

Relevance Of Parliamentary System Of Government In India

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ABSTRACT:

When India emerged as an independent nation in 1947, It already had the experience of operating parliamentary institutions, and thus, in a sense, the decision of the Constituent Assembly of India may be said to have been preempted by the British political reality appears to be that the Indian psyche has found itself in harmony with the parliamentary form of government. But in recent years due enormous problems of the government the future of parliamentary system India seems to be bleak. So, a lot of efforts are required in order to ensure successful functioning of the parliamentary system in India.

Development of Thought: `

Questions regarding the future parliamentary democracy in India were asked as early as the fifties, soon all the Constitution of India was adopted. In fact, two national seminars on theme were organised in 1956 and 1957. Some of the most eminent nation leaders and parliamentarians including the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, participated. Nehru, as the chief artificer of the system, himself rah doubts about its ability to deliver the goods.

Key words: Independent, nation, decision, constituent, assembly, political, government.

Introduction:

Parliamentary form of government has been the key feature of the Indian political system, its inception having taken place under the British rule itself. It became an explicit announced policy under Government of India Act, 1919 and subsequent enactments.

When India emerged as an independent nation in 1947, It already had the experience of operating parliamentary institutions, and thus, in a sense, the decision of the Constituent Assembly of India may be said to have been preempted by the British political reality appears to be that the Indian psyche has found itself in harmony with the parliamentary form of government. But in recent years due enormous problems of the government the future of parliamentary system India seems to be bleak. So, a lot of efforts are required in order to ensure successful functioning of the parliamentary system in India.

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"The problems of Government", he said, "have grown so enormously that sometimes one begins to doubt whether the normal parliamentary processes are adequate to deal with them."

He added: "The business of Government and the business of parliament become more and more complicated and it becomes a little doubtful how far parliament's democracy can carry on its work and solve such problems."

The major of the parliamentary democracy are decline in quality of our representatives, decline in quality of debates, defections, criminalization of politics, deterioration of the law and order, lack of strong opposition, corruption and the parallel economy. Nevertheless our parliamentary democracy is a highly developed system with a long and glorious history and sophisticated operational mechanics, fact, the conception of its basic structure is absolutely sound.

The Constitute has created certain institutions and endowed them with certain powers. The powers are not unlimited. But the men and women who run these institutions forget that they are limited personalities. On the whole our constitution does not need any fundamental transformation.

We can conclude with Herman Finer that "If the power holders exercise self-restraint, the written constitution is unnecessary, and if they do not, then no written constitution will check them." We can paraphrase Finer by saying that if the public authorities and the people do not have the will and the motivation to work under the parliamentary Constitution then no system can substitute it. Parliamentary form of Government has been the key feature of the Indian political system; its inception having taken place under the British Rule itself. It becomes an explicit announced policy under the Government of India Act, 1919 Id subsequent enactments.

When India emerged as an independent nation in 1947, it already had the experience of operating parliamentary institutions, and thus, in a sense, the decision of the Constituent Assembly of India may be said to have been pre-empted by the British.

By planting institutions and processes parliamentary democracy in India, the British rulers had trained the Indians parliamentary.

When the Indian leaders were called to choose a form of government, they naturally chose that form with which they were familiar, namely, the Westminster model of democracy. The political reality appears to be that the Indian psyche has found itself in harmony with the parliamentary form of Government.

There are certain prerequisites which are essential for the success of the system as obviously of any social system. The people must have become one nation with a commonality of interests and a consensus on certain fundamentals national goals.

Besides an all pervasive national identity as one people, it needs a minimum level of economic resources and stability, a certain amount of peace and an absence of social tensions, democratic traditions, a broadly homogeneous population, general political awareness, a well organized and established party system with two major parties democratically constituted and competing with each other on" ideological or, programmatic basis, and lastly, a respectable lei of education among the people at large.

When India achieved independence from the British and the founding fathers sat down to frame a constitution, it was natural that they looked up to the system and the institutions of their erstwhile rulers as the best.

The leadership is mainly British educated and was oriented to the British ways; Again, freedom was accepted in haste, almost under duress and on British terms.

The tiers of the Constitution had no time or full opportunity to write on a clean slate and devise a system most suited to India's ethos, history, needs and genius.

They bodily lifted large parts of the Government of India Act, 1935, and enshrined them in the Constitution without fully realizing that the Act was designed not to integrate the people into one nation but to divide them and keep them divided.

The hard facts are that we were a heterogeneous, pluralistic and feudal society with diverse divisive pulls breaking us into small segments and fragments of caste, religion, region, language and the like. There was widespread poverty backwardness and illiteracy.

We were, above all, far from being a nation: true sense. None of the essential pre-conditions for the success of the British type of parliamentary system were present in India. Moreover, it was not recognized that the system and its institutions were hardly amenable to transplantation on another soil and in a different milieu.

