implementing and monitoring of public services.

7.3 Meaning of Political Participation

Political Participation, as one of the basic concept in political science has been defined by scholars in different ways. The concept has gained a key place in contemporary political science in general and political sociology in particular. In a very general sense, political participation essentially means taking part in politics. However, getting involved in politics may imply participation at varying degrees and at different levels. For instance, some may be highly active and may even choose politics as a career while there may be others who may appear to abstain completely from political activity and may even refuse to apply polling right. As a concept, political participation includes both the cited extremes and as obvious therefore, makes the concept complex and highly controversial. Adoption of a standard definition on the concept automatically tends to include or excludes certain activity from the purview of political participation thereby, leading to debates in ascertaining an activity to be regarded at all as an act of participation in politics. For example, political participation is defined as those voluntary actions in which people seek to influence the making of public policy, then the emphasis on voluntary actions appears to exclude those forms of mass participation that are obligatory or coerced as for example the requirement of shows of symbolic support for authoritarian regimes. Such a definition might further exclude the act of voting in democratic countries where voting is required by law. The recent Taliban occupancy in Afghanistan might invite almost a similar debate with regard to the concept.

There have been several attempts in Political Science to define political participation and analyse its nature from different perspective. Sidney Verba and Norman Nie state that ‘political participation will refer to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly and indirectly in the formation and influencing of public policy.’ They view political participation as legal activities which are aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and the actions they take. Samuel P. Huntington and Joan M. Nelson defined political participation as ‘the activity by private citizens designed

to influence governmental decision making.’ This is almost similar to Verba and Nie’s definition. Michael Rush has viewed political participation from a rather broader angle. To him, ‘political participation is the involvement of the individual at various levels of activity in the political system, ranging from non involvement to the holding of political office.’ This definition sheds the legal overtones of the earlier two definitions. However, in almost all definitions there is a latent emphasis on voluntary participation by the people. Obligatory or coerced mass action, such as the show of symbolic support for authoritarian rules, is not considered as political participation. Infact, it is a point of debate among the political scientists whether political participation should include only voluntary participation by the people or otherwise. A more inclusive definition was provided by G. Parry, G. Moyser and N.Day. According to them, ‘political participation consists of taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies. This implies to include those actions which seeks to shape the attitudes of decision makers to matters yet to be decided, or it may be action in protest at the outcome of some decision.’ According to Parry, ‘political participation is not confined to successful actions only. Those actions that fail to fulfil their desired goal are also regarded as political participation. The present definition therefore, broadens the ambit of political participation.

7.4 Factors affecting Political Participation

Political scientists have identified a number of socio-economic and political factors which influence the degree and rate of political participation. Robert E. Lane makes a meticulous study to identify those socio-psychological and political variables to explain various forms of political participation in USA. His generalisation could be easily taken into consideration for understanding the nature of political participation, in general. All these factors are not equally effective and important at all places and at all times. Their relative importance and effectiveness are time-place specific. The different factors as identified, can be summed up in the following manner-

(a) Psychological factors

The psychological factor emerges from individual personality traits and cognitive structures. Such structures involve political activities of man’s

need for power, competition and achievements, affiliation, aggression, money prestige, status, recognition, approval, manipulation, sympathy and responsibility. Participation may also be classified in terms of goals. These are- instrumental and consummatory. Instrumental political activities are primarily oriented towards concrete goals such as the party's victory in the election. Consummatory or expressive activities are aimed at more immediate satisfaction. For example, common people who cast their vote and feel elated for being involved in the decision making process.

(b) Social factors

Political participation is determined to a great extent by social factors such as education, income, age, place of residence, religion etc. Some of these factors for convenience are discussed below-

- (i) Education :** Education acts as an important determinant in formulating reasonable thinking and voting. It is widely understood, that there is a natural and necessary correlation between an individual's educational qualifications and his/her participation in politics. Almond and Verba opine that education attracts the individual towards democratic political culture. Education gives information about politics and expands the horizon of one's interest in the political process. It enables the individual to develop the skill for political participation.
- (ii) Income :** People belonging to the higher income groups are generally found to be interested in political participation. This however, does not mean that a rise in income has a uniformly proportionate effect on political participation. Although, income at the individual level is an important correlate of political participation, it may not necessarily be so at the national level. A recent study contradicts the facts and claims that low income groups are easily mobilized and actively participate in political activities. Vendors, hawkers, riksha pullers, auto drivers etc. are now more politically vigilant than the middle class and their turn out in polls at times outnumber the middle class people.
- (iii) Age :** Along with education and income age and sex are also sometimes important in explaining political participation. Those who are too young lack experience about politics. The lack of stability and security

at the early age usually makes the young evasive of political participation. Older people on the other hand, cannot participate very actively due to the lack of physical fitness and declining political efficacy. Middle aged citizens are usually free from the problems of the too young or the too old and tend to participate more actively. However, there can be exceptions to this general rule depending upon the type of political participation. For example, if within the domain of political participation the protests movements of the students are included then such movements launched by students and youths of different countries shows that the above explanation no longer holds good.

- (iv) **Place of residence :** It is often argued that an individual's place of residence has its impact upon political participation. Usually, urbanites are found to be more participative than their rural counterparts. City dwellers get greater opportunities of education which helps in their greater understanding of political issues. They are much more exposed to different forms of mass media. It makes them more informed about politics. Rural people are generally denied these opportunities. This negatively affects their rate of participation. However, such a rural-urban divide does not hold good in all cases. Researches have shown that in Japan, the rural folk participate more than the city people. Again, it is also suggested that the longer a person resides in a given community, the greater are the chances of his/her political participation.
- (v) **Religion :** Some studies on political participation have attempted to indicate that religion also sometimes has an impact on political participation. It has been shown mainly in the context of the western political systems that generally catholics participate more in elections that involves issues like legislation on birth control or matters touching the affairs of educational institutions imbued with catholic beliefs. The impact of religion on politics is more evident in political systems that are not secular in the real sense of the term. Religions in such cases are often used in various ways as a major component of political behaviour – particularly in the arena of electoral politics and also outside its boundary.

(c) Economic factors

Economy has an impact on the rate of political participation. Affluent class of the society either controls political participation through muscle and money or tries to maintain the status quo of the political system. They rebel against the evils of the society and clamour for positive change. But the people at the lowest economic ebb do not rationalise their voting behaviour. They are swayed by emotions and mobilised by local area elites. Therefore, in a developed society the level of political participation is high as compared to the developing society.

(d) Political factors

Political participation is no doubt a political activity, but it is highly influenced by non political variables like caste, community etc. However, it cannot be suggested that political factors are of no use. They do play a crucial role in articulating political participation. The nature of political system has impact on the political participation. Constitutional structure, election procedure, party system, role of press and the functions of the organs of state decide the voting behaviour in any political system. Political orientations, affiliations, ideological commitments and cognition of issues and events determine political participation.

7.5 Types of Political Participation

Earlier citizen's involvement in the political process was regarded as the only form of political participation. However, with the widening of the concept of politics from state centric, institutional and legal analysis to individual socio-political behaviour or interaction, the scope of the concept of political participation was enhanced beyond electoral participation. Political participation, thus, can broadly be classified into two types namely-

1. Participation in the electoral process
2. Participation through other modes

1. Participation in the electoral process

Modern day democracies are indirect, representative democracies. To realize the idea of representative democracy in practice, various institutional arrangements

are needed. The electoral system is one of the most important of these. It is through the electoral process that individuals choose their representatives who perform the act of governing on their behalf. Shefali Roy in her book on Political Sociology has highlighted some of the major types of political participation.

- (a) **Voting** : Electorate in order to safeguard themselves and secure their rights needs to be critical in analysing government performance. Citizens must not be guided by social psychological pressures, rather, should cast votes on the basis of political efficacy. So voting becomes not only a political right of a citizen but also a basic duty. Adult franchise is universally practiced where an adult citizen takes initiative to vote and to control the reigns of power holders.
- (b) **Campaigning** : An individual can take part in the electoral processes in a number of ways, for instance as a voter, as a candidate, taking part in election campaigns, discussing politics, distributing party literature, attending political meetings and so on. In whatever ways a citizen takes part, the individual actually performs the act of political participation. Such participation naturally assumes greater importance in a democratic political system. One such major form of political participation is campaigning. Citizens actively involve themselves in canvassing. Citizens use their vehicles, money or man power in canvassing for a particular political party or for a particular political candidate. Though they are not the main political actor, yet they seek and capture power as a reward of their loyalty towards a party or a person. Those persons who have keen interest in political affairs motivate masses to cast vote, and makes an effort to produce collective mobility.
- (c) **Self interest** : Self interest makes an individual an active citizen. They are continuously involved in political activities right from reading newspapers to taking processions. They always assess and express the performance of the government through processions and debates. Moreover, they always remain ready for forming interest groups with the government officials to get their work or others work done with or without gratification.
- (d) **Collective activity** : In such a type of political participation, citizens do not act on their own rather joins a group to influence the decision making process. The citizens may even put pressure on the government and get

certain policies framed. They work for collective gain, but in most of the cases, they promote a small group of interests. Such an activity is mainly the output of vested interests.

2. Participation through other modes

In addition to taking part in the electoral process and voting, there are many other ways by which the individual can participate in politics. A number of political scientists have attempted to identify and classify different types of political participation. Anthony Birch has included many other kinds of activities than that of merely voting, within the purview of political participation. These are, for example, active membership of a political party or a pressure group, taking part in political demonstrations, industrial strikes with political objectives and similar activities aimed at changing public policy.

While identifying different forms of political participation, Michael Rush and P. Althoff arrange them in a hierarchical order on the basis of the degree or extent of participation. They place the types of activities in a descending order-

- (i) Holding political or administrative office
- (ii) Seeking political or administrative office
- (iii) Active membership in a political organization
- (iv) Passive membership in a political organization
- (v) Active membership of a quasi political organization
- (vi) Passive membership of a quasi political organization
- (vii) Participation in public meetings and demonstration
- (viii) Participation in informal political discussion
- (ix) General interest in politics
- (x) Voting
- (xi) Political Apathy

What is significant in this hierarchical arrangement is that the act of voting has been placed almost at the lowest level. The argument forwarded is that in all political systems the election is an occasional, periodic happening. Moreover, the act of voting requires minimum involvement and labour on part of the individual.

Milbrath's classification tends to show that political participation basically is of two types namely active and passive. This distinction actually is a necessary outcome of the most common fact that political participation in every society has a cost that involves time, energy and resources. Not all people are equally able or even willing to bear these costs and hence, all are not direct and active participants in every society. Political participation may further be classified in terms of its purpose as instrumental and expressive. Instrumental political participation is essentially directed to the achievement of concrete goals like securing party victory or the passage of a bill or just a rise in one's status or influence. Expressive political participation, on the other hand, does not aim at the realisation of any concrete goal. It is concerned with some immediate satisfaction or a mere release of feeling. Thus, some vote because they are really interested in the political results flowing from the elections or in any material gain for themselves, but because they just have a feeling of satisfaction in exercising their voting right. Milbrath classified the acts of political participation into three categories namely 'Gladiatorial Activities', 'Transitional Activities' and 'Spectator Activities'. In Milbrath's scheme, political participation was seen as a hierarchical activity. He arranged the American population in three groups namely 'gladiator', 'spectator' and 'apathetic'. His classification of activities for convenience is discussed in the following manner :-

- (a) **Gladiatorial Activities** : This category includes the activities which are part of routine of the political parties, such as elections to political post, participation in election to legislature, gathering fund for the party, movements to increase membership, and organization of meetings everywhere to form public opinion in its favour etc.
- (b) **Transitional Activities** : These include activities of the helpers and well wishers of the political parties, such as hearing the lectures of the leaders, donating to the fund of the party and maintaining contact with the leader of the party.
- (c) **Spectator Activities** : This category includes voting, influencing others to vote, participating in political debate, being influenced by political stimuli, wearing badges of the political party and distributing leaflets etc.

However, the analysis of Milbrath throws light upon the nature of the political participation which is always changing, from time to time and place to place. Some later studies on political participation felt the need to amend Milbrath's one

dimensional hierarchical model. This was reflected in the important researches by Verba, Nie and J. O. Kim. These researches pointed to a picture of highlighted specialisation in political participation. The research done by Parry, Moyser and Day on participation in Britain showed that among those people who did more than vote four sub groups could be distinguished namely- (a) Protestors (b) Election campaigners (c) People active in community groups and (d) People who specialised in individual contacts with officials, politicians or the media. Most legislators are familiar with constituents in this last category. Based on their findings a more elaborate and sophisticated classification of political participation was presented. The participants were classified into six classes namely-

- (a) Totally Passive
- (b) Voter whose only activity is to vote in elections
- (c) Localist whose activities are limited within the boundaries of local level politics
- (d) Parochial who is interested only in those activities that fulfil his/her personal needs
- (e) Campaigner whose involvement in politics centres around some particular political issues and problems and
- (f) Total Activist who takes an active part in the political process as a whole. These different types of political participation can be placed at different points along a continuum whose one end starts with total passivity and at the other lies the total activist.

7.6 Types of Non Political Participation

If political participation happens to be one of the crucial yardstick to measure the success of democracy then simultaneously it has to be noted that there are cases of non participation as well. It is essential to identify the major types of non participation since this will enable us to analyse the reasons behind the passivity with regard to political actions by the citizens. Broadly, there are four main types of non participation which are –

- (a) **Apathy** : Social scientists have shown interest in certain forms of political non participation of which apathy is one of them. Apathy is a type of

political passivity which provides support for the regime, but enables the individual to avoid the politicization of his/her whole being. There are different causes of apathy. In a democracy one usually comes across two types of apathetics. There are those who fail to participate because of lack of information about and interest in the political world which results from their political indifference and incapacity and also from a lack of the opportunity to participate. This kind of political apathy which is far from deliberate and is usually found among the uneducated, the inarticulate, the parochial, the isolated and also among those whose very roles operate only on the basis of a kind of political passivity. At the same time, there is another group of persons who are highly aware of the political changes and they are either frustrated and helpless or highly satisfied and want no change whatsoever, to bring in the polity, and therefore, deliberately keeps themselves away from the political activities. There may be very many reasons why an individual deliberately shuns political involvement. In the first, it may be due to the fact that political involvement to an individual may appear to be far less rewarding than other kinds of human activity. One may tend to derive higher psychological satisfaction and greater amount of concrete material benefits from one's preoccupation with family, friends and the like than from political involvement. The extent to which political participation will thus, be lowly valued by an individual, however, depends on two factors- psychological and social. An individual's mental make up may be such that he has a greater interest in his primordial, biological and psychological needs than in the distant and vague results likely to flow from political involvement. Secondly, an individual is likely to be disinterested in his/her political participation, if he/she somehow goes by the belief that it really makes no sense in as far as it will never be able to change the existing state of things. Thirdly, political apathy may also result from the fact that an individual is too satisfied with the efficiency and efficacy of the political system of which he/she belongs to. He/she may have so great a confidence in the excellence of a political system that he/she may believe that the system will go on functioning smoothly and efficiently no matter whether he/she is politically involved or not. This explains why voter turn outs raise high in times of economic crisis in USA in 1936.

Apathy leads to the decline of political vitality and vigilance. This might ultimately result in depriving this particular section of the society who need most to be represented for exercising the right to influence the decision making process. Sometimes political apathy becomes an ideology which is detrimental to the interests of the nation. Infact, political apathy makes politics confused, complicated and contradictory, and political communication becomes mere propaganda. Personal reasons may also account for apathy. It develops certain degree of mental laziness to a phobia toward a serious thought of political decay. Whatever be the cause or causes, political apathy remains a crucial problem.

- (b) **Cynicism** : Cynicism etymologically means complete distrust towards others. It is a psychological disorder where good deeds of others are always viewed with suspicion and doubt. Such a person grows a cell around him/her and becomes isolated. They also become pessimistic and regard political leaders as actors of oppression. Political cynicism, if increases qualitatively or quantitatively, it weakens the foundation of democracy. Cynical person regards voting as a futile effort to control the government. They are fed up with the existing political system and at the same time they are not optimistic towards bringing about change. Thus, cynicism leads to lack of legitimacy and popular support for the political system.
- (c) **Alienation** : Alienation as a concept was elucidated by Satre and Marx which is a stage of dilemma. The inherent conflict and the loss of judgement lead to it. In a political system such a condition of a man/woman divorces him/her from the day to day activities. A person purposefully segregates themselves from the polity.
- (d) **Anomie** : This is another psychological phenomenon which refers to a sense of rootlessness, loss of values and lack of direction among individuals. Anomie inhibits political participation because as in the case of apathy it implies a feeling of ineffectiveness or a feeling that authorities do not care about the common people. However, there is also a difference between the two. While the former is passive in nature, latter involves fear, panic, violence and destruction. The implication of anomic attitude is reflected at the individual level in the form of suicide, as riot at the group level and as terrorism at the country and cross country level. This is a very serious problem as it involves devaluation of norms and goals.

This suggests that participation by the people in the political process is regarded as one of the essential preconditions for the success of democracy. Thus, in a democracy, non participation may be viewed as a disease or a crisis.

7.7 Voting behaviour

One of the major concern of political participation in a representative democracy is the voting behaviour. Election provides opportunities for the most overt forms of political participation. Broadly speaking, the factors responsible for voting behaviour can be classified into three categories namely socio-economic, psychological and political.

(a) Socio-economic

The socio-economic factors are governed by the following :-

- (1) **Caste** : The study of electoral behaviour suggests that the main force behind voting in India is caste. Rajani Kothari had a firm belief that voting is an extended family affair usually guided by the choice of the head of the family or caste affiliation. He further added that caste and community are two easily identified social clusters which are keenly and deliberately exploited by the politicians for the electoral gain. The most glaring example in India can be Mandal and Kamandal Politics.
- (2) **Class** : Class cleavage in the society though being a sociological concept has a lasting political impact. Karl Marx rightly claims that there are only two class in the society- haves and have-nots. The economically dominant class according to him, remains more authoritative than the middle income group. Politicians take help from capitalist class in contesting elections, and in return give them certain favours. Class factor remains important in orienting voting behaviour. The role of class in electoral politics has come in for critical review in the work of Geoffrey Evans where it was indicated adequately how class is still relevant as an important explanatory variable in voting behaviour.
- (3) **Community** : Religious affinity and race can also turn into communal frenzy. The dictates of religious heads or priests in guiding voting

behaviour needs to be discouraged. As it happens to be a sensitive issue politicians try to gain optimum result out of it. Be it Ram Janam Bhumi or Babri Masjid or the Khalistan issue religious sentiments are exploited for vested interests. The influence of religion is more pronounced in the developing countries like that of India where the pace of secularisation is slow and the grip of tradition is strong.

- (4) **Region :** Geographical proximity also plays a crucial role in influencing the voting pattern. The north south divide in India is a glaring example of opposed political behaviour. The autonomy of the state within a federal structure is a result of regional imbalances and strikingly different political culture. The emergence of regional parties was mainly due to the fact that Congress as a party failed to serve the interests of the nation as a whole. It was alleged to be a party of north India and south Indians as a sharp reaction to it found their own regional parties for promoting their sectional interests.
- (5) **Language :** Linguistic loyalty often forms the basis for the formation of political parties dedicated to meet the requirement of specific groups. Language affinity is a direct offshoot of regional grievances and is purposefully used by political leaders for seeking or holding power. Unfortunately, Hindi as a language has been a bone of contention between north and south India.
- (6) **Money :** Food, security and adequate means of livelihood remains the most complicated problem in a larger democracy like that of India. Welfare state functions on the principle of just and human order. India too, follows its footsteps but the non delivery of the services at the grassroot level aggravates the problem.

(b) Socio-Psychological factors

The voting behaviour reveals the fact that human psychology also has an impact on exercising of vote. Even in western democracies, personality or sympathy voting cannot be denied. The sudden demise of a political leader pulls sympathy of the masses which are often reflected in their voting behaviour. For example, post poll results after the assassination of Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi reveals this truth. Film stars and celebrities

find easy to become representatives because of the popular support. Age is also a difficult factor to treat as an independent variable. However, older voters tend to vote for conservative parties. Though there is no final finding regarding gender as a determinant of voting behaviour but Lipset found that women are more sensitive towards ethical issues and therefore, corruption and criminalisation adversely affects their behaviour.

(c) Political factors

The major political determinants of voting behaviour includes- political orientation, political issues and events, political ideological allegiance, political efficacy and anti incumbency. Political variables have not received due attention. What motivates the electorate to become a voter is its sense of political security rather than performance efficacy. Matured political systems demand political orientation of the electorate. Here, the role of the political party becomes highly crucial and responsible. Political parties disseminate political ideas and information and make voters aware of their polling rights. Elections are contested primarily based on issues where there is ideological ambiguity in the party system. Long term continuities in allegiance to particular group or ideologies inspite of the changes in the issues or in the role of different political parties remains stable conditions underlying mandate. For example- older people have a very strong affiliation to Indian National Congress and they are not ready to undermine its importance even with the changing behavioural pattern of the party. People link themselves with the political system and political parties, as they do with caste or community. It has also been found that ideological allegiance varies from area to area. There are many factors responsible for political allegiance. The family orientation, the individual interest or the ideological affiliation work together as man is a product of multiple and dynamic environmental factors. The most analytical and critical voting behaviour is based on evaluating performance of political parties. Political participation is a human activity fundamentally and therefore, cannot be completely free from personal preferences. The analysis of the past elections provides us many examples where voters were influenced by immediate political speeches and normative agendas.

