CHAPTER THREE

DEMOCRACY

The notion of democracy is not a new one rather it has a long tradition. However, the philosophies regarding its embodiment and grounds of its justification have been revised from time to time. The term ‘democracy’ is hard to describe as it is ambiguous like some other political terms as liberty, equality, power etc. It is so because its perspective changes from one person to another. In other words, what one person would regard as a model, another would refute. Therefore, people have both positive and negative understanding of democracy and thus, argue accordingly. Thus, democracy connotes different effects to different minds.

Gandhi, one of the greatest thinkers of political thought has explained in detail that democracy and non-violence are integral to each other and one is dependent on the other for its successful operation. Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysberg speech of 1863 defined democracy as, “… government of the people, by the people and for the people”.¹ Thus, the repetition of the word ‘people’ meant that he emphasized the important role assigned to the ‘people’ in a democracy; that is it is a people government.

Gandhi believed that true democracy is based on non-violence and for him establishment of peace and fulfillment of democracy are synonymous with cultivation of non-violence. He therefore believed that, “… ahimsa comes before swaraj.”² Democracy and violence can not be reconciled and can never go together since a state whose means are tainted with violence whether physical or non-physical the result is always a non-democratic state or a totalitarian regime. If people do not give in to true non-violence,
exploitation does continue even though apparently it would seem to be a democratic regime. As Gandhi says:

True democracy or the Swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be remove all opposition, through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated ahimsa.\(^3\)

Perfect democracy, therefore may be achieved only through perfect non-violence. If people will follow true non-violence thereby having self control, master over methods of satyagraha and will to cooperate the state; an ideal and genuine democracy would emerge. Such a democratic state based on non-violence would facilitate full growth and progress of individuals and would be based on rational understanding, mutual cooperation and love for all which are the outcome of true non-violence. As such, corruption and hypocrisy would reduce and spirit of equality and liberty would emerge as both democracy and non-violence believe in spiritual equality and liberty of all men. In such a condition adequate opportunity would be provided to both the weakest and the strongest. As Gandhi pointed out,

“My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence”.\(^4\)

Exploitation would reduce and master servant or capitalist labour relationship would be replaced by a new cooperative order based on a new culture. It will be a federation of more or less self-sufficing and self-governing Satyagrahi village community. Thus, a democratic state based on the principle of non-violence would be a, ‘spiritualized democracy’ where
power would be in the hands of people and political, social and economic equality would become a reality.

1) MEANING AND DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy is an ever developing term. Democracy has been rightly described by Education policies Commission of National Educational Association as,

“… a great social faith which, in response to the yearnings and struggles of many races and people has been developing through the centuries.”

Some important definitions by thinkers of democracy are being given as under:

a) According to Abhram Linclon (1809-1865),

“… democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people.”

b) John Straut Mill (1806-1873), describes it as a form of government in which,

“…the whole people or some numerous portion of them, exercise the governing power through deputies periodically elected by themselves.”

c) Robert Morrison Maclver (1882-1970) says:

Democracy is not a way of governing whether by majority or otherwise but primarily a way determining who shall govern and broadly to what ends.

d) Lord Bryce says:

The word Democracy has been used ever since the time of Herodotus (Book V1, Ch. XL111) to denote that form of government in which the ruling power of a State is legally vested, not in any particular class or classes, but in the members of the community as a whole.

e) Dr. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), says:
That democracy is not merely a political system but a way of life which affords equality to everyone irrespective of the difference of race, religion, sex, economic status.\textsuperscript{10}

Thus, to some, democracy ‘is a form of government’; to others, it is ‘a way of social life’. The essence of democracy as a form of government lies in its nature of franchise, the character of the electoral system and the relation between the government and the people existing in a particular nation. Democracy as a way of life has a different connotation; as for example to the communist, it means economic equality amongst citizens, to a humanist, it implies the absence of disparities in rights on the basis of caste, creed or birth. Thus, democracy comes out to be a complex term and the only way to come out of this complexity owning to its diversity is to analyze each of the meanings attached to it and to trace its development and growth according to time, situation and mental progressive innovations for human betterment.

2) RISE AND GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY

From the anthropological studies we came to know that democracy existed in the most primitive society that is in early parts of human civilization, when people had just started to live in groups. Though there was very immature form of it yet it could manage to address people for their unity and common progressive claims. Let us briefly examine the notion of the growth of democracy in the West and East.

2.1) GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY IN WEST:

Democracy in the ancient times in the Western soil was not so mature and effective form of government or public, political or social groups. In the West, there has been a gradual development of democracy from the time of
Homer to its present form referred to as ‘Liberal Democracy’. In Homer’s time, a king needed the support of general body of freemen to make any important decision. Also, in Athens in age of Pericles a form of pure democracy prevailed where assemblies called Ecclesia played an important role in administration.\(^{11}\) In Rome, democracy came into existence after the downfall of the kings and after a struggle between Patrician and Plebian in which power came in the hands of Patrician. The constitution being democratic in nature gave equal rights to the Plebs to participate in the working of government. With the fall of Roman democracy, democracy in ancient times came to an end.

Many great philosophers contributed in the rise and growth of democracy in ancient Greek city-states. Though at that time, the appearance of democracy was by no means considered as an ideal rule. Plato (428/427 B.C-348/427B.C.) vehemently opposed democracy because, according to him people were not appropriately equipped with education ‘to select the best rulers and the wisest courses’.\(^{12}\) He added that democracy made men excellent orators to seek votes but their selfishness ruined the state and left people helpless as their basic needs were not fulfilled with this form of government. Aristotle (384 B.C-322 B.C) believed that democracy should be ‘the rule of many’\(^{13}\) that is it should not be the rule of mediocre fulfilling their vested interests but should be equally the rule of poor. He agreed with his teacher’s (Plato) conception of democracy that it failed to judge and select people or leaders on merits or sound education and mental level. Aristotle observed that all the forms of democracy of his time were perverted with none stable and ideal. He pointed out the merits and demerits
of democracy and approved of a *Mixed Constitution* which is a combination of aristocracy and democracy.

This idea of mixed democracy was carried forward by latter philosophers like Polybius (ca.203-120B.C.), Marucus Tullius Cicero (106B.C.-43 B.C.) and Saint Augustine (354-430 C.E.). In eighteen century democracy again forcefully emerged with the writings of Baron De Montesquieu, François-Marie Arouet Voltaire (1994-1778) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). With Machiavelli’s ‘*Discourses*’ and Montesquieu’s ‘*Spirit of the laws*’ came the dawn of modern political thought. They took democracy to be pure form of government that could be safely incorporated into state craft only as one component of a mixed republican constitution. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704) were the early exponents of ‘Social Contract Theory’ which sort to base political legitimacy on the consent of the people. They challenged monarchy and traditional dictatorship and believed that kings had no divine rights and that the state is a creation of man met to serve their betterment. This theory advocated for placing the power of governmental authority in the hands of common man for the protection of natural liberty and rights of people. This theory forms the foundation of latter democratic government.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was one of the chief exponents of social contract theory. His theory is based on his concept of ‘*General Will*’. He makes a distinction between will of individual that is the *particular will* and will of community that is the *general will*. When particular will is inclined towards general will it is termed as ‘*real will*’ and when it goes against it is called as ‘*actual will*’. Therefore, ‘actual will’ reflects one’s ‘self interest’
while real will involves ‘self discipline’ invoking nobler supreme thoughts that is thinking about well-being of all rather than for an individual or oneself. This implies that actual will represents lower self while ‘real will’ represents higher self. Individuals having real will, will cooperate in the betterment of common good and in this way, his own interest would also be served. The functioning of government in such a case would be smooth, fruitful and easy.

Rousseau also introduced the idea of ‘Popular Sovereignty’ which made him the greatest early theorist of democracy. His concept of popular sovereignty means that general will, which represents higher self of individual and is morally superior to other expressions of will, should have supreme authority. He believed that such a democratic government would work for public welfare and common good. This form of democracy has its own limitation as it is suitable only for a small and unified community while in complex societies it assumes only symbolic significance.

