

Demand of Parliamentary Democracy and Pt. Nehru's Outlook

Dr. Shazia Akhtar

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, K.K.(P.G.), College, Etawah, U.P., India

Abstract : The article 'Nehru's Views on Demands of Parliamentary Democracy' attempts to describe the Nehru's outlook about parliamentary Democracy and local self of government how to success works on the context of Indian parliamentary institution, this article also points out that what type of democracy and parliamentary institution to work successfully in India context. Nehru's suggestion about right and duties of civilized citizen, economics character of contemporary political scenario, success of local-self govt., and Panchayati Raj, what India choose her path to success for the Nation's demands of welfare state, what type of representative government and its nature and function. He also points out what should be Indian's social life and also quality of social demands. He also reflects that the new system of India after receiving the freedom, faces the problem before the political system.

Keywords : Parliamentary Democracy, Civilized, 'Spirit of Laws', 'Social Contract', 'On Liberty', Representative Government, Local Self-Government.

Jawahar Lal Nehru was the greatest Champion of liberal democracy in India. Throughout his life he stressed the importance of democracy, and passionately desired that free India went along the full democratic process. He had grown up since childhood in the western democratic tradition and his sensitive mind had absorbed man of the dominant concepts of modern democratic thought. He had extensive reading of major works of many outstanding western political thinkers and in his books he often referred to Montesquies's 'Spirit of Laws', Roussaue's 'Social contract', and J.S. Mill's 'On Liberty'. This he confessed when he wrote "My roots are still perhaps partly in the 19th century and have been too much influenced by the humanist liberal tradition to get out it completely."¹

"Nehru's concept of democracy has certain specific implications. In the early years of the struggle for independence democracy meant the ideal of self rule or responsive government, later his socialist ideas altered his views on democracy stressing more of its economic aspect. In its ultimate analysis democracy implied a mental approach applied to political and economical problems."² "Democracy in its broad sense, emphasized equality of opportunity to all in the political and economic field and freedom for the individual to grow and develop to the best of his personality. It also involve a high degree of tolerance and a certain inquisitive search of truth. Democracy was thus a dynamic concept for Nehru. His concept of individual freedom necessarily implied freedom of speech and expression, of association and many other field of human activities. The general health of a society. Nehru believed, was largely determined by the freedom of its

people. Freedom of expression was absolutely essential for the orderly progress of many society. Free exchange of ideas, he regarded, as the only civilized method of resolving differences.”³

"There is the view of Nehru that democracy, even parliamentary democracy of what the Marxist- would call the 'Bourgeois Type', provides opportunities for class struggle to be resolved in a peaceful manner. It is also true that with the development of nuclear technology the alternative of a violent class struggle is too dangerous to contemplate. Nevertheless, the Marxist argument cannot be divided that a bourgeois democracy that is, a democracy not proceed or following by a social revolution, cannot usher in a classless society. There is indeed nothing to prevent a determined socialist party winning the confidence of the deprived classes who, specially in underdeveloped countries, constitute the majority of the electorate, and thus going ahead with a socialist programme"⁴. This however, needs in the words of prof. Gyan Chand, Quoted "A dynamic technic of social change not inherent in parliamentary democracy it-self". "Positively, he believed in human values, in the dignity of the individual in the capitalist in civil liberty. That made him a democrat, but he realized that democracy in the capitalist context could not ensure human dignity. There could be no human dignity without individual liberty- liberty not merely in the form of absence of physical restraint, but perhaps, more importantly, in that of freedom want, freedom to develop one's talent and one's personality as one pleases. It was develop one's talent and one's personality as one pleases. It is this wilder concept of liberty that attracted him too much."⁵

The chosen Path: "We choose this given of parliamentary democracy deliberately; we choose it not only because, we had always thought on those lines previously; but because we thought it was as in keeping with our own old tradition also; naturally, the old tradition, not as they were, but adjusted to the new condition and new surroundings. We choose it also. Let us give credit is due-because we approved of its functioning and other countries, more specially the United Kingdom."⁶