It is true that voting behaviour cannot provide a final explanation of the

voting participation. Yet, it cannot be denied that they establish some important links. These links are extremely important since through continuous verification of these links in different historical conditions, one may finally arrive at some reliable propositions and it is in the perspective of these propositions that one can make an attempt of a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of political participation.

7.8 Political Participation of Women

Role of women in political participation has been a topic of much discussion in the recent years. The participation of women in electoral process can be defined not only in terms of the equality and freedom with which they share political power with men, but also in terms of the liberty and space provided for women in the democratic framework of electoral politics. The marginalisation of female from electoral participation in India stems not mainly from competition arisen between national and regional parties in terms of seat allotments but also from the patriarchal prejudices that shrouded the political parties and refrain them to be in command even within the organization. In contrast to the poor allotment of seats to women by political parties in the elections and marginalisation within the party structure, female participation as voters has been a notable upsurge in the late 1990's as voter turnout in the last few elections.

The electoral participation of women in India, invites a wide range of opinions and divergent views. On the one hand, some theorists argued that the electoral process in India is fraught with patriarchy that act as impediments to women participation. The lack of political voice and poor representation in the Parliament bears the testimony of such claims. On the other hand, there are theorists who dispute this argument and feel that the increased participation of women in electoral competition as voters and sharing of political power at the grassroot level reveal that electoral politics in India is no more gender exclusive but is quite inclusive.

The participation of women has been systematically analysed by Praveen Rai in one of his article published in Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) using a pyramidal electoral participation model stratified at four levels on a quantitative basis. This model suggests the following four strata-

- (1) In the top strata, is female representation in the lower house of the Parliament and in Legislative Assemblies which is the narrowest and most constricted numerically.
- (2) In the second strata, are women as candidate in electoral competition participating as members and functionaries of political parties where their representation in quantitative terms is more than that at the top layer.
- (3) In the third strata, as active campaigners for political parties where female participation is much larger in numbers than that in the second strata.
- (4) In the bottom strata, with the widest base of women in numerical terms as single time voters.

The levels of female participation at the top tiers of electoral competition are fairly low as compared to Indian men and the only level of electoral participation where they have achieved some degree of parity are as voters in elections. Thus, women's participation in electoral competition has been restricted to being periodic electors, something that is not only promoted and encouraged by the political parties and society but also by the state organs in India.

Before analysing the low level of representation of women in the lower house of the Parliament, it is worthwhile to compare their positions with other countries of South Asia in recent years. The representation of women in the lower house of Afghanistan Parliament is the highest i.e. 27% as witnessed at the first parliamentary election after the downfall of the first Taliban rule. Apart from Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan are the two countries in the region where women representatives occupy more than 20% seats in the lower house of the Parliament. The reasons for other countries being ranked higher than India is mainly due to reservation of seats for women in the lower house of the Parliament. Thus, India (10.86) and Sri Lanka (4.89) are two countries in the region where representation in the Parliament is below the world average of 20% representation of women.

The main factors as identified by P. Rai includes the following-

Firstly, socio-economic forces inherited from nationalist movement, current social policies and the gendered nature of citizenship in hampering women's political participation in government structures, elections and community organisations.

Secondly, lack of reservation of seats for women in the Parliament and state legislatures.

Thirdly, lack of national consensus and willingness among political parties to give more tickets to women in elections

Fourthly, perpetuation of a patriarchal political structure together with caste, class and gender subordination acting as strong deterrents to women contesting elections.

Finally, lack of awareness and knowledge of electoral politics combined with a lack of support from the family and political parties severely affects women's chances to contest and win elections.

However, despite the gloomy reality, the silver lining over women's participation in electoral politics in India, is the participatory upsurge witnessed among women as voters since 1990s. Women's participation has also noticeably increased in campaign activities during the election. It is obvious to address the key barriers restricting women's participation in politics on a priority basis and simultaneously efforts on part of the government and the civil society to motivate women for their active participation in formal politics is needed to be ensured. An increased participation of women in active politics will not only ensure equality with men but will further enhance the scope to address larger serious issues concerning women which were otherwise mostly neglected.

7.9 Conclusion

Electoral politics in liberal democracies are going through revolutionary changes with the ushering in of new techniques of electoral propaganda and marketing strategy. If the new politics based on new social movements have tended to activate the civil society in influencing the elections then the role of technology particularly internet and social media have engulfed the country with cyber campaigns. The increasing use of opinion polls and development of several research groups meant for elections (like MARG, IMRB etc.) have helped political parties and candidates to develop a marketing strategy. The intense usage of such tools not only gave birth to media hype centering on elections but has a significant influence upon the electoral behaviour of the voters.

7.10 Summing Up

- Political participation as one of the basic concept in Political Science has been defined by scholars in different ways.
- In a very general sense, political participation essentially means taking part in politics. However, getting involved in politics may imply participation at varying degrees and at different levels.
- Political scientists like Robert E. Lane have identified a number of socio-economic and political factors which influence the degree and rate of political participation.
- Political participation can broadly be classified into two types namely- participation in the electoral process and participation through other modes.
- There are cases of non participation in democracy too, such as apathy, cynicism, alienation and anomie.
- One of the major concerns of political participation in a representative democracy is the voting behaviour. Factors responsible for voting behaviour can be classified into three categories namely socio-economic, psychological and political.
- The marginalisation of female from electoral participation in India stems not mainly from competition arisen between national and regional parties in terms of seat allotments but also from the patriarchal prejudices that shrouded the political parties and refrain them to be in command even within the organization.

7.11 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. What is political participation? What are its different types?
2. Identify the major factors influencing political participation.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on women's participation in Indian politics.
2. Explain Milbrath's classification of political participation.
3. State the factors influencing the voting behaviour of a country with special reference to India.

Objective Questions :

1. How does anomie inhibit political participation?
2. What is meant by political apathy?
3. What is meant by expressive political participation?

7.12 Further Reading

1. Rush, M and Althoff, P. *An Introduction to Political Sociology*, London, Nelson, 1971.
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3. Roy, S. *Society and Politics in India : Understanding Political Sociology*, Delhi, PHI, 2014.
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Unit – 8 □ Representation–Meaning, Theories and Models

Structure

- 8.1 Objective**
- 8.2 Introduction**
- 8.3 Idea of Representation**
- 8.4 Theories of nature of suffrage**
- 8.5 Theories of Representation**
- 8.6 Models of Representation**
- 8.7 Conclusion**
- 8.8 Summing Up**
- 8.9 Probable Questions**
- 8.10 Further Reading**

8.1 Objective

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to understand :

- The meaning of representation
- The different theories relating to suffrage
- Different theories on representation
- A variety of models related to representation

8.2 Introduction

Electorate and Representation happens to be one of the most significant areas of discussion with regard to liberal democracies of contemporary world. Democracy implies popular sovereignty and popular sovereignty becomes meaningful only when

electorate exercises their right to vote to constitute a government. So to make democracy effective in practical plane, it is the elections that play the most crucial role. The practice of periodic elections in liberal democracies and in electing representatives to act as a custodian of masses gave rise to the idea of representation. However, the method to ensure representation had given rise to severe controversies amongst scholars. Subsequently, a number of theories in representation have been introduced based on distinct ideological and political assumptions.

Growing political consciousness of the masses led to the belief that governmental actions must conform to the interest of the public. Under the ancient democracies, the citizens of the city states participated in the making of laws and administration of public business. In the large nation states of the later ages, direct popular participation became impossible. Consequently, the practice of electing periodically some representatives, who would work as the trustee of the people, came to be developed. This gave birth to the idea of representation.

8.3 Idea of Representation

What is Representation?

If we go by the meaning of the term representation in accordance to the Oxford Advanced Learner, it implies, “the act of presenting someone or something in a particular way”. However, this is a very general meaning of the term. Specifically, in political parlance representation is the process through which influence by the entire citizenry or a part of them is exerted upon governmental action, with their express approval, exercised on their behalf by a smaller number among them with binding effect upon those represented.

Historically, the idea of representation was often used synonymously with responsible government. But here, a clear line of distinction is required to be drawn between the two. Usually, the purpose of representation is the attainment of responsibility. But there may be governments, which inspite of the fact that they are characterised by representative assemblies, are not responsible in their manners of operation. The fascist government of Italy and the government in Hitler’s Germany had elections yet, they were not responsible governments. Contrarily, a government may be responsible without being representative. For instance, the ancient democracies operating through direct popular vote did not have any system

of representations. In a democracy, however, representation is a method of securing responsible government.

Again, representation is often referred to mean delegating authority to somebody and thereby, surrender their right of judgement of policy. However, modern representation is not merely another name for delegation. Representation implies both direction and control. Infact, delegation requires the consent of the governed, whereas representation requires the fulfilment of their will. The purpose of representation is as much to choose representatives as to exercise control over the direction of governmental policy.

The principles of representation have generated profound and recurring political controversies. With the spread of democracy in the 19th and 20th centuries, questions arose largely centering upon the issue who should be represented. Initially, representatives were elected by only male, propertied section of the society. However, later the question was largely been resolved through the widespread acceptance of the principle of political equality in the formal sense by means of universal suffrage. Women were enfranchised in Switzerland in 1971, and racial criterion for voting was swept away in South Africa in 1994. But equating representation merely with elections and voting makes the approach of representation too simplistic, since it tends to ignore a more difficult question as how one person can represent the interests of others and what it is that he/she represents. Furthermore, the transformation of the older social unity based on territory into diverse specialised interests has created a problem in the theory of representation. It is often argued, as how can diverse individual opinions and group interests be represented. A partial solution to this problem can be found in the political parties. Insofar as the parties cut across local and personal prejudices, sectional and occupational differences, they serve to integrate the diverse forces. Still, the representation of the multifarious interests through the political parties is not quite satisfactory. Infact, a representation cannot be expected to represent all the interests in the constituency. That is why, several methods of representations have been suggested to resolve the problems arising out of it.

Nature of Representation

History throws some light on the nature of representation. As the ancient democracies operated through direct popular participation in public affairs, the problem of representation did not arise at all. However, with the emergence of

the kings in the feudal societies of Europe, the custom of calling representatives from the communities developed. This was necessary for the purpose of obtaining their consent to extraordinary taxes or levies. The local representatives presented complaints and petitions, and bargained on grants of money. Hence, they were not true representatives but acting as local powers under special instructions or mandates.

Generally speaking, in the past a representative used to represent the councils of the king which was a close knit community with a distinctive unity of its own. It could well serve the purpose of the constituency. However, only highlighting upon the local interests, the question of national interest seems to have been neglected. Thus, this led to the theory that a representative must rise above petty localism and represent the national interests. In contemporary times, constituencies are strips of territory where various kinds of voters live. Hence, the boundaries of constituencies are frequently readjusted to give representations by populations.

8.4 Theories of nature of suffrage

As the question of representation is integrally connected with the voting system, it is worthwhile to note the different theories as propounded surrounding the nature of this political right. These are briefly discussed in the following manner:

The Natural Right Theory

This theory is actually derived from the theory of social contract which expresses an explanation with regard to the origin of the state. The contract theory assumed a hypothetical state of nature where the people were supposed to be living a free and equal life under the laws of nature. Since the state was created by the people through a contract among themselves, they have a natural right to take part in the government. This right to vote is thus, an abstract right derived from the ancient laws of nature.

The Legal Right Theory

This theory treats suffrage not as a natural right but as a political right granted by the law of the state. Voting is a public function and the electorate is an organ of government. Hence, the composition and powers of the electorate are determined by law.

The Ethical Theory

This theory regards the right to vote as a means for the self expression of the individual in political affairs. By allowing the individual to associate itself with the government, suffrage ensures the development of human personality.

The Tribal Theory

The conception of inclusive citizenship developed among the early Greek, Roman and German led to the theory of suffrage. Within a narrow citizen class, voting was supposed to be a part of the life of the community. It was necessary attribute of membership of the state. Citizenship as a qualification for voting today is a survival of the tribal theory.

The Feudal Theory

This theory as developed in the latter part of the middle ages, argues, that the right to vote depends on a particular social status. In the past, it was usually associated with the ownership of land. The modern emphasis in some states on property qualification may be said to be a relic of the feudal theory.

Though the feudal theory and the legal theory tend to limit the right to vote by imposing some restrictions but the widest possible extension of suffrage was supported by the tribal theory, the natural rights theory and the ethical theory. However, a controversy arises concerning voting whether to be regarded as a moral duty or a legal obligation. Whatever be the motive behind its practice, it cannot be denied that voting to be made a compulsory act if at all, the will of the electorate is to be ensured.

8.5 Theories of Representation

It is difficult to determine representation through a single general theory. The theories of representation evolve mainly over the issue of the role to be played by representation in the process of policy making. Different theories have been propounded by thinkers in analysing the role to be played by representatives and in evaluating it against their control of the entire process. O.P.Gauba has identified the major theories of representation which for our convenience, are discussed in the following manner-

Reactionary Theory of Representation

The chief exponents of this theory are Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and Alexander Hamilton (1756–1804). The reactionary theory largely depends on the superior knowledge and wisdom of the politicians who are regarded as the best custodians of public interest. Hobbes defined representation as acting in the name of another who has authorised the action. So when a representative is authorized to act on behalf of the represented, the latter is bound to accept the consequences of this act. When people authorize a sovereign, to act in their behalf, they make him their unlimited representative. This gives rise to absolute sovereignty. This theory is democratic only so long as it accepts the primacy of public interest in policy making.

Conservative Theory of Representation

The chief exponents of this theory are namely Edmund Burke (1729–1797) and James Madison (1751–1836). It is more progressive than the reactionary theory because it grants a measure of public control without encouraging popular participation in the process of government. It is also an elitist theory because it allows people to choose their representatives from an elite group. However, if the representatives fail to satisfy them, they can be replaced by other suitable members of the elite group at the next election. Burke defined the role and duties of a parliamentary representative to put ‘great weight’ on the wishes of his constituents and accord their opinions high respect. However, he did not want him to receive instructions from his constituents, but to exercise his own judgement.

Liberal Theory of Representation

The chief exponents of this theory are John Locke (1632–1704) and Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826). This theory banks on the wisdom of the masses and treats their representatives only as their agents or messengers. In its view, representatives of the people are their true representatives. Instead of using their own judgement they must translate the judgements of their constituents into concrete policy proposals. Locke not only wanted that the government should rule with the consent of the people but also argued that no taxes could be imposed on the owners of property. He has no special rights or powers, but only special obligations.

Radical Theory of Representation

Its chief exponents are J. J. Rousseau (1712–78) and the New Left. This theory holds wisdom of the people in highest esteem and goes to the extent of depreciating

representative government itself. It holds that wisdom of the people is bound to be diluted through the process of representation. It therefore, exalts direct democracy as the only truly democratic form of government.

8.6 Models of Representation

There are contesting models of representation which are based on distinct ideological and political assumptions. These models of representation dictate very different behaviour on the part of representatives. It is often questioned, if the representatives are bound by policies and positions as outlined during election. It is also argued, if it is the responsibility of the representatives to form a public opinion and thereby, determine the public interest. However, here it is further pointed out that more than one interest actually operates within the same political system. This suggests that no single model sufficient enough to secure a representative government. A. Heywood, has identified four principal models of representation which are advanced for our discussion in the following manner-

Trustee Model

The classic expression of representation as trusteeship is found in Edmund Burke's writings. A trustee is a person who is vested with formal responsibility for another's property or affairs. For Burke, the essence of representation was to serve one's constituents by the exercise of mature judgement and enlightened conscience. In short, representation is a moral duty; those with good fortune to possess education and understanding should act in the interests of those who are less fortunate. This implies that the mass of people do not know their own best interests. A similar view was advanced by J.S.Mill in the form of liberal theory of representation. This was based on the assumption that, although all individuals have a right to be represented, not all political opinions are of equal value. Mill therefore, proposed a system of plural voting in which four or five votes would be allocated to holders of learned diplomas or degrees, two or three to skilled or managerial workers and a single vote to ordinary workers. Trustee representation thus, portrays professional politicians as representatives insofar as they are members of educated elite. It is based on the belief that knowledge and understanding are unequally distributed in society, in the sense that not all citizens know what is best for them.

This model of representation is not beyond criticisms. Firstly, it is often argued that this model is anti democratic. This is so, since if politicians happen to be the best judge of actual conditions and the public is ignorant, poorly educated or deluded then surely it is a mistake to allow the public to elect their representatives in the first place. Secondly, the link between representation and education is also questionable. Finally, as argued by Thomas Paine, that if politicians, are allowed to exercise their own judgement, they will simply use that latitude to pursue their own selfish interests.

Delegate Model

A delegate is a person who is chosen to act for another on the basis of clear guidance or instructions. This model of representation usually supports mechanisms that ensure that politicians are bound as closely as possible to the views of the represented. This includes what Paine referred to as frequent interchange between representatives and their constituents in the form of regular elections. In addition, radical democrats have advocated the use of initiatives and the right of recall as means of giving the public more control over politicians. Although delegation stops short of direct democracy, its supporters nevertheless usually favour the use of referendums to supplement the representative process. One of the greatest advantages of this model is that it provides broader opportunities for popular participation and serves to check the actions of the professional politicians in securing their self interests.

This model has been criticised on several grounds. In the first place, in ensuring that representatives are bound to the interests of their constituents, it tends to breed narrowness and foster conflict. Secondly, delegation limits the scope for leadership and statesmanship. Politicians are forced to reflect the views of their constituents and are thus, not able to mobilise the people by providing vision and inspiration.

Mandate Model

New theories of representation have emerged viewing the limitations of the Trustee and Delegate models of representation. It is often argued that the above two models were developed before the emergence of modern political parties when representatives were viewed essentially as independent actors. However, in contemporary times candidates are rarely elected on the basis of their individual capacities. Rather they are supported as a member of the political party whose

programmes and policies receive attention and are accepted to a certain extent by the majority. The most influential amongst the new theories is the doctrine of the mandate. This is based on the idea that, in winning an election a party gains a popular mandate that authorises it to carry out whatever policies or programmes it outlined during the election campaign. As it is the party, rather than individual politicians, that is, the agency of representation, the mandate model provides a clear justification for party unity and party discipline. As such a politician tends to serve their constituents by remaining loyal to their party and its policies.

The strength of the mandate doctrine is that it takes account of the undoubted practical importance of party labels and party policies. However, it is also subjected to severe criticisms. Firstly, it is based on a highly questionable model of voting behaviour, insofar as it suggests that voters select parties on the grounds of policies and issues. According to this model, voters are assumed to be rational and well informed which may not be true in all respects. They can also be influenced by a range of irrational factors such as the personalities of the leaders, the images of parties, habitual allegiances and social conditioning. Secondly, even if voters are influenced by policies, it is likely that they will be attracted by certain commitments. A vote for a party cannot therefore, be taken to be an endorsement of its entire manifesto or any election promise. Thirdly, it limits government policies to those positions and proposals that the party took up during the election, and leaves no scope to adjust policies in the light of changing circumstances. Finally, the doctrine of the mandate can only be applied in the case of majoritarian electoral systems, and it may turn out to be farce, if the winning party fails to gain fifty percent of the popular vote.

Resemblance Model

The last but never the least, model of representation is based on whether the representatives typify or resemble the group they claim to represent. This means a representative government would constitute a microcosm of the larger society, containing members drawn from all groups and sections in society and in numbers that are proportional to the size of the groups in society at large. This model was endorsed by socialist and radical thinkers. They argue that the under representations of groups such as the working class, women and racial minorities at senior levels in key institutions ensures that their interests are marginalised and neglected. This model therefore, suggests that only people who came from a particular group and have shared the experiences of that group can fully identify with its interests.

This model too raises some difficulties which are worth to note. Firstly, this model portrays representation in exclusive or narrow terms believing that only women can represent women and so on. If all representatives simply advance the interests of the groups from which they come, the consequences would be social division and conflict with no one being able to defend the common good. Secondly, a government is said to represent the society but how far it is likely to benefit is questionable particularly in a society in which majority of the population happens to be apathetic to common interests, or ill informed or even poorly educated. Finally, it is often argued, that microcosmic ideal can only be achieved by imposing powerful constraints upon electoral choice and individual freedom. In the name of representation political parties may be forced to select quotas of female or minority candidates. As such, in this system the electorate might have to be classified on the basis of class, gender, caste, race and so on and only be allowed to vote for candidates from their own group.

8.7 Conclusion

The long history of democracy suggests that representation as a major principle emerged due to two reasons. Firstly, the ever growing population can be endured with it and secondly, the rising mistrust of several scholars like Dahl over the capacity and motivation of the majority of individuals to be governed directly.

In contemporary times, representation is found everywhere in social and political milieu. This is more prevalent in the spheres of civil society activities and also in transnational governance. However, such representations are not bound to election. Infact many social and political spheres give input to political decision making and generate representation without electoral authorization.