Having a view of contemporary scenario, since the eighteen century, democracy was judged not only as a form of government but rather on moral grounds. This period worked on the extension of franchise to bring about human equalities. Much stress was given on the forms which serve human needs and satisfy them even partially if not fully. The American war of independence and the French revolution contributed to the Declaration of Rights to the people and gave the principles of democracy a written form. The ideals of democracy soon spread rapidly in the West Europe with the extension of franchise, growth of political consciousness among labor class and finally with the European war. Earlier only male citizens had the right to vote. Female franchise was introduced latter for example in U.S. in 1919 and
Thus, democracy in the Western world came to be fully established only in the 20th century and people started participating in it and also initiated means and trends to know and make proper lawful use of it. They learnt that though it has various deficiencies in it, yet it can help people to form government of their choice with the help of their franchise to work for their betterment in various aspects of existence.

The upshot of the above discussion on democracy is that while tracing the growth of democracy from ancient to modern times change is perceived in its idea, form and concept. The ancient democracy was immature and smaller in size and people directly participated in the state affairs that is ‘Direct democracy’ existed. In modern democracy political rights are universalized but owning to largeness of states direct democracy is not possible. So a system of democracy called ‘Indirect or representative democracy’ evolved. This is a form of governance in which people through their representative who are chosen for a definite period of time form a government and people have choice to replace it after the expire of the stipulated period.

2.2) DEMOCRACY IN ISLAMIC WORLD:

The concept of democracy evolved, changed and developed in hands of various Islamic philosophers and intellectuals also. Most all of them, who were preoccupied with politics followed Aristotle and Plato’s idea that man is a political animal and cannot live in isolation and society serves as their natural environment Al-Ghazali(1058-1111) explained the same views in the following words:

Man is created in such a manner that he cannot live all by himself but is in constant need of others, wishing
that someone else, human like himself should always be with him.\textsuperscript{16} 

Ibn Rushd, ‘Averroes in Latin’ (1126-1198), is another thinker of Islamic philosophy whose one of the most important contribution in Islamic political thought is his Commentary on Plato’s \textit{Republic}.\textsuperscript{17} Here, he discusses about state, Imam, constitution and other important related topics. In the third part of his commentary, he describes six forms of constitution namely (1) monarchy, (2) aristocracy, (3) timocracy, (4) oligarchy, (5) democracy and 6) tyranny. Out of these he considers ‘monarchy’ and ‘aristocracy’ as the perfect forms and the rest as degenerate ones. Expressing his views on democracy, he says that this system bestows a lot of freedom to the public making them inclined towards pleasures and desires. He feels that in democracy, majority does not follow the laws leading to violence or wars.\textsuperscript{18} In his commentary he examines that the Platonic aspect of characteristics of the righteous sovereign and honest government is at par with the Islamic elements. The rulers according to Plato should make use of religious philosophy as the basis of their social reforms. He desired that a ruler should be a philosopher wherein in his rule exists interdependence between the ruler and the ruled. Highlighting the importance of a state ruled by a philosophers-king, Plato says:

\begin{quote}
The masses serve the masters in that where by the aim of philosophy is fulfilled for them, while the masters serve the masses in that which leads them to their happiness.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

He believed that the philosopher-king can not do anything without taking into account the psychological aspect of his masses and in this way, the ruled people gain happiness in such a state that is wisely governed. This
concept is also found in works of Abu Nasr Mohammad Ibn al-Farakh al-Farabi (259-339 A.H./870-950 A.D.)

The questions regarding the power and position of a *khalifah* has remained urgent in Islamic political philosophy. Al-Mawardi (who d. 1058) in his work considers Caliphate as a supreme form of Islamic authority and a legitimate owner of all powers, who according to him was above the *sultans* or the military leaders. The need for a coherent doctrine with regard to Caliphate became more necessary as the institution began to decline. At this point of time Al-Ghazzali’s doctrine appeared. He believed that the *khalifah* and the *sultans* are like two sides of the same coin thereby complementary to each other. They are interdependent as one guarantees that the state would protect the religion and that the other will provide moral and ethical foundations to the state. He emphasizes that the kingship should be adapted on the Islamic ideal of equality before God and thereby limiting his power by the dictates of the *Shari’ah* law. In this way, when fully understood his notion of ideal and the notion of modern democracy seem to be very close to each other, as in both of them Law is supreme whether it is human law as in democracy or Divine as found in Al-Ghazzali’s notion.

In this field Ibn- Khaldun’s (1332 A.D.-1406 A.D) analysis appeared when *sultans* had completely replaced the *Khalifahs* and the state was no longer run on Islamic principles. Having a moderate perspective, he asserted that a state is a natural creation based on the needs on the human rather than being of Divine origin.

Democracy during the period of nineteenth century becomes a prime importance in context with the development in the West and the changes that were witnessed in the Arab countries. With the coming of Industrial
Revolution, the West became economically prosperous and in search of new raw materials started its process of colonization. The West in comparison to the East had an upper hand owing to its military and economical developments and social and political thoughts. It was during this period that the need of reform became urgent in the Arab World and democracy became a topic of debate.

In tracing the development of the notion of democracy, Rifa Tahtawi (1801-1873), the father of Egyptian democracy needs to be mentioned first. Tahtawi tries to explain that democracy and law of Islam are compatible to each other. Khairuddin At-Tunisi (1810-99), leader of the nineteenth century reform movement, in his book stresses the need of improvement in the status of community in contemporary Arab World. He justified the borrowing of knowledge from the West to bring about political reform in Arab World. He said that,

“... wisdom (or knowledge) is a believer’s long–cherished objective’, that ‘... religion has been revealed for the benefit of the creation’, and that … [the] Sharia and the vital interests of the community are fully compatible.”

He called for an end to absolutist rule and held it responsible for the oppression of the nation and destruction of civilization. He believed that,

“... kindling the Umma’s potential liberty through the adoption of sound administrative procedures and enabling it to have a say in political affairs, would put it on a faster track toward civilization, would limit the rule of despotism, and would stop the influx of European civilization that is sweeping everything along its path.”

Rashid Ghannouchi represents a neutral stand on this debate. He further supported the ideas of Khairuddin and explained that these Islamic
scholars through their work are only trying to develop better understanding and application of Islam and its laws. In his interview in 1992 in London Observer he said:

If by democracy is meant the liberal model of government prevailing in the West, a system under which the people freely choose their representatives and leaders, in which there is an alternation of power, as well as all freedoms and human rights for the public, then Muslims will find nothing in their religion to oppose democracy, and it is not in their interests to do so.²⁶

Jamal ad-Din Al-Afghani (1838-97) in his article entitled ‘The Despotic Government’ (1879), considered lack of justice and despotism to be responsible for the decline in the Muslim World. Though he was greatly influenced by the Western thought and philosophy, he was against Western colonization. He believed that the Arab World needed social, economic and political regeneration to prevent the danger of colonization. In his meeting to the Shah of Iran he pleaded for granting more rights to the people.

Abdurrahman Al-Kawakibi (1849-1903) another scholar of political thought holds similar viewpoint like Al-Afghani declaring:

“… the adoption of logical and well practiced rules that have becomes social duties in these advanced nations which are not harmed by what appears to a be division into parties and groups, because such a division is only over the methods of applying the rules and not over them”²⁷

He thinks that such a state of affairs may be taken into account as one of the reason for the development of West.

Latter philosophers like Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935), Al-Rumi, and various other nineteenth century Islamic political thinkers were influenced by European political thought and showed the similarity between
Islamic laws and democracy. They vehemently supported the need of adopting Western idea and practice of democracy in order to reform the corrupt rule of their times. The scenario showed a major change with the onset of world war first and its consequences like the removal of the Khalifah. Though under the rule of Ottoman rulers the Muslims had suffered a lot yet, the Khalifah (Caliphate) represented for centuries a moral shield for the Muslims. The consequence of colonization of the East by the West led to westernization of the Muslims. This colonization thus became a threat to the Arab Islamic identity. With the loss of Khalifa, a symbol of unity and the coming of colonization the Muslim scholars who earlier wanted to reform the society now advocated for its revival.