Demands of Parliamentary Democracy: "Now, parliamentary democracy demands many things, of course, ability. But it demands a certain devotion to work as every work does. But it demands also a large measure of co-operation, of self-discipline, of restraint. It is obvious that a 'House' like this can not perform any functions without the spirit of co-operation of without a large measure of restraint and self-discipline in each 'Member' and in each group. parliamentary democracy is not something which cannot be transplanted in a country by some wand or by some quick process. We talk about it but we know very well that there are not many countries in the world it functions successfully. It think that it may be said without any partiality that it has functioned with a very large measure of success in this country. Why?..... I do think, because of the background in our country and because our people have the spirit of democracy in them."⁷

Representative Government: "Popular sovereignty through representative institutions was to be essence of his democratic thought. The doctrine of majority rule with the right to the sovereignty, according to him, was not alien to Indian traditions. In fact, democratic institutions existed in ancient India and "The ancient practices provided historical precedents for the development of modern democracy in India".⁸ In liberal democracy a wider political participation is ensured by the system of individual adult franchise. Realising importance of mass participation in the political life, Nehru, in early twenties, repeatedly demanded the setting up of a constituent assembly based on adult franchise. The idea behind this demand was to provide equal political opportunities to all, despite the fact of other social inequalities among them. He was in favour of the widest possible franchise without any propert or educational qualification attached to it. he was highly critical of the 19 century liberal who believed that equal political right for the people would eventful pave the

way for equality in other matters. However he conceded the political equality was the basis on which other qualities could be secured. "And so, Nehru set his face against any doctrine of elitism in limiting or restricting Indian democracy."⁹ "Nehru realized the representative government required responsible political parties as well as leadership its success. He admitted that the problem of leadership was a complex one, but with an abilities to show due regards for truth and morality, the problem could be solved to a large extent."¹⁰

Social Quality of Life: "We have definitely accepted the democratic process. Why have accepted it? Well for a variety of reasons. Because we think that in final analysis it promoted the growth of human beings and society; because we have said in our constitution, we attach great adventurous spirit of man to grow."¹¹ "Democracy..... is a means to an end. What is the end we aim at? I do not know if everybody will agree with me, but I would say the end is the good life for the individual. What form it should take can be argued about the good life certainly must imply a certain satisfaction of the essential economic needs, which will release him from continuous oppression, and which will give him a chance to develop his creative faculties."¹²

Rights and Duties: "We live in an age of Democracy and India is committed to the democratic ideal. For the first time in history we were brave and courageous enough to give the vote to dwellers in the jungle, even as to the dwellers in the cities. We did not deny the vote any person in India, we did not attach any property qualification or education test. We treated everyone as human being, with a sigh to say what his government should be. So we put our faith in democracy to the fullest extent. And democracy only flourishes, as freedom flourishes, in when, when the responsibilities of freedom are understood and carried out. If the responsibilities are not understood and carried out, them freedom itself tends to slip away. There is no right without a corresponding and obligation. We claim rights, but we forget the obligation that accompany the rights and such rights will not be a blessing to us, and may even be a cure."¹³

Ordered Liberty: "I should like this country to develop the democratic process grown on democracy that liberty. We have seen those of us who are aquatinted with recent history how too much. talk of liberty has led to licence and has led to suppression of liberty. The history of Europe will show that; the history of other countries too. So let us not be too sure of the liberty and freedom we possess. Let us cling to them and guard them jealously. But will not guard them or preserve them by loose talk or loose action. Only by stern discipline and sternly understanding the limitations of freedom can we preserve them, for everything has its limitation, even freedom and even liberty. Without those limitation we endanger the very things we stand for."¹⁴