While examining concepts about representation beyond elections and states, it is often found that the context of representation becomes more meaningful. As argued by Henrike Knappe that representative relationship can be seen as something socially constructed which is difficult to be captured through a single dimensional concept like election. When electoral politics rely on a clear temporal sequences of authorization vide election and held the representatives responsible for their actions, in non electoral politics the authorization and accountability are diverse and often diffused in nature. This becomes true particularly for informal representative

relationships like social movements in which represented groups are shaped and sometimes even constructed in the process of representation.

Thus, it can be said that democratic representation is not a mere substitute for direct democracy. With a recent note of change in representation, as socially constructed, the norms of representation depend to a large extent on the definition of representative relationships. This implies that democratic representation may be differently practiced if individuals, groups, interests or the common good is represented.

8.8 Summing Up

- To make democracy effective in practical plane, it is the elections that play the most crucial role.
- The practice of periodic elections in liberal democracies and in electing representatives to act as a custodian of masses gave rise to the idea of representation.
- Historically, the idea of representation was often used synonymously with responsible government.
- The principles of representation have generated profound and recurring political controversies.
- The question of representation is integrally connected with the voting system so it is worth to note the different theories on suffrage namely—The Natural Right Theory, The Legal Right Theory, the Ethical Theory etc.
- There are several contesting theories of representation which have evolved mainly over the issue of the role to be played by representation in the process of policy making.

8.9 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. What is the nature of representation? In this respect, discuss the different theories on the nature of suffrage.

2. Do you think the idea of representation can ensure a responsible government? Argue your case.
3. What is Representation? How it is integrally connected with the voting system?
4. Examine the different models of Representation.

Short Questions :

1. Define representation in your own words.
2. Write a short note on the Mandate Model of representation.

Objective Questions :

1. What, according to Edmund Burkes is the essence of representation ?
2. Why do the radical theorists of representation oppose representative government?
3. Why is representation considered important in a democracy?

8.10 Further Reading

1. Heywood A., *Politics*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997.
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3. Thomas Christiano, 'Democracy' in McKinnon C.ed. *Issues in Political Theory*, New York, OUP, 2008.

Unit – 9 □ Functional Representation

Structure

- 9.1 Objective**
- 9.2 Introduction**
- 9.3 Elections: Some Paradoxes**
- 9.4 Functions of Elections**
- 9.5 Direct and Indirect Elections**
- 9.6 Methods of voting**
- 9.7 Functional Representation**
- 9.8 Limitations of Functional Representation**
- 9.9 Advantages of Functional Representation**
- 9.10 Minority Representation**
- 9.11 Problems of Minority Representation**
- 9.12 Conclusion**
- 9.13 Summing Up**
- 9.14 Probable Questions**
- 9.15 Further Reading**

9.1 Objective

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to :

- Analyse the paradoxes of elections
- Learn the functions of elections
- Examine the different methods of voting
- Analyse the method of Functional Representation
- Make a critical assessment of Functional Representation
- Explain the method of Minority Representation

9.2 Introduction

With the rising popularity of the democratic systems the significance of elections cannot be questioned. Elections provide the public with its clearest formal opportunity to influence the political process, and also help directly or indirectly, to determine who will hold government power. From this perspective, elections are about results. This view is encouraged by media coverage, which with the goal of opinion polls increasingly turns elections into horse races. Nevertheless, politicians are not backward in claiming that elections have a broader and more profound meaning. Elections are, in this sense, seen as nothing less than a visible manifestation of the public interest. However, the term public interest is highly ambiguous since it also raises a question, if at all, any such thing as public interests exists. Generally, public interests tend to refer common or collective interests of all citizens but it is difficult to perceive for an indivisible public interest. This is so, since interests of individuals vary as it is not expected them to act selflessly in accordance with a general or collective will. At best, what electoral results can be accepted to reveal is the preferences of a majority or a plurality.

9.3 Elections : Some Paradoxes

Election is one of the necessary conditions to ensure representation but it cannot be claimed to be the sufficient condition.

Firstly, elections are widely used to fill those public offices whose holders have policy making responsibilities yet, there are certain key political institutions which are sometimes treated as exceptions. This applies for instance, to the second chambers of legislature in states like the UK and Canada and also in those states where constitutional monarchs still serve as heads of the state.

Secondly, though restrictions on the right to vote based on factors such as property ownership, education, gender and racial origin have been abandoned in most countries, yet there may be informal restrictions, as in most US states of leaving electoral registration entirely in the hands of the citizens. This results in non registration and non voting as a widespread phenomenon. On the other hand in Australia, Belgium and Italy, for instance, voting is compulsory.

Thirdly, modern elections are generally held on the basis of secret ballot. The secret ballot is usually seen as the guarantee of a fair election. However, Heywood observed that it also keeps the dangers of corruption. Infact electoral fairness need not alone depends on how people vote. It is also affected by the voters' access to reliable and balanced information, the range of choice offered to them, situation in which campaigning took place and finally how scrupulously the vote is counted.

Finally, electoral competition concerns not merely the right of the people to stand for election and the ability of political parties to nominate candidates and campaign legally. There exist also other significant factors that might affect party performance such as the sources of funding and access to the media. In this respect , the nature of the party system may be as crucial to the maintenance of genuine competition as are rules about who can stand and who can vote.

9.4 Functions of Elections

Liberal democratic electoral systems has been popularised particularly with the collapse of the communist regime by the disintegration of erstwhile Soviet Union, since 1990s. Being essentially characterised by universal adult suffrage, the secret ballot and electoral competition, it has expedited the advance of democratisation. The conventional view is that elections are a mechanism through which politicians can be called to account and forced to introduce policies that somehow reflect public opinion. This emphasises the bottom up functions of elections, political recruitment, representation, making government, influencing policy and so on. On the other hand, a radical view of elections as developed by theorists like Ginsberg portrays them as a means through which government and political elite can exercise control over their population. This view emphasises top down functions like building legitimacy, shaping public opinion and strengthening elites. This shows, how elections have no single character. Heywood has identified several functions of election which are enumerated below :-

Political Recruitment

In modern democracies elections serve the principal source of political recruitment. It takes into account the processes through which parties nominate candidates. However, elections are typically not used to fill posts that require specialist knowledge or experience such as those in the civil service or judiciary.

Forming Governments

Elections only make governments directly in states like USA, France etc. However, in most other parliamentary systems it influence the formation of governments, most strongly when the electoral systems tends to give a single party a clear parliamentary majority.

Providing Representation

Elections happen to be a means through which demands, when they are fair and competitive, are placed before the government from the masses. However, people do not possess any means to ensure that mandates are carried out effectively apart from their decision not to vote for the same in the next election.

Influencing Policy

Elections restrict the government from pursuing radical and deeply unpopular policies. However, in case of predominance of a single issue in the election campaign then it is said to influence the policy directly. Nonetheless it is also argued that government policy is in any case shaped more by practical dictates such as the state of the economy than it is by electoral considerations.

Awareing Voters

The process of campaigning provides the electorate with an abundance of information about parties, candidates, policies, the current government's record, the political system and so on. However, this becomes meaningful, if it engages public interest and stimulates debate. At the same time, it may also be noted that the same may likely to have an adverse effect, if the citizens are provided with incomplete and distorted information.

Creating Legitimacy

A valid reason why even an authoritarian regime bother to hold elections lies in the fact that it helps to foster legitimacy by providing justification for a system of rule. This is so, since by encouraging citizens to participate in politics even in the limited form of voting, elections mobilise active consent.

Supporting Elites

Elections can also serve as a means through which elites can control and manipulate the masses. Political discontent and opposition can also be neutralised

by elections that channel them in a constitutional direction and allow governments to come and go while the regime itself survives.

9.5 Direct and Indirect Elections

The electoral functions can be exercised either directly or indirectly. Direct democracy means the rule by the people of a state, town or another political community by means of direct participation in the management of public affairs. Some examples of direct democracy are found in ancient Greek city states, some of ancient Indian Republics etc. This system can operate in an area having a small number of citizens who can periodically meet at one place. However, it is not practicable in larger states of modern times.

In case of indirect election, the electorate chooses a smaller body which in turn elects the final representatives. In India, the bulk of the members of the Council of States are elected indirectly. Modern democracies therefore, have indirect or representative democracy where government is conducted by the representatives of the people, who are elected at regular intervals. Thus, in modern times the term democracy is used as a synonym of representative democracy unless otherwise indicated.

The advocates of direct election regard it as more democratic since the system allows the electorate to take part in constituting the government directly. Also direct election is supposed to promote political education of the electorate and to arouse interest in politics. Against this system, it is argued that when the people exercise the electoral function directly rational voting is made impossible. Indirect election is often suggested as an antidote to the vices of direct election. However, despite its advantages, the system of indirect election has been found incompatible with the spirit of democracy. As the representatives are finally elected not by the whole electoral body, but by a smaller group, the system in most cases helps political corruption. For a smaller group is more easily swayed by special interests. Further, as a means of political education indirect election is supposed to be inferior to direct election. Being deprived of the direct responsibility of electing representatives the primary voters may not take much interest in politics. Finally, it is pointed out that the system of indirect election is reduced to a mere formality by the operation of the party system which serves as the link between the primary voters and the intermediate electors.

9.6 Methods of voting

Several methods of voting have been adopted by different democratic countries over time. Some are discussed below:

Public and Secret Voting

The method by which voting is exercised may be public or secret. The practice of oral or public voting was prevalent in Prussia, Denmark, Soviet Russia etc. It was however, subsequently abandoned. Eminent writers like Montesquieu and Mill defended public voting. To Montesquieu, it was a means for the education of the common people under the guidance of the enlightened. Though theoretically sound, public voting has been found to be practically defective. This is because, it does not enable its voters to exercise its choice freely and independently the government in powers or powerful individuals or groups could influence the voters and pressurise them. Hence, to ensure free and independent voting or secret voting, votes through ballots were introduced and practiced universally.

Plural and Weighted Voting

In contemporary times, the equal weighing of votes is practically universal. But plural or weighted voting also known as differential voting was not lacking in the past. In Belgium for instance, plural suffrage was introduced as early as in 1893. Voters were graded on the basis of educational, property and professional qualifications. The main argument for plural voting rested on the idea that in the choice of public officials, the opinions of the intelligent few must have a greater weight than the rest. The main objection of plural voting, however, rests on the fact that no suitable standard or criterion is to base political right on wealth which is clearly undemocratic.

9.7 Functional Representation

There is hardly any single method of representation rather there are a number of competing methods, each citing its own advantages and limitations in a particular way. However, despite their differences in mechanism, there is no doubt that all the major methods of electoral representations arise mostly to overcome the shortcomings of one or the other methods. Heywood for instance, has argued how

the majoritarian systems are thought to be at their weakest when evaluated in terms of their representation of functions. To a greater extent, all majoritarian system distorts the popular preferences in the sense that party representation is not commensurate with electoral strength. This is most glaringly apparent in their unfairness to small parties and parties with evenly distributed geographical support and their over fairness in relation to large parties. For example, in 1997 in the UK the Labour Party gained 63% of the parliamentary seats with 44% of the vote while the Conservatives had won 25% of the seats with 31% of the votes and the Liberal Democrats gained merely 7% of the representation with 17% of the vote. Such biases are not justified in representative terms specially since the third parties are often centrist parties and not the extremist parties of popular image.

Similarly, limitations of territorial representation have prompted to harness the arguments in favour of functional representation. The system of territorial representation is based on the assumption that people residing in the same area share common interests. The advocates of functional representation have contested this thesis and pointed out that not territorial community but interests can be represented. Their contention is that representation should be functional and in this way individuals can be more accurately represented on the basis of occupational or economic interests. Usually it is argued, a constituency comprises diverse economic groups such as traders, farmers, employers, industrial workers etc. Hence, it is not possible for one representative to represent all the views of the constituents. However, such representatives take part in the enactment of laws affecting these diverse interests. It is sure to lead to the making of ineffective laws that have little or no relevance to the choice of effective means.

The advocates of functional representation find in it, a remedy against these defects of territorial representation. Their scheme is to treat every important specialised interests or functions as a unit for representation. The legislature would thus, be composed of the representatives of organised interests and not of the people residing in particular geographical areas. There have always been advocates of the system of functional representation. At the time of the French Revolution it was supported by Mirabeau and Sieyes. Later eminent writers like Duguit, Guild Socialists and the like have proposed different schemes for the representation of interests or functions.

9.8 Limitations of Functional Representation

The system of functional representation has been attacked by several eminent writers. The most serious criticisms against it have been discussed in the following manner:

Firstly, it is argued that this system seeks to bolster up the claims of particular interests at the expense of the general national interests. Anxious care is taken under a scheme of functional representation to make provisions for the representations of the various economic and occupational groups but there is no room for a unified central authority epitomising the conceptions of the national interest. However, too much preoccupation with the clear articulation and vindication of function weakens the sense of community of belonging to something that contains but transcends the function.

Secondly, if representation is based on particular functions there would be as many parties as there are functions. Consequently, the present party system, which seeks to patch up group interests and throw up a unified conception of general interest, would cease to function under a system of functional representation.

Thirdly, such system of representation operating through the mechanism of a multiplicity of functional organisations would automatically lead to the same governmental paralysis as under the system of proportional representation.

Fourthly, it can be remarked by way of conclusion that democracy lives by the organisation of centripetal rather than centrifugal forces. This is so, since functional representations seeks to release the disruptive forces in a community and it is inimical to the spirit of democracy.

Finally, the utility of the functional representation has been questioned on the ground that various interests are needed to be represented. However, it is argued that instead of making provisions for the representation of various interests in the legislature, arrangements in recent years are made for their representation through advisory committees attached to particular government departments that deal with the administration of laws affecting some functional groups.

9.9 Advantages of Functional Representation

Every dark cloud has a silver lining and so does the method functional representation. It has several advantages which for convenience are discussed below :

Firstly, through this system the legislature is likely to be formed by members coming from different functional and occupational groups representing diverse organised interests. It is thus, argued that by this mechanism the interests of the members as reflected would be distinct and seeks to be more effective in providing the expertise to policy formulation.

Secondly, it is often argued that a representative of a particular geographical territory cannot take care of the interests of all sections of people living in that territory. As such, functional representation is suggested, so, that representatives can be send to decision making body on the basis of economic and professional interests and exerts its influence in policy framing. So it claims to reflect democracy in the truest sense of the term.

Finally, in most cases it has been found that functional representations have largely been tried under totalitarian systems particularly in pursuance of corporatism. In doing so, it is argued that the class conflict could be easily avoided. In Mussolini's corporative state a non representative fascist or Corporative Chamber was developed on the basis of economic grouping. To facilitate the working of a highly regimented economic system, Nazi Germany organised a system of "estates" representatives of economic interests. The Salazar regime in Portugal has also tried this system.

9.10 Minority Representation

Democracy is based on the principle of popular sovereignty which implies that along with the majority, the minorities too have a role to play in the process of legislation. However, democracy in practice thrives for a majority to form an effective government. This imply that to ensure the voice of the minorities in safeguarding their interests, it is essential to have their representation in the legislature.

Nevertheless, it is very difficult to underpin the meaning of a minority in a

nation state since the term is used ambiguously to indicate several usages. Sometimes it may stand for a political party like the United Socialist Party or Jana Sangha in India which is a minority party as compared to other national parties like Indian National Congress or Bharatiya Janata Party. Besides such political minorities, there may be racial, linguistic and religious minorities. Thus, from the communal standpoint in India the Hindus are in the majority and the Muslims or the Anglo Indians are the minorities.

Various methods have been suggested for securing the representation of minorities, some of which are discussed below:

Cumulative Vote System

This system involves multi member constituencies. The voter has the right to cast as many votes as there are seats in a constituency. But his/her votes may be spread over several candidates or concentrated on one candidate only. Hence, the voter belonging to a minority party may elect their representative by concentrating all their votes on him/her.

Limited Vote System

The constituency under this system are multi member. The voters are allowed to cast a certain number of votes which is less than the number of seats to be filled. By limiting the number of votes of each voter, this system acts as a check on the monopolisation of representation in a constituency by a single political party, and helps the minority to get atleast one seat.

Communal Representation

Special arrangements are sometimes made for the representation of minority communities. There may be separate electorates for separate communities. Under British rule such a system was introduced in India. Thus, voters of each community voted for the candidates of their own community.

A second method of communal representation is the reservation of seats in a joint electorate. Under this system, the voters may cast their votes for the candidates of communities other than their own. But in deciding the result a member of the community having reservation of seats, which gets the highest number of votes among the candidates of that community, will be declared elected despite candidates of other communities might have acquired a larger number of votes.

Under Articles 330 and 332 of the Indian Constitution, there are provisions for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the states.

Concurrent Majority

In the United States, during the first half of the 19th century, a debate ensued between the North and the South on the question of the abolition of slavery. The South was in favour of continuance of slavery but the North wanted the abolition of slavery to ensure supply of workers for the newly set up industries. The North enjoyed majority in the American Congress, hence, it was most likely to win its case. At this juncture John C. Calhoun (1782-1850) advanced the principle of concurrent majority with a view to safeguard the interests of the South which was in minority. This imply that if, the government of a country takes a decision on the basis of numerical majority, the minority affected by that decision should have the power to veto that decision. So Calhoun proposed to replace the prevalent federal system of the United States by a constitutional structure wherein each of the important economic functional or regional interest interests of the country would have the right to indicate its organ of self expression and concurrence of all these organs would become necessary for every important decision. In America this proposal was never accepted but this principle was invoked on the question of the role of minority in the decision making process.

Consociational Democracy

This system involves an elaborate arrangement to ensure minority representation. It is regarded particularly suitable for the governance of the societies which are deeply divided by religious, ideological, regional, cultural, racial or ethnic differences. It involves four basic principles namely-

- (a) Executive power sharing which entails a grand coalition of the representatives of all significant segments.
- (b) Greater autonomy of different segments implying that decisions on all issues of common concern should be made jointly by the representatives of all important segments.
- (c) Proportionality which made provisions for allocation of political offices, administrative appointments and public funds in proportion to the population of each segment.

- (d) Minority veto which is the ultimate weapon for the minority segments to protect their vital interests. A veto may be invoked by the minority for the protection of its position in case of a possibility of being outvoted by the majority.

9.11 Problems of Minority Representation

There are certain practical difficulties associated with minority representation.

Firstly, any system of minority representation is sure to multiply the number of parties in the legislature. In such a case, it is likely that no single party is to have the required majority in the legislature to form the government. Consequently, a coalition ministry becomes inevitable which is likely to function on a principle of temporary compromise. Such a coalition government would therefore, be feeble and short lived.

Secondly a strong allegation is made against minority representation by arguing that it seeks to pay premium on anti democratic forces in a country and thus, in future might imperil the operation of democracy.

Thirdly, a system of minority representation deliberately divides people into hostile camps. It encourages the minority to indulge in minority thinking. A minority in viewing from such perspective is likely to have a distorted idea of the reality. Consequently, democracy which postulates the existence of a common will, suffers most under the system of minority representation.

Finally, provisions of minority representation would encourage formation of political parties on the basis of narrow sectional interests rather than on the basis of larger national interests representing reconciliation of conflicting group interests.

9.12 Conclusion

The shortcoming of the different methods of representation suggests that there can hardly be an universally acceptable system of representation. If critics argue for violation of political equality as one of the major weaknesses of functional representation, as was the case of Hong Kong in the recent past, then there are equally strong arguments against geographical representations as well. Various

strategies have been explored ranging from broadening of electoral basis through a balanced bicameral legislature to adequate minority representation, yet none seems to be flawless and highly effective to satisfy all situations and people. No matter how much reforms and suggestions are advanced by scholars, debates and controversies over the right kind or the ideal type of representation would continue to exist and thereby, motivates intellectual intrigues for further research in the arena.

9.13 Summing Up

- Elections are a visible manifestation of the public interest. Generally, public interests tend to refer common or collective interests of all citizens but it is difficult to perceive for an indivisible public interest.
- The conventional view is that elections are a mechanism through which politicians can be called to account and forced to introduce policies that somehow reflect public opinion.
- Election is one of the necessary conditions to ensure representation but it cannot be claimed to be the sufficient condition.
- The electoral functions can be exercised either directly or indirectly. Direct democracy means the rule of the people by means of direct participation in the management of public affairs. In case of indirect election, the electorate chooses a smaller body which in turn elects the final representatives.
- The advocates of functional representation have pointed out that not territorial community but interests can be represented. Their contention is that representation should be functional and in this way individuals can be more accurately represented on the basis of occupational or economic interests.
- The critics of functional representation argued, that this system seeks to bolster up the claims of particular interests at the expense of the general national interests.
- It is further argued that functional representations seek to release the disruptive forces in a community and it is inimical to the spirit of democracy.
- However, through this system the legislature is likely to be formed by members coming from different functional and occupational groups representing diverse organised interests.

- To ensure the voice of the minorities in safeguarding their interests, it is essential to have their representation in the legislature.
- Various methods have been suggested for securing the representation of minorities like Cumulative Vote System, Limited Vote System, Communal Representation, Concurrent Majority and Consociational Democracy.

