

## The Myth of Democracy: An Appraisal

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### **Abstract:**

**Purposes:** Democracy means power of people, or a system of government which believes in power sharing with people. It can be defined as a system of government of the people, by the people and for the people. This study aims at examining democracy to know the real meaning of democracy (definitions, principles and characteristics), besides investigating the myth of democracy by pin-pointing those factors which are not the real face of democracy. Where democracy is composed ideologically and culturally by the elites for the self-interest and not for the welfare of society. The study focusses on qualitative approach of study mainly relying on secondary sources of data based on documents-analysis. The self-structure scale is designed for measurement of myth in democracy. Main findings of the study encompass humiliations of the political, social and economic rights. Deconstruction of the equality, liberty, freedom, rule of law, tyranny and government of immature.

**Keywords:** Myth, Democracy, Liberty and Freedom.

### **Introduction**

Democracy is a model which has no fixed model, it has changed its shape with the passage of time and has different meaning for different societies. Social scientists define it according to their own sense of understanding. Most of the people reject it because of the just political model, totalitarianism of the majority over minority and adding that democracy is a government of the incompetent people, while in confrontation, majority acknowledged democracy and considered it as a power sharing with people, government of the individual, freedom of thoughts, liberty, equality, equity, rule of law and power sharing with majority and protection of rights of the minority (Bell, 2009). Anyhow, democracy has good omen for the majority as well as minority, if it introduced in real means as said by the Abraham Lincoln as “democracy is a form of government of the people, by the people and for the people” (Lincoln, 1994) while the most comprehensive concept is, democracy is a form of government in which everyone has a share on equal basis.

However, the researcher explored the concept of myth in democracy. According to Oxford dictionary meaning of myth is “something that many people believe but that does not exist or false”. But by myth the researcher mean composed or plan democracy, which is ideologically and culturally

composed in society by the elites for their self-interest and not for the welfare being of society. It may also be refer to the flourishing of common sense politics and propaganda on the name of democracy, for this purposes it is necessary to understand norms, values and principles of democracy and needs to explore the trigger concept in democracy and find out those common sense concept which polluted the real face of democracy. This paper is divided into two parts, first part of the paper investigated that what is democracy, while in second part researcher tried to pointed out those malwares in democracy which demolished the real face of democracy or make it fragile.

This works comes in fundamental research, researcher analysed the primary and secondary data on political, social and economic situation of developing societies and investigated myth in democracy. This research has great significance for community because to know that what is democracy and what is not democracy.

### **The Concept of Democracy**

Democracy is the combination of two Greek words “demos” and “kratos” which means power of the people (Birch, 2001: 71) or sharing of powers with people. Actually it is a form of government where power share with citizen. Basically, in democratic society political powers is in the hands of people, they are directly or indirectly involve in the governmental activities of the state. People have political, social and economic rights, and also have a power of freedom of thoughts, expression, liberty and criticism on government. As Abraham Lincoln said “democracy is a form of government of the people by the people and for the people” (Lincoln, 1994).

Although, Greeks gave the concept of democracy but did not provide a modal that how it could be gage. According to Greeks democracy means powers of the people, but actually what sort of power will be in its sphere or what should be the condition of ruling. Either it should be limited to institutional or industrial democracy or may in reach of common man (male and female). If it is, it is against principle of liberal democracy because democracy is a comprehensive term in their nature it is not only limited to a system of government, it is also associated to all institutions and all aspects of society. As Americans declared that they have not only a democratic government but also a democratic society (Birch, 2001: 72). Thus, we cannot limit it to industrial or parliamentary democracy. So democratic society neither limited to a specific institution of government (legislature, executive and judiciary) nor to a private system, it is comprehensive by nature and comprehended all aspects of individual (public and private).

From the above discussion it is concluded that democracy is a system which has different characteristics as belief on power sharing with all citizens directly or indirectly as to elect their representative. Democracy depends upon majority and having protection of the individual rights, there is decentralization of powers because of responsibility. No one has the right to demolish the rights of other. Democracy provides freedom of expression, thoughts, speech and criticism and provides advocate opportunity of political, social and economic rights. There is a periodical election on free and fair bases through which people elect their representatives. Not only

these, democratic societies having values and norms of tolerance, consensus, peace, conversation and dialogue.