Peaceful Method: "Parliamentary democracy involve naturally peaceful method of action, peaceful acceptance of decisions taken and attempt to change them through peaceful ways again; it is not parliamentary democracy otherwise. It is essential that we, who talk and who believe in the quest of peace so much, should remembered that the quest of peace and the quest of democracy can only be made through methods of peace and not through methods of peace and not through any other. We have a great united country. A country which is dear to us, and of which we were proud. But being proud of it does not mean that we should close our eyes to the grave problems we often have to face in the country and the disruptive tendencies that raise there in head and challenges the democratic process with this parliaments represents..... We prize the parliamentary from of government because it is a peaceful method of dealing with problems. It is a method of argument, discussion, and decision, and of accepting that decision, even

though on may not agree with it. However, the minority in a parliamentary government has a very important part to play. Naturally, the majority, by the mere fact that it is a majority, must have its way. But a majority which ignores the minority is not working in the true spirit of parliamentary democracy."15 In a period of dynamic change, the institution of parliament has to function with speed. Does the parliamentary form of government enable a country to move with speed when a speed becomes essentials. Take an emergency like war when a war occurs, Parliaments continue to function but with certain limitation because of the emergency. A great deal depends on the condition of the times. On the environments and on the problems which a country has to face. "This system of parliamentary democracy embodies. I think these principles of change and continuity, both, and it is up to those who function in this system, parliamentary, 'Members of the House' and the numerous others who are part of this system increase the pace of change, to make it as they like, subject to the principle of continuity, because the moment the continuity is broken we become rootless and the system of parliamentary democracy break down. Parliamentary democracy is a delicate plant and it is a measure of our own success that this plant has become sturdier during these last few years." 16

Wider Concept: "Parliamentary government is a democratic conception. It means the gradual widening of the franchise till it becomes adult franchise. It is only in very recent times and may any country had adult franchise. The effects of adult franchise are being in full only now. This political changes having fully established itself, it has become obvious that a political change by the itself is not enough." "From political democracy we advance to the accept of economic democracy. First of all, that means working for a certain measure of well being for all, call it 'welfare state'. Secondly, It means working for a certain measure of equality of opportunity in the economic sphere. Every country whether it is communist, non-communist or communist, is going that way.... we can hardly have a political democracy without mass education. In other countries full blooded political democracy came after education had spread a good deal as a result of the economic revolution which had prepared the ground for it. But in most Asian countries certainly in India, we have taken a huge jump to hundred percent political democracies makes. That is the essence of the problem in all the Asian Countries. All of our political life is really concerned with how rapidly we can bridge this hiatus between desire and their fulfillment."17 "Democracy is not merely a question of election. The questions before us is how to combine democracy with socialism, through peaceful and legitimate methods. What I want is that all individuals in India should have equal opportunities of growth, from birth upwards, and equal opportunities for work according of their capacity.... We must realize that the process of bringing socialism to India, specially in the way we are doing it, that it, the democratic way, will inevitably take time."18

Coping with Work: The Problem of Govt.: "The problems of government have grown so enormously that sometimes one beings to doubt whether the normal parliamentary procedures are adequate to deal with them, I remember reading discussion about the growing difficulty in the British parliament thirty years ago. They were not finding time to deal with these problems in detail and suggestions had been made from time to time for powers to be transferred to large committees of parliament which could deal laid down by parliament. That is one way of getting over the difficulty, but do not know whether any satisfactory solution has been found.

Parliaments now-a-days have to work much harder than used to. Members of parliament get a vast number of papers to study which they can hardly read. They have to sit late hours to grapple with the problems. If the average member has to carry this great burden of printed paper and sit late hours, with select committee and

all kinds of other committees functioning. You can very well imagine what the poor member of the government have to carry. In addition to the papers given to private members, they have to carry the burden of decisions and many other loads which are part of the day to day government of the country not coming up before parliament. The business of government and the business of parliament become more and more complicated and it becomes a letter doubtful how far parliamentary democracy can carry on its work and solve such problems. Some kinds of a division of authority may be come necessary; otherwise problem might remain unsolved, unsolved problems are dangerous. How far can parliamentary democracy be adapted to meet these new burden and functions of government satisfactorial, effectively and in time? Time is the overriding consideration and that is why the questions has arisen whether democracy which ensures that these problems can be dealt with rapidly and effectively."19