9.14 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Examine the different paradoxes of elections and discuss its different functions.
2. How can representation of minorities be ensured?

Short Questions :

1. Discuss three major functions of elections.
2. What is Concurrent Majority system? Where and why was it initiated?
3. Write a short note on Consociational Democracy.
4. Can all kinds of representation be ensured through elections? Argue your case.
5. What is Functional Representation? Evaluate this system with adequate illustrations.

Objective Questions :

1. What precisely is the radical view of elections?
2. What is meant by plural voting?
3. What is the objective of the cumulative vote system?

9.15 Further Reading

1. Heywood A., *Politics*, London, Macmillan Press, 1997.
2. Gauba O. P., *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, Delhi, Macmillan, 2010.

Unit – 10 □ Territorial Representation

Structure

- 10.1 Objective**
- 10.2 Introduction**
- 10.3 Universal Adult Franchise**
- 10.4 Types of Representation**
- 10.5 Territorial Representation**
- 10.6 Merits and Demerits of Territorial Representation**
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- 10.11 Probable Questions**
- 10.12 Further Reading**

10.1 Objective

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to :

- Understand the arguments and counter arguments of Universal Adult Franchise
- To identify the different types of representative system
- To have a comprehensive understanding of Territorial Representation
- To locate the different safeguards of Territorial Representation
- To evaluate the different representative system

10.2 Introduction

Modern democracies function mostly through electoral representations. Elections in recent years turned out to be an essential condition for the sustenance of

democracy. As such, elections are often referred as the very heart of democracy. In identifying democracy simply as a political method, it is the elections with which it sets its journey. The mechanisms of elections vary from country to country and its varied forms often give rise to severe controversy amongst scholars. The mechanism to conduct elections thus, assumes significance in analysing the nature of democracy in contemporary times. Through a considerable extension of franchise from a narrow, frequently unequal and indirect system to one which is now virtually universal and equal the history of democracy has traversed towards a more steady and stable evolution. The changes undoubtedly have helped democracy to earn its credibility and this becomes evident with the rising number of democratic countries all across the globe in the past years.

10.3 Universal Adult Franchise

In a representative democracy elections are usually held on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise. Now, on the question of who to have the voting right has given rise to severe debates. Opinions varied from a group favouring universal suffrage to the other seeking to restrict suffrage. The arguments in favour of universal suffrage are enumerated in the following manner:

Firstly, it is often argued, that, if democracy implies popular sovereignty then suffrage must be universal. The logic behind it is firmly rooted on the ground that popular sovereignty becomes meaningful only when every individual has the right to take part in constituting and conditioning the government.

Secondly, it is also argued that since the laws and policies of the state affect all so all must have the right to vote and practically get actively involved in shaping of the state policies.

Thirdly, it is often forwarded that a restricted electorate cannot ensure the welfare of the masses, as deprived of suffrage implies deprivation of the benefits of the government.

Finally, Universal Adult Franchise also provides an opportunity to the citizens to express their opinions in public affairs. In doing so, the dignity and self respect of the individual is not only enhanced but it also helps the development of individual personality. Through their right to vote the citizens constitute the government and thereby, take interest in political questions which help to promote political consciousness.

If the arguments in favour of Universal Adult Franchise are strong then there also existed some counter arguments which are discussed below :

Aristocratic Argument

Writers like Macaulay, Lecky and Sir Henry Maine considered it unwise and dangerous to extend the franchise to the ignorant masses. Lecky in his *Democracy and Liberty*, denounced the system of universal suffrage as he could not reconcile with the view that progress could be ensured under a government by the ignorant rather than the intelligent. According to Sir Henry Maine, universal suffrage is inimical to scientific progress. Though much of these statements are highly exaggerated as there is no evidence to show that universal suffrage is an obstacle to progress yet these criticisms also reveals certain truths. For instance, if the people are given the right to constitute the government then they should be properly trained up and made fit for the job. In this respect there is inherent truth in Mill's remark when he said that universal education must precede universal enfranchisement.

Property Owning and Tax Paying Arguments

In the 19th century the main qualification for the franchise was the possession of property or the payment of taxes. Until 1832, the parliamentary franchise in England was limited to freeholders possessing property worth forty shillings a year. In Japan until 1925, there was a taxpaying requirement which led to the disfranchisement of a large portion of the population. The property owning and taxpaying tests are also in operation in some of the American states too.

Insofar as, property qualification was supposed to be a guarantee of education and hence, of political competence can be debated over time but as a general test the ownership of property undoubtedly leads to injustice. For in most cases where multitudes do not possess property due to misfortune or in consequence of rigid economic class divisions in the society the test of property ownership tends to become clearly reactionary. The taxpaying test is however, to some extent justified as the state may legitimately expects something from its members in return for the protection it guarantees to them. Also the operation of the state is made possible by the contribution of its members. Still it may be argued that the function of the tax payment depends on the capacity to pay which in turn is largely determined by the income earning opportunities made available to the citizens. A state which fails to provide employment for its masses has no justification for its policy of excluding those who cannot pay taxes from the voting right. Property is after all not a bar to political competence.

Educational Qualification

Many writers have favoured educational tests for voting. It is accepted as a measure of electoral ability. Since the essence of democracy is popular judgement, the plea for educational qualifications seems to be logical. There is however, practical difficulty in finding out an objective test for determining political intelligence. Also it is highly doubtful, if political intelligence is a function of formal education. In the field of politics, human behaviour is in most cases as Graham Wallas point out determined by intuitions, passion and desires. It is the consciousness of one rather than intellectual achievement which condition the voter's attitude. Hence, it is not logical to believe that the ignorant masses will not be able to know what to vote for. The literacy test presupposes that the state, as Mill said must ensure adequate educational opportunities for all. But such opportunities hardly exist today. However, an enlightened and intelligent electorate is really an asset to democracy. So what is necessary is that every social vehicle for promoting political knowledge like the press, radio etc, should be properly utilised and the electorate should be made to depend on wise and honest leadership.

Sex Qualification

The political enfranchisement of women is quite a recent phenomenon. The exclusion of women from the suffrage was a general rule even after the democratic movement had led to the enfranchisement of the masses. It was further perpetuated, even after the emergence of the modern states, by the general economic and legal dependence of women. The earlier discrimination against them was gradually removed owing to their increasing employment in different professions and their equal access to educational opportunities. Also, the movement for female suffrage was greatly strengthened by the admirable role women played in the two world wars. Political parties in their zeal for the support of the newly enfranchised did much to emancipate women. Thus, in most of the states, today, women have been given equal political rights with men.

Race qualification

Racial barriers sometimes work against the extension of suffrage. During Hitler's regime the Jews in Germany were not allowed to vote.

Nationality Qualification

Modern states grant the right to vote only to their nationals, ie. those who have acquired citizenship by birth or naturalisation. Again, naturalised citizenship does not always carry with it the right to vote.

Age Qualification

In no country is the right to vote granted to persons of every age. As a matter of fact, all states exclude the children and restrict the suffrage to those who have attained maturity though the question of maturity of the voters is highly controversial.

Miscellaneous Qualification

Most states deny the right to vote to insane persons, the bankrupts and those who have been convicted of great crimes. In fact almost everywhere the residence in the country and in the voting district, and registration as a voter are the most common requirements.

10.4 Types of Representation

Representative systems in contemporary times can be classified into two alternative systems namely

1. Territorial Representation and
2. Functional Representation

Territorial Representation

Territorial Representation is often called geographic representation. The territorial principle of representation is prevalent in most countries having representative governments. According to this principle, the whole country is divided into districts or areas of approximately equal population and a single representative is selected from each district by majority vote. To make the system equitable, it is necessary to redraw the boundaries of constituencies frequently and fairly to keep pace with the growth and variations of the population. Also the task of redrawing the boundaries should be placed in the hands of a non partisan body, as in Great Britain.

Functional Representation

Functional Representation implies that the people belonging to different occupations or functions should be allowed to elect their representatives on this

very basis. These representatives should vote on issues relating to their specific function. For instance, those belonging to industry should vote on industrial policy and so on.

10.5 Territorial Representation

The Territorial Representation system is apparently based on the assumptions that each constituency has uniform interests. Under territorial or geographic representation the whole country is divided into geographical areas of nearly equal population, which are called constituencies. Voters of each constituency are entitled to elect their representatives or representatives. With a growth of population, boundaries of different constituencies may be required to be redrawn. It is imperative to ensure that any changes in these boundaries do not result in any advantage or disadvantage to any political party. The system is simple and convenient. It enables the electorate to know their representative more closely. However, sometimes it may lead to undue prominence of simple, routine issues relegating the complex, policy issues to the background.

10.6 Merits and Demerits of Territorial Representation

Merits of Territorial Representation

The greatest advantage of territorial representation is that it is simple and very easy to be implemented. The voter, under the system, is required simply to cast a vote for one representative in a constituency. Secondly, the limited area of a constituency enables the voter to know his representative intimately. Also, the representative keeps in touch with and becomes responsible to his constituency. Thirdly, owing to the restricted area of each district, the system is economical for the representative. Finally, as the operation of this system has proved in several countries, it secures a stable majority in the legislature and thus, ensures a strong and stable government.

Demerits of Territorial Representation

The system of Territorial Representation has a tendency to represent the local interests more than the national interests. The representative becomes an agent for securing every advantage for his own locality and takes little care to advance the

national interest. Secondly, when this system encourages the election of only the residents of a district, it naturally narrows the list of candidates available to the voter. Consequently, inferior men are often chosen and able men are discouraged from running for office. Thirdly, since the constituency is small in size, a government can easily influence adequate number of voters and thus, obtain the return of its own candidates. Fourthly, this system produces a peculiar practice of “Gerry mandering”. It means manipulation of the boundaries of constituencies to enable the party in power to capture as many seats as possible. Fifthly, under this system a relative majority is required to win a seat. As such, Finer observed that this may produce injustices in some constituencies and general nationwide misrepresentation. The system, therefore, may lead to the permanent voicelessness of a perpetual minority.

10.7 Safeguards of Territorial Representation

Harold Laski has suggested three safeguards to improve the electoral machinery of the system which is discussed below:

Firstly, the electoral choice should not be limited to one of the residents of a district. What is needed in politics is experienced leadership and not parochialism.

Secondly, the candidate elected from a constituency must not be merely a delegate for the representations of the local interests. Nor should he be a servant of the party which is in the majority in the constituency. Finally, in between elections the electors have some means of registering their dissatisfaction if any, either with their elected representative or with the government. For this purpose the limited recall can be accepted as a method of last resort.

10.8 Classification of Representative System

The available system of representation can be divided into two broad categories on the basis of how they convert votes into seats. On the one hand, there are majoritarian systems, in which larger parties typically win a higher proportion of seats than the proportion of votes they gain in the election. This increases the chances of a single party gaining a parliamentary majority and being able to govern on its own. A classic example in this case is United Kingdom. On the other hand,

there is proportional systems which guarantee an equal or at least more equal relationships between the seats won by a party and the votes gained in the election. In a pure system of proportional representation a party that gains 45% of the votes would be exactly 45% of the seats. Proportional Representative systems therefore, make single party majority rule less likely, and are commonly associated with multiparty systems and coalition governments.

Plurality Systems

Under plurality system, or simple majority system election may be won by simple majority. If there are only two candidates in the field for one seat, there will be no problems in deciding the winner. But in case of three or more candidates in a single member constituency, situation becomes a bit complicated as the voter can cast vote for one candidate only. It implies that any candidate obtaining the largest number of votes will be declared elected. It is not necessary for him/her to secure absolute majority. That is more than 50% of the total number of valid votes. This practice is widely followed. Again, under the simple majority system the votes scored by different political parties might not correspond to the number of seats won by them in the legislature.

Advantages

Firstly, as there exist a clear link between the representative and the electorates so there is a scope to ensure that duties of the constituencies are met adequately.

Secondly, it provides the electorate a clear choice of potential parties of government.

Thirdly, it makes for a strong and stable government which rarely collapse as a result of disunity and internal friction.

Finally, it helps to keep away extremism since it becomes difficult for small parties to gain seats and credibility.

Disadvantage

Firstly, there is immense wastage of votes in this system since there are people who would be casting votes in favour of the losing candidate and also some voting for the winner over the plurality mark.

Secondly, it has duopolitic tendencies thereby, limiting the electoral choices.

Thirdly, it distorts electoral preferences by under representing small parties.

Finally, it might lead to unaccountable government in the legislature.

Majoritarian System

In a majoritarian system a candidate to win election is required to obtain an absolute majority ie. 50% of the valid votes cast. If the total number of candidates amount to two then there will be no problem. But if, there are more than three contestants in a single member constituency and no candidate wins an absolute majority then the following two methods are adopted for the purpose. They are:

1. Alternative Vote
2. Second Ballot

Alternative Vote

The alternative vote system, also known as the method of preferential voting, does not involve two elections. In an election, the voters are required to make their order of preference for the candidates in a constituency. Thus, a voter is to mark 1 opposite his first choice on the ballot and accordingly 2 and 3 opposite to his second and third alternative preferences. Then if, on the counting of the first preferences of all the voters none of the candidates is found to get an absolute majority, the candidate getting the lower number of votes is dropped out of the contest and the second choices of the voters who voted for him as their first choice are distributed according to their preferences. In the second counting that follows, the first and second choices are totalled to see if any candidate gets an absolute majority. Even then if an absolute majority for someone does not emerge, the process of eliminating candidates from the bottom of the poll continues, till one gets an absolute majority.

Advantages

Firstly, compared to the Plurality system fewer votes are wasted in this system of voting.

Secondly, though in this system winning candidate is required to secure atleast 50% support yet single majority government is not ruled out entirely.

Finally, the outcome cannot be influenced by deals made between candidates.

Disadvantage

Firstly, this system is biased in favour of large parties.

Secondly, the outcome may be determined by the preferences exhibited by voters in small numbers which has the potential threat of extremist parties.

Finally, winning candidates may enjoy little first preference support thereby, making the government not stable enough to tackle situations.

Second Ballot

The second ballot system involves second or runoff elections immediately after the first. Under this system, the voter is required to vote for one candidate only. If no candidate is able to obtain absolute majority, second ballot is held to decide the winner. This system of voting was prevalent in France and Germany for some time. Under this system constituencies are drawn on a geographical basis on the lines of plurality system. Hence, this may suffer from the same disadvantages as noticed in the case of the plurality system.

Advantage

Firstly, the system provides a wide range of choices for the electorates.

Secondly, strong and stable government can be formed out of this system.

Finally, as candidates win elections by a majority support so they are encouraged to make their appeal as broad as possible.

Disadvantage

Firstly, it may distort the preferences and is often unfair to the third parties.

Secondly, it may found to be too stressful for the electorates and may even test their patience and interest in politics.

Finally, runoff candidates are encouraged to abandon their principles in search of short term popularity.

Proportional Representation

The single member constituency system does not ensure mathematically exact representation of the electorate. Certain small minorities, under this scheme, may go all together unrepresented and the legislature may not reflect proportional representation of the actual majorities and the minorities. To remedy this defect,

political theorists and practical politicians of different shades of opinion have sought to bring forward various arrangements for what is known as proportional representation. There are many variations of these electoral systems. But whatever may be the diverse technicalities, this system involves multimember constituencies instead of single member ones.

Advantages

Firstly, in a society there are various sections with their peculiar problems and opinions. To make the legislature a true mirror of the nation, it is essential that all sections are directly represented. Proportional representation enables due representation of all types of groups, such as ethnic groups, women, different interests and ideologies.

Secondly, under this system, there will not be any necessity for reappointment and redrawing of the boundaries of electoral districts with a rapidly fluctuating relationship of population to districts. Thus, this system will eliminate the practice of “Gerry mandering.”

Disadvantage

Firstly, the critics of proportional representation argue that it encourages divisive, centrifugal forces, and aggravates sectionalism.

Secondly, the whole logic of democracy is based on the conception of national welfare and a common interest. The idea is that, various sectional interests will work out an ultimate compromise. Proportional representation by widening the area of conflict rather than that of agreement, spells a danger for democracy.

Thirdly, the inevitable consequence of organised group interests and minority thinking is the splintering of political parties. By substituting narrow sectional interests for the national welfare, proportional representation tends to equate a faction with a political party.

Fourthly, the splintering of political parties makes the legislative body filled with numerous groups. No single party possess the independent strength to form a government. Hence, weak coalition governments are formed. The government lacks the solidarity for effective legislative leadership and for the formulation of a coherent policy.

Fifthly, the vast size of the electoral districts under a system of proportional representation involves a number of difficulties. It renders impossible an intimate connection of the candidate with his constituency. In a single member constituency, the candidates can visit the different sections and try to understand the 'configuration of opinion'. But when a gigantic multimember constituency consists of hundreds and thousands of voters, neither can the candidate make contact with all nor do can voters know him/her well.

Finally, what is more dangerous is that proportional representation tends to widen the gap between the electorate and the government further. The effect is that the electorate fails to understand who should be held responsible for a policy and consequently feels alienated from governing.

There are two main schemes for proportional representation namely-

1. Hare System
2. List System

Hare System

The single transferable vote, called the Hare system, was first suggested in 1857 by an Englishman named Thomas Hare in a pamphlet entitled *The Machinery of Representation*. In a Hare system, large constituencies are set up and the voter has only one effective vote. Under this system, a voter is required to indicate his/her order of preference against the names of different candidates. For each constituency a quota is set which a candidate needs to reach. The quota is determined by dividing the total number of votes cast by one more than the number of seats to be filled and then by adding one to the result.

$$\text{Quota} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Votes}}{\text{Number of seats} + 1} + 1$$

The candidates who reach the quota on the result of the first counting of the ballots was declared elected. His/her 'surplus votes' ie. first preferences over and above the electoral quota are redistributed among those candidates whom these voters have given their next preference, in proportion to the number of second preferences obtained by each of such candidates. The candidate obtaining the least number of first preferences is eliminated and the next preferences of his/her voters are added to the first preferences of those candidates this process of redistribution

from both sides is repeated till the number of candidates securing the electoral quota equals the number of seats available, who are then declared elected. This system has been used in the national elections of Irish Republic and Malta.

List System

This system is widely used in continental European countries. It takes two forms, the bound list and the free list. Under either type, each political party prepares lists containing the names of its candidates in the constituencies. Thus, if from one constituency, six members are to be elected, each political party will make a list containing six names of its own candidates. The voter must vote for the list prepared by a political party. Under this system the voter is required to mark one list according to his/her choice. In case of a bound list the voter is not allowed to express his own preferences for the candidates listed by the party. He/she is simply to follow the order of preference determined by the party. The free list system, however, allows the voter to indicate his/her own preference among candidates and in some countries like Switzerland, the voter may even write in additional name. The list system is employed in voting for national elections in Germany, Italy, Israel, Switzerland, Finland etc.

10.9 Conclusion

Democracy in contemporary era is passing through a stage of perpetual crisis. This becomes more evident when even in democratic countries underneath a formal democratic institutions, public leaders are found to be engaged in serious democratic abuse which often adversely affects the sanctity attached to the democratic principles. The rising cost of running an election in a hugely populous country has placed many of the developing countries in grave economic crisis. The role of the media is further not beyond the range of influences. Infact, private and social media have many of their obligations to be fulfilled which restricts them from their inherent neutrality and often prompts them to embody certain biases. Even individual journalist closer to political actors lose their ability to work independently and with credibility. With political parties prone more towards internal struggles for power and growing deficiencies in intellectual and ideological capacities of political leaders have made the voters look forward for a more complementary element of participation and accountability required for the system. This calls for a more effective electoral

management system that might struggles against the possible adversaries of democracies and ensures a more adequate and systematic representation for the next generation possible voters.

10.10 Summing Up

- Elections in recent years turned out to be an essential condition for the sustenance of democracy.
- In a representative democracy elections are usually held on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise. Opinions varied from a group favouring universal suffrage to the other seeking to restrict suffrage.
- Representative systems in contemporary times can be classified into two alternative systems namely Territorial Representation and Functional Representation.
- Territorial Representation is often called geographic representation. The territorial principle of representation is prevalent in most countries having representative governments.
- The available system of representation can be divided into two broad categories on the basis of how they convert votes into seats namely majoritarian systems and proportional systems.

10.11 Probable Question

Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain the majoritarian system.
2. What is the method for minority representation? Examine its advantages and disadvantages.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on Hare system.
2. What are the different safeguards of territorial representation?
3. What is the Second Ballot system?

4. Examine the debates with regard to Universal Adult Franchise.
5. What is Territorial Representation? What are its advantages and disadvantages? State its various safeguards.
6. Classify the different methods of representation. State their advantages and disadvantages.

Objective Questions :

1. What is meant by Gerrymandering ?
2. What is the salient feature of the Second Ballot system ?
3. What is meant by proportional representation ?

10.12 Further Reading

1. Heywood A., *Politics*, London, Macmillan Press, 1997.
2. Gauba O. P., *Political Ideas and Ideologies*, Delhi, Macmillan India, 2010.

