

Democracy Vs Dictatorship

Or

For Forms of Government Let Fools Contest

“Democracy requires us to respect each individual as sacred.”

— Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Democracy is a form of Government run by those people who are elected by the common people for the welfare of the country. All the adult citizens over the age of 18 have a fundamental right to vote in the elections to the central or the state government. The party that gets a majority in the elections becomes the ruling party.

In a democratic country, all the citizens enjoy equal rights. It is the highest form of civilized government. Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysberg Address once defined Democracy as a “Government of the people, and for the people.” It has been found successful in India, Switzerland, U.K., U.S.A., France, Canada and many other countries in the world. It is fast replacing Dictatorship in various countries.

There are, however, some basic essential conditions for the success of a Democracy. Those essential requirements are an educated public, well-organized, strong political parties, patriotic leaders and freedom of the press and the independent judiciary. Economic equality is also a must in a democratic society.

Democracy in India sometimes appears to be temporarily derailed only because of rampant illiteracy and poverty. Corruption, casteism and communalism have also been ruling the roost. Under such circumstances, ignorant voters are easily exploited into electing undeserving people to the state legislatures or the Parliament. Voters are carried away by empty slogans and tall promises only to be sadly disappointed later on. Things are, however, improving with the spread of education. People are becoming more and more mature and democracy is making a firmer foothold in the country with every day that passes.

A strong opposition is also one of the important essentials of a successful democracy. A strong opposition acts as a powerful watchdog and continues to expose the flaws and failings of the ruling party. It keeps the ruling

party on its toes all the time and forces it to answer for its various lapses and failures. In the absence of an organized opposition, on the other hand, the members of the ruling party go berserk. They are worried more about themselves than about the welfare of the people. This gives rise to the dishonest practice of corruption, favoritism and nepotism and sows the seeds of disaffection and dissatisfaction in the country. It is because of such flaws only that, at times, Fagnet's words seem to be true:

"Democracy is the cult of the incompetent."

Dictatorship, in contrast, is the rule of a particular king or ruler on all the people. This is helpful if the ruler is good, just and honest. But sometimes, it is not so. Einstein once said: -

"Dictators of genius are succeeded by scoundrels."

Dictatorship does bring law and order and discipline but it is an enemy of individual liberty. It removes all joy and dehumanizes all men. It takes away people's freedom of speech, thought, expression and faith. The press is not free to express its opinion in a totalitarian society. People have to obey the order of the government on fear of stringent punishments. There are no political parties, no demonstrations or public meetings, no protest marches and no strikes. The means of production and the agencies of distribution are controlled by the state. There is no private ownership of property and there are no fundamental rights. Right from birth people are indoctrinated into a certain pattern of thought that teaches them loyalty to the state or the ruling junta. People have no say in the affairs of the government and the voice of dissent is stifled with an iron hand. Some people believe that this type of denial of individual freedom is a crime against humanity.

Democracy and dictatorship are two forms of government having their own plus and minus points. It is difficult to decide as to which form is superior to the other. Everything depends upon the people themselves. It is said that people get the government they deserve. It may be true but people do have peace and security. Whatever be the form of government, it must satisfy the basic people in an honourable and respectable manner. Alexander Pope rightly said:-

"For forms of government let fools contest.

Whatever is administered best, is the best."