

# **FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES**

**COURSE: B.A.LL.B. 1st Semester**

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# Lecture-10



## **Explanation of Features:**

The most important feature of liberal democracy is the competition of ideas and competition of views. Once Ernest Barker said democracy is never a one-idea state. There are multiple ideas and all of them always compete or contest among themselves.

Because of the multiplicity of ideas there always occurs competition among persons and institutions or organisations. Competition can easily be called life-blood of democracy and liberal democracy is the most secure abode of all sorts of competition.

Only in liberal democracy the distinction between state and society is maintained and nurtured. It is believed that individuals can develop their qualities only through strong and autonomous institutions. The distinction also emphasises the decentralisation of power.

The famous Marxist Gramsci held the view that in liberal democracy civil society is placed at a very high position and it is the civil society's autonomy and gradual rise of power that have caused the survival and the increasing strength of capitalist state. Liberal democracy is indirect and representative democracy. It works through the representatives elected by the people and elections are periodically held.

## **Pluralist View of Liberal Democracy:**

### **Definition of Pluralism:**

Liberal democracy has been viewed from different angles. One such angle is pluralist interpretation of liberal democracy. Pluralism is opposite to monism. The primary perspective of pluralism of pluralist view is in a democracy there are no single centre of power, rather multiple centres. Not only this there are a number of social and political centres. Each idea is centred around a particular centre. It also denotes that power is exercised by many centres.

It may be that all the centres are not equally powerful. Some exercise more and others less. In spite of this the multiplicity of centres is the basic characteristic of pluralist democracy. John Schwarzman in his *Structure of Power: An Introduction* (1987) defines liberal interpretation of democracy in the following words: "A system where there are competing parties, a network of pressure groups and associations, a separation of powers in some form or other in the constitutional field, is one where, in the pluralist view, the concentration of power would be avoided".

We thus see that political parties, pressure groups, multiplicity of organisation and association are the hallmarks of liberal democracy. The basic tenet of liberal democracy is competition and the competition is always among all the groups and ideas. If the possibility of competition is removed or blocked the concept of liberal democracy will meet an untimely death. In this background we can note certain basic features.

## **Features:**

The main feature of liberal democracy is that there is hardly any scope of the abuse of power because there are many groups and organisations and they are so much vigilant about their power and autonomy that any move by the state to intervene unnecessarily will be resisted by the groups and men. In autocratic political system this is not to be found. The decision of the state is final.

Robert Dahl is a great exponent of liberal democracy and he carried out investigation in American liberal democracy. What he found was that though in such a democracy some elite groups are powerful than others, these, under no circumstances, dominate the entire political scene of liberal democracy.

Liberal democracy is also called pluralist democracy. In such a democratic structure the important thing is the institutional arrangements for sharing, implementation and distribution of political power and in this system no agency or individual has overriding power over the other. An important aspect of institutional arrangement is the separation of power which acts as a mechanism of checks and balance. Another institutional arrangement is the supremacy of constitution.

In British political system there is neither a written constitution nor a clear separation of powers. In spite of this British democracy is of liberal plural type. Why? British liberal democracy, to use H.S. Kariel's phrase, is an historical phenomenon.

Liberal democracy blends elite rule with a significant measure of popular participation. Professionals administer the state. But at the head of the administration there are political executives who are accountable to the electorate. The importance of the professionals in a liberal democracy is chiefly due to the fact that all categories of people have not the ability to shoulder the onerous responsibility of administration. Only the elites possess the ability.

## **Democratic State:**

Generally democracy is a form of government and we have given definitions of important writers above, but certain writers have made a distinction between democratic government and a democratic state. For example, Hearnshaw, while giving the meaning of a democratic state, has said, "A democratic state, in short, is simply one in which the community as a whole possesses sovereign authority, maintains ultimate control over affairs and determines what sort of governmental machinery shall be set up because democracy as a form of state is not merely a mode of government; but is merely a mode of appointing, controlling and dismissing government".

It is thus evident that in a democratic state people have the rights to give a shape to the government, to appoint it and to dismiss it. The people appoint a new government after some years through elections, and express their will on important matters through the press or other means.

## Economic Democracy:

Western system of democracy is the Capitalist Democracy, with its economic and social inequalities. The socialist writes lay stress on economic democracy because they feel that without it, democracy cannot be called real.

Economic Democracy means no economic disparity and everyone should enjoy equal opportunity in the society, there would be no unemployment, the living standard of the people should be raised and they should have economic security. This is possibly only when there is no exploitation. The establishment of socialism is a sure way to guarantee this to all the citizens.

### MCQ

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1. Which of these statements regarding factors affecting politics of social divisions are true?

A. It is much easier if the people see that their identities are multiple and are complementary with national identity.

B. If people see their identities in singular and exclusive terms, it becomes very easy to accommodate.

C. It is easier to accommodate demands that are within the constitutional framework and not at the cost of another community.

D. It depends on how the government reacts to demands of different groups.

E. Attempts at forced integration do not sow the seeds of disintegration.

(a) A and B are true.

(b) C and B are true.

(c) A, B and C are true.

(d) A, C and D are true.

2. Identify the countries which faced the problem of social divisions.

(a) Belgium, Germany and USA

(b) Belgium, Sri Lanka and U.K.

(c) Sri Lanka, Canada and India

(d) U.K., USA and India

3. Which one of the following statements is not correct about social division?

(a) Too many small divisions are better than a single big division.

(b) Politics is a force of unity when expressions of various kinds of social divisions occur.

(c) It is only in countries like India that we have social divisions.

(d) Assertion of social diversities in a country need not be seen as a source of danger.

4. The success of democracy depends upon

- A.Periodic Elections.
- B. Voting.
- C.Campaigning in The Elections.
- D.All of the above

5.Which of the following is a permanent feature of a representative form of government?

- E. Voting.
- F. Decision Making.
- G. Military Force.
- H. None of The Above.