Module–3

Unit – 11 □ Election System : Definition and Procedures

Structure

- 11.1 Objective**
- 11.2 Introduction**
- 11.3 Need for Election**
- 11.4 Election and Election System**
- 11.5 Factors Central to Assessing an Election System**
- 11.6 Functions of Elections**
- 11.7 Direct and Indirect Election**
- 11.8 Conclusion**
- 11.9 Summing Up**
- 11.10 Probable Questions**
- 11.11 Further Reading**

11.1 Objective

This unit would acquaint the learner with :

- Meaning and definition of election and election system.
- Procedure of election system.
- Importance of election in political system.
- Various types of election system.

11.2 Introduction

It is a valuable political right of the people to choose a ruler to govern and run the state especially, in the democratic political system. However, not only in

the democratic political system but also the rulers of undemocratic systems hold elections to give legitimacy to their rule or maintain the stability of their rule. Different democracies worldwide have separate state structures, different political histories, government systems, political institutions, and political cultures that can make a difference in the elections process of a particular political system or country. Due to this, different types of elections and election systems can be observed at different levels of elections in different countries or within the country.

Most countries in the world regard periodic and regular elections as a core attribute of democracy. In 2016, a total of 132 elections were held worldwide in presidential, legislative or local contests. Electoral processes held under conditions that meet global and regional standards for being credible give meaning to democracy's core values of political equality and the accountability of those who govern. At a basic and practical level, elections are a critical element of an effective anti-corruption strategy, even if the fear of losing an election is not always enough to prevent elected officials from being corrupt. Nonetheless, how far the underlying rules of the game of elections affect the practice of democracy is often under-appreciated. The rules embodied in an electoral system are critical to how democracy is practiced in a given setting.

11.3 Need for Election

Elections are the lifeline of a democracy. Elections fulfil following needs :

- (i) Election is the best way by which representatives of the people can be chosen and sent to legislatures to serve their interests.
- (ii) When there is a contest between different candidates for the same position, it gives the voters freedom of choice and makes it easy to elect candidates by casting their votes.
- (iii) Elections help the people to evaluate government's activities, political parties know that they will be ousted from power if they do not perform according to the people's expectations.
- (iv) By contesting elections either as members of a political party or as independent candidates, people get a chance to form the government and make laws and policies for the welfare of their people and the country.

- (v) Election is the only means to peacefully transfer power/ authority to a new authority or ruler.
- (vi) Elections can make citizens an active participant in the policymaking or rulemaking process

11.4 Election and Election System

The strengths of democracy are reflected in citizens' intensity and attachment when it comes to casting their votes. Millions of voters engage in elections. Voters in a democracy contribute to the governance process. This is of great importance in understanding and legitimizing the true meaning of democracy. An election is a process in which people vote to choose a person or group of people to hold an official position. The election is a mechanism by which people can choose their representatives at regular intervals and change them if they wish to do so. It is the process through which people choose their representatives to form the government.

The electoral system is one of the primary sources of institutional diversity among democratic countries. The electoral system is an essential element in the political system of a state. It is regulated by legal norms that, taken as a whole, form electoral law and the electoral right. An electoral system is the rules that decide how votes are cast, counted and translated into legislature seats, and these systems vary widely worldwide. They govern the conduct of elections. The Electoral Systems focuses on the design, mechanisms, and effects of different electoral systems on national, local and supranational levels. There are various elements of election, such as the offices for election, an electoral college, candidates for election, procedures for election, the rules for capturing the vote and counting it, declaration of results, and certifying the fidelity of the elections.

The choice of Electoral System is one of the most important institutional decisions for any democracy. The choice of a particular electoral system has a profound effect on the future political life of the country concerned, and electoral systems, once chosen, often remain relatively constant as political interests solidify around and respond to the incentives presented by them. However, while the conscious design has become far more prevalent recently, traditionally, it has been rare for electoral systems to be consciously and deliberately selected.

The global movement towards democratic governance in the 1980s and 1990s, stimulated a new urgency in the search for enduring models of appropriate representative institutions and a fresh re-evaluation of electoral systems. This process was encouraged by realizing that the choice of political institutions can significantly impact the broader political system. Electoral systems are today viewed as one of the most influential political institutions and of crucial importance to more general issues of governance.

Electoral processes held under conditions that meet global and regional standards for being credible give meaning to democracy's core values of political equality and the accountability of those who govern. Nonetheless, how far the underlying rules of the game of elections affect the practice of democracy is often under-appreciated. The rules embodied in an electoral system are critical to how democracy is practiced in a given setting. Electoral systems are the rules in constitutions or laws that describe how votes are translated into seats, such as a typical single presidential 'seat', a member of parliament's seat, or a member of local government's seat.

The electoral system is an essential element in the political system of a state. It is regulated by legal norms that, taken as a whole, form electoral law and the electoral right. The electoral system includes two elements :

- (A) The principles and conditions of participation in the formation of elective bodies, In determining the conditions for citizen participation in the formation of elective state bodies, the electoral systems of the socialist countries proceed from the principles of universality and equality. Voters participate in elections on an equal basis: they have one vote each in elections to each representative body (chamber), and every vote influences the results of the elections equally.
- (B) The organization and procedure for elections (the electoral process): The electoral systems of the bourgeois countries are formally based on the principles of universality and equality, but various electoral qualifications frequently restrict these principles. In the USA, for example, where dozens of such qualifications operate, approximately 20 million people are deprived of the right to vote. Equality of the citizens' electoral rights in capitalist countries is violated by unequal representation for various population groups. (Usually by granting unlawful advantages to sparsely settled and

politically backward rural areas), by setting up the so-called plural vote and establishing a system of determining the winner that gives an advantage to the major bourgeois parties.

11.5 Factors Central to Assessing an Election System

Four factors emerge as central to assessing an electoral process.

First is the ease of voting: the ability to qualify citizens to register, become candidates and participate in voting should be as barrier-free as possible. Equally important is ballot design—whether traditional paper or electronic, the ballot must be presented and designed to minimize mistakes or intentional manipulation.

Second, determining which political parties and candidates are eligible to run for office is a critical part of the process. Nominations, democracy within political parties, and official determination of candidacies must be fair, transparent and consistent with democratic principles.

Third, the process of campaigning is about mobilization or rallying citizens around a candidate, party, program, or set of ideas. Campaigns are often extremely divisive precisely because elections are designed to be competitive. Candidates and parties seek to define what they are and what they believe, but also what they do not represent or believe.

Fourth, perhaps the most important institution for ensuring a credible and, to the extent possible, free and fair election is the electoral management body (EMB).

11.6 Functions of Elections

The elections in democracies serve **four principal functions**. These help to identify the most critical questions for understanding why and how elections matter. The four principal functions of elections are :

- (a) **Legitimization of Ruler** : The legitimacy of ruling elites in a democracy is ideally conferred through ‘free and fair’ or ‘clean’ electoral processes that are free of corruption, intimidation or restricted choice. An important question for any electoral process is - how and in what ways does the electoral process confer on the government legitimacy to wield authority and to advance socio-economic development?

- (b) **Exercising Accountability** : Through electoral processes, leaders are ‘held to account’ by the people for providing security and fostering development—or providing critical goods and services such as a stable environment for economic development. To what extent does the electoral process allow the exercise of accountability? The relationship between elections and accountability is not automatic. It depends on the conscious and politically educated citizens of the political system.
- (c) **Choosing ‘representatives’** : Representation happens in quite formal ways, such as through the nomination of candidates and lists of political parties. Still, representation also has a deeper meaning regarding how such individuals or organizations portray what they seek to represent. In practical terms, representation can be presented as -
- (i) Ideological representation: such as by a ‘socialist’ party.
 - (ii) In geographic terms: such as by Italy’s Northern League, in India Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.
 - (iii) Ethnic, racial, religious, or sectarian lines: Such as the political parties in Northern Ireland.
 - (iv) Other lines, such as the environmentalism of the Green Party in Germany.
- Constructing ideas of ‘representation’ is at the core of electoral processes in that they articulate visions of inclusion and exclusion in the political community and its shared values, purposes, and goals.
- (d) **Exercising Voice, Aggregating Preferences** : Electoral processes give meaning to the principles of political equality and popular control in democracy. In ideal conditions, they also help to ‘educate’ the voter by setting common agendas, defining the issues, articulating alternatives and options, and engaging in competition with others on the best way forward. The concept of ‘voice’ is essential to electoral processes, together with the aggregation of each citizen’s views into a common social or public choice.

Other functions are :

- (e) **Educating Voters** : The campaigning process provides the electorate with much information about parties, candidates, policies, the current government’s

record, the political system, and so on. However, this leads to education only if the information provided and how it is provided engages public interest and stimulates debate, as opposed to apathy and alienation. As candidates and parties seek to persuade rather than to educate, they also have a strong incentive to provide incomplete and distorted information.

- (f) **Influencing Policy :** Elections deter governments from pursuing radical and deeply unpopular policies, but in the only unexceptional case, when a single issue dominates the election campaign, can they be said to influence policy directly. It can also be argued that the range of policy options outlined in elections is typically so narrow that the result can be of only marginal policy significance. Others suggest that government policy is, in any case, shaped more by practical dictates such as the state of the economy than it is by electoral consideration.
- (g) **Strengthening Elites :** Elections can also be a vehicle through which elites can manipulate and control the masses. This possibility encouraged Proudhon to warn that 'universal suffrage is counter-revolution. Political discontent and opposition can be neutralized by elections that channel them in a constitutional direction and allow governments to come and go while the regime itself survives. Elections are particularly effective in this respect because, at the same time, they give citizens the impression that they are exercising power over the government.
- (h) **Making Government :** Election makes governments directly only in states such as the USA, France, and Venezuela in which the political executive is directly elected. In the more common parliamentary system, elections influence the formation of governments, most strongly when the electoral system tends to give a single party a clear parliamentary majority. The use of proportional representation may mean that governments are formed through post-election deals and that government can be made and unmade without the need for an election.
- (i) **Recruiting of Politician :** In democratic states, elections are the principal source of political recruitment, taking into account also of the processes through which parties nominate candidates. Politicians thus tend to possess talents and skills related to electioneering, such as charisma, oratorical skill, and good looks, not necessarily those that suit them to carrying out

constituency duties, serving on committees, and running government departments. Elections are typically not used to fill posts that require specialist knowledge and experiences, such as those in the civil service or judiciary.

11.7 Direct and Indirect Election

Elections may be Direct or Indirect.

- (a) **Direct Election :** Direct election is a process by which the voters participate directly in the choice of public office holders. In the direct election process, citizens vote directly for deputies to the representative body. Direct election involve the electorate casting their votes directly in an election for candidates of their choice that will represent them either in the executive or legislature, without any interference. An example of direct election is the election of Lok Sabha and Legislative assemblies in various states in India; election of the President of France which has been a popular vote since the amendment of the Constitution of the first French Republic in 1962.

The characteristics of Direct Election include the following :

- The voters do not need to go through any intermediate body or person to select their political leaders.
- Direct election is the method of election most closely associated with democracy.
- Direct election may be open or secret ballot, by proxy or by postal voting.
- It may take the form of referendum, plebiscite, recall or initiative.
- Direct elections can be conducted in small or large states.

Direct election has the following advantages.

- (i) It allows the electorate themselves to choose their representatives.
- (ii) The voters know the candidates and issues directly involved in an election and this raises thier political consciousness.
- (iii) There is direct communication between the electors and the prospective political leaders.

- (iv) The rights of the electors are restored in voting for the right candidate of their choice.
- (v) It satisfies the democratic principle by its openness and mass participation in political decision making of the country.
- (vi) Direct election is simple and easy-to-understand by the electorate. It gives the electorate quality of votes; One Man, One Votes.

Direct election has the following disadvantages.

- (i) If the electorate is left to itself, it may not be able to make the best choice among candidates. This is largely the case with ignorant or uninformed voters.
- (ii) It is difficult to organise a direct election in a large under developed country with poor infrastructure.
- (iii) Although direct election is open, the real issues and interests at stake tended to be masqueraded. As such, election is more or less a ritual as the preferred candidates representing the interests of the party oligarchy still have a very good chance of being elected.
- (iv) This mode of election is expensive to operate as the government, Election Commission, political parties and even candidates have to expend huge amounts of money on elections.

- (b) Indirect Election** (by several stages) : In the indirect election process, the members of the representative body are elected by subordinate elected bodies or electoral colleges that may be made up either of electors elected by the population or of the subordinate representative bodies, or both.

As a rule, direct elections are followed in the socialist countries; the majority of the chambers of supreme representative bodies in Yugoslavia and the regional and metropolitan councils in Hungary are formed through indirect elections. In the bourgeois countries, in the context of party rivalry, indirect elections distort the will of the voters in favour of the strong bourgeois parties.

In the majority of cases, rules of socialist countries governing elections to state bodies provides for secret voting, which guarantees the voters free expression of their will.

Most bourgeois states' electoral systems are founded on the principle of the so-called free mandate. (The independence of the deputy from the voters),

Socialist electoral systems are based on the principle of imperative mandate. In a socialist system, deputies or representatives are bound by the voters' mandate. They are responsible to the citizen in all of their activity.

Correspondingly, the right to recall deputies /members who have not justified the voters' confidence is lacking in bourgeois states.

In socialist states, the right to recall deputies is one of the most important elements of the electoral system. In the erstwhile USSR, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, it was exercised through open voting at assemblies of voters, whereas in Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, recall is by the same procedure as the elections; in the German Democratic Republic, recall is carried out by the representative body itself, on the initiative of the voters.

11.8 Conclusion

Electoral processes give meaning to the principles of political equality and popular control in democracy. In ideal conditions, they also help to 'educate' the voter by setting common agendas, defining the issues, articulating alternatives and options, and engaging in competition with others on the best way forward. The concept of 'voice' is essential to electoral processes, together with the aggregation of each citizen's views into a common social or public choice.

Political institutions shape the rules of the game under which democracy is practiced. It is often argued that the most straightforward political institution to manipulate is the electoral system, for good or bad. In translating the votes cast in a general election into seats in the legislature, the choice of electoral system can effectively determine who is elected and which party gains power. While many aspects of a country's political framework are often specified in the constitution and can thus be difficult to amend, electoral system change often only involves new legislation and can thus be subject to manipulation by the unscrupulous majority. Even with each voter casting the same vote and the same number of votes for each party, one electoral system may lead to a coalition or a minority government. At the same time, another may allow a single party to get majority support.

11.9 Summing Up

- Most countries in the world regard periodic and regular elections as a core attribute of democracy.
- The electoral system is a strong determinant of the nature of democracy.
- The effect of electoral systems as rules for translating votes into seats, which in turn affects how parties organize and arrange themselves in relation to one another in a party system, is highly complex phenomenon.
- Voters in a democracy contribute to the governance process and mediate the legitimacy of equality and pluralism.
- The Electoral Systems focuses on the design, mechanisms, and effects of different electoral systems on national, local and supranational levels.

11.10 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. What is Election (electoral) system? Discuss the various components of the election system.
2. What is direct and indirect method of the election? Discuss the demerits of the direct election method.
3. Explain the factors relevant for assessing an Election System.
4. Discuss the importance of Electoral Systems in a democratic country.

Short Questions :

1. Briefly discuss the need for an election.
2. What are the different types of Election Systems?

Objective Questions :

1. Which constitutional amendment introduces the direct election method to elect the president of France?
2. Name any country where the right to recall deputies is one of the essential elements of the electoral system.

3. Why did proudhon describe universal suffrage as counter revolution ?

11.11 Further Reading

1. Heywood, Andrew. Politics, Basingstoke : Palgrave, 2002.
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3. Gouba, O P. An Introduction to Political Theory. New Delhi : Macmillan India Limited, 1999.
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5. Electoral System Design : An Overview of the New International IDEA Handbook, Stockholm: International IDEA, 2005.

Unit – 12 □ Types of Election System–Hare and List System

Structure

12.1 Objective

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Types of Electoral System

12.3.1 Majoritarian electoral systems

12.3.1.1 Plurality Elections

12.3.1.2 Second Ballot Majority-Runoff Systems

12.3.1.3 Alternative Vote

12.3.2 Semi-Proportional Systems

12.3.2.1 Single Transferable Vote (STV)

12.3.3 Proportional Representation:

12.3.3.1 List System (Party Lists Systems)

12.3.3.2 Hare System Voting

12.3.4 Mixed Systems

12.4 Conclusion

12.5 Summing Up

12.6 Probable Questions

12.7 Further Reading

12.1 Objective

After study of this unit the learners will be able to :

- Explain the various types of electoral system.
- Understand the method of Hare and List System

- Explain applicability and necessity of Hare and List System
- Understand the importance of Hare and List System

12.2 Introduction

Scholars specialized in the field of election system are amazed by the diversity and complexity of contemporary electoral systems. The rules that govern how votes are cast and seats allocated differ markedly from one country to another. Selecting an electoral system is not a purely technical decision. It may have huge consequences for the operation of the political system. Harold J Laski has suggested that an electoral system should satisfy four general considerations. In the first place, the system should so constitute the legislature that on the vital issues of public policy the legislature must reflect the opinions of the majority and minority. Secondly, the area which returns representatives to the legislature must be small enough to develop personal relations between the elected representatives and the electorate. Thirdly, the electoral system must have 'a means between elections, of checking the result of a general election by revealing the drift of opinion among the voters'. Fourthly, the system must develop a direct and close relationship between the government and the electorate.

Typologies of electoral systems can be based on the electoral formula, which determines how votes are to be counted in order to allocate seats, on district magnitude, which refers to the number of seats per constituency or on ballot structure, which defines how voters express their choice. Experience teaches that electoral engineers are quite imaginative folks. There are three basic electoral formulas, corresponding to as many criteria of legitimacy as to what is required to be elected. Supporters of plurality are satisfied when a candidate gets more votes than each individual opponent, while others feel that one should be declared the winner only if he or she can muster more than half of the vote, that is, a majority. Advocates of proportional representation (PR) feel that political parties should be represented in parliament in exact (or nearly exact) proportion to the vote they polled. Mixed systems combine PR with either plurality or majority. It is convenient to examine electoral formulas in chronological order (from the oldest to the more recent) and in the order of their complexity (from the simplest in its application to the most sophisticated). While plurality in English parliamentary elections dates

back to the Middle Ages and majority began to be applied to legislative elections in the early 19th century, PR was imagined during the first half of the 19th century and began to be used for national legislative elections at the end of that century.

12.3 Types of Electoral System

There are countless electoral system variations, the most common way to look at electoral systems is to group them by how closely they translate votes won into parliamentary seats won; that is, how proportional they are. To do this, one needs to look at both the vote-seat relationship and the level of wasted votes. For example, South Africa used a classically proportional electoral system for its first democratic elections of 1994, and with 62.65% of the popular vote the African National Congress (ANC) won 63% of the national seats. The electoral system was highly proportional, and the number of wasted votes (i.e., those which were cast for parties who did not win seats in the Assembly) was only 0.8% of the total. In direct contrast the year before, in the neighbouring nation of Lesotho, a classically majoritarian First Past the Post electoral system had resulted in the Basotho Congress Party winning every seat in the 65-member parliament with 75% of the popular vote; there was no parliamentary opposition at all, and the 25% of electors who voted for other parties were completely unrepresented. This result was mirrored in Djibouti's Block Vote election of 1992 when all 65 parliamentary seats were won by the People's Rally for Progress (Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès) with 75% of the vote.

However, under some circumstances non-proportional electoral systems (such as FPTP) can accidentally give rise to relatively proportional overall results. This was the case in a third Southern African country, Malawi, in 1994. In that election the leading party, the United Democratic Front won 48% of the seats with 46% of the votes, the Malawian Congress Party won 32% of the seats with 34% of the votes, and the Alliance for Democracy won 20% of the seats with 19% of the votes. The overall level of proportionality was high, but the clue to the fact that this was not inherently a proportional system, and so cannot be categorized as such, was that the wasted votes still amounted to almost one-quarter of all votes cast.

Electoral Systems or Election Systems that are currently in use vary across

the globe. There are many ways on the basis of which, electoral system can be classified. Classifying them on the basis of Structure of the ballot, electoral formula and distinct Magnitude; we get four broad categories: Plurality System, Majority System, Proportional Representation and Mixed -member Representation. Further, different types of systems fall within each of these types.

Ever since the seminal work of Maurice Duverger (1954) and Douglas Rae (1971), a flourishing literature has classified the main types of electoral systems and sought to analyse their consequences. Systems vary according to a number of key dimensions including district magnitude, ballot structures, effective thresholds, mal apportionment, assembly size, and open/closed lists, but the most important variations concern electoral formula.

Electoral formula determines how votes are counted to allocate seats. There are four main types :

- (A) **Majoritarian formulas** (including plurality, second ballot, and alternative voting systems);
- (B) **Semi-proportional systems** (such as the single transferable vote, the cumulative vote, and the limited vote);
- (C) **Proportional representation** (including open and closed party lists using largest remainders and highest averages formula); and,
- (D) **Mixed systems** (like the Additional Member System combining majoritarian and proportional elements).

12.3.1 Majoritarian Electoral Systems

A worldwide survey found that 83 out of 150 countries were found to use majoritarian systems (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1993). This is the oldest electoral system, dating back at least to the 12th Century, and also the simplest. This category can be subdivided into those requiring candidates to win a plurality, or an absolute majority (50+ percent) of votes to be elected.