A major development of this period is the establishment of Al-Ilkhawan al-Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood) by Hasan Al-Banna (1904-49). This was the largest and the first international Islamic movement. He noted that European power after the First World War (1914 to 1918), which resulted in defeat of Turkey and its allies, had imposed its rule on almost every Islamic nation from Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine to Turkistan and India. In this process the west accomplished its goal of dismantling the Islamic empire and erasing its name from the list of powerful nations. Thus, at this stage Europe ceased to be a model and on contrary became responsible for the sufferings of Muslims. This movement therefore started to work with the mission of freeing the Islamic state from colonial powers and to bring re-establishment of Islamic government based on precepts of Islam. Imam Hasan Al-Banna supported parliamentary elections as he considered them to be at par with Islam but he vehemently opposed political parties. He considered the political parties to be the root
cause of social corruption and advocated for their dissolution. In midst the struggle for independence, monarchy took over colonial authorities in these Arab countries. In this regime, that is during the post-independence era, Islam its culture, identity heritage came under serious threat and offence in name of modernization.

In early seventies (1970s), the Islamic world came to be influenced by the works of Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) and Abu al-Ala Mawdudi (1903-79). In his theory of democracy, Qutb denounced the very notion of democracy, calling it unfamiliar and incompatible. He questioned out that:

> Democracy is, as a form of government, already bankrupt in the West; why should it be imported in the Middle East?\(^{29}\)

Abu al-Ala Mawdudi held that Islam believes in democracy, and held that though western democracy had some negative attributes to it, still it should be given a chance to be adopted and be successful in Muslim countries. He considered it the duty of every Muslim to displace evil from power with virtuous ones. He said:

> There is no other way in a democratic system except to participate in battle of elections, that is by educating the public opinion in the country and changing the people’s standard in electing their representatives. We should also reform the election mechanism and cleanse it from theft, deceit and forgery. By doing so, we would be in a position to hand power to righteous men, who are eager to develop the country on the pure basis of Islam.\(^{30}\)

He stressed the need of government being accountable to the public and public having the power to replace the government when it fails in its duty. Thus, he emphasized the need of will for reform, education, vigilance, strength, and awareness among common mass; and virtuosity among leaders.
Said Hawwa, an Islamic political thinker, initially opposed democracy saying:

Democracy is a Greek term which signifies sovereignty of the people; the people being the source of legitimacy. In other words it is the people that legislate and rule. In Islam the people do not govern themselves by laws they make on their own as in democracy. Rather, the people are governed by a regime and a set of laws imposed by God.\(^{31}\)

However, latter on, he adopted a more moderate position about democracy and accepted its need and importance to resolve various public matters. He wrote:

We see that democracy in the Muslim world will eventually produce victory for Islam. Thus, we warn ourselves and our brothers against fighting practical democracy. In fact, we see that asking for more democracy is the practical way to the success of Islam on Islam’s territory…\(^{32}\)

He furthers added that in order to make Islam successful in future democracy is inevitable, “Democracy in the Muslim World is the most appropriate climate for the success of Islam in the future.”\(^{33}\)

Thus, the contribution of one of the important Islamic political thinkers, Said Hawwa is worth mentioning since; he once again brought a change in the thinking of Islamic intellectuals. He hailed the decision once made by Hasan Al Banna, to participate in election. This was one of the most significant events in the history of Islamic Movement.

Side by side, Malik Bennabi, an Algerian thinker, laid the foundations of modern Maghreb school of thought. This school of thought was inspired by the nineteenth century reform movement of Khairuddin at-Tunis and others. Bennabi understanding of democracy is that it,
“… is the generation of a sentiment, and of objective and subjective responses and standards, that collectively lay the foundations upon which democracy, prior to being stated in any constitution, stands in the conscience of the people…”\textsuperscript{34}

Bennabi in his writings and lectures stresses that colonization has had a positive impact on Muslim civilization. It allowed the Muslims to break the fetters of rigid social order and enabled them to come out of their decadence. He considered the Renaissance and Movement of revolt being responsible for development of democracy in Europe. He concludes that Islam endows man with certain holiness that is above the values that any model of democracy bestows whether in form of Western democracy of Europe or popular democracy of East. To prove his point he referred to the Qur’an which says, “We have honored the children of Adam”.\textsuperscript{35}

He summarizes that democracy did exist in Islam during the period of Prophet Mohammad (S) but is absent in Islam in its present form which is devoid of its original brilliancy. Thus, Bennabi and his disciples like Rashid Ghannouachi and others produced a revolution in existing stands on democracy. The Arab World being basically influenced by the ideas of Syed Qutb considered democracy to be antagonistic to Islam and treated it as an enemy. However Malik Bennabi and others initiated new version of democracy according to the requirement of the time and its claims, and therefore, helped to bring a major change in the perception of Muslims to adjust them in modern socio-political developing world across the globe.

One of the basic principles of Islam has been the concept of \textit{Tawhid} that is a firm belief in the oneness of God. The Qur’an stress on the Oneness of God:

\begin{quote}
Say: He is Allah, the One!
\end{quote}
Allah, the eternally besought of all!
He begetteth not nor was begotten.
And there is none comparable unto Him. 36

Infact in Islamic political system the supreme Sovereign or the Most Powerful Authority is God and the Amir (sultan) a responsible man selected/elected by the religious scholars has to implement the rules or principles as laid down in the Qur’an and practiced by the Prophet of Islam.

Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, an Iranian scholar and politician advocates for Islamic democracy. In a television interview, before presidential elections he was noted saying,

“…the existing democracies do not necessarily follow one formula or aspect. It is possible that a democracy may lead to a liberal system. It is possible that democracy may lead to a socialist system. Or it may be a democracy with the inclusion of religious norms in the government. We have accepted the third option.” 37

He provides a combination of democracy and spirituality. Ali Shari’ati, a highly influential Iranian revolutionary, wrote in ‘On the Sociology of Islam’ that Tawhid,

“… in the sense of oneness of God is of course accepted by all monotheists. But Tawhid as a world view … means regarding the whole universe as a unity, instead of dividing it into this world and the here-after… spirit and body.” 38

Favouring the democratic form of government Abdelwahab El-Affendi another Islamic Political thinker:

No Muslim questions the sovereignty of God or the rule of Shari’ah [the Islamic legal path]. However, most Muslims do (and did) have misgivings about any claims by one person that he is sovereign. The
sovereignty of one man contradicts of sovereignty of God, for all men are equal in front of God.... Blind obedience to one- man rule is contrary to Islam.  

Thus, Islam and democracy in the context of *Tawhid* has been interpreted by some to be far apart from each other and by others to be indispensable. Conservatives do believe that the idea of sovereignty of people is against the sovereignty of God while liberals like Affendi and others like-minded thinkers believe that the doctrine of *Tawhid* requires a democratic system because all humans in front of God are equal and democracy supports this notion.

Another well discussed aspect of Islam and democracy is ‘mutual consultation’ in political affairs which appears in 42: 38 verse of the Quran. Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr notes in Islamic Political system, that the people, “… have a general right to dispose of their affairs on the basis of the principle of consultation.” It was further supported by Khatami saying that:

“…people play a fundamental role in bringing a government to power, in supervising the government and possibly the replacement of the government without any tension and problems.”

Muhammad Allama Iqbal (1873-1938), a poet and religious philosopher was highly influenced by the ideals of Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273). Iqbal was a believer of spiritual democracy. He considered that state and religion are inseparable aspects of human life and therefore stressed the need of laws of *Shari’ah* in the governance of the people. He asserted his point by saying,

“... the Qur’an considers it necessary to unite religion and state, ethics and politics in a single revelation much in the same way as Plato does in the *Republic.*"
He believed in the concept of *Tawhid* that is the sovereignty of God and as a result was against the notion of popular sovereignty. As an Islamic political philosopher, he believed in the full development of the human individuality or ego hood which is termed as ‘*Khudi*’ and believed in sharing of power. His concept of *Tawhid* had a social and political manifestation in terms of *Millah* which implied equality, freedom and fraternity. Iqbal was highly critical of contemporary Western democracy and termed it as an imperialist form. This was because the West was colonizing the East on the pretext of removing ignorance and bringing in democratic institutions. He presented his views on democracy in several of his books, lectures and interviews. In his *Bal-i-Jibril* (Gabriel’s Wing), he termed politicians as devils and pointed out that liberty should be within limits lest it would be dangerous for the society. In *Zabur-i-Ajam*, Iqbal criticizes democracy on its nature of being based on the rule of majority rather than on the competence of the ruler. Or in *Payam-i-Mashriq*, (Message from the East), he again denounces democracy considering that it provides a play ground for different ambitions leading to conflicts and divisions and making it synonymous with monarchy or dictatorship. On January 1st 1938, on All India Radio he expressed his views on democracy:

So long as this so called democracy, this accursed nationalism and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as man do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole is a family of God, so long as distinctions of race, color, and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contended life and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never be materialized.  