Any democratic system should, in fact, in its very nature, emanate from within the nation and evolve among the people in accordance with their thoughts, feelings, aspirations, hopes, needs and environs. Jawaharlal Nehru highlighted the merits of the parliamentary system follows:

(1) We chose this system in keeping with our own old traditions; (2) parliamentary democracy involves peaceful methods of action, peaceful acceptance of decisions taken and attempt to change them through peaceful ways again!

We prize the parliamentary form of government because it is a peaceful method of dealing with problems. It is a method of argument, discussions and decision, and of accepting that decision even though one may not agree with it.

The parliamentary system of government, with all its failings, has the virtue that it can fit in with the changing pattern of life.

In the ultimate analysis, a political system is not an end in itself. It is only a means for ensuring a better life for the individual and achieving certain collective social objectives and national goals.

What were the objectives of the framers of the Constitution in adopting the parliamentary system and how far have their expectations been fulfilled?

They thought, however erroneously that the parliamentary system would help them in building a united India and an integrated nation from a highly fragmented and segmented society; that it would lead to the emancipation of the millions of Indians who lived below the poverty line and that it would ameliorate the lot of the backward and the downtrodden.

Initially, there were some remarkable successes for a variety of reasons. But, after more than four decades of working, we find the portents gloomy and dismal. There is a basic disenchantment with the system. People have lost faith in the political process and institutions.

Even Parliament is getting irrelevant as political parties both ruling and opposition are losing legitimacy. One wonders what can be the prospects of the parliamentary system in a situation where the elected representative of the people come to be looked down upon with contempt. The politicians need huge sums

of money for the party and for meeting the high costs of elections. Not un often do they need money for paying a price to win over the elected representatives to their side to ensure the required majority for hanging onto power.

The politician has to pay the price by rating and promoting causes which breed corruption, crime, black money and the rest. In other words the vicious circle perpetuates itself. In the recent years, even the thin veil of operating by proxy has been given up in many areas and the anti-social elements themselves have jumped into the political arena.

not given for nothing.

We have almost reached a blind alley not knowing where to go from here. The most burning problems that we face today are the same which confronted the founding fathers, namely, the urgent need of nation-building and economic development.

We have not yet become a nation; we are struggling to become one. The parliamentary system, if anything, has made the task difficult.

Fissiparous tendencies are raising their ugly heads and powerful sections are refusing to fall in line and wanting to project their separate identities. The system encourages it all.

The populist politics of vote merchants in almost all parties makes it impossible for them to take honest and firm stand in matters of crucial national concern.

That the system of parliamentary democracy has failed can be illustrated also from the fact that at the level of the states, during the period of the last 41 years, nearly twice the number of times.

That on about 82 occasions, it has been officially admitted that the constitutional machinery has failed necessitating suspension or dissolution of parliamentary institutions and imposition of President's rule.

According to N.A Palkhivala, the four costly failures of the political system and the people, which are the direct causes of the present spectacle, are: (i)

Failure to maintain law and order, (ii) Failure to bring the unbounded economic potential of the country to fruition, (iii) Failure to make human investment, and (iv) Failure to provide moral leadership.

Conclusion:

It seems that everything is wrong with the men and women who fill our major institutions. Their conscience is dead, their, ethical impulses have dried up.

No statutory amendments, no procedural refinement, not even systemic change, can awaken their conscience, only a changed ethos can make the heart springs of morality flow with life-giving waters.

The system has brought India to the brink of a political disaster. There is, therefore, an urgent need for reviewing, reforming and if necessary, replacing it by something which would be more suited to our needs and would take into account our weaknesses as well.

All the portents point towards the prospects of parliamentary system being bleak in India. Logic and morality dictate an immediate review. But, notwithstanding all this, no review and no change may come about.

The system has become well-entrenched through distribution of favors, widening the base of corruption with a growing number of influential people coming to have a vested interest therein and building a power base irrespective of party affiliation through a contrived consensus to make parliamentary democracy in its Indian variant a government not by the people, of the people and for the people, but a government over the people and for serving the selfish interests of power seeking politicians, their sycophants and hangers on.

If our existing democratic institutions can be revived, a great deal will have been achieved. Reduction of poll expenditure, simultaneous elections to all representative institutions, regular election to local bodies, state financing of elections and democratization of political parties.

Even direct election to the upper house to eliminate 'Vote-trading', proper selection of judges, raising-of their emoluments and retirement age, efficiency and work ethic in government departments and public sector undertakings, an efficient public grievances procedures are some of the reforms indicated.

Any scheme for strengthening parliamentary institutions must be concerned with steps to ensure that Parliament as a body is able to impress its corporate personality on the other organs of the state and in the direction of national affairs.

So as to increase the effectiveness of Parliament in the discharge of its primary duties in these fields, exercise of continuous control of the Administration through a well devised committee system, providing opportunities and facilities for specialization by members and for their general equipment in order to increase their effectiveness, Provision of training for MP's and MLA's and Automatic voting.

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