## Myth in Democracy: Humiliation of Individual's Rights

Rights are those principles which are derived from individual needs and capacity, whenever individual needs they construct or adopted from others. Most of the then thinks tankers of the time raised voice for the individual's rights. As in 10 A.H. of the Islamic Calendar was very significant in the history of Islam because of the last pilgrimage and ceremony of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, in the ceremony Prophet Mohammad delivered his speech on the basic rights and duties of the individual, he declared that your life and property as sacred with you, harm no one, you are responsible for your deeds, don't take interest, neither suffer nor inflict in-equality and injustice, do good with your women, they have rights over you, be good with your slave, clothed and feed them as you yourself. All of you are equal, An Arab have no superiority over non-Arab, white and black is on the same line, you are brother of one another (Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon, 2013: 3-4). John Locke also focussed on individual's rights and liberty and was a great pioneer of individual's life, property and liberty. His work on *Concerning Civil Government*, he declared that natural liberty of an individual is free from any superiority, no one can make other as a slave by force. Further he said that preservation of private property is the natural rights of individual, God gave this world to Adam and his sons and by reason they have a right to possession and cultivation. In addition, he declared that man has a right of freedom and liberty (Locke, 1998:13-28).

But the twentieth century was the period of recognition for the individual's rights on international level. The International world has espoused several programs and conventions on the rights and freedom, which define and introduced the human rights in clear articles and ensured that such rights should be protected. At the same time it was cleared with the states to safeguard and ensure it in domestic laws in their states.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR has been adopted by the United Nations UN in 10 Dec, 1948, short after the World War II (United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, 2010: 1). 10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1948, recognized as "International Human Rights Day or Human Rights Day" and the Guinness Book of World Records considered UDHR as the most translated article in the world history (Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR, 1948: 193). All political, social and economic rights are clearly defined in declaration, right to life and family, marriage, health, religion, property, freedom of expressions and thoughts, participation in government, freedom of association, freedom of public opinion, security, migration, asylum, protection, justice, nationality and member of society, equal access to public services and works, specific hour time and holidays, join trade union, education, abolishing of slavery, discarding of discrimination, equality before law, no one can be imprisoned without proper trial, eliminations of the distinction of colours, creeds, race (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, 2010: 2-7) (The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan).

So, follow such types of human rights in theory as well in practice are the basis of democracy. It is compulsory for each democratic government must

provide the upper mentioned rights of the individual, if they maintain peace and stability in their state. Unfortunately, mostly in developing society and rarely in developed society, these rights are curbed by the authorities (Politicians, Armies, Industrialists and other elites) through back door policy. This is equal to derail of democracy and human rights. Unfortunately, human rights violations are common in developing countries i.e. extra judicial killing, missing person, children and women abusing, IDPs problems, police torturing and other minority humiliation are daily publishing in newspapers. More than that, where there is a strike and protest against government because of cruelty over masses, while government, instead to solve their problems use force against community through army and police. Issue order for direct firing to disperse the protesters, consequently, they become victim of bullets and innocent people died in protests. Some time, people protest only against institutions or establishment rather than state because of corruption, humiliation of public interest. In a response to investigate the issue and problem, the administrators blamed them as terrorist and declare them rebellion. So the elimination of the individuals rights means curbing the principles of democracy.

## **Rigging in Elections**

Basically, democracy and elections have seriously link, democracy without periodical elections is a myth. For any democratic society, there should be periodical elections, through which the electors chose their own representatives and to enhance a democratic system of government. So, election is a process through which democratic societies choose their representative to administrate society.

Mostly, in developing societies there are rigging in elections, as rigging before election (pre-poll rigging), during election (polling day rigging) and after election (post poll rigging). The then government use bureaucracy, elections commission and other government agencies for the purposes to win election. By this way they not only disturb the mandate of the people but also destruct the bases of democracy. Elites or influential authorities use various illegal ways to win elections, some of them are, buying votes, rigging, pinching the ballot and mandate, endorsing propagations, and gerrymandering (to change the size and border of an area for voting in order to give an unfair advantage to one party in an election). Sometimes for the accomplishment of goal especially winning of the election, the political leaders attack on their own party member. In a response they may get sympathy of the people in the shape of votes in favour of the victim candidate or party. So, using illegal way for winning the election means to disrupt the nature of democracy, which is a myth in short words.

Prominent scholars have listed many causes and explanations over election's frauds and rigging. Some of them are enlisted, according to F. Lehoucq these are controlled by the state (Lehoucq, 2003: 233-256), Anderson percept on economic, he opines that economy is a basic reason for the fraud in election (Anderson, 2000), according to Graham, mostly frauds in elections occurs because of maintaining class power (Graham, 1990). There is also infringement in the electoral laws which lead to rigging in election mentioned

by Eisenstaedt (Eisenstadt, 1998). Sometimes the influential groups and parties make a game-trap which discourage the opposition from race of the elections and comprehends the voters in their favours (Fortin-Rittberger, 2014: 95-117).

