

# SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

## ELECTIONS:

In a democracy elections provide the basis of people's choice and representation. They help in the crystallization of people's interest and giving expression to them. Elections decide who shall rule and who will form the government. Election is such a process of political participation through which peripheral groups overcome their linguistic, castiest, and regional identities. Elections therefore, are necessary as voters make choice of representatives who form the government, make laws, and, take decisions.

The election is democratic in true sense, only if every citizen have right to choose on basis of one person, one vote, existence of political parties, right to contest elections, right to vote, elections are held periodically and in a free and fair manner.

## DIFFERENT METHODS OF ELECTIONS:

In modern times, that government is best in which people take part directly. This form of government is democratic, but in modern times in states with huge population, establishment of direct democracy is impossible. Therefore, representative form of government has been evolved. The citizens elect their representatives for a fixed tenure and these representatives conduct the government in accordance with the wishes of the people. Those representatives who do not care for the wishes of the people are not elected next time. Thus, in democracy people have the right of electing representatives of their choice.

The different methods of elections are:-

### 1. DIRECT & INDIRECT SYSTEM OF ELECTION:

**Direct Method:-** This method is easy. In this system, voter takes part in elections directly. He goes to polling booth and casts his vote to a candidate of his choice, it is called direct method of election. Then elected candidates hold the government of the country. Representatives of House of Commons in England, House of Representatives in America and House of people in India are elected by direct method.

**Indirect Method:-** In this method, voters do not elect their representatives to legislative assemblies directly, but elect an electoral college, and then this electoral college elects representatives to the legislative assemblies. In this way, representatives are indirectly elected by people through Electoral College. The members of upper house in state legislative assembly and members of council of states or Rajya Sabha in centre are elected by indirect method.

### GOOD EFFECTS OF INDIRECT METHOD ON PARTY AND POLITICS:

- i) The electoral college is comparatively possessing more wisdom and common sense. They will perform their duties in more responsible manner while electing the representatives.
- ii) The indirect system is free from party politics, because activities of political parties decrease in this system.
- iii) This system is successful in countries which are backward and people are not politically conscious.

### BAD EFFECTS OF INDIRECT METHOD ON PARTY AND POLITICS:

- i) It is against democracy, as it diminishes the importance of an individual, because he cannot elect the representatives directly.
- ii) It diminishes interest of people in public problems because they are deprived of casting their votes directly for election of representatives.
- iii) In indirect method people are deprived of political education, as candidates go to Electoral College for campaigning and not to common people.
- iv) There is no close contact between voter and the representatives, as candidates are in contact with Electoral College and not voters.
- v) In this system as only few people have the right to elect representatives, therefore it is easy to corrupt such people with money.

### 2. TERRITORIAL OR GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION:

**Constituency:** - When a territory is divided into number of constituencies for elections, such representation is called territorial or geographical representation. A constituency may be

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smaller or bigger than a district. Territorial constituency is of two types – single member constituency and multi member constituency.

**a) Single member constituency:-** When only one member is elected from constituency it is known as single member constituency. Such constituencies are small in size and equal with other from population point of view. A candidate, who secures more votes than others from a constituency, is declared elected.

## **MERITS:**

- i) This is a simple method and common voter can easily understand it.
- ii) There is efficiency in working of ministers, due to small size of constituency.
- iii) It is less expensive.
- iv) There is close relationship between voters and representatives. It helps in solution of problems and interest of constituency cannot be neglected.
- v) This method helps in limiting the number of parties, constituencies and helps in developing bi-party system, so that a stable government can be established.
- vi) Minorities also get representation in it.

## **DEMERITS:**

- i) The successful candidate often does not get the majority of votes polled as contests are multi-cornered.
- ii) The constituencies have to be de-limited from time to time. Those who de-limit constituencies can easily be influenced by ruling party.
- iii) The national interest may suffer because there is tendency to serve the local interest.
- iv) The field of choice for the voters is generally limited.

**b) Multi Member Constituency:-** When more than one member is elected from a constituency, it is called a multi-member constituency. In this system, whole country is divided into constituencies, from where many representatives are elected. In multi-member constituency, the method of proportional representation is adopted and for being elected, a candidate has to fulfill the quota of votes. The voters have to vote for as many representatives as are to be elected. The voters may indicate their preference.

## **MERITS:**

- i) In this system, voters get adequate representation in the parliament.
- ii) The voters have wide field of choice and they can send representatives of their choice.
- iii) The point of view of the representatives also becomes wider because local problems do not get much importance in the elections.

## **DEMERITS:**

- i) There is possibility of development of multi party system. Therefore, no single party may get majority in the parliament and may lead to the establishment of coalition governments. Consequently, it may lead to instability in the government and formulation of effective and lasting policies may not be possible.
- ii) Such elections are expensive because of big constituencies.
- iii) There is not close relationship between the voter and representatives.
- iv) It is a complicated system.

## **3. FUNCTIONAL OR VOCATIONAL REPRESENTATION:**

The supporters of vocational representation term territorial representation as a fraud and injustice, because it does not give representation to all interests or whole population. The territorial representation should be replaced by vocational representation. The idea behind the vocational representation is that all the social, economic and occupational groups should get representation in the national parliament. The main exponents of this system were socialist thinkers. They feel that man of one occupation cannot represent the other occupation.