Iqbal firmly believed that democracy can never be successful, because it lacks spirituality. He stressed the need of use of rules of *Shari’ah* and of
liberal understanding interpretation and reconstruction of Islamic thoughts in accordance with the demands of the modern life thereby stressing the need of *Ijtihad* (independent reasoning).

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) played a vital role in making Muslims enter into the stream of modernization through educational, political, religious, and social reforms. Sir Sayyid believed to bring rationalism in Islam with the belief that religion existed for man’s benefit and not vise versa. For the cause of social reform he started monthly Urdu periodical ‘*Tahzibul Akhlaq*’ or ‘*The Social Reformer*’ and his other major contributions included establishment of Translation Society in Ghazipur for the translation of scientific books and founded Aligarh School in 1875 which later developed into Muhammadan Anglo Oriental (M.A.O.) College of Aligarh which became a full fledged University under the name “Aligarh Muslim University” Aligarh, in 1920.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan held some reservations for democracy mainly because he believed that democracy would lead to the ‘tyranny of majority’. He feared that in India Muslims being in minority would suffer in the hands of majority community. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan eulogized Western civilization and in his works he presents his political views which include a blend of the West with traditional Islam. In his image of democracy, he had a firm belief in the need of an impartial and supreme law. He declared that, “A popularly elected President is preferred by Islam.”

He stressed that Islam does not accept personal rule neither does it permit monarchy and hereditary monarchy is not permissible at all. In support of his admiration for supremacy of law in the interest he gave
examples of the practice of supremacy of law in Britain above which nobody exists. He said:

Queen Empress Victoria of Great Britain, Ireland, and India, is the sovereign of law; her will does not constitute law and she is helpless to do anything at her personal discretion. 49

It needs to be remembered that, though he admired the Western civilisation but was against rule of British monarchy in India. He was the campaigner of liberty, one of the basic of democracy. He declared the liberty of press to be very important and to emphasize this Aligarh Institute Gazette had a crowing motto of,

“Liberty of the Press is a prominent duty of the Government and the natural right of the subjects.” 50

He believed that religion and politics should not be intermixed and supported the separation of religion from secular affairs. He stressed:

Spiritual or religious matters can not have any connection with worldly affairs. A true religion only states cardinal principles comprising ethical values and only incidentally deals with the problems of the world. Islam, as a true religion, is based upon this dichotomy and the Prophet upheld this distinction in his well-known statement: “Maata kum min amer-i-dinakum fakhazu wa ma naha kum ‘inah faantahu”. “In all religious matters except divine injunction and refrain from those actions which are forbidden”. 51

Thus, he believed that the intervention of religion into state affairs is responsible for the lack of progress in Islamic world. However, many other Islamic political thinkers do not accept such a view-point.

Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1959) holds a prominent place in India’s struggle for freedom and was a political thinker who conveyed his political ideas through his Urdu Journal Al-Hilal which he started in June 1912. 52 His
concept of democracy and freedom are closely linked to his beliefs as a Muslim. In his trial, during the *Khilafat* and Non-cooperation movement he made a statement before the court which gives vent to his political ideas. In his statement, referring to Islam, he justified the revolt for freedom and attainment of democracy, both on the basis of Islam and as a birth right. He asserted that oppression and exploitation by any nation over another can be justified on no grounds. He argued that Islam is a religion which believes equality and liberty of all beings and in the sovereignty of God only. Thus, it becomes a moral duty of every follower of Islam to fight the domination of any power except for the power of God and to even sacrifice his life for the maintenance of truth and freedom. He believed that Islam is fully a democratic religion and in this support he gave examples of the democratic elements present in Islam as cited in the Qur’an and practiced by Prophet Mohammad (S) during his times.

The political system in Muslim countries is becoming more and more secular and democratic in the twenty first scenario. In twentieth century secularism first emerged in Turkey then in some Arab countries. Secularists in Turkey believed that Islam could adopt certain features of Western democracy and can then adapt it with their own Islamic principles. In the nineteenth and the twentieth century a large amount of literature was produced by the fundamentalist leaders creating a wide influence on the masses. This includes the work of fundamentalists like Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787) in Saudi Arabia, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Ismail Shahi in India, and Muhammad Ahmad (1844-1885) the founder of the Mehdiyya in the Sudan etc., while few others moderate fundamentalists included Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), Abul A‘la Maududi (1903-1958)
the founder of Jama‘t-i Islami, in India and Pakistan, Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) the Egyptian founder of \textit{Ikhwan al-Muslimin} ( Muslim Brotherhood), his Sayyid Qutb in Egypt, and Shaikh Mustafa al-Siba’i in Syria\textsuperscript{56} who through their work emphasized the need of change. The modernists in the twentieth century developed anti-West and pro-West orientations. The love for the West was based on the following point of view:

\begin{quote}
The representative institutions evolved in the West a practical method by which Islamic democracy can find concrete form in the large populations of today.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

While the anti-West sentiments developed owing to the imperialistic domination of the West. This hatred for the West got expressed as most of the non-aligned nations were Muslim states. After world imperialism came to an end, democracy got established in many Muslims countries while in no country viable Islamic system could be established. The examples of this can be noted in the Muslim states like Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan where democracy can be seen in its full bloom and even women are being elected as the heads of the government. In Turkey too secular electoral politics has replaced conservatism.

Thus, democracy and its compatibility with Islam has been a topic of debate for a long time. In this discussion there exists a wide range of thoughts consisting of two extreme poles and in between exists a moderate perspective. Some believe that Islam and democracy can never go together and that ‘democracy’ is an alien term which has been used by the West as a means to modernize the Islamic state, thereby dismembering its integrity and identity. They argue that the very concept of popular sovereignty (propounded by Rousseau) is against the basic principle of Islam that is \textit{Tawhid}. The other pole believes that Islam requires a democratic system.
They cite examples from Islamic traditions to show the semblance between Islam and democracy. The difference in the perspective is mainly a result of how Islam and its teachings have been understood, interpreted and implemented by different people according to the requirement of the time and situation.

2.3) DEMOCRACY IN INDIA:

India today in its twenty first century celebrates seventy years of its sovereign democracy which came into existence on twenty sixth January 1950. Like many other countries in the East, in some respects democracy in India is an outcome of colonization and Western influences.

Numerous examples from early Vedic period point out at the old nature of the idea of democracy. The Indo-Aryans carried on their tribal administration through Sabha and Samity which were governed roughly on democratic principles. Other notable example is Santiparva of Mahabharata where democracies are referred to as ‘Ganas’. Lord Buddha too preached the need of democracy for proper administration, and Kautilya’s Arthashastra gives vivid references to democracy that prevailed in various parts of ancient India.58

The notion of democracy in the Vedic period had its own limitation and existed in a rudimentary state as Sabha and Samity were treated merely as advisory bodies and common people in age of Kautilya were not allowed to be a part of governing body. Also with the coming of Mauryan Empire, Guptas, Chalukyas or in the hands of the Mughal rulers, democracy showed no signs of development. Its true beginning can be traced with the coming of the East India Company, which came in 1612. The government of East India Company though exercised a colonial authoritarianism still it marked a slow
growth of constitution. The various acts like the *Regulating Act* of 1773, *Pitts India Act* of 1784, various *Charter Acts* of 1793, 1813, 1833, and 1853 acted as landmarks in the process of democracy. Slowly the impact of Western philosophers and their ideas of liberation started to be felt on the Indian minds, leading to gradual transformation of powers from the British government to local government, responsible government, to finally self-government. With the influence of great philosophers, intellectuals, theorists like Rousseau (concept of general will); Thomas Pain (concept of rights of the people), Abraham Lincoln (gospel of rule by, of and for the people) and others greatly influenced the mind set of Indians. In India after independence indirect or represented democracy got established with time. This is the political development of democracy.