## Rule of Law

Rule of law which comes up with promulgation of law, means the complete absence of totalitarianism and anarchy or in other words, government administer through law not of individual. Further it is endorses that rule of law encounter fear and anarchy in a state because Professor Dicey declared that it is focussed on the principles of equality before law, supremacy of the law and dominancy of the legal rights. Reference from dicey book. Rule of law is a comprehensive term, even a sovereign state is not out of its sphere. United Nations declared that rule of law is the standard of good governance which included each individual, organization (wither public or private), institutions and even the state, are bow before laws. Where law is uniform for everyone, supreme and no one can detain or imprison without proper investigation (Tamanaha, 2012: 234). This is why people follow the rule of law because it eliminates the class society and everyone is the child of law on equality basis. It is the rule of law which give life to the concept of democracy because, where government is responsible before a common man of the society, where there is governed by the law not a man, where individual have a right of freedom and liberty and no one imprisoned without proper trial of court. In such type of situation society comes up and sings the songs of peace and prosperity. While in the tyrannical society, individual comes to the bridge of destruction because of the failure of the law and democracy. Plato opinions, "Where the law is subject to some other authority and has none of its own, the collapse of the state, in my view, is not far off but if law is the master of the government and the government is its slave, then the situation is full of promise and men enjoy all the blessings that the gods shower on a state".

## Construction of Common Sense Politics in Community

Mostly political leaders change the public discourses for the sake of their personal interest. To govern softly, winning of election, creation of hurdle for the opponent, or to make a facilitated and easy situation to survive, political leaders always change the public opinion, norms and values according to possible solution which is in their favour. For the endorsement of their lobby, political leaders always use media, by which they can publish their lobby across society. Their lobbies and propagandas are so well versed that a common man may easily motivated and follow it. There are tactics and counter tactics policies, social movements are using to change the public behaviour and indulge it in their own way of politics. *D.R. Woody* comprehensively discussed the concept of common sense politics in his book on *The Politics of Common Sense* (Woody, 2015). *Dr. Asim Sajjad* also incorporated about the mentioned topic in his book of *The Politics of Common Sense: State, Society and Culture in Pakistan* (Akhtar, 2017).

As usually, the fascist state enhance the habitual culture like awards for the national heroes of war, celebrate the heroes death's ceremony, by this way they hide the weaknesses of their activities. They celebrated because to create unity among people. Whenever, there is an insurgency in a state, protests and strikes against government. Administration of that community started fake war on border against other or may create something astonish events for the purposes to change the behaviour of protesters and bring them to unity. More specifically, crosses, crescents, military parades, flags, inflammatory speeches and posters have instigated certain groups of people to kill and harm those who belong to other groups. In many societies, these symbols or events have also been used to create barriers to discriminate against people who do not share them (Jeong, 2000: 33). Thinkers, writers, political, social and economic scientists are the people who observe society by their keen eyes and explore the political, social and economic events. They discussed the evils and good job of the community, as a result it become the poison for them because the corrupt leader don't want to explore his evils and blasphemy among people.

### **Government of Men not of Laws**

Montesquieu, the father of the theory of separation of powers, after observing the governmental system in England, endorsed that separation of powers with check and balance as necessary for the sustainability of community. While in a democratic society, it is necessary that all of the three pillars of the government must be separated from one another, accumulation of power of these three branches in a single hand is nothing more than tyranny and dictatorship (Kemp, 2016: 1-12). In the modern concept of political system USA followed Montesquieu theory of separation of powers, where each agency of government has their own sphere of powers with a little check, which extends the government of laws not of men (Clemons, nd: 2).

It has been observed that in the developing society like Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan in the past, political authorities or a military commander make a centralized system behind democracy, they have control over the internal and external activities and never share political powers with other authorities. They have sharp teeth of dictatorship behind nominal democracy or thorns beneath roses. So, in reality such types of government are ruled by the men not by the laws.

### **Class-Society lead to Totalitarianism**

Democracy without economic equality is a myth. For smooth running of the government it is necessary that there should be equal opportunity of economic development for each individual in society. In capitalist society, there are only a limited people on the top of the hierarchy who run society. Upper class or the rich one have the sole opportunity to make party, conduct election and get power of the government while the poor cannot survive in this system, because beggars cannot be chooser. As GDH Cool is of the opinion, "Political liberty without economic equality is a myth". There are two pillars of democracy liberty and equality, both are depends upon each other, if there is equality for the individual in political, social and economic system liberty

itself follow it, while the situation may in confrontation there will be no democracy.