## **EFFECTS OF VOCATIONAL REPRESENTATION ON PARTIES AND POLITICS:**

The vocational representation system was followed in former USSR and in India; twelve members of Rajya Sabha are nominated by President on Vocational basis. It is right that representation should be given on basis of occupation, class or function, but it creates

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more difficulties than it has advantages. The vocational system effects the party and politics in following ways:-

- i) It is difficult to choose the group interests and even if they are selected, it will be difficult to give representation to all of them.
- ii) It is difficult to separate political and economic questions.
- iii) The parliament will become an area of various occupational interests and this will eliminate national and general interests.
- iv) It is against the theory of national sovereignty, because legislature is supposed to fulfill the national interest and not special one.
- v) The legislature will become a place of dispute instead of a law-making agency.
- vi) The system may represent classes or interests, but cannot give representation to the minorities.

## 4. SIMPLE MAJORITY SYSTEM:

Simple majority representation system means that system in which a candidate, securing votes more than those of others, is declared elected. Here securing of absolute majority of votes is not necessary. In this system as there is a multi-cornered contest, candidate with less than 50% of the polled valid votes is elected. In most of the countries, this system is used for the elections to the lower houses, because those members represent the common men.

## 5. PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM:

The most complex problem of modern democratic government is how the minority communities living in the country should be represented. It has generally been admitted that to give them representation is most essential for their cultural, political and social development. This system was founded by Thomas Hare. He planned this system as;

- a) There should be large constituencies.
- b) At least three candidates should be elected from each constituency.
- c) Each voter will cast as many votes as the number of representatives to be elected.
- d) To be elected each candidate should secure at least as many votes as fixed by electoral quota.
- e) The electoral quota is determined by dividing the total number of votes by number of candidates to be elected.

Proportional representation in modern times is used in following ways:-

### a) Single Transferable Vote System:

In this system people cast one vote and then mention their preference on ballot paper. According to this system, multimember constituency is formed and as many representatives as are desirable may be elected. To be successful in elections, each candidate must secure at least as many vote as the quota is fixed for the purpose. Transfer of votes according to need is the characteristic of the system. The two methods for determining quota are:

- i)  $\text{Total number of votes polled} / \text{Number of representatives to be elected}$
- ii)  $\text{Total number of votes polled} / \text{Number of representatives to be elected} + 1$

### b) List System:

In this system, there are large multi-member constituencies and many representatives are elected from each constituency. Each political party submits a list of that number of candidates as are elected from a particular constituency, and each voter votes in favour of a list. If five candidates are to be elected, the voter has no option to cast two votes to one list and three to other. He/she will have to cast all votes in favour of one list. To be elected each candidate has to secure as many votes as are fixed by electoral quota.

## MINORITY REPRESENTATION:

Democracy implies majority rule, but this does not mean that minority gets no representation. It is necessary that adequate representation should be of minority also. The minority should also have its full representation like the majority.

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## DEFINITION:

Minority means a group of persons who are less in number than others. From political point of view, it is a non-dominant group which has its own racial, religious or linguistic characteristics, which are different from other members of political association.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines Minority as a group which is tied because of common race, language or religious beliefs and who considers themselves separate from the majority members of Political community. Thus, separate racial, religious and linguistic characteristics are essential for being a minority.

Minority sections get representation, so seats are reserved for them in legislative assemblies as well as in House of People in centre.

## FIRST PAST THE POST SYSTEM:

This system was chosen for India after Independence because of social, economic and political factors. In 'First past the Post System' there are single member constituencies and one representative is elected from each constituency. This system was chosen in India due to following reasons;

- a) Due to lack of politicization in India, First Past the Post System was chosen as it was simple for Indian population to understand because they were not educated and not familiar with national issues.
- b) Due to presence of many political parties in India, this system was suitable for India.
- c) To establish secularism, this system was adopted to maintain a close relationship between people and candidate.

## EFFECTS OF FIRST PAST THE POST SYSTEM:

- i) The main problem with this system is that elected candidate polls less numbers of votes than the candidates of opposition parties.
- ii) The use of money power by political parties to provide tickets to rich people.
- iii) During election, cabinet does not resign. There is chance of misuse of power and position by ministers, in order to make their party victorious.
- iv) There are committed election officers and voters are not vigilant.
- v) Candidates seek support on basis of religion, caste and language.

## PROVISION TO ENSURE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS:

Following provisions ensure free and fair elections:-

- i) Universal adult franchise, right to vote should be given to all adult citizens without the distinction of caste, religion, class or sex.
- ii) The Indian Constitution provides the establishment of a free and fair, and, impartial election commission. Election commission should be multi-membered, one chief election commissioner and two other election commissioners. These are appointed by President and parliament makes rule for service conditions and decides tenure of Election Commissioner.

## WHAT DOES THE ELECTION COMMISSION DO?

The functions of the election commission are given in Article 324(1) of the constitution. These functions are:-

- i) The superintendence, direction and control of elections.
- ii) Preparation of electoral rolls and to include the names of all such citizens in the electoral rolls as are qualified to vote.
- iii) Conduct of the elections of President and Vice President.
- iv) Conduct of all elections to parliament as well as state legislatures.
- v) Control over the staff of commission and providing recognition to political parties.
- vi) Allotment of symbols to political parties and independent candidates.
- vii) Preparation of electoral rolls and identity card with photograph.
- viii) Demarcation of electoral constituencies, details of electoral expenditure and to conduct electoral appeals.

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