12.3.1.1 Plurality Elections

Plurality systems, otherwise known as ‘first-past-the-post, is used for election to the lower chamber in 43 countries including the United Kingdom, Canada, India, the United States, and many Commonwealth states. The aim of plurality systems is to create a ‘manufactured majority’, that is to exaggerate the share of seats for

the leading party in order to produce an effective working parliamentary majority for the government, while simultaneously penalising minor parties, especially those whose support is spatially dispersed. In ‘winner take all’, the leading party boosts its legislative base, while the trailing parties get meager rewards. The focus is effective governance, not representation of all minority views. The basic system of simple plurality voting in parliamentary general elections is widely familiar: countries are divided into territorial single-member constituencies; voters within each constituency cast a single ballot (marked by a X) for one candidate; the candidate with the largest share of the vote in each seat is returned to office; and in turn the party with an overall majority of seats forms the government. One feature of this system is that single-member constituencies are based on the size of the electorate. The United States is divided into 435 Congressional districts each including roughly equal populations with one House representative per district. Boundaries are reviewed at periodic intervals, based on the census, to equalize the electorate. Yet the number of electors per constituency varies dramatically cross-nationally: for example India has 545 representatives for a population of 898 million, so each member of the Lok Sabha serves about 1.6 million people, while in contrast Ireland has 166 members in the Dail for a population of 3.5 million, or one seat per 21,000 people. The geographic size of constituencies also varies substantially within countries, from small, densely packed inner-city seats to sprawling and more remote rural areas.

12.3.1.2 Second Ballot Majority-Runoff Systems

Other systems use alternative mechanisms to ensure that the winning candidate gets an overall majority of votes. In France the second ballot ‘majority-runoff’ system is used in elections for the Presidency. Candidates obtaining an absolute majority of votes (50 percent+) in the first round are declared elected. If this is not the case a second round is held between the two candidates who got the highest number of votes. This system is used in 15 of the 25 countries with direct presidential elections including Austria, Columbia, Finland and Russia. In the 1996 Russian Presidential election, for example, 78 candidates registered to run for election, of which 17 qualified for nomination. Boris Yeltsin won 35.3 percent of the vote in the first round, with Gennadii Zyuganov, the Communist candidate; close behind with 32 percent, and Alexander Lebed third with 14.5 percent of the vote. After the other candidates dropped out, and Lebed swung his supporters behind Yeltsin, the final result was a decisive 53.8 percent for Yeltsin against 40.3 percent for Zyuganov.

12.3.1.3 Alternative Vote

Another majoritarian system is the Alternative Vote, which is used in elections to the Australian House of Representatives and in Ireland for Presidential elections. Australia is divided into 148 single member constituencies. Instead of a simple 'X', voters rank their preferences among candidate (1,2,3...). To win, candidates need an absolute majority of votes. Where no one gets over 50 per cent after first preferences are counted, then the candidate at the bottom of the pile with the lowest share of the vote is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed amongst the other candidates. The process continues until an absolute majority is secured. In the 1996 Australian elections, for example, there was a close call on the first preferences, with both the Australian Labour Party and the Liberal party getting 38.7 percent of the vote. In the final preferences however the ALP won 46.4 percent compared with 53.6 percent for non-ALP candidates. Again this process translates a close lead into a more decisive majority of seats for the leading party. This systematically discriminates against those at the bottom of the poll in order to promote effective government for the winner.

12.3.2 Semi-Proportional Systems

Semi-proportional systems provide another option, including the cumulative vote where citizens are given as many votes as representatives, and where votes can be cumulated on a single candidate (used in duel-member seats in 19th Century Britain and in the State of Illinois until 1980). The limited vote is similar, but voters are given fewer votes than the number of members to be elected (used in elections to the Spanish Senate). In Japan, until 1994, voters used the Single Non-Transferable Vote where electors cast a single vote in a multi-member district.

12.3.2.1 Single Transferable Vote (STV)

The system in this category, which continues to be used, is the 'Single Transferable Vote' (STV) currently employed in legislative elections in Ireland, Malta, and the Australian Senate. Each country is divided into multi-member constituencies which each have about four or five representatives. Parties put forward as many candidates as they think could win in each constituency. Voters rank their preferences among candidates (1, 2,3,4...). The total number of votes is counted, and then the number of seats divides this total in the constituency to produce a quota. To be elected, candidates must reach the minimum quota. When

the first preferences are counted, if no candidates reach the quota, then the person with the least votes is eliminated, and their votes redistributed according to second preferences. This process continues until all seats are filled.

12.3.3 Proportional Representation

Proportional Representation systems are widely used in Europe and in Australia for upper houses. Proportional Representation systems attempt to relate the allocation of seats as closely as possible to the distribution of votes. Many Proportional Representation systems have been developed to overcome the problems of proportionality that are associated with single member constituencies which use either plurality or majoritarian systems. Multi-member constituencies where there is more than one vacancy are necessary for proportional representation to work well.

Where majoritarian systems emphasize governability, proportional systems focus on the inclusion of minority voices. Proportional electoral systems based on Party Lists in multimember constituencies are widespread throughout Europe, and worldwide 57 out of 150 countries use PR.

12.3.3.1 List System (*Party Lists Systems*)

Proportional Representation systems can be broadly grouped into two categories :

- (a) **List systems and**
- (b) **The Single-Transferable Vote system.** In turn, List systems can be further divided into :
 - (i) Largest Remainder and
 - (ii) Highest Average categories.

List systems may or may not allow the elector to choose between candidates of the same party. List systems can be either

- (1) Closed, allowing no choice at all;
- (2) Flexible, where the voter can vote for the party or a candidate;
- (3) Open, where there is no party vote, but candidates listed in order;
or
- (4) Free, where the candidates are not placed in any order by the parties

The principle of proportional representation is that the seats in a constituency are divided according to the number of votes cast for party lists, but there are considerable variations in how this is implemented in different systems. Party lists may be open as in Norway, Finland, the Netherlands and Italy, in which case voters can express preferences for particular candidates within the list. Or they may be closed as in Israel, Portugal, Spain and Germany, in which case voters can only select the party, and the political party determines the ranking of candidates. The rank order on the party list determines which candidates are elected, for example the top ten to fifteen names. Party Lists may also be national as in Israel, where all the country is one constituency divided into 120 seats. But most Party Lists are regional, as in Belgium where there are seven regions each sub-divided into between 2-34 seats. The electoral formula varies among systems. Votes can be allocated to seats based on the highest averages method. This requires the number of votes for each party to be divided successively by a series of divisors, and seats are allocated to parties that secure the highest resulting quotient, up to the total number of seats available.

12.3.3.2 Hare System Voting : (*Ranked choice voting*) :

This system was named by the name of Sir **Thomas Hare**, (1806–1891) a British lawyer, MP, and proponent of electoral reform. Hare system is an electoral system of proportional representation that aims to achieve party representation in the closest proportion to actual voting strength by transferring votes beyond those needed to elect a candidate from that candidate to the next indicated choice. In this method voters rank candidates in order of preference - 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice, etc. All first choices are tallied and in a single-winner race, if no candidate receives a majority (50%+1) of first-choice votes, the less popular candidates are eliminated and ballots cast for these candidates are redistributed to more popular candidates, based on their voters' second choices, until one candidate wins with a majority. As a result, every vote counts and very few votes are "wasted." Voters cast their vote for their favourite candidate knowing that if he or she doesn't gather enough votes to win, their vote will count toward their second choice. This helps ensure that more voters than ever are represented by someone they voted for and provides greater opportunity for more diverse representation.

The basic concept of Proportional Representation systems is to allocate seats in a legislature or Houses of Parliament in a relationship which is proportional

to the number of votes cast in the election. To achieve this requirement a number of different and complex computational arrangements have been devised. These arrangements may or may not include the use of a quota.

A quota in this context is the number of votes required to obtain a seat. The simplest method of determining a quota is to divide the number of valid votes by the number of seats to be allocated. This method is often referred to as the Hare quota.

Three alternatives to the Hare quota exist :

- (1) The Hagen-bach-Bischoff quota, in which the number of votes is divided by the number of seats plus one;
- (2) The Droop quota, in which the number of votes is divided by the number of seats plus one and adding one to the quotient;
- (3) and the Imperial quota, in which the number of votes is divided by the number of seats plus two.

The Largest Remainder system favours smaller parties over larger parties when using the Hare quota. The relative importance of remainders in the allocation of seats can be reduced by the use of a lower quota (Hagen-bach-Bischoff or Droop quota). Lower quotas result in more seats being allocated on the basis of parties receiving a full quota and less being allocated by remainders. However, the use of a lower quota does not always overcome the proportionality problem of the Largest Remainder system.

To overcome problems associated with the Largest Remainder system, the Highest Average system was devised. The object of the Highest Average system is to ensure that when all seats have been allocated the average number of votes required to win one seat shall be as near as possible the same for each party.

The Highest Average system can be used with or without a quota. When used with a quota, the system is sometimes referred to as a Hagen-bach-Bischoff system. The system derives its name from the method of allocation of seats to parties. Under the system, each party's votes are divided by a series of divisors to produce an average vote. The party with the highest averages votes after each stage of the process is allocated a seat. After a party has been allocated a seat, its votes are then divided by the next divisor.

The Highest Average system has a number of different variations, depending upon the divisors used and whether a quota is used or not. The d'Hondt version uses the numbers one, two, three, four, etc. as its divisors.

The form of Proportional Representation familiar to most Australians is the Single-Transferable Vote system used in elections for the Senate, the Legislative Councils of New South Wales, South Australian and Western Australia and the Tasmanian House of Assembly. The Tasmanian system, referred to as Hare-Clark, differs from the system used for the Senate and States' Upper Houses in a number of ways. However, the basic concepts are the same.

12.3.4 Mixed Systems

Many newer systems, such as those recently adopted in Italy, New Zealand and Russia, use mixed systems, although with a variety of alternative designs. The Additional Member System (combining majoritarian and proportional elements) used in Germany combines single member and party list constituencies. Electors have two votes. Half the Members of the Bundestag (328) are elected in single-member constituencies based on a simple plurality of votes. The remaining MPs are elected from closed party lists in each region (Land). Parties, which receive, less than a specified minimum threshold of list votes (5 per cent) are not be entitled to any seats. The total number of seats, which a party receives in Germany, is based on the Niemeyer method, which ensures that seats are proportional to second votes cast for party lists. Smaller parties which received, say, 10 per cent of the list vote, but which did not win any single member seats outright, are topped up until they have 10 per cent of all the seats in Parliament. It is possible for a party to be allocated 'surplus' seats when it wins more district seats in the single-member district vote than it is entitled to under the result of the list vote.

12.4 Conclusion

Every political system has its political history and socio-economic and political variations. When a political system selects or decides on a particular election method for its own, there must be an option for the decision maker of that country or pre-condition of that specific socio-economic background. So we have different types of election systems all over the globe at present, and each method is marked by distinct features. But none of them are accurate or perfect regarding the representation of the masses.

This unit focuses on the different election and electoral systems; their distinctive features and procedures. Mitchell and Gallagher have identified eight criteria for evaluating electoral systems, which are: accuracy of the representation of voters' preferences; socio-demographic representation in legislature; personal accountability of representatives to constituencies; high levels of political participation; cohesive and disciplined parties; stable, strong and effective government; identifiability of government options; and opportunity for voters to remove government from office.

12.5 Summing Up

- Selecting an electoral system is not a purely technical decision. It may have huge consequences for the operation of the political system.
- The first necessary step for an understanding of the consequences of an electoral system is to have a good grasp of the kinds of electoral systems that exist.
- The electoral systems currently in use in representative democracies can be divided into two basic kinds: majoritarian systems and proportional representation systems.
- There are many ways on the basis of which, electoral system can be classified
- There are countless electoral system variations.
- To classify the election system on the basis of Structure of the ballot, electoral formula and distinct Magnitude

12.6 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the List and Hare system of voting.
2. Explain the system of Proportional Representation.

Short Questions :

1. Write a note on mixed election system.

2. Write a note on majoritarian electoral systems.
3. Explain the Second Ballot Majority-Runoff Systems.

Objective Questions :

1. How many countries follow majoritarian election systems as per Inter-Parliamentary Union Report (1993)?
2. Name any country that adopted the Second Ballot Majority-Runoff System.
3. With which electoral system is the name of Sir Thomas Hare associated?

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Unit – 13 □ First Past the Post Representation

Structure

13.1 Objective

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Features of The First Past The Post [FPTP] System

13.4 First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems: An Indian Experience

13.5 Advantages of First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems

13.6 Disadvantages of the First Past The Post System

13.7 Conclusion

13.8 Summing Up

13.9 Probable Questions

13.10 Further Reading

13.1 Objective

After study of this unit the learners will be able to :

- Explain the various features of First Past the Post Representation
- Understand the applicability of First Past the Post Representation
- Discusses the advantages of First Past the Post Representation
- Explain the Disadvantages of First Past the Post Representation
- Understand the importance of First Past the Post Representation

13.2 Introduction

First past the post electoral system is usually labelled as the most straightforward electoral system. It is used in many countries around the world. This system is the simplest form of plurality/majority system, using single member constituency and candidate-cantered voting.

The entire country is divided into small geographical units called constituencies. Every constituency elects **one representative**, where a voter votes for one candidate. A candidate who gets more votes than other candidates is declared the winner. The winning candidate need not get a majority, i.e., 50%+1 of the votes.

The voter is presented with the names of the nominated candidates and votes by choosing one, and only one, of them. FPTP ultimately allows people to vote for the preferred candidate on the ballot paper and the candidate that reaches the benchmark first, with the most votes, wins, although the proportional representation electoral system takes this stance too. The winner takes all, yet the other parties win nothing; this allows the two large parties to compete constantly. The winning candidate is simply the person who wins the most votes; in theory, he or she could be elected with two votes if every other candidate only secured a single vote.

First Past The Post (FPTP) systems are found in different assembly elections and General election in India. This system also found primarily in the UK and those countries historically influenced by Britain. Along with the UK, the cases most often analysed are Canada, India and the United States. FPTP is also used by a number of Caribbean countries; in Latin America by Belize; in Asia by five countries, Bangladesh, Burma, India, Malaysia and Nepal; and by many of the small island countries of the South Pacific. In Africa 15 countries, mostly former British colonies, use FPTP systems.

13.3 Features of The First Past The Post [FPTP] System

There are three main features that distinguish single member plurality from other types of electoral systems in the world :

- (i) The entire country is divided into small separate geographical units called constituencies.
- (ii) For each constituency, one representative is elected. Candidates represent a specific geographic area.
- (iii) The candidate who gets the highest number of votes in the constituency is declared as the winner.
- (iv) Votes are counted on a constituency by constituency basis for the individual candidates, not for political parties.

- (v) In order to win a riding, a candidate does not need to receive a clear majority (considered 50 percent plus one) of the votes.
- (vi) Instead, the candidate only needs to receive a *relative* majority (also called a plurality majority), meaning that he/she received more votes than any other candidate in the riding district.
- (vii) Under the single member plurality system, a candidate can win a riding even though the majority of voters voted against him. This system is also known as plurality system.

13.4 First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems : An Indian Experience

India remains the largest democracy in the world, with over 800 million electors in the parliamentary election of 2004. Its parliamentary government and FPTP electoral system are a legacy of British colonialism, which ended in 1947. The British introduced self-government in India in stages. It was not until the end of colonial rule and the adoption of the Indian Constitution in November 1949 by a Constituent Assembly that universal suffrage was achieved. The Constituent Assembly, which comprised eminent jurists, lawyers, constitutional experts and political thinkers, and laboured for almost three years, debated which electoral system would best suit India before finally choosing to retain the FPTP electoral system. Various proportional representation systems were considered and attracted many advocates, given India's extraordinarily diverse and multi-ethnic society. Still, FPTP was chosen mainly to avoid fragmented legislatures and help form stable governments—stability being a significant consideration in a country emerging from immediate postcolonial communal bloodshed and with widespread poverty and illiteracy. Under the Indian Constitution, voters elect a 543-member Lok Sabha (lower house of the Parliament) from single-member constituencies. By contrast, the upper house of Parliament, the Rajya Sabha or Council of States, and the corresponding upper houses of some states are indirectly elected by members of the state legislative assemblies. There is also a president who is elected by an electoral college composed of members of both houses of Parliament and the legislatures of the states and a vice president who is elected by the members of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha only. General elections are held every five years generally. The prime minister holds office for as long as he or she can

command a majority in the Lok Sabha. All the successive Congress Party governments which ruled India continuously until 1977 served for almost five years, close to the maximum allowed in the constitution. From 1977 to 1997, governments were less stable, and several prime ministers had to resign due to party splits or votes of no confidence before completing their full term. Since 1997, a period of stability seems to be emerging again, now under coalitions of parties. All these political environments have arisen from the same FPTP electoral system.

The significant effect of the electoral system until 1977 was to guarantee majority governments based on a minority of voter support. The FPTP electoral system initially resulted in the ruling Congress Party securing stable majorities in the Lok Sabha, usually against a fragmented opposition. This fragmentation was characterized by a rise in popularity of regional and state parties in some areas. When the opposition parties combined to form coalitions and started putting up familiar candidates against the Congress candidates (as was the case in the 1977 and 1989 general elections), the Congress majorities vanished. Moreover, the nature of the system meant that small changes in the vote share often had a dramatic impact on the number of parliamentary seats won.

13.5 Advantages of First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems

First Past The Post system, like other plurality/majority electoral systems, is defended primarily on the grounds of simplicity and its tendency to produce winners who are representatives beholden to defined geographic areas. The First-Past-The-Post [FPTP] system is widely seen to be unfair and many attempts have been made to improve or replace it in countries where it is in use. However, the system does have a number of advantages. The main advantages are :

- (a) First Past The Post system provides a clear-cut choice for voters between two main parties. The inbuilt disadvantages faced by third and fragmented minority parties under FPTP in many cases cause the party system to gravitate towards a party of the 'left' and a party of the 'right', alternating in power. Third parties often wither away and almost never reach a level of popular support above which their national vote achieves a comparable percentage of seats in the legislature.

- (b) First Past The Post system (FPTP) gives rise to single-party governments. The 'seat bonuses' for the largest party common under FPTP (e.g. where one party wins 45 per cent of the national vote but 55 per cent of the seats) mean that coalition governments are the exception rather than the rule. This state of affairs is praised for providing cabinets which are not shackled by the restraints of having to bargain with a minority coalition partner.
- (c) When operated with single member constituencies, it provides for a direct relationship between the member of the legislature and the local constituency. The system is secret and simplest for the voter; and the voter's vote is NOT transferable, or manipulated by party hands. It is NOT perfect, but it is also how we order our lives in any situation where there is competition for ONE winner.
- (d) Because elections are contested at the constituency level, there can be a degree of local control over the party's choice of candidate, and parties must take some account of the constituency's wishes when selecting a candidate.
- (e) First Past The Post system gives rise to a coherent opposition in the legislature. In theory, the flip side of a strong single-party government is that the opposition is also given enough seats to perform a critical checking role and present itself as a realistic alternative to the government of the day.
- (f) It advantages broadly-based political parties. In severely ethnically or regionally divided societies, FPTP is commended for encouraging political parties to be 'broad based', encompassing many elements of society, particularly when there are only two major parties and many different societal groups. These parties can then field a diverse array of candidates for election. In Malaysia, for example, the Barisan Nasional government is made up of a broadly-based umbrella movement which fields Malay, Chinese and Indian candidates in areas of various ethnic complexions.
- (g) First Past The Post system elects the candidate who receives the largest number of votes. Candidates cannot be elected as a result of the transfer of a third or fourth preference, thus defeating the candidate with the largest number of first preference votes.

- (h) The system is straightforward and easy to understand. Electors are not required to choose from vast lists of candidates or to exercise preferences they may not have. The system is uncomplicated and produces a speedy outcome.
- (i) The system allows electors to directly choose the government and not be subject to backroom wheeling and dealing that can occur when a large number of parties are elected to the legislature.
- (j) It excludes extremist parties from representation in the legislature. Unless an extremist minority party's electoral support is geographically concentrated, it is unlikely to win any seats under FPTP. (By contrast, under a List Pluralist Representation system with a single national-level district, a fraction of 1 per cent of the national vote can ensure representation in the legislature.)
- (k) It promotes a link between constituents and their representatives, as it produces a legislature made up of representatives of geographical areas. Elected members represent defined areas of cities, towns or regions rather than just party labels. Some analysts have argued that this 'geographic accountability' is particularly important in agrarian societies and in developing countries.
- (l) It allows voters to choose between people rather than just between parties. Voters can assess the performance of individual candidates rather than just having to accept a list of candidates presented by a party, as can happen under some List PR electoral systems.
- (m) It gives a chance for popular independent candidates to be elected. This may be particularly important in developing party systems, where politics still revolves more around extended ties of family, clan or kinship and is not based on strong party-political organizations.
- (n) There is less likelihood of a proliferation of minor parties, which may make the formation of stable governments difficult.

Finally, because elections are contested at the constituency level there is a greater possibility of outstanding candidates being elected regardless of party support.