Democracy has a philosophical connotation too. In this sense, democracy becomes a way of life and today it is being interpreted in terms of a kind of faith on humanistic and philanthropic aspects. In this direction the Indian culture from time immemorial is *at par* with the democratic philosophy and thus acts as a source of strength to its foundations. The world today with its numerous diversions, socio-economic problems or scientific, technological and industrial advancement and various other complexities; needs faith in certain essential values for survival of democracy to prevent and misuse of power. Indian culture believes in the existence of the supreme power which supports the democratic theory of limitation of political authority. Democracy is a deliberate attempt to curb the growth of power in hands of few thereby minimizes domination and misuse of power. Thus, democratic belief of limitation of power gets reinforced by the spiritual dimension. However, Indians are still lacking the
spiritual or ethical element in their general democratic political system. Again, democracy believes that each individual is equal before the law thereby giving the right of vote to every adult man or woman with no distinction between rich or poor or on the basis of caste or creed. This democratic notion can be seen in various examples down from the history of Indian culture where in the past saints and sages coming even from lowest section of society could attain prestige and reverence. Democracy believes in certain moral values of self control, compromise, tolerance, working not with a spirit of competition but for the common welfare and Indian culture with its belief in virtue of love, justice, submission strikes a semblance between Indian culture and democracy. In Mahabharata where an Indian sage gave away his bone for the destruction of demons serves an instance of full self-sacrifice for collective altruism. However, in the previous and present (21st Century) the situation had been critical and the politicians formed various political parties on the basis of caste-system, linguistic and racial preferences. Therefore, resultanty, we have several parties and each is trying to get power for its minor and selfish interests and doesn’t bother about the real spirit of democracy.

Thus with this analysis we come to the conclusion that the notion of democracy in India has been partially inherited from the scriptures and partially borrowed from the West. However, the Indian culture has been responsible for its true development, strength and success in India. Today we are the largest democracy in the world and though there exist some drawbacks as mentioned but they are taken as challenges rather than leading to desolation or pessimism. Generally, Indians love democracy and appreciate this system of government inspite of its limitations or drawbacks.
Various great Indian philosophers and thinkers contributed to the notion of Democracy which includes Bipin Chandra Pal, Mahatma Gandhi, M.N Roy, Jawaharlal Nehru and others.

a) Bipin Chandra Pal:

He (1858-1932) was one of the prominent figures of Indian nationalist movement and is considered a modern Hindu reformer. He was an educationist, patriot and a political philosopher. He formulated the concept of ‘Divine Democracy’ which has its origin in the Vedantic concept of unity of existence. The Bhagvada Gita emphasizes the fact that all human being on account of having a divine spirit are equal in all respect. He said:

“…men are gods; and the equality of the Indian democracy is the equality of the divine possibilities and the divine destiny of every individual being, be he a Hindu or Mohammedan, Buddhist or Christian….”

This notion of divine origin guaranties each individual equal right, respect and dignity and therefore is in consonance with ‘one man, one vote’ formula of democracy. On the basis of the concept of divine democracy, he considered that the revelation of democracy in India was superior as compared to the European one. He said:

The ideal of Swaraj that has revealed itself to us is the ideal of divine democracy. It is the ideal of democracy higher than the fighting, the pushing, the materialistic… the cruel democracies of Europe and America…..It is on account of this general training of the Indian people in the past, whether they be Hindu or Mohammedan, it is on account of this spiritual emphasis of the Hindu character and the generality also of the Indian character that we have had the supreme privilege of seeing before us the revelation of a democratic ideal, superior to that which has as yet been revealed to the general consciousness of European humanity.
b) Mahatma Gandhi:

He (1869-1948) was one of the greatest political thinker and flag-bearer of Indian Freedom struggle and a prominent advocate of secularism and democracy. Gandhi’s concept of democracy is closely linked with his ideas of non-violence or *ahimsa*. He urged for the need of *true democracy*,\(^6^1\) which according to him could only be achieved through non-violence. He, like Iqbal, believed that religion and politics go hand in hand and desired the spiritualization of politics:

“… it will be seen that for me there are no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap because they kill the soul.”\(^6^2\)

This does not mean that he advocated for the transference of power in the hands of religious leaders but rather desired the inclusion of religious values as no religion preached barbarism, exploitation and violation of human rights. His concept of true democracy is in fact *spiritual democracy*\(^6^3\) that is democracy does not mean only the governance of a nation on democratic principles but rather it also includes the ultimate realization of *Swaraj* from within which can only be achieved through self-controlled and self-purification. Thus, meaning to say that true democracy needs purity of heart and self discipline which comes with true religious spirit. In such a democracy each person will contribute for the benefit of the society on the whole and will be interested more in his duties than his rights. For Gandhi, democracy politically meant a thorough exactness in dealing with one’s opponent and economically it meant equal opportunity for both the rich and the poor.\(^6^4\) He criticized Western democracy on grounds of capitalistic and oppressive nature of the West. About the democracy in West he said:
Western democracy as it functions today is undiluted Nazism or Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism.\(^{65}\)

Thus, he was critical of Western democracy primarily on the ground of the capitalistic and oppressive nature of the West.

c) Manavendra Nath Roy:

He (1886-1954) advocated for the cause of ‘organized democracy’\(^ {66}\). He believed that popular democracy had a serious drawback since the electorates remain helpless between elections. His notion of organized democracy meant that local communities would handle power and power will not be vested in the hands of few elected people on the top.\(^ {67}\) For the cause of organized and partyless democracy he stressed the need of political schools that would train people the art of proper handling of their duties. A check would be kept on the government through recall and other means.\(^ {68}\) In this scheme the local democratic agencies would elect their candidates for election and, in this way, people would vote for men of morality and not on regional lines. These elected people will work not for their personal interests but for the welfare of the society on a whole. Thus, in simple words, it can be said that M.N. Roy supported direct democracy as advocated by Rousseau and others.

3) GENERAL FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

Here in this section, we shall try to illustrate the view-points of various thinkers on different forms of government and try to highlight that among all the forms, ‘democracy’ has long been a dominant form for all the times and ages. A government is an organization of the state and it is through the medium of the government that the state makes, executes and realizes its purpose of the well-being of its people. Various forms of
government exist in accordance to the vesting of power and authority in the hands of the organs employed to meet the purpose and the rules and procedures it follows in performing its functions. Broadly speaking, three fundamental forms of government do exits namely (a) Monarchy, (b) Aristocracy and (c) Democracy.

The forms of government have been variously classified. Let us discuss some important classifications given by famous philosophers and political thinkers.

1) According to the traditional classification of the government as given by Aristotle, which he borrowed from Plato three normal forms of government and three perverted forms of government exists. If the political authority resides in the hands of an individual it is termed as Monarchy, where the power is exercised in accordance to the law but if this form of government becomes perverted it is termed as tyranny. In Aristocracy, Sovereignty (power) resides in small majority of population and its perverted form is Oligarchy. In Democracy, power resides in a large population, where it is directed by law but otherwise it is called 'mob-rule.'

