

The Contest in Power, Democracy and Development

INTRODUCTION

The issues of democracy, its implications and applicability provoke hot discussions all over the world; the issues of effective execution of power in achieving equitable development are a subject of contest as well. In fact, the dispute over the manner and styles of government existed in different societies since the beginning of the human civilization. Particularly, people discuss what principles and values should be considered the reference point in a community's social and political life. The principle of ethics and moral justice should be the force that drives all our operations in public offices; however, these moral rights come with relevant obligations and responsibilities, because rights should naturally be reciprocated. Therefore, exercising of justice in a society requires strict guidance of the rule of law that protects and governs such rights (Korpi 56).

Some basic political theories attempt to set broad boundaries for the issues of administration of democracy, exercising of delegated power and justice. According to the theory of communism, true justice in a society is measured by an extent to which elimination of private ownership has been successfully instituted. In turn, the theory of democracy treats ownership of private property as natural human rights that must be respected and protected. Democracy classifies property ownership as a moral issue that those in power are never supposed to transgress. In the 20th century, the contest of the exercise of power and democracy sparked a vicious "cold war" between the developed and the developing worlds. However, the world has managed to end this confrontation to some degree, as many participants withdrew from it. Consequently, the

global community has seen growing interests and valuable efforts from national leaders aspiring to harmonize the democratization process, particularly, in the developing economies. It is, therefore, clear that democracy, power and development are integral components that are not easily separable (Connolly 24).

Many experts in the North America and Canada, however, suggest that democracy contributes significantly to hampering effective development. For instance, the American Economic Association (AEA) says that it was not clear enough from their symposium held in 1993 whether democracy has a positive or negative impact on economic development (Bardhan 86). These remarks brought a very ambiguous reaction and introduced a new order of contest on democracy, power and development. For a long time, the Western countries have been known to exemplify the execution of true democracy as the political model of choice for the modern societies; therefore, this idea was quite unexpected. The modern situation of advanced knowledge implies that democracy model stands to offer the best chance to develop effective law and order nationally and internationally, that would initiate excellent environment for economic development. Besides, the AEA remarks are obviously contradictory to the learning acquired from the human history. The primary objective of the long struggles was the search of democracy; therefore, claims of experts denying the link between democracy and national development seem to be somewhat groundless (Connolly 44).

This paper examines democracy, power and development, and establishes their relationship from the perspective of morality, ethics and political philosophies.

DEMOCRACY AND POWER

Democracy is a term that originates from the Greek word “democratia” which essentially refers to peoples’ driven rule. The idea of democracy was primarily initiated to protect people’s rights and freedoms: it demonstrates a concept of people with freedom of electing the governors; thus, the power is not succeeded but deserved (Marx 15). The concept of democracy is based on equality that is measured by numbers. Democracy, therefore, promotes the peculiar view of what is right; and when it prevails then the power and sovereignty of the people is exercised. Any decision made by the majority under the conditions of democracy is usually accepted, which ensures equality among the people by giving them the controlling influence (power).

Power can be seen as the measure of the people’s ability to influence the current environment in their effort to establish the enjoyable and fulfilling future. The exercise of power must be just and free of excessive coercion in the environment of democracy. Consequently, power can be seen both as a means of constraining people’s action and a means of supporting them. According to the rational choice theory, people are action initiators who can freely choose appropriate actions that they can take to accomplish the desired goals. However, the power should not be equated with influence, for power is relative, and its execution primarily depends on the understanding between the parties in the relationship. Legitimate power is the most applicable power dispensation in democracy. This kind of power is bestowed to a person with regard to the position given to him/her and the responsibilities he/she has in the society. On the other hand, referent power which is also common in the democratic society, is seen as the ability that a person acquires in order to attract other people and establish sustainable loyalty with

them. This kind of power depends on the individual's interpersonal skills and traits that make him/her admirable (Connolly 27). People identify with the unique traits of the leader, which makes it a very effective form of power (Russell 37).

DEVELOPMENT

Traditionally, development was defined as the process characterized by the growth of the economy's per capita income during a considerable period of time. However, today the notions of economic growth and economic development are considered to have a different meaning, and the latter definition is more often referred to the process of economic growth, which is expected to have certain macroeconomic orientation.

Economic development is, on the other hand, considered to have microeconomic nature that derives its basic principles from handling the national challenges, especially poverty, from political science and sociology (Bardhan 64). Economic growth refers to actual output into the economy per person whereas economic development refers to the output that is diverse in nature: it is rather a combination of principles of economic growth and improved attributes of social variables. Economic development is seen in the light of particular changes that can be realized in the required supply and demand for a nation's economy (Connolly 51). The variation of demand is, however, seen as the effect of development rather than being an initiating factor. The growth of a nation's population is natural and is controlled by a range of social factors; however, all other factors in supply are explicitly controlled by the people. The effort taken by people to impact the factors of supply is dependent on the benefits that they expect to get in the result. Therefore, economic development can be linked to the policies that the state

implements to protect the right of property ownership. This principle is best exercised in a democratic environment (Korpi 46).

The political and economic systems can be seen as the basis of sovereignty in any society. This means that they must always be in harmony with each other for the society to achieve its goals. This harmonious coexistence between the two systems occurs when the principles of democracy are taken as the pivotal driving force to the economic development.

THE LINKAGE BETWEEN POWER, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

For the social systems of any nation to function effectively, the attributes established by nature must work in perfect harmony with the people's morality and ethics. Selfishness is though seen by some as one of the primary attributes that motivates human beings to develop culture of creativity. Hence, the effort taken by citizens to work towards self-development is considered to be induced by the levels of freedom that they enjoy. Freedom is, therefore, the most significant pillar of any society, and any society that promotes freedom ends up being productive and desirable for habitation and development (Bardhan 53).

Democracy is the approach to political governance that promotes freedom as the most important social attribute. For this reason, democracy as a style of governance is in harmony with a society's development agenda. The long period during which democracy exists in the Western countries is a proof of the effect that power exercised in a democratic environment can have on the society's development. This discovery removes the persistent doubt about the existence of the connection between

development and democracy. Democracy is a result of government elected through the voice of the majority. The leadership elected in the democratic environment is given the power to protect citizens' property and implement policies that will motivate people to be engaged into the development agenda.

CONCLUSION

To disregard people's freedom actually means to denounce their right to humanity, for it is the very reason that a man leaves to promote (Bardhan 75). Democracy, power and development are the most fundamental elements the society is built on. When people have freedom, they can delegate the power to individuals whom they consider to be worth giving it. When a leader gets his/her position as a result of the choice of the majority, then there is an essential motivation for people to work hard and retain their freedom, for they have confidence that the elected leader is able to protect their rights and property. This hard work is the basis of development in the society. Development, on the other hand, is connected with economic freedom that completes harmony in peaceful coexistence of societies.

The continued contest about the meaning and the linkage between power, democracy and development is a concept that people need to build consensus on. However, due to the biased interest developed by some systems of governance in search of political, social and economic power, the issue has remained debatable for a long time. The true power is exercised by people, and a leader can only enjoy his/her power if it stays in accordance with the morals and ethics accepted by the society and supported by the majority of the followers.

Works Cited

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