13.6 Disadvantages of First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems

However, FPTP is frequently criticized for a number of reasons. These include :

- (a) **The First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems** excludes smaller parties from 'fair' representation, in the sense that a party which wins approximately, say, 10 per cent of the votes should win approximately 10 per cent of the legislative seats. In the 1993 federal election in Canada the Progressive Conservatives won 16 per cent of the votes but only 0.7 per cent of the seats, and in the 1998 general election in Lesotho the Basotho National Party won 24 per cent of the votes but only 1 per cent of the seats. This is a pattern which is repeated time and time again under FPTP.
- (b) As a rule, under FPTP parties put up the most broadly acceptable candidate in a particular district so as to avoid alienating the majority of electors. Thus it is rare, for example, for a black candidate to be given a major party's nomination in a majority white district in the UK or the USA, and there is strong evidence that ethnic and racial minorities across the world are far less likely to be represented in legislatures elected by FPTP. In consequence, if voting behaviour does dovetail with ethnic divisions, then the exclusion from representation of members of ethnic minority groups can be destabilizing for the political system as a whole.
- (c) **The First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems** excludes women from the legislature. The 'most broadly acceptable candidate' syndrome also affects the ability of women to be elected to legislative office because they are often less likely to be selected as candidates by male-dominated party structures. Evidence across the world suggests that women are less likely to be elected to the legislature under plurality/majority systems than under PR ones. **The Inter-Parliamentary Union's** study of Women in Parliament found that, as at June 2004, on average 15.6 per cent of the representatives in lower houses of legislatures were women. Comparing established democracies in 2004, those using FPTP averaged 14.4 per cent women in the legislature, but the figure was almost double that —27.6 per cent— in those countries that use some form of PR. This pattern has been mirrored in new democracies, especially in Africa.

- (d) It can encourage the development of political parties based on clan, ethnicity or region, which may base their campaigns and policy platforms on conceptions that are attractive to the majority of people in their district or region but exclude or are hostile to others. This has been an ongoing problem in Asia - African countries like India, Malawi and Kenya, where large communal groups tend to be regionally concentrated. The country is thus divided into geographically separate party strongholds, with little incentive for parties to make appeals outside their home region and cultural-political base.
- (e) **The First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems** exaggerates the phenomenon of 'regional fiefdoms' where one party wins all the seats in a province or area. If a party has strong support in a particular part of a country, winning a plurality of votes, it will win all, or nearly all, of the seats in the legislature for that area. This both excludes minorities in that area from representation and reinforces the perception that politics is a battleground defined by who you are and where you live rather than what you believe in. This has long been put forward as an argument against FPTP in Canada.
- (f) **The First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems** leaves a large number of wasted votes which do not go towards the election of any candidate. This can be particularly dangerous if combined with regional fiefdoms, because minority party supporters in the region may begin to feel that they have no realistic hope of ever electing a candidate of their choice. It can also be dangerous where alienation from the political system increases the likelihood that extremists will be able to mobilize anti-system movements.
- (g) It can cause vote-splitting. Where two similar parties or candidates compete under FPTP, the vote of their potential supporters is often split between them, thus allowing a less popular party or candidate to win the seat. Papua New Guinea provides a particularly clear example.
- (h) It may be unresponsive to changes in public opinion. A pattern of geographically concentrated electoral support in a country means that one party can maintain exclusive executive control in the face of a substantial drop in overall popular support. In some democracies under FPTP, a fall from 60 per cent to 40 per cent of a party's share of the popular vote nationally can result in a fall from 80 per cent to 60 per cent in the number

of seats held, which does not affect its overall dominant position. Unless sufficient seats are highly competitive, the system can be insensitive to swings in public opinion.

- (i) **The First Past The Post (FPTP) Systems** are dependent on the drawing of electoral boundaries. All electoral boundaries have political consequences: there is no technical process to produce a single ‘correct answer’ independently of political or other considerations. Boundary delimitation may require substantial time and resources if the results are to be accepted as legitimate. There may also be pressure to manipulate boundaries by gerrymandering or mal apportionment. This was particularly apparent in the Kenyan elections of 1993 when huge disparities between the sizes of electoral districts—the largest had 23 times the number of voters the smallest had—contributed to the ruling Kenyan African National Union party’s winning a large majority in the legislature with only 30 per cent of the popular vote.

13.7 Conclusion

The first-past-the-post (FPTP) system is also known as the simple majority system. In this voting method, the candidate with the highest number of votes in a constituency is declared the winner. This system is used in India in direct elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. While FPTP is relatively simple, it does not always allow for a truly representative mandate, as the candidate could win despite securing less than half the votes in a contest. In 2014, the National Democratic Alliance led by the Bharatiya Janata Party won 336 seats with only 38.5% of the popular vote. Also, smaller parties representing specific groups have a lower chance of being elected in FPTP.

13.8 Summing Up

- First Past The Post (FPTP) system is the simplest form of plurality/majority system, using single member constituency and candidate-centered voting.
- First Past The Post (FPTP) systems are found in different assembly elections and General election in India.

- Under the single member plurality system, a candidate can win a riding even though the majority of voters voted against him. This system is also known as plurality system

13.9 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. What do you mean by the First-Past-The-Post System? Discusses the advantages of First past the Post Representation.
2. Explain the Features of The First-Past-The-Post System.
3. Discuss the importance of First past the Post Representation system in a modern democracy.

Short Questions :

1. Mention the reasons for applicability of First past the Post Representation.
2. Write a note on First past the Post Representation in the Indian context.
3. Explain the disadvantages of First past the Post Representation.

Objective Questions :

1. What is the full form of FPTP?
2. What is meant by relative majority?
3. In which year did the Progressive Conservatives of Canada win 16 percent of the votes but only 0.7 percent of the seats?

13.10 Further Reading

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Unit – 14 □ Proportional Representation

Structure

- 14.1 Objective**
- 14.2 Introduction**
- 14.3 Origin and Development of PR System**
- 14.4 What is Proportional Representation?**
- 14.5 The basic Principles of Proportional Representation System**
- 14.6 Forms of Proportional Representation System**
 - 14.6.1 Party list Proportional Representation**
 - 14.6.2 Mixed-Member Proportional Representation**
 - 14.6.3 Single Transferable Vote or Choice Voting**
- 14.7 Advantages of Proportional Representation**
- 14.8 Disadvantages of Proportional Representation System**
- 14.9 Conclusion**
- 14.10 Summing Up**
- 14.11 Probable Questions**
- 14.12 Further Reading**

14.1 Objective

After study of this unit the learners will be able to :

- Explain the various features of Proportional Representation
- Understand the applicability Proportional Representation
- Discuss the advantages of Proportional Representation
- Explain the disadvantages of Proportional Representation
- Understand the importance of Proportional Representation

14.2 Introduction

Elections in different countries take different forms. Besides several differences in practical arrangements (e.g. registration formalities), dissimilarities also exist concerning the more technical elements in the election. Especially with reference to how the seats in parliament are distributed after the election, numerous methods are employed. The electoral system – i.e. “the means by which votes are translated into seats in the process of electing politicians into office” – is never the same in two countries. Still, given the abundance of systems currently in use, two main categories can be distinguished: non-proportional and proportional systems. Non-proportional systems aim to achieve a clear majority for one of the parties. As such, one hopes to create a strong and stable government. Proportional systems, on the other hand, allocate seats more or less in line with the electoral result (in terms of votes) obtained by each party. Proportional representation is the idea that the seats in parliament should be in proportion to the votes cast. This has the advantage of lowering voter alienation and politically motivated violence, but the ensuing multiparty systems tend to be less stable.

The proportional representation electoral system seeks to create a representative body that reflects the overall distribution of public support for each political party. Majority or plurality systems effectively reward strong parties and penalize weak ones by providing the representation of a whole constituency to a single candidate who may have received fewer than half of the votes cast (as is the case, for example, in India, United States). Proportional representation ensures minority groups a measure of representation proportionate to their electoral support. Systems of proportional representation has been adopted in many countries, including Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

14.3 Origin and Development of Proportional Representation System

Advocates for proportional representation argue that an election is like a census of opinion as to how the country should be governed, and only if an assembly represents the full diversity of opinion within a country can its decisions be regarded as legitimate. For example, proponents maintain that the plurality system can produce

unrepresentative, minority governments, such as in the United Kingdom, where the two major parties governed the country for the last three decades of the 20th century with little more than 40 percent of the votes. In India, after independence, all ruling parties at the center ruled without the support of the majority. The proportional system also is suggested as a means of redressing the possible anomaly arising under majority or plurality systems whereby a party may win more seats with fewer popular votes than its opponents, as occurred in the British elections of 1951 and February 1974.

Unlike the plurality system, which uses single-member constituency/districts, proportional representation systems use multimember constituencies. Systematic methods of applying proportional representation were first developed in the mid-19th century in Denmark by Carl Andrae and in Britain by Thomas Hare and John Stuart Mill. Methods currently in use include the single-transferable-vote method (STV), the party-list system, and the additional-member system.

14.4 What is Proportional Representation?

Representative democracy essentially means rule by the majority. However, the basic principle of democracy is to give equal importance to all groups and shades of opinion. Hence, it is necessary to ensure that different minority groups get representation in the legislature in proportion to their members, this is an important issue associated with the electoral system. Political scientists have suggested different types of electoral methods to ensure adequate representation of minorities. These are the limited voting system, the cumulative voting system, proportional representation, and communal representation. Proportional representation refers to electoral systems designed to approximate the ideal of proportionality in converting citizens' votes into legislative seats. All proportional representative systems require multi member constituencies.

14.5 The basic Principles of Proportional Representation System

The basic principles underlying proportional representation elections are

- All voters deserve representation and that all political groups in society deserve to be represented in a legislatures in proportion to their strength in the electorate.

- In order to achieve this fair representation, all proportional representation systems have certain basic characteristics—characteristics that set them apart from our current election system.
- First, they all use multi-member districts. Instead of electing one person in each district, several people are elected.
- These multi-member constituency/districts may be relatively small, with only three or four members, or they may be larger, with ten or more members.

14.6 Forms of Proportional Representation (PR) System

There are many ways to decide representation in parliament/ legislative body, some are more proportional, and some are less. The forms of Proportional Representation are:

14.6.1 Party list proportional representation:

Party list voting systems are by far the most common form of proportional representation. Over 80% of the proportional representation systems used worldwide are some form of party list voting. It remains the system used in most European democracies and in many newly democratized countries, including South Africa.

How It Works

Legislators are elected in large, multi-member constituencies /districts. Each party puts up a list or slate of candidates equal to the number of seats in the district. Independent candidates may also run, and they are listed separately on the ballot as if they were their own party. On the ballot, voters indicate their preference for a particular party and the parties then receive seats in proportion to their share of the vote. So in a five-member district/constituency, if the Party A win 40% of the vote, they would win two of the five seats. The two winning candidates of party A would be chosen according to their position on the list.

There are **two broad types of list systems** :

- (a) Closed list and
- (b) Open list.

- (a) **Closed list :** In a closed list system—the original form of party list voting—the party fixes the order in which the candidates are listed and elected, and the voter simply casts a vote for the party as a whole. Voters are not able to indicate their preference for any candidates on the list, but must accept the list in the order presented by the party. Winning candidates are selected in the exact order they appear on the original list.
- (b) **Open list :** Most European democracies now use the open list system. This approach allows voters to express a preference for particular candidates, not just parties. It is designed to give voters some say over the order of the list and thus which candidates get elected. Voters are presented with unordered or random lists of candidates chosen in party primaries. Voters cannot vote for a party directly, but must cast a vote for an individual candidate. This vote counts for the specific candidate as well as for the party. So the order of the final list completely depends on the number of votes won by each candidate on the list. The most popular candidates rise to the top of the list and have a better chance of being elected.

14.6.2 Mixed-Member Proportional Voting

Mixed-member proportional representation goes by a variety of other names, including “the additional member system,” “compensatory PR,” the “two vote system,” and “the German system.” It is an attempt to combine a single-member district system with a proportional voting system. Half of the members of the legislature are elected in single-member district plurality contests. The other half are elected by a party list vote and added on to the district members so that each party has its appropriate share of seats in the legislature. Proponents claim that mixed-member proportional voting (MMP) is the best of both worlds: providing the geographical representation and close constituency ties of single-member plurality voting along with the fairness and diversity of representation that comes with PR voting.

This system was originally invented in West Germany right after World War Two, though since then it has also been adopted in several other countries, including Bolivia and Venezuela. It is still one of the least used PR systems, but in recent years it has begun to garner a great deal of attention. In fact, it is now one of the “hottest” systems being considered by those involved in electoral design. In

part this growing attention is a result of MMP's unique claim to be a "compromise" between the two main rival systems. In the 1990s New Zealand abandoned its traditional single-member plurality system for MMP. Hungary also adopted this approach. Most recently, the newly formed parliaments of Scotland and Wales used this system for their first elections.

People cast votes on a double ballot—see the ballot below. First, on the left part of the ballot, they vote for a district representative. This part of the ballot is a single-member district plurality contest to see which person will represent the district in the legislature. The person with the most votes wins. Typically half of the seats in the legislature are filled in this way. So in a hypothetical 100-member state legislature, the winners of these district contests would occupy 50 of the seats.

14.6.3 Single Transferable Vote or Choice Voting

This system of proportional representation is known by several names. Political scientists call it "the single transferable vote." It is called the "Hare-Clark system" in Australia. In the United States, electoral reform activists have taken to calling it "choice voting." Currently this system is used to elect parliaments in Ireland and Malta. In Australia it is used to elect the federal Senate, as well as the legislatures in several states there. It is also the PR system that was used in a number of cities in the United States during the twentieth century, including New York, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Toledo, and Boulder. It continues to be used today in Cambridge, Massachusetts for elections to their city council and school board.

How It Works

All candidates are listed in the same place on the ballot. Instead of voting for one person, voters rank each candidate in their order of choice. Voters can rank as few or as many as you want.

As the name "single transferable vote" implies, this system involves a process of transferring votes. To understand how the transfer process works, it may be best to start out with a simple analogy. Imagine a school where a class is trying to elect a committee. Any student who wishes to run stands at the front of the class and the other students vote for their favorite candidates by standing beside them. Students standing almost alone next to their candidate will soon discover that this person has no chance of being elected and move to another candidate of their choice.

to help him or her get elected. Some of the students standing next to a very popular candidate may realize that this person has more than enough support to win, and decide to go stand next to another student that they would also like to see on the committee. In the end, after all of this shuffling around, most students would be standing next to candidates that will be elected, which is the ultimate point of this process.

In the single transferable vote, votes are transferred around just as the students moved from candidate to candidate in the analogy. For the sake of simplicity, assume that there is a three-seat district in which six people are running for office. The first step in the process is to establish the threshold: the minimum number of votes necessary to win a seat. The threshold usually consists of the total number of valid votes divided by one plus the number of seats to be filled, plus one vote. The formula looks like this: $\text{Threshold} = (\text{valid votes} / 1 + \text{seats}) + 1 \text{ vote}$. So in our three-seat districts with 10,000 voters, a candidate would need $10,000 / 1 + 3$ (which is 2,500) plus one more vote, for 2,501.

The votes are counted according to first preferences. If all the seats are not filled, candidate at the bottom is eliminated. His or her votes are redistributed according to second preferences and the process goes on until all the seats have been filled.

This transfer process is a bit complicated, so why does it exist? The transfer process was invented primarily to reduce the problem of wasted votes — votes that are cast but do not actually elect anyone. Plurality-majority systems routinely waste large numbers of votes and this is why they are prone to such problems as party misrepresentation, and the underrepresentation of political minorities, racial minorities, and women. The transfer process in STV is designed to ensure that the fewest votes are wasted and that the maximum number of people gets to elect a representative to office. It acknowledges that there are two kinds of wasted votes: votes for candidates that stand little chance of winning, and votes in excess of what a winning candidate needs. Transferring these votes to their next ranked choice makes it more likely that they will actually contribute to the election of a candidate.

14.7 Advantages of Proportional Representation

In many respects, the strongest arguments for PR derive from the way in which the system avoids the anomalous results of plurality/majority systems and is better able to produce a representative legislature. For many new democracies, particularly those which face deep societal divisions, the inclusion of all significant groups in the legislature can be a near-essential condition for democratic consolidation. Failing to ensure that can have catastrophic consequences, such as seeking power through illegal means.

Proportional representation systems in general are praised for the way in which they operate :

- Faithfully translate votes cast into seats won, and thus avoid some of the more destabilizing and ‘unfair’ results thrown up by plurality/majority electoral systems. ‘Seat bonuses’ for the larger parties are minimized, and small parties can have their voice heard in the legislature.
- Encourage or require the formation of political parties or groups of like-minded candidates to put forward lists. This may clarify policy, ideology, or leadership differences within society, especially when, there is no established party system.
- Give rise to very few wasted votes. When thresholds are low, almost all votes cast in proportional representation elections go towards electing a candidate of choice. This increases the voters’ perception that it is worth making the trip to the polling booth at election time, as they can be more confident that their vote will make a difference to the election outcome, however small.
- Facilitate minority parties’ access to representation. Unless the threshold is unduly high, or the district magnitude is unusually low, then any political party with even a small percentage of the vote can gain representation in the legislature. This fulfils the principle of inclusion, which can be crucial to stability in divided societies and has benefits for decision making in established democracies, such as achieving a more balanced representation of minorities in decision-making bodies and providing role models of minorities as elected representatives.

- Encourage parties to campaign beyond the districts in which they are strong or where the results are expected to be close. The incentive under PR systems is to maximize the overall vote regardless of where those votes might come from. Every vote, even from areas where a party is electorally weak, goes towards gaining another seat.
- Restrict the growth of ‘regional fiefdoms’. Because PR systems reward minority parties with a minority of the seats, they are less likely to lead to situations where a single party holds all the seats in a given province or district. This can be particularly important to minorities in a province which may not have significant regional concentrations or alternative points of access to power.
- Lead to greater continuity and stability of policy. The West European experience suggests that parliamentary PR systems score better with regard to governmental longevity, voter participation, and economic performance. The rationale behind this claim is that regular switches in government between two ideologically polarized parties, as can happen in FPTP systems, makes long-term economic planning more difficult, while broad PR coalition governments help engender a stability and coherence in decision making which allow for national development.
- Make power-sharing between parties and interest groups more visible. In many new democracies, power-sharing between the numerical majorities of the population who hold political power and a small minority who hold economic power is an unavoidable reality. Where the numerical majority dominates the legislature and a minority sees its interests expressed in the control of the economic sphere, negotiations between different power blocks are less visible, less transparent, and less accountable (e.g. in Zimbabwe during its first 20 years of independence). It has been argued that PR, by including all interests in the legislature, offers a better hope that decisions will be taken in the public eye and by a more inclusive cross-section of the society.

14.8 Disadvantages of Proportional Representation System

Most of the criticisms of PR in general are based around the tendency of PR systems to give rise to coalition governments and a fragmented party system. The arguments most often cited against PR are that it leads to :

- Coalition governments, which in turn lead to legislative gridlock and consequent inability to carry out coherent policies. There are particularly high risks during an immediate post-conflict transition period, when popular expectations of new governments are high. Quick and coherent decision making can be impeded by coalition cabinets.
- A destabilizing fragmentation of the party system. PR can reflect and facilitate a fragmentation of the party system. It is possible that extreme pluralism can allow tiny minority parties to hold larger parties to ransom in coalition negotiations. In this respect, the inclusiveness of PR is cited as a drawback of the system. In Israel, for example, extremist religious parties are often crucial to the formation of a government, while Italy endured many years of unstable shifting coalition governments. Democratizing countries are often fearful that PR will allow personality-based and ethnic-cleavage parties to proliferate in their undeveloped party systems.
- A platform for extremist parties. In a related argument, PR systems are often criticized for giving a space in the legislature to extremist parties of the left or the right. It has been argued that the collapse of Weimar Germany was in part due to the way in which its PR electoral system gave a foothold to extremist groups of the extreme left and right.
- Governing coalitions which have insufficient common ground in terms of either their policies or their support base. These coalitions of convenience are sometimes contrasted with coalitions of commitment produced by other systems (e.g. through the use of AV), in which parties tend to be reciprocally dependent on the votes of supporters of other parties for their election, and the coalition may thus be stronger.

- Small parties getting a disproportionately large amount of power. Large parties may be forced to form coalitions with much smaller parties, giving a party that has the support of only a small percentage of the votes the power to veto any proposal that comes from the larger parties.
- The inability of the voter to enforce accountability by throwing a party out of power or a particular candidate out of office. Under a PR system, it may be very difficult to remove a reasonably-sized centre party from power. When governments are usually coalitions, some political parties are ever-present in government, despite weak electoral performances from time to time. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) in Germany was a member of the governing coalition for all but eight of the 50 years from 1949 to 1998, although it never gained more than 12 per cent of the vote.
- Difficult either for voters to understand or for the electoral administration to implement the sometimes complex rules of the system. Some PR systems are considered to be more difficult than non-PR systems and may require more voter education and training of poll workers to work successfully.