Mostly in the developing countries like Pakistan, the landlords and the industrialist have control over the state institutions, they made a hereditary system like absolute monarchy i.e. PPP (ZA Bhutto, Bainazer, Zardari and Bilawal) and PMLN also have the same nature (Nawaz Shareef, Shahbaz Shareef, Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shabaz), in reality it is a totalitarianism rather than democracy. So the real cause is economic difference between rich and poor, the modern system cannot afford by the poor society and the upper class consider the government as their discretionary rights. Perhaps it is a myth on the name of democracy, because they shouts for democracy while forget their hereditary nature of absolute tyranny.

## **Subjugation of media**

Media which is consider as a basic pillar of state because it works like a bridge in a democratic society, it bring public news to the political system while the governmental decision show to people, this is the reason that media functions are like a “watchdog”, any time they are teasing the public and government activities. Media is too much necessary for the democratic societies and government, during election, political parties run their charter through media and informs community about the manifesto of the parties and they cost vote in favour of their parties, not only this it show the public demands to the government this is why Gunther and Meghan considers the media as a connective tissue of democracy (Anthony Mughan and Richard Gunther, 2000). It is media which run the system of political, social and economic education and informs community from local and global news. For this purposes it is necessary that media should be free, as Unger argued that free media is needs of the time because to inform the community about each act of the government in developing as well in develop society (Ungar, 1990). As same comment has been passed by McQuail, he is of the opinion that all activities of the state and government (democratic and undemocratic) depends upon press media (McQuail, 2000), so it should be free from any restriction of state and other influential body.

It is media which can make the public opinion, because community depends upon media for the governmental affairs and show their response. However, mostly government and dominant group use media for their own purposes. Some time, they spread the false news to change the behaviour of community, for this purpose they funded to press. They may keep media under his pressure that to hide the drawbacks of government and replace its failures in bogus success. These types of actions are common during elections, crisis, emergency, war, insurgency, belligerency, failing of government and state, political violence and terrorism, corruptions etc.

These factors are the evidence of media subjugation, as a result it show myth of democracy because free press is the sole of modern democracy. Welfare concept of state belief on freedom of media, restrictions on media means hide

facts and figures of government from citizens which is against the norms of democracy.

## **Political Violence and Terrorism**

It is true that peoples turn towards violence and terrorism because of the tease situation i.e. injustice, absence of merit, lacking of job, poverty etc. but sometime, mostly peoples do violence and terrorism although they have wealth and a good life to live. Now the question is why do people turn towards violence and terrorism although they have the abundance of wealth and luxury life? It is because of political purposes and interest, they want to change the situation according to their own will and desire (all, 2014: 103). According to Bruce Hoffman, terrorism is an activity which has done for the goal to achieve a political interest (Hoffman, 2006). At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the anarchists were involved in the major political assassinations, they have only the interest of political inducement on national and international level. Killing of the Russian Tsar Alexander II by the Ignatei Grinevitski, Marie-François Sadi Carnot, a French President killed by Sante Geronimo Caserio in 1894 and also the assassination of the USA president William McKinley (all, 2014: 103), all of these political violence were done for the purposes of political interest.

Democracy is system which demands for the peaceful change in government and political sphere of activities. It is totally against any type of violation whether it is doing for the purpose of politics or for something else. In the globalize world, mostly in the developing world, political leaders follow the philosophy of Machiavelli "The Prince". Mostly they are doing something else and showing something else, probably the political leaders have curse in heart while mercy on tongue. For the winning of elections they adopted illegal ways i.e. killing of the opposite candidate or creation of the terror situation in a society, where the masses feel insecurity and never cost a vote. So, all of these illegal activities are myth in democracy.

## **Conclusion**

On the question of the myth of democracy in developing society, it has been concluded that how the influential and elite propagated democracy and use ideological, political and culture violence on the name of democracy and endorse their own interest. Elite class use political and social institutions for their self-interest to be remain always in power by any means. They have a different strategies for the public control, some-time they use force to have control over public and some-time use ideology. For using the force, they have control over courts, laws and police, while using print and electronic media for the propagation of their ideology. By this way they disrupted democracy, which led to the failure of the good governance, humiliation of the political, social and economic rights of the masses. In a real sense democracy is the best form of government, a truly democratic society has to follow the basic norms and values for the success of democracy. Like developed society as United States of America, Unite Kingdom, Canada, France etc. provided basic needs of life to citizen as, food, shelter, freedom of speech, education,

health facilities and so on. They work for the welfare of society and this is why democratic society and government are successful. On the other hand democracy could not flourish in real sense in developing society.

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