

Concept of Representation

Learning Objectives

- Introduction
- Basis of Representation
- 1. Territorial Representation
- 2. Functional Representation
- 3. Proportional Representation

Introduction

- Democracy is based on the principle that the political authority belongs to the people.
- People have the right of participating in the administration of the nation.
- Direct and Indirect democracy
- Franchise or Suffrage
- Success of democracy depends upon control exercised by the electorate on the government
- Real democracy means more powers must be given more people

- Representation and election are two means by which the electorate maintains contact with the various organs of government.
- The actual power of the electorate depends on the method of election.
- Secret voting gives the freedom to the voters.
- Declaration of the election day as a public holiday enables all people to participate.

Origin and growth of Representative System

- General belief that it originated in the middle ages as a device used by certain monastic order and was applied to bodies called by the king for consultation on questions of broad interest, especially taxations under various names:
- Parliament in England, Estates general in France, Cortes in Spain, Diet in Germany
- Such bodies came into existence towards the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries and were soon playing an important part in the national affairs of their respective countries.

- For example in England parliament had rights of taxation and consultation
- They only represented certain elements in the population , the aristocracy ,the rich businessmen and the higher clergy.
- With the end of the middle ages with the emergence of the nation states, monarchy become more powerful
- The struggle between Cromwell and Charles resulted in the victory of parliament.

- The revolution of 1688 and Magnum carta of 1215 had established the sovereignty of parliament by reducing monarchy .
- Before 1832 there were only a few thousands of voters spread all over the country and parliament seats were in the grip of rich man
- The first change in the system of representation, fixed in the middle ages was made in 1832
- After 1832 extending to 1928, there had been successive electoral reforms , in the country possess the right to vote and elect their representatives to the House of Commons.

BASIS OR METHOD OF REPRESENTATION

- **Territorial Representation**
- **Functional Representation**
- **Proportional Representation**

Territorial or Geographical Representation

- In this system of representation, the total electorate of the country is divided into territorial units called constituencies or electoral districts, which elects one or more representatives.
- The constituencies are more or less equal in size and population.
- All voters living in a particular constituency take part in the election of a representatives.
- Where one representative is elected from a constituency is known as a single member constituency.
- Where more than one representative is elected it is known as a multi-member constituency.

- After every census rearrangement of these constituencies is carried out through independent committees under the control of the Election commission.
- Most of the states have chosen single member constituencies for the election to the lower Houses of the legislature.

Advantages of Territorial Representation

- 1. Simple and Practicable
- 2. Provides strong and stable government
- 3. since the territory of a constituency is limited, it enables the voter to his representative intimately.

DISADVANTAGES OF TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATION

- It denies representation to the majority of votes in a constituency. Irrespective of number of contestants , one who tops the list is elected. Further , the disparity between the votes polled by a party, and the seats won by it , grows with the number of parties.
- This system is criticized as defective because it does not adequately represent the interests of the voters. Voters elect their representatives without any consideration for their vocation or function.
- The territorial representation makes the representative a custodian of local interests. As such the representative takes little care to advance the broad national interest.

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- When the system provides for the election of only the residents of that constituency, it restricts the list of available candidates to the voter. Consequently , inferior men are often chosen to the legislatures.
- Not getting adequate minorities representation.

Functional or Occupational Representation

- It is a protest against the system of territorial representation.
- In modern states usually basis of representation is territory.
- A district or constituencies is demarcated and voters living within the territorial limits of that constituency elect a representative.
- A representative elected on the territorial basis cannot represent the varied and diverse interests living in a constituency.
- That's why it is proposed to replace the traditional territorial system of representation by functional representation in which various industrial or other occupational groups should be reflected.

Advocates of the Representation of Interests

- This system based upon classes, professions, occupations, or other groupings of society is not of recent origin.
- Mirabeau at the time of the French revolution declared that a legislative assembly ought to be a mirror of all the interests of society.
- According to this system the doctors, teachers, laborers, capitalists, lawyers and businessmen will elect their own separate representatives.
- At the time of the French revolution Mirabeau and Sieyès supported this theory besides communists, Guild Socialists and pluralist writers, GDH Cole, Sydney Webb, Graham Wallas and Dilger also supported this view.
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Examples of Representation of Interests

- The system of functional representation is commonly known as the Soviet System.
- The geographical or territorial system of representation has been replaced in Soviet Russia by a system based on the functional men and other classes choose their own representatives without any regard to territorial areas.
- Mussolini introduced the system of functional representation in Italy and the senate was , accordingly reorganized. It consisted of various trades and professions, employees and trade unions recognized by the Fascist government.

- The Weimer constitution of Germany (1919) introduced a new innovation by creating a National Economic Council representing the interests of labor , capital and consumer.
- In Great Britain , the universities had till recently special representation in the legislatures.

Criticism of Functional Representation

- According to prof. Laski is opposed to the system of functional representation He says , “The territorial assembly built upon **universal franchise** seems, therefore, the best method of making final decisions in the conflict of wills within the community.”
- It is further maintained that is **inconsistent** with the principle of **national sovereignty**. The legislative assemblies are chosen to represent the interests of **the nation as a whole** and not the special interests of particular occupations or classes.
- It emphasize to encourage **class-consciousness** as it understanding the very basis of political organization. A man is a **citizen first**, worker or peasant afterwards.

- It does not solve the problem of minority representation.
- There is the practical difficulty involved in classifying a huge population on a functional basis suitable for electoral purposes.

Proportional Representation

- J. S. Mill and John Locke proposed proportional representation as a safeguard against the evils of territorial representation .
- It seeks give representation to the minorities in more or less exact proportion to their voting strength.
- Under this system each party gets representation strictly in accordance with its voting strength.
- It means majority of the electors would have majority of the representatives but a minority of the electors would have a minority of the representatives.

- It is a device by which the defects of the ordinary elections are remedied.
- There are two different methods of proportional representation
 - 1. Hare or Single Transferable Vote system
 - 2. List System

Single Transferable Vote System

- The first experiment of this system was conducted in the French National Convention in 1793, but its popularity began only when in 1851 **Thomas Hare**, an Englishman, described it in his book “**Election of Representatives**”
- In 1855, **André**, a minister, introduced the scheme in Denmark. Hence it has been called the Hare or the André system.
- In India the election of the president, the vice president and also the elections to the Rajya Sabha are conducted according to this system.

Features of Single Transferable System

- Multi-member constituency
- One effective vote and marking preferences
- Electoral Quota and transfer of votes
- Droop formula:-
 - $\frac{\text{Total No.of votes}}{\text{No.of seats}+1} + 1$
- No loss of Votes

List System

- Voting for Lists
- Quota(fixed No. of votes)

Merits of Proportional Representation

- Representation of minorities according to strength
- Elect good candidates
- Political education
- Democratic method
- Secure independence of voter
- No single party dictatorship

Demerits of proportional Representation

- Complex System
- Unstable governments
- Lack of responsibility
- Setback to parliamentary government
- No bye election