2) Montesquieu, a well known French writer gave a three fold classification of government namely (a) Republican, (b) Monarchial, and (c) Despotic. He describes a Republican form of government as one in which supreme authority is exercised by the people as a whole or by a part of people thereby making this form of government either ‘Democratic’ or ‘Aristocratic’ in character. In Monarchy, the sovereignty as described earlier lies in the hand of one which he governs in accordance to established laws. Its perverted form is ‘Despotic government’ where Law is in the hand of single individual which he uses for selfish reasons.
3) Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) classifies government in three forms: (a) Monarchies, (b) Aristocracies and (c) Democracies. He again subdivides Aristocracy in natural, electric and hereditary forms.\textsuperscript{72}

4) K. Blunstachli, a famous German writer recognizes four forms of government namely: (a) Monarchy, (b) Aristocracy, (c) Democracy and (d) Ideocracy. Ideocracy and Theocracy are those forms of government in which power resides in the hands of God and ruler is held as a representative of God and interpreter of His will. The perverted form of Theocracy is Idolocracy.\textsuperscript{73}

5) In recent times, John Arthur Ransome Marriott (1859-1995) classifies government on three-fold basis. According to first fold, based on the distribution of powers, government is divided into two forms (a) Unitary and (b) Federal.\textsuperscript{74} He terms unitary form of government as one, where power lies in the hands of center and the provincial or the state government has only delegate powers. In Federal form of government both centre and state exist as autonomous groups and enjoys coronal powers. Marriott’s second fold classification is that of ‘rigid’ and a ‘flexible’. In the third fold he also classifies government in three forms as (a) Despotic, (b) Presidential, and (c) Parliamentary. In Despotic form executive is superior to legislative and in Parliamentary is subordinate to legislator. In between exists Presidential form in which executive and legislative coordinates in powers.\textsuperscript{75}

6) Stephen Leacock classifies government as (a) Despotic and (b) Democratic ones.\textsuperscript{76}

Let us examine briefly discuss some of the most prominent forms of government in order to understand the best one.
3.1) MONARCHY AS A FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

Monarchy is the earliest form of government, run by a single individual who rules without any restrictions and, ‘who does everything according to his own will’. Two forms of Monarchy do exist namely absolute and limited. In absolute monarchy the monarch is the sole ruler and in limited monarchy his rule is limited by laws. Limited monarchy is found in Britain but it remains a matter of discussion whether it can be considered a form of monarchy since in this the power resides in the hands of the people making it more near to a democratic government. Monarchy as a form of government has been supported by Jean-Jacques Rousseau who said:

The will of the people, the will of the prince, the public force of the State and the particular force of the Government, all answer to a single motive power; all the springs of the machine are in the same hands, the whole move towards the same ends; there are no conflicting movements to cancel one another, and no kind of constitution can be imagined in which a less amount of efforts produces a more considerable amount of action.78

A similar viewpoint is stressed by Lord James Bryce who considers that the monarchies of the seventeen and the eighteen century,

“… saw many reforms in European countries, which no force less than that of a strong monarchy would have carried through”.79

Another important political thinker, Jean Bodin (1530-96) also supports monarchy as it considers it best suited to deal with emergency as an absolute monarch is independent to make decisions.80 No doubt, monarchy has its own limitations too as for example an inefficient monarch can destroy and bring misery for its nation. Moreover, it has been proved in history that owing to hereditary monarchy many incapable rulers have ruled the masses.
As Stephen Leacock maintains, “A hereditary ruler seems on the face of things as absurd as the hereditary mathematician or hereditary poet laureate”. 81

Again, the perverted form of monarchy that is despotism serves to be the worst form of government as a despot works only for his own interests and curbs the liberty and other basic rights of its people. As Aristotle maintains in his cycle of political chain that in monarchy earlier the monarch ruled his people with love and justice but in due course of time the kings forgot their duties. Thus, making the form of government tyrannical which could not last long and people finally revolted and monarchy was replaced by Aristocracy.

3.2) ARISTOCRACY AS A FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

Aristocracy is a form of government in which a relatively small proportion of the citizens participate in making decision for the government. ‘Aristos’ in Greek means ‘the best’ and ‘Kratos’ means ‘power’. The Greek philosophers therefore considered aristocracy a form of government run by the best or par excellence. The best here may apply either to a more intellectually sound person or a person superior in education or experience or in wealth. However, the notion of the rule of the best came into existence with the very idea of giving hereditary monarchy a legitimate shape. The medieval Europeans gave the theory that the monarch and his beaurocrats were in virtue superior to the masses. Thus, in order to maintain hereditary rule, the monarchs and his beaurocrats were theorized to be morally and intellectually superior and in this way the concept of rule of the best came into existence.
The theoretical foundation of ‘Aristocracy’ was laid by the works of two great figures in Greek and Roman philosophy namely Plato and Aristotle. Both of them defended ‘Aristocracy’ and had reservations about ‘Democracy’ as according to them democracy puts government in hands of people who are not capable of making correct decisions. According to Aristotle and especially to Plato, some people naturally possess better power of administration and such people should be given the opportunity and education to govern and contribute to the social and economic life of the people.\(^8\)

Generally, it has been said that the, ‘…essence of Aristocracy lies in the respect accorded to the aristocrat by others; a respect to be enhanced more by deeds than words’.\(^9\)

Moreover, Aristocracy is characterized by element of quality which may be in accordance to one’s birth that is Aristocracy of family, culture and education that is Aristocracy of priests or of scholars, property that is Aristocracy of land owners. Prof. Jellinek discussed the social aspect of Aristocracy in which a particular class which may be priestly, militarily etc. plays an important role.\(^10\) This class enjoys certain privileges owing to which it has become a ruling class and politically dominates over the rest. He further describes two types of Aristocracy. (a) *Hereditary Aristocracy* in which others belonging to lower class can in no situation become a part of the ruling class and (b) ‘*education and social status*’ in which even inferior class may become a part of ruling class owing to improvement in their education or status with time. In theory, aristocracy has been favored by some since other political thinkers as it is based on *quality* and not *quantity*. As Rousseau also says in this regard:
It is the best and most natural arrangement that the wisest should govern the many, when it is assured that they will govern for its profit and not for their own. \(^{85}\)

John Stuart a famous Mill famous English Ethico-political thinker, also supports Aristocracy saying:

The governments which have been remarkable in history for sustain ability and vigor in the conduct of affairs has generally been Aristocracies. \(^{86}\)

Montesquieu too supported aristocracy considering that it has the virtue of moderation. Aristocracy is moderate in its ruling, since it is a familiar of the fact that the ruling class is in minority and the masses are in majority therefore an immoderate use of power may lead to a powerful resistance. Another positive aspect of Aristocracy, as some thinkers do believe, is its conservative nature. However, in aristocracy, power lies in the hands of experienced and wise ruler who have ruled and have experience of ruling for a long time and therefore they do not take rash judgment or do radical political experiments.

Aristocracy also suffers from certain flaws. It has been proved certain times throughout history that aristocracy has given way to Oligarchy and the ruling class has displayed its arrogance and pride towards the lower classes. Example of this can be seen in the treatment met out to Helots by the Spartan. \(^{87}\) Some thinkers like Bluntschli also point out that, Aristocracy is marked by excessive rigidity owing to which it becomes static in nature while society keeps on changing. \(^{88}\) The unwillingness of Aristocracy to change with time in order to preserve its power has led several times to its downfall. This has been partly the reason for the downfall of feudal Aristocracy of Europe in middle ages. In modern times, Aristocracy is not favored by the majority of peoples around the globe as a form of government
but as an element in the states. It has been stressed upon that the opinions of the best citizens should be taken in account in making of important decisions by the government. Moreover owing to the negative aspects of Aristocracy it has been replaced by ‘Democracy’ with time.

Democracy has commonly been accepted as the best form of government as it is free from the negative aspects of Aristocracy that is tyranny, exploitation etc. and has also become inevitable with the changing times and claims. This is the reason why the world in majority today has Democracy as an appropriate form of government.

Let us briefly examine the democratic form of government and find out its merits and suitability for the twenty first century human world.

3.3) DEMOCRACY AS A FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

Democracy is considered as ‘better a form of government’ by many thinkers from the past to modern times. The Greeks meant by democracy a rule by many and Aristotle considered it as a perverted form of government. In literal sense democracy is formed of two Greek words ‘Demos’ meaning people and ‘Kratia’ meaning power. Thus, ‘Democracy’ means ‘power of the people’. Philosophers like Aristotle and Plato in ancient times, Cicero in medieval age and Sir Henry Maine, James Russell Lowell, Lord James Bryce in modern period regard democracy merely as a form of government.

