Concept of Republican States
3. Concept of Republican States

The concept of Republican State has been variously explained from time to time according to varying content. In its most elementary meaning republic is contrasted with monarchy and means a form of state and government in which there is no hereditary monarch. According to Encyclopedia Britannica the republic is "a state the which supreme power rests in the people on in officers elected by them to modern usage the fact distinguish a republic from monarch in which the head is perform the duties required to them. The head of the state is usually elected directly and in hereditary." ¹

Historically in the western world republic did developed in opposition to monarchy or despotism "For centuries says the Encyclopedia of social sciences" the tradition of the struggle of the Greek city states for freedom; on the other hand against their tyrants and on the other against the oriental despotism of legendary conflict with a kingship of the Persian Kings kept the republican idea alive. Roman legends conflict with a kingships; which finally degenerated in the tyranny; their devoted to the status publica, their separate attempt to stare of ceaserism, even the period of complete absolution did not succeed in obliterating the republican idea. ² After an intermediary period dominated by the theory of emperorship with world domination the break of medieval univerlisation opened the way of republicanism which like its prototype of the ancient world bore distinctly antimonarchy features literally the world republic means the same thing as the Latin ‘republica’ i.e. public affairs or the common wealth. Cicero, the Roman thinker says him "De Re Publica", the common wealth is the people's affairs; which 'needs to be ruled by some sort of deliberating authority in the first place, must always be relative to be peculiar
grounds which be brought the particular state in to being. It must be in second place, be
delegated either to a single man, to a certain selected persons, or it must be retained by all the
members of the groups. He also describes the community where a republican state is possible.
By ‘people’ he does not mean the association of the people in any manner, but the coming
together of considerable number of men who are united by a common agreement about law &
right by the desire participate in the mutual advantage.”

Here, Cicero seems to be discriminating between the association of men united to be
common agreement about law and rights and a simple mob which is as tyrannous as if it were a
single user, it is even worse for there is nothing more odious than this monster which apes the
appearance and usurps the name of the people.

According to the Cicero, is therefore the people’s affair where the government must
necessarily be delegated either to a single man or to a group of selected persons or if possible, as
in smaller city states, be retained by all the members of the group? Cicero’s idea is restated in a
different language of Montesquieu.

Montesquieu assumes three folds of the governments, Republican, monarchic and
despotic on the basis of structure of government. According to Montesquieu “the republican
system is that in which sovereign power is possessed by either the whole people or some part of
it. He says that every form of government has its particular principle”. In a republican
government this is ‘virtue’, not moral or Christian virtue, but political virtue in the strict
namely’’ love of country and of equality.

Cicero as well as Montesquieu says that a republic need not necessarily be a
democracy.
The people may delegate power to a single man or a group of selected man. In other case they should be the men of the choice of the people, exercising authority of moderation. Moderation is a virtue of aristocracy.

Moderation is the virtue of aristocratic government in a republican state. Ruling in moderation is necessary in an aristocratic government because republic ultimately means guarantee of liberty of citizen at large. Liberty can exist only where possessors of governmental power are subject to limitations.

In republican state public approval are essential for government. Vox Populi; is the chief criterion of a republic, but popular sovereignty ‘if it means that the whole people is, in all but executive detail of government itself, is an impossible function’ because running of government is a specialization of function. Therefore political business has to confine to a small group of men whose decisions generally speaking are accepted by vast majority.

America is a modern example of this type of republic. Its a republic according to the definitions, cited form Cicero and Montesquieu and ‘ever since’ in emergence as an independent political community. America has been a political democracy; but we must be careful not to embody in idea of political democracy more than it infect implies. It is essentially a democracy of a middle class, which assumes through it does not democracy of authority of wealth and has been careful, through our history not to permit its informing idea to jeopardize the claims that men of property invariably but forward as the boundaries beyond which democracy may not pass. Specially, after the civil war which protected property form democratic invasion grew increasingly high. American democracy is oligarchies in nature.

The reason of the growth of oligarchy in the American system as given by some author of course different which theoretical is obviously in character. It is said “the disorderliness in the
formation and execution of policy, which seems to be inevitable in free political society has on many occasions led to demands that we get rid of politician and put expert in charge. That is why, the national assembly whether congress or parliament in fact becomes the people and it derives the right therefore to exercise completely sovereign power. Popular sovereignty thus implies in American representative government. The real sovereign is the constitution”. The people must act in a way specified in the constitution against act of government the citizen may successfully assert rights against the sovereign he has no rights.

The problem before the framers of the American constitution was to create a government for a republican state, which give rulers enough power to do an efficient job and then they must so limit the exercise of the essential power it will not used to oppress the individual for whom the government exists. A dependence on the people is no doubt the primary control on the government, but experience has taught mankind the necessary of auxiliary precaution. Therefore, Montesquieu’s theory of separation of powers incorporated in the American constitution as a ‘doctrine of liberty’.

The most convinced believes in the doctrine of the powers acknowledged that an absolute separation of the three department of government would make the government itself possible. It was therefore necessary to introduce modifications of the pure doctrine by setting up what are called the ‘check and balance’.

The power and position of the American President like those of the Roman consuls of the ancient time make us feel that the office is a depotic as that of royal government. The impotence on influence as that senate like senate of ancient Rome would make us imagine that the constitution is a complete aristocracy again the role of the people in national politics would
lead one to say that the chief power in the state was the people & that the constitution was
democratic.