14.9 Conclusion

The striking anomalies following from the system of single-member constituencies have induced many political scientists to strongly argue in favour of proportional representation. They argue that legislators should reproduce all the components of a country in their true proportion. In a society, there are various sections with their own peculiar problems and opinions. To make the legislature a true mirror of the nation, it is essential that all sections be directly represented. However, although proportional representation eliminates some of the defects of the majority principle in practice it encourages divisive and centrifugal forces. It widens the areas of conflict and spells a danger for democracy. The system of proportional representation has worked well in some countries, while in others it has created a lot of competition. The unavoidable conclusion is that the electoral system must be studied in a wider context of the whole constitutional order and the civic culture.

14.10 Summing Up

- Proportional representation allows a wider variety of views to be heard and considered.
- The Proportional representation system will avoid the wild pendulum swings of a two-party system. Broad proportional representation coalition governments will change more gradually, allowing continuity and stability of policy for the long term, which is particularly important for long-term planning by businesses, individuals and government civil servants.
- Apathy is the enemy of democracy. Too many people believe that their vote doesn't count. With the ability to find candidates who align with their views, votes are less likely to be wasted, and participation should be higher.
- While the Proportional representation system is often credited with making representation available to third parties, what's often overlooked is that it also enables the representation of major parties when they're a local minority.
- The proportional representation system more faithfully represents the people's views, translating them into representatives.

14.11 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Define the Proportional representation system. Explain the various methods of proportional representation system.
2. Explain the basic principles of proportional representation system.
3. Discuss the advantages of proportional representation system.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on Single Transferable Vote system.
2. Explain, in brief, the Party list system of proportional representation.
3. Discuss, in brief, Mixed-Member Proportional representation system.

4. Discuss the importance of proportional representation system in modern democracy.
5. Explain the disadvantages of proportional representation system.

Objective Questions :

1. Name any country, where the system of proportional representation has been adopted.
2. Name any two countries where systematic methods of applying proportional representation were first developed.
3. What is the full form of SMD?
4. What is the salient feature of the open list system?
5. In which country was proportional representation methods first adopted for national election?

14.12 Further Reading

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Unit – 15 □ Mixed Representation

Structure

- 15.1 Objective**
- 15.2 Introduction**
- 15.3 Meaning of Mixed Representation System**
- 15.4 Majoritarian or Proportional: Linkage between Nominal and List Tiers**
- 15.5 Advantages of Mixed Member Proportional System**
- 15.6 Disadvantages of Mixed Member Proportional System**
- 15.7 Conclusion**
- 15.8 Summing Up**
- 15.9 Abbreviation**
- 15.10 Probable Questions**
- 15.11 Further Reading**

15.1 Objective

After study of this unit the learners will be able to :

- Explain the meaning and features of Mixed Representation
- Understand the applicability Mixed Representation system
- Discusses the advantages of Mixed Representation system
- Explain the Disadvantages of Mixed Representation system
- Understand the importance of Mixed Representation system

15.2 Introduction

It has long been conventional to divide electoral systems into two broad categories, majoritarian and proportional. Majoritarian systems usually employ

exclusively single seat districts/ constituencies with plurality rule and tend to give greater representation to the two parties that receive the most votes. Proportional system must employ multi-seat districts/ constituencies, usually with party list, and typically produce parliamentary representation that largely mirrors the vote shares of multiple parties. Although the effect on party systems may be arrayed on a continuum ranging from fully proportional to highly disproportional, designers of electoral systems have nonetheless tended to operate with either a “plurality principle” or a “proportional principle” in mind. Recently, however, there has been a marked tendency around the world to mix these two principles of electoral system design. Many newly adopted electoral systems, including those in long established democracies such as Israel, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, and Venezuela, have entailed various hybrids of the competing majoritarian/plurality and proportional principles. In the prototype of a mixed-member system, half of the seats in a legislative chamber are elected in single-seat districts / constituencies while the other half are elected from party lists allocated by proportional representation. Yet, there are numerous variations within the general class of mixed-member system. The universe of such systems has included the following examples:

- (a) A system with only one seat elected by the majoritarian principle
(example - Israel);
- (b) One in which the share of seats elected by proportional representation a quarter
(example- Italy);
- (c) one in which the majoritarian tire is elected partly in multi-seat districts/ constituencies
(example-Venezuela).

Establishing a generic definition of a mixed member electoral system is therefore not as simple as it might at first seem.

15.3 Meaning of Mixed Representation System

Mixed-member electoral system is defined as a subset of the broader category of multiple-tire electoral system. An electoral system employs multiple tires if seats are allocated in two (or more) overlapping sets of districts/constituencies, such that

every voter may cast one or more votes that are employed to allocate seats in more than one tier. Examples include the Belgian system of relatively small multi-seat districts/constituencies, from which voters are transferred into upper tiers based on regions to ensure a closer approximation to proportional representation. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria, and Greece are among the proportional representation systems that employ two or three tiers of allocation, which usually make the system more proportional than if only one tier were used.

Mixed-member electoral systems are thus a variant of such multiple-tier system, with the specific proviso that one tier must entail allocation of seats nominally whereas the other must entail allocation of seats **by lists**. The distinction between nominal and **list** voting is based on the nature of the vote cast by the voter and how it is employed to allocate seats. Under nominal voting, voters cast votes for candidates by name and seats are allocated to individual candidates on the basis of the votes they receive. List voters, on the other hand, ‘pool’ among multiple candidates nominated on a list submitted prior to the election by a party, alliance, or other political organization. There are various hybrids possible, of course, but in general electoral formulas break down into nominal vs. list system. In a mixed-member system there are (at least) two separate overlapping tiers, one of which employs allocation of seats nominally, while another employs allocation to party list. Typically, each voter is provided with the option of casting separate votes in each tier, which we shall call the nominal vote and the list vote. However, there are cases in which the voter casts only a nominal vote. In such cases allocation of seats in the list tier is based on an aggregation on nominal votes on the basis of party.

The Nominal Tier : Usually the nominal tier consists of **single-seat districts** (SSDs)/ constituencies. Within single-seat districts (SSDs)/ constituencies the allocation formula is usually plurality, though in some systems there is a runoff required in any district in which there is no first-round majority, as in Albania, Georgia, Hungary, and Lithuania. There have also been mixed-member systems with multi-seat nominal-tier districts, including South Korea in 1987 and some districts in Venezuela in 1998. The key point is that for a system to qualify as mixed-member, there must be a tier in which nominal votes are the sole means by which candidates win seats in this tier. Nominal formulas are usually majoritarian, but they need

not be. For example, the **single non-transferable vote** (SNTV) is a purely nominal formula, but one that is aptly described in the literature as semi proportional because of its tendency to permit some seats to be won by relatively small parties. Japan's upper house continues to use **single non-transferable vote** (SNTV) in some districts; because there is also an overlapping national list PR tier, this electoral system is a mixed-member system. Taiwan also has a mixed-member system with **single non-transferable vote** (SNTV) in the nominal tier. Although both of these systems belong to the broader family of mixed-member systems, the use of a semi proportional rather than majoritarian formula for the nominal tier places them in a distinctly different branch of the family from those that represent the current "wave" of electoral reform. Notwithstanding these cases, a mixed-member system will be understood to have a nominal tier of **single-seat districts** (and thus a majoritarian formula) unless otherwise noted.

The List Tier : A mixed-member electoral system must also contain a tier of members elected from party lists that overlays the nominal tier. Most list systems employ a PR formula, such as D'Hondt divisors or the simple quota and largest remainders. However, there are less familiar list majoritarian systems. The US Electoral College is a prominent example, in which each US state serves as a multi-seat district. Each candidate has a slate of electors for each state, and when a candidate wins the plurality of the state's vote his entire slate is elected. There have been several cases of mixed member electoral systems with list tiers that are at least partially majoritarian. Examples include several former systems of Mexico and South Korea, as well as the current systems of Cameroon and Chad. By far the most common form of list in a mixed-member system is the closed list, wherein candidates are ranked prior to the election by the parties themselves. Voters have no say in the order by which candidates are elected from a closed list. The major alternative to the closed list is the open list, wherein candidates receive preference votes from voters and the order of election from the list is determined by the number

Note : D'Hondt - The D'Hondt method also called the Jefferson method or the greatest divisors method, is a method for allocating seats in parliaments among federal states, or in party-list proportional representation systems. It belongs to the class of highest-averages methods.

The method was first described in 1792 by future U.S. president Thomas Jefferson. It was re-invented independently in 1878 by Belgian mathematician Victor D'Hondt, which is the reason for its two different names.

of preference votes received. There is no reason why a mixed-member system could not employ open lists in the list tier; however, no mixed member system used at the national level has done so. There have been some alternatives to the closed list, however. Mixed-member systems lend themselves to lists ordered on the basis of which candidates prove to be the “best losers” in the nominal-tier districts in which they are nominated. Variations on the best-loser provision have been used in Mexico (1964-76), as well as by the Italian senate since 1993 and Japan’s lower house since 1996. From the point of view of voter choice, the best-loser list is no different from a closed list, at least if the nominal-tier districts are single-seat districts SSDs. As with closed lists, voters do not have the opportunity to select from among multiple candidates within their party’s list. Nonetheless, best-loser lists do provide candidates with the incentive to be popular within their districts—even in districts that are “hopeless” for their party to win in the nominal tier—because more popular candidates will be elected from the list tier ahead of less popular cop artisans. In a system that employs a best-loser provision on the list tier, there is in fact no list, *per se*. rather, parties simply nominate candidates in the nominal tier. Once nominal-tier winning candidates have been determined, any seats that a party may obtain from the list are taken from its pool of nominal tier candidates who did not win their races. Thus, under this system, the nominal-tier districts serve as *de facto* nominating districts for the list tier. As with the nominating districts used in some list PR systems (such as Slovenia), seats are allocated to parties across a multi-seat district, but are allocated to candidates within parties according to their success at garnering votes in the nominating districts.

15.4 Majoritarian or Proportional : Linkage between Nominal and List Tiers

As noted, mixed-member systems combine the majoritarian and proportional principles in one electoral system. However, notwithstanding the mixture of principles, most mixed-member systems tend to “lean” towards either majoritarian or proportional in their overall effects. Thus, we identify two broad subtypes, which we call mixed member majoritarian (MMM) and mixed-member proportional (MMP). In this section we show that the primary variable in mixed-member systems that separates MMM and MMP systems is the presence or absence of a linkage between tiers.

If the tiers are not linked, then the typical majoritarian boost received by a large party in the nominal tier is not likely to be wiped away by proportional allocation from the list tier. Thus, the principle behind majoritarian systems-giving an advantage to a large party-remains in MMM systems. On the other hand, MMP systems prioritize the list-PR tier, such that large parties do not receive a boost in overall seat allocation, or receive a smaller one than they would in an otherwise similar MMM system.

Linkage refers to whether votes are transferred from the nominal tier to the list tier, or whether the number of list seats a party receives is based in some way on how many nominal-tier seats it has won. At one extreme, the two tiers are parallel; i.e., there is no linkage between tiers in the allocation of seats to parties. Thus, parties' list votes and seats are not adjusted in any way on the basis of votes cast or seats won in the nominal tier. A party in a parallel mixed-member system simply takes its seats in the nominal tier and adds to them whatever number of seats it wins in the list tier.

If seats are linked, the number of seats a party takes from its list is determined partially by the number of seats it has won from the nominal tier. In these systems a formula is applied to the two tiers combined-either in the whole territory of a jurisdiction, or in regional subdivisions of it. The formula establishes a party's total seat allocation; then list seats are allocated to bring the party's representation up to that total. The form of seat linkage that will most concern us here is the compensatory type, which produces a mixed-member proportional (MMP) system. For example, in Germany a party wins a percentage of seats nationally that is determined by applying a PR formula to the total number of parliamentary seats. Each party then fulfils its entitlement of seats by taking whatever single-seat districts (SSDs) it has won and augmenting them with the number of candidates off the list that it requires to reach its overall entitlement. A similar system was first used in New Zealand in 1996.

Seat linkage occurs also in a type of system that might best be called majority-assuring. The electoral systems used in Mexico in 1988 and 1991 assured the party with the most nominal-tier seats a majority of all seats in the chamber. In other words, the largest party was automatically given whatever number of list seats was necessary to augment the single-seat districts (SSDs) it had won in order for it to have a legislative majority. These systems are rare and are likely to be found

in countries of dubious democratic credentials. The common theme in both the compensatory-PR and majority-assuring systems is that seat allocation from the list tier is determined in part by seat allocation in the nominal tier.

Returning to systems that use PR for the list tier, if votes are linked, then the votes that are used to allocate list-tier seats are not solely the votes that are cast for party lists, because those votes are adjusted by the transfer of votes from the nominal tier. Linkage may take the form of either positive or negative transfers of votes. For example, in Hungary votes cast for candidates who do not win their own single-seat districts (SSDs) races are added to their parties' list votes. Conversely, in Italy parties' list votes are reduced to account for their candidates who are successful in the nominal tier.

By combining the two variables of vote and seat linkage, we can arrive at a typology, shown in Table below :

Table-I

Linkage Between Tiers : A Typology of Mixed-Member Systems With Pr List Tiersa

Seat linkage?	Vote linkage?	
	No	Yes
No (parallel)	MMM	MMM with partial compensation
	Armenia	Hungary
	Georgia	Italy
	Japan	
	Lithuania	
	Macedonia	
	Mexico	
	Russian Federation	
	Thailand	
	Ukraine	
Yes (compensatory)	MMP	
	Bolivia	
	Germany	
	New Zealand	
	Venezuela	

These are MMM systems, in that they conform to the majoritarian principle that large parties should receive a seat bonus. The seat bonus is not, of course guaranteed (even in purely majoritarian systems), but is likely to result from the parallel combination of over representation of large parties in the nominal tier and large parties' full proportional share of the list-tier seats. Among cases placed in

the upper-left cell of the above Table-I, Mexico deserves special mention because it provides a cap on the degree of over-representation a party may receive. The Mexican provision is that no party may obtain a seat share more than eight percentage points greater than its vote share. Up to this limit seats are allocated in parallel, and the fact that a party with as little as 42% of the votes is likely to win a majority of seats means Mexico's system must be considered mixed member majoritarian (MMM), though in a limited form.

In the upper-right cell, we find systems that have parallel seat allocations but incorporate a mechanism of vote linkage. We consider these cases to remain in the broad category of MMM, because once again, even if a party is overrepresented in the nominal tier relative to its vote share, it is still likely to receive a significant share of the list-tier seats. Nonetheless, the vote linkage provides partial compensation for smaller parties by reducing the number of list seats that such an over-represented party will win compared with a fully parallel system.

In the bottom row of Table 1, we find systems that entail the opposite principle from the MMM systems. Whereas mixed member majoritarian (MMM) systems add seats from the list tier in parallel, even for parties that are already over-represented in the nominal tier, systems with compensatory seat linkage provide list seats to compensate parties that are under-represented in nominal-tier allocation.

15.5 Advantages of Mixed Member Proportional System

Some specific advantages of Mixed Member Proportional are :

- (a) Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) retains the proportionality benefits of Proportional Representation (PR) systems, it also ensures that voters have geographical representation. They also have the luxury of two votes, one for the party and one for their local MP.
- (b) While MMP retains the proportionality benefits of PR systems, it also ensures that elected representatives are linked to geographical districts. However, where voters have two votes-one for the party and one for their local representative-it is not always understood that the vote for the local representative is less important than the party vote in determining the overall allocation of seats in the legislature.

- (c) Furthermore, MMP can create two classes of legislators-one group primarily responsible and beholden to a constituency and another from the national party list without geographical ties and beholden to the party. This may have implications for the cohesiveness of groups of elected party representatives.
- (d) It retains the proportionality benefits of a wholly PR election- there is a relationship between votes obtained, and representative positions won while ensuring votes have some accountable geographic representation.
- (e) It allows voters to have two votes- so votes can be split between parties/people representing different parts of a voter's views.
- (f) It is an inclusive system, enabling the legislature to be composed of representatives of various political movements, including minorities, within society.
- (g) Under the Mixed Member Proportional system, few votes are 'wasted'; thus, voter turnout is encouraged.
- (h) It promotes diversity in candidate nominations for election, assists the election of minorities, and provides representation for some minority or small /regional parties.

15.6 Disadvantages of Mixed Member Proportional System

- (i) One problem of Mixed Member Proportional System (MMP) is that the vote for their local MP is far less important than the party vote in determining the overall allocation of parliamentary seats, and voters do not always understand this. Furthermore, and akin to the difficulties inherent within Parallel systems, MMP can create two classes of MPs.
- (ii) The Mixed Member Proportional System can tend to promote coalition or weak governments, which is difficult to dislodge from power.
- (iii) The Mixed Member Proportional System can be complicated for voters to understand how seats are allocated under Mixed Member Proportional System and may require substantial voter education efforts.
- (iv) The Mixed Member Proportional System can give rise to 'strategic

voting' where votes are encouraged to vote in their constituency for a candidate from a party other than, but in sympathy with, the party they support, to maximise their party's seats under the proportional representation allocation.

- (v) The Mixed Member Proportional System is more compressor voters to use for election administrations than the list proportional representation system. At the same time, they are delivering the exact proportionality of results.

In translating votes into seats, MMP can be as proportional to an electoral system as pure List PR, and therefore shares many of PR's advantages and disadvantages. However, MMP is sometimes seen as less preferable than straight List PR because it can give rise to what is called 'strategic voting' anomalies. However, one reason why MMP is sometimes seen as less preferable than straight List PR is that it can give rise to what are called 'strategic voting' anomalies.

15.7 Conclusion

Mixed-member systems have been largely successful thus far. They appear to be more likely than most other electoral systems to generate two-block party systems, without in the process reducing minor parties to insignificance. In addition, they are more likely than any other class of electoral system to simultaneously generate local accountability as well as a nationally oriented party system. Other electoral systems may generate a mix of these attributes, but generally not without introducing features that may be seen as undesirable, such as intra-party competition and factionalism, which frequently characterize STV or open-list PR. Mixed-member systems simultaneously encourage divergent incentives that lead party systems to exhibit many of the features of the "efficient" and desirable balance. On the interparty dimension, they permit some parties to specialize in SSDs and others to specialize in lists. On the intraparty dimension, they permit some legislators to specialize in appealing to local interests while others attend to their party's national priorities.

The central question is whether mixed-member electoral systems might prove to be the electoral reform of the twenty-first century. Whether or not they will

depends to a large degree on how their performance is viewed in the numerous countries that have adopted them in recent years. In particular, it will be crucial to see if their promise of delivering the best of both the majoritarian and proportional worlds of electoral systems is realized. The prospects for the spread of mixed-member systems also depend on the presence elsewhere of the basic conditions that brought about the recent proliferation of mixed-member systems.

Finally, no electoral system is free of disadvantages. Even if mixed-member systems did indeed provide the best of both worlds as we think they often do they nonetheless draw criticism on several accounts. All the criticisms of mixed-member electoral systems, perhaps the most serious is that they are too complex. Simplicity is usually held to be a virtue in electoral systems and MM systems have been criticized as introducing unnecessary complexity. If the connection between voting behaviour and seat outcomes is not readily apparent, the legitimacy of the electoral system may suffer. Some studies have noted that voters in Germany, the longest established MM system, do not really understand whether the nominal vote or the list vote is more important. At the same time, German voters have managed to make good strategic use of their two votes over the years, even if they do not fully understand the mechanics of their MMP system.

15.8 Summing Up

- Shape a legitimate electoral system is a big challenge for any representative body in any democratic political system.
- No electoral system is perfect; each has its advantages and disadvantages.
- Mixed member electoral systems are described as a mixture of two principles of electoral system design.
- The mixed member electoral systems is a subset of the broader category of multiple tier electoral systems.
- MMP provides ridings with individual representatives for part of the seats in the House. The remaining candidates are elected from a list each party prepares before the election.
- Mixed-member electoral (MM) systems have been the choice of the most countries implementing electoral reform.

15.9 Abbreviation

- SSD- Single-Seat Districts
- MMMP- Mixed Member Proportional System
- MMM- Mixed Member Majoritarian
- SNTV- **Single Non-Transferable Vote** (SNTV)

15.10 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Define the Mixed-Member Representation System. Mention the basic features of this system.
2. Analyse the advantages of a Mixed-Member Proportional System.
3. Explain why the Mixed Member Representation System is important for ensuring minority representation in the legislature.
4. Do you agree with the view that ‘Mixed member representation system is necessary for a democracy’? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Discuss the shortcomings of the mixed-member proportional system.

Short Questions :

1. Explain how ballots are counted in the Mixed Member Representation System.
2. Mention the main features of Mixed-Member Proportional Representation.

Objective Questions :

1. What is the full form of MMM in Representation System?
2. Name any one country that has introduced the Mixed Member Representation System?
3. When did the Italian Senate introduce the Mixed-Member Election System?
4. What is meant by strategic voting?

15.11 Further Reading

1. Matthew Shugart., and Martin P. Wattenberg, editors. *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems : The Best of Both Worlds?* Oxford University Press, 2003.
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4. Bochslers, D., 2009. “Are Mixed Electoral Systems the Best Choice for Central and Eastern Europe or the Reason for Defective Party Systems?” *Politics & Policy* 37(4), 735-767.
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