According to James Russell Lowell, democracy “is nothing more than an experiment in government”.\(^{89}\) Democracy is a rule by will of majority of the people. Lord James Bryce considers that democracy the ruling powers rest in the hands of the community as a whole. He elaborates his point:

This means in communities which act by voting, the rule belongs to the majority, as no other method has
been found for determining peaceably and legally what is to be declared the will of the community which is not unanimous.\textsuperscript{90}

The will of majority should prevail, as it is considered that the wisdom possessed by many is superior to those possessed by few. Also majority is physically stronger than minority and it can resort to coercion if minority does not submit to its will. But democracy to be successful in the real term minority citizens should not feel subjugated or oppress by the majority. So democracy provides each citizen political equality and gives them right to speech, publication, association and the like others. Democracy, therefore, provides the scope for free discussion and therefore, a government by the people is subject both to discussion and to criticism. Democracy as a form of government is based on the consent of the people but the consent or choice needs to be real, efficient and active to give democracy its true shape and meaning. Today the efficient rule of government on democratic principles requires qualified and wise people. Mazzini defines democracy as, “The progress of all through are under the leadership of the best and the wisest”.\textsuperscript{91}

Owing to large size of population, today democracy exists not in a direct form but rather as representative democracy. Every adult citizen in democracy enjoys the right to vote irrespective of his caste, creed, race or faith. As some scholars, like Prof. Seeley points out that democracy is, “A government in which every one has a share”.\textsuperscript{92}

Thus, in democracy the authority is enjoyed by the people or by their representative and it is people who elect, control or remove government if it does not function lawfully and honestly. Here, all citizens enjoy equal opportunity to progress and efforts are made to increase \textit{liberty, equality} and
fraternity. Democracy being treated merely as a better form of government does not allow us to arrive at an adequate conception of democracy. It may be wrong to treat democracy primarily and essentially as the only a ‘form of government’. It has another dimension to its nature that is, ‘democracy as a way of life’. Let us, further analyze the notion of democracy as an art of living also.

4) DEMOCRACY AS AN ART OF LIVING

It has been a known fact that the concept of democracy originated as a political concept. In modern times, democracy has expanded its horizon and includes social, economic and ethical values. Democracy in other words has become ‘a way of life’, or to say a social philosophy. Maxey rightly acclaims:

Democracy as interpreted in the twentieth century is thus seen to be more than a political formula, more than a system of government, more than a social order. It is a search for a way of life in which the voluntary free intelligence and activity of men can be harmonized and coordinated with the least possible coercion and it is a belief that such a way of life is the best way for all mankind, the way most in keeping with the future of man and the nature of the universe.93

John Dewey (1859-1952) an American philosopher, made a major contribution in the process of analyzing democracy as a way of life. He held:

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.94

Democracy as a way of life includes various important features attached to it. One of the important among them is ‘rational empiricism’. The term empiricism lays stress on rationality and its application in human relation and physical nature. It stresses upon the fact that truth is an ever
changing concept and is not an absolute entity. It functions on the basis of constant checking and verification and as such the concept of democracy has been changing and developing through the centuries. Democracy also lays stress on ‘individualism’. It stands for the welfare of all individuals in a society. It considers that man is different from animals and other living creatures as he is bestowed with the faculty of reason or wisdom. Each individual is important and equal irrespective of his social status, birth or wealth. Every individual gets equal opportunity to show his/her latent talents. This is achieved through cooperation and mutual understanding leading to common good and welfare of all.

Freedom is another prerequisite of making democracy a way of life. It includes freedom of speech, press, criticism, organization or association, religion or faith, work or profession and so on. Democracy can never flourish if life is strictly controlled or suppressed and mind is tutored lest democracy would become autocracy or dictatorship. In democracy criticism is allowed and is taken without contempt. Criticism is allowed in democracy as it is shown through the functioning of opposition in a parliament. The real triumph of democracy lies in the fact that it deals with differences and criticism through open, free and value-based discussion. The need of free discussion was emphasize by Govind Ballabh Pant in the following words:

Since democracy proceeds by free discussion and debate, the laws framed by the elected representatives of the people carry a moral sanction. Democracy cannot function unless those who have framed the law, as those who may differ, are willing to submit to the supremacy of the law. Law in democracy does not derive its sanction from the force which the State has at its command, but from the moral obligation on all those who may differ to abide by the decision which has been arrived at by free discussion.
In a society there does not exist sameness of status, class, attitude to life, religion and owing to these differences, democracy stresses upon the values of forbearance, mutual respect, tolerance, equality and is opposed to imperialism and slavery. Tolerance of difference and criticism or objectivity is necessary in democracy. In this regard Jawaharlal Nehru said, “Democracy means tolerance, tolerance not merely of those who agree with us, but of those who do not agree with us.”

In a democratic set up each individual is free to live his own way of life and can enjoy and exercise his freedom and also works for others. Wolf supports this aspect by saying, that a democratic society, “… is a society of free, equal, active and intelligent citizens, each man choosing his own way of life for himself and willing that others should choose theirs.”

A government, therefore, to be called democratic does not need mere structural frame-work and institutions, as aptly put by John Dewey:

Democracy is only a form of government is like saying that home is a more or less geometrical arrangement of bricks and mortar or that church is a building with pews, pulpit and spire.

Rather its very purpose is to serve the people through the values it advocates, and tries to inculcate in the masses. Barker has defined democracy as a, “… mode of spirit, an attitude of mind of those who profess it, and only those who profess it can practice it.”

There is synchronization of thoughts and action and this is the essence of democracy, “It is a form of government; it is a kind of economy; it is an order of society; it is a way of life, it is all these things put together.”
5) BASIC TENETS OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy as discussed is not merely a form of government but it is also a social philosophy, an art of living or in other words, a way of life. The basic tenets of democracy comprises of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. These are the central ideals of social philosophy of democracy and intrinsic values of democratic faith.

5.1) LIBERTY:

Various thinkers believe that democracy and liberalism are like two sides of the same coin and Waldron has emphasized that since democracy and liberty emerged roughly around the same period they share a deep grounding. In democracy people have liberty to take individual decision concerning their individual affairs and also have liberty to take collective decision in collective affairs. The concept of liberty like equality found its full expression in the American and French declaration. They gave the argument that man being created free and equal by God should not be controlled by laws that he does not give consent to whether directly or indirectly.  

The concept of ‘liberty’ grew out differently for different people in accordance with the hardships and restrictions they were subjected to in different ages. People sought for ‘social liberty’ which aimed to give freedom from encroachment by despotic authority on life and property of people. The struggle for social liberty was seen as early as in sixth century B.C. by Greeks who were subjected to unjust laws and arbitrary powers. Similarly, the British parliament started their struggle against Charles the first for the same cause as above. Again, ‘Religious liberty’ or ‘Civil liberty’ was sought by English men in seventeenth century as they were not allowed
to follow faith and religious convictions different from the rulers. Further, ‘political liberty’ was also demanded to give equal political powers to all the citizens. Ernest Barker in his Principles of Social and Political Theory says that political liberty says:

A liberty not of curbing government but of constituting and controlling; constituting it by a general act of choice or election, in which we all freely share on the basis of universal suffrage; controlling it by a general and continuous process of discussion, in which we all freely share according to our capacities.

This political liberty was demanded by British people for more than two centuries and finally they achieved universal adult franchise. India also got political liberty on August 1947 after a long struggle against the imperial powers. One of the basic ideas in the value of political liberty is self governance or in words of Rousseau, “Freedom is obedience to a law we give ourselves.”

Gandhi conducted the non-violent movement of 1940-41 to defend the right of free speech which according to him was essential for attaining Swaraj. He mentioned that:

This liberty is a concrete issue which needs no defining. It is the foundation of freedom, especially when it has to be taken non-violently. To surrender it is to surrender the only means for attaining freedom.

People living under democracy are governed by laws they make for themselves and this is a major point of distinction between democracy and other forms of government. In dictatorship for example, one is governed by laws made by others while in democracy, we enjoy freedom by being under laws made by us. Though freedom is an intrinsic aspect of democracy that is self rule prevails in democracy yet we find that the out voted minority do not
rule themselves. They are ruled by laws made by their fellow citizens and in this sense they do not follow their will. This aspect of democracy can be understood better in following manner:

1) A state is formed to resolve conflicts between people and democracy cannot provide authority to each citizen rather it serve as a means to solve conflicts and provides the decision making authority that best respects people’s autonomy. In this way democracy gives more autonomy to people than other forms of government.