Local Self-Government: "We have the panchayati Raj. The concept behind panchayati Raj has attracted us and we have given it the utmost importance because the test of success in India is not the construction of few building but how human being grow. The whole object behind the Community Development Movement' and the 'Panchayati Raj' is to create opportunities for human being to grow, to be able to think, to be able to act, to be able to co-operate with each other and act together in our local self government we see the gras roots of community life. I would with that all our legislator who come up to assemblies and parliament are made to serve for some time in this type of local self govt. before they are allowed to stand for higher bodies. This would give them knowledge and experience, and in every way it will give them good training which ever way we look at things, the importance of this foundation is very great, whether it is in the rural or in the urban areas..."20

Institution Reflect People: All our institutions, including the parliamentary, are ultimately the projection of a people's character, thinking and aims. They are strong and lasting in the measure that are in accordance with the people's character and thinking, otherwise they tend to break. You have the leaders of the youth movement in India and you have built up strong living organism. But remember that organizations and institutions are passive instrument of man. They living and vital only when they are pushed onward by the strength of great ideas. Have great Ideas before you and do not lower them by ignorable compromise. Look deep down to where the millions toil in field and factory and look across the frontiers of India to where other like you are facing problems similar to yours. Be national, the sons and daughters of your ancient mother land working for her liberation; and be international member the 'Republic of Youth' which knows no boundaries or frontiers or nationalities and work for the liberation of the world from all thraldom and injustice. "To do great things", said a Frenchman many years ago, "A man must live as if he had never to die". None of us can evade death, but youth at least does not think of it. Old man work for the spam of years that still remains for them, the young work for eternity."21

Nehru wanted India to be a welfare state and have a socialist economy. To attain this goal he emphasized that we have to increase production and aim at an economy of plenty. He regarded democracy as the right and peaceful measure to achieve egalitarian ends. Democracy also given an opportunity to the individual to develop his best self. According to him the parliamentary form of government is a peaceful of dealing with problems. It is a method of argument, discussion and decision and of accepting that decision, even though one may not agree with it. He also emphasized the role of minority in parliamentary form of government. He tried to combine democracy with socialism through peaceful and legitimate methods. This was Nehru's great

contributions to nation building in India. Thus Nehru was a vigorous thinker a man of Ideas which should always inspired mankind of better vision of life.

REFERENCES:

1. Jawahar Lal Nehru: An autobiography, op. cit., P.59]
2. R.C Pillai: Jawaharlal Nehru and his critics 1929-1947, Gitanjali Publishing House, New Delhi. P.25
1. D.E. Smith : Nehru and Democracy, The Political thought of an Asian Democrat, Op. Cit, P.44
3. R.C. Dutt : Socializm of Jawarlal Nehru, Abhinav Publication, Delhi, P.275
4. Ibid : P.275-276
5. Nehru : Speaking by way of valedictory reference at the conclusion of the terms of the First-Lok Sabha (1952-57)
6. Nehru: Speaking at a seminar on Parliamentary democracy, Feb 25, 1956
7. Nehru: "Away from Acquisitive Society" speech to AICC Indore. Jan.4 1957. Delhi Govt. of India Publication Division. 1958P.53
8. P.N. Haskar : Premonitions (Bombay: Interpress, 1979) P. 23 (Nehru Memorial Lecture)
9. R.C. Pillai: Nehru And His critics 1929-1947, Geetanjali Publication House, New Delhi, P.27
10. Nehru: Speaking at the all India congress committee, Indore, Jan 4, 1957
11. Nehru: Speaking at a Seminar on Parliamentary Democracy, Feb.25, 1956
12. Nehru : Speaking at a reception at Pondicherry, Jan. 16, 1955
13. Nehru: Speaking on a constitution (First Amendment Bill, 1951)
14. S.P.Agrawal & J.C. Agrawal : Nehru on Social Issues, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, P.60
15. Nehru: Speaking at a seminar on Parliamentary Democracy Feb. 25,1956
16. Nehru : Inaugurating a seminar on Parliamentary Democracy of New Delhi on Dec.6, 1957
17. Ibid :
18. Ibid :
19. Nehru : Speech at the meeting of central council of Local self government New Delhi, Sept. 6, 1963
20. Nehru: Speaking at seminar at Parliamentary Democracy Feb. 25, 1956