2) Out voted minority may have to live under will of majority but they enjoy equal opportunity to take part in law making procedure and play full role in making collective decisions.

3) With passage of time arouse the demand for ‘personal’ or ‘individual liberty’ which aimed at giving full freedom of development of ones capacity unless it does no harm to the welfare of the community. It involves the right to ones choice of goods, profession etc.

H.J. Laski (1893-1950) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) supported the notion of individual liberty with Mill stressing the fact that it is not legal for the government to interfere in matters which concerns an individual and which are neither beneficial nor harmful for the community. Laski laid a great stress on those freedoms of individuals which are fully compatible with social ends. John Stuart Mill presented his arguments in favour of individual liberty in his book On Liberty (1859). He held that individual liberty cannot be truly achieved, “… unless the intelligent part of the public can be made to feel its value.”
Liberty, according to him, can not be achieved merely by passing acts but there exits a need to develop a culture of liberty in which people seriously participate.\textsuperscript{112} He believed that debate and disagreement is needed to realize the true value of liberty. Stressing the need of an atmosphere of free discussion he said:

The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race- posterity as well as the existing generation- those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produce by the collision with error.\textsuperscript{113}

Further the socialists came up with a notion of ‘economic liberty’ which implies that each individual should have enough to satisfy the minimum basic needs of life (food, shelter and clothing) and should share equal opportunities offered by the society. This economic freedom has a negative aspect to it also.

Liberal thinkers like H.J. Laski and R.H. Tawney (1880-1962) stressed that unrestrained economic freedom creates a gulf between rich and poor.\textsuperscript{114} The rich owing to economic liberty become richer by multiplying their property by the means of their talents and labour power while the poor are made to work hard on terms and conditions laid by the owners. In this way the freedom of rich becomes the un-freedom of the poor. Here socio-economic equality becomes inevitable to bridge the gap between rich and poor of the society and this can be achieved through taxation and by giving social security to the poor.
Thus, we find that liberty has both positive and negative connotations to it. In the negative sense, it means absence of restrictions imposed on one by another and, in positive sense, it implies that each individual has right to take their decisions through the use of reason and realizing of a true sense. It means giving others the same space as one demands for oneself. It is a noted fact that an individual has no existence without society and therefore rights come from the society. Liberty, since is created by the society, should be seen in terms of number of acts an individual can perform and not the number of restrictions that are remove from him. Thus, freedom is not the mere absence of restrains rather it is both the service one citizen can do for another and for the welfare of the society and his own self-development through ones freedom of use of ones self capabilities.

5.2) **EQUALITY:**

The urge for ‘*Equality*’ has been a driving force for the struggle by men to replace other forms of government by democracy. The example of this can be seen in course of history where we find that the Greeks demanded that the poor should share equal political power as those of the rich. They considered that the lack of political representation by the poor as the hindrance to their self development and denial of their basic rights. Tracing the root of the doctrine of equality, we find that it begins with the formulation by Stoic philosophy, being further added by Roman Jurists, reinforced by the Christian theology of universal brotherhood and further stressed by philosophers like John Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Jefferson, and Tom Paine. Let us see the view-points of these western thinkers regarding equality. John Locke wrote that:
To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what estate all men are naturally in, and that is a state of perfect freedom to order their actions…. A state also of equality, where in all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than others.\footnote{117}

The American and the French declaration of 1776 and 1791 respectively considered equality as the natural right of men. The American declaration held:

We hold these truths to be self-evidence, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights that among these rights are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.\footnote{118}

Again the French declaration more emphatically stated:

All citizens have a right to concur personally, or through their representatives, in making the law. Being equal in its eyes, then, they are all equally admissible to all dignities, post, and public employments.\footnote{119}

The discussion for equality in fact began with Thomas Rainsborough’s observation that, “… the poorest he that is in England has a life to live as the richest he.”\footnote{120}

He made this observation on the debate for manhood franchise where he touched upon the doctrine of equality of man as one of the central principle of democracy. American and the French declarations as we find fully expressed themselves on equality and it was latter revived under the influenced John C.Calhoun and in the works of Abraham Lincoln.\footnote{121} According to Abraham Lincoln, Equality means that each citizen must be given the right to use his abilities to the fullest. He considered slavery a reason for the under development of the Negroes.\footnote{122}
The notion of equality means that each individual in a society should be treated alike. It does not imply that ‘all men are equal’ because men vary to a great extent in their physical, intellectual and moral qualities. In fact equality means that every individual in a society should be given equal opportunity for self development regardless of his birth, status, or class. It means being treated equally by law and given the opportunity to equally contribute in the formation and the working of law. Thus equality exists in equality of opportunity and equality before the law. One of the wrong assumptions about democracy is that, it is a means to fulfill what people desire. This is impossible to achieve as the preferences of different people vary significantly and democracy can not fulfill the whims and fancies of all the people equally. Democracy, therefore, is not a method to convert people’s wishes into policies but rather it is a way to transform reform and improve people’s views through debate, argument, reflection etc. which form the basis of democratic set up.

Equality and liberty though superficially seemed to be opposite but they are not antagonist to each other in reality. Though equality sometimes is constrained through liberty as in case of economic equality, where equality is curbed through too much liberty but if we understand the purpose and aim of liberty and equality it seems that they go hand in hand. Both aim at the promotion of the value of personality and development of its capacity. If they are used to contribute to the social life and for the interest of the community as a whole both liberty and equality can function together for the progress of democracy.

Till eighteenth and early nineteenth century liberty and equality remained the only fundamental principles of democracy and fraternity or the
spirit of fellowship latter rouse up as an emotion and it was the French revolution which gave the slogan of ‘liberty, equality and fraternity’. 123

5.3) FRATERNITY:

Fraternity has its own significant contribution to the world human civilization. Its very spirit is to unite the hearts of people and work out the ways for maximum progress of human being across the globe. It is a spirit among the members of a community who share common culture and common values, to work in association to achieve common welfare. It was described by Wright in following words:

By a community is meant the participation of all members of a society in a good which can not be divided into parts that fall to the exclusive possession of their individual owners, but which, since it is by nature a common good, can only be realize by a group of communicating individuals. 124

The member of a society having the spirit of community or fellowship have selfless devotion, work for common welfare through joint efforts and lay more stress on duties rather than on rights. The feeling of brotherhood, mutual love and understanding amongst the people makes democracy as one of the most complete and most comprehensive type of human association which is based upon the participation of all for mutual benefits. This spirit allows the true realization of socio-ethical values of life for which democracy stands. Liberty and equality often come into conflict with each other and this contradiction can be solved through the concept of fellowship or ‘fraternity’. Both liberty and equality lay a great stress on rights of individual and in fact it is a spirit of fraternity, which becomes essential to make an individual a part of the society in true sense. True democracy is realized when freedom is achieved through ‘living together’, exercising
peace and tolerance and equality must be sought out in the corporation of a democratic community. Also the spirit of equality helps to achieve community organization since it helps to remove the feeling of contempt between rich and poor. Thus, liberty, equality and fraternity need to be interwoven together completely to achieve true democracy.

Thus, from this discussion on democracy, we may conclude that democracy has developed through various ages and stages and has acquired new meanings through each century. A lot of change has come from the infantile concept of democracy that existed in Greek cities, to its written form with coming of American and French declarations, to its present state of popular democracy. Even with achievement of universal adult franchise and inclusion of ideal notions of liberty, equality, fraternity; the question that emerges out is that as to why democracy in many countries is still facing crisis. One reason for this is that democracy still exists as a mere political term. Though changes have come in economic and social systems mindset of people have not changed. Perspective of the masses needs to be changed and the old value system which has weakened owning to materialism and loss of faith in religion needs to be strengthened again. Democracy needs to become a way of life otherwise; achieving true democracy will remain a mere illusion and will never become a reality. The religo-ethical values can give more strength to the advocates of democracy and they can do the service to humanity in a more perfect and intrinsic way.
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