**Double Kingship in Sparta:** - The city of Sparta had the rare institution to show that the
character of a republican state was mainly based on the popular sanction behind the power of the
government. The city of Sparta had the rare institution of double kingship. “As king they were
high priest and military leaders, but the bulk of legislative judicial and executive functions
passed the senate (Gerousia) and assembly (Apella). The senate of thirty members, included ex-
officio the king grew in to an advisory body, elected or life tenures by the assembly. The
assembly was composed of all citizen and it will as law.12” People generally refused to accept
Spartan constitution as a democratic republic because of the existence of the institution of
slavery and consequently the exclusion form citizenship, of a large portion of the population.

**Concept of Republics in India:** - The concept of republics in ancient India is much older than
Rome and Greece. The age of republics goes back to as early as the seventh and sixth century
B.C. The ancient Indian people knew little of modern state. Like the Greeks’ it was the only the
city of which the writers could speak Ancient Indian writers have called the rock publican as
“Gana” or “Samgha” meaning there by a community organized by law. The world law meant to
the Greeks custom and convention the same was the outlook here. It was a mode of living certain
beliefs a habit of the people a corporate life.

Republic in ancient India also “had defined constitutional meaning.” says Dr.A.S.Alteker. A republic denotes “a form of government where the people were vested not in
one person but in gana or group of people. Samgha was another term used precisely in the same
sense because it was sharply distinguished from monarchy.” Dr.Altekar definition found in
Paninis Astadhyayi or the writing of Katyayana
Concept of republics of Panini: - In the Asthadhyayi of Panini says that the country was divided in to Janpada. The derivatives meaning of term Janpada means the place of habitation of Jan. In common partance Jana is use to denote people bet in vedic literature it is employed in technical sense of a tribe and connotes that the stages of human evolution in vedic period, when group of human being lived mobile communities with out any serious attachment, on their part to a particular territory.

The majority of Janpada the original upper and lower does not exists. The explanation the term kshatriya setters still held sway and the political powers was concentrated in their hands. The ruling kshatriya inhabiting the Janpada were as we are informed by Katyayana governed by two fold of constitution; some were "Monarchies ‘‘and other were “samghas” or republics. (kshatriya-e-karajat samgha pratishedhaten). Kayatayana takes samgha as a form of government distinct from Ekraja where sovereignty vested in one (ekadhina) & not in many as in the samgha (ganadhina).

Panini being an eminent grammarian explains samgha, not only as a political term but also as a generic term applied in various purposes. Firstly, samgha means, a multitude as in expression Gramya-pasu-samgha =a herd of domestic cattle. In the same sense it was also applied to a multitude of human beings. Secondly, a samgha was a term for nikaya or body which is defined by Panini as a corporate body where the distinct between the samgha applied to the religious samghas functioning a fraternity with out distinction of Uttara =high and Andhara=low.

Thirdly, there is the sutra (samghodghan-gana-prasamsayoh), which speaks of political samgha technically known as gana for, whatever purposes the term may be applied, it signifies a herd, a group of men formed in to a body or people collecting governed by
themselves. The meaning of the term samgha a gana "would be state where gana or number ruled or the rule of many." We find a confirmation of opinion the gana was 'the rule of the many.' in Buddhist canon.

**Meaning of gana according to the Jataka:** - The Jataka as of vol.1& 2 have two passage with help us considerably in appraising the value of gana. They describe how families in Srawasti managed to entertain the bhikkus of Buddha's order. Some households combined to three and four in some cases the whole quarter combined together and jointly provided for the feast of bhikkus, while in some cases 'many people' managed to entertainment by combing according to gana -binding (gana-bandana). Here the real sense of gana becomes apparent; assembly or association. The word bandhana (the binding Ger. bunds) shows the artificial nature of gana-organization as opposed to tribal and primitive.

The description of gana life as referred to in Jataka is confirmed by two canonical extracts, Dighanikayan and Anguttar nikayan where Buddha is said to have made his famous pronouncemant about the future of a republican communities of the northern India is said to have the crises of its fortunes. In the text quoted that when the Ajatsatru of Magadha attacks on the Vijjian confedecracy he send a messenger to Buddha for advice. The Buddha asks his favorite disciple Ananda whether Vajjis still observe the seven condition of welfare he taught them before and being answered in affirmative, he prophesies that so long Vajjis observed these conditions they may excepted not to decline but to prosper.

**Concept of gana state in the Mahabharata:** - Mahabharata the well known Indian epic, present under chapter 107, of shantiparvan of the Mahabharata which tells us the clearest possible terms what gana was? According to Dr. K. P.Jayaswal ganas were noted according to that for their successful foreign policy for their full treasury for their successful foreign policy
for their skill in war for their good laws for their disciple Mantra or policy of state and the
discussion of that policy by large number of gana are alluded to. These characters among others
can not refer to as such or to a corporation of leaders; they refer to gana as an organization of
assembly government or a republic.\textsuperscript{24}

In the discourse between Yudhisthira and Bhisma in chapter 107 of Shantiparvan and
Mahabharata makes it clear that gana refer to the whole body politic entire political community
and in the alternate the parliament not to the government body only.\textsuperscript{25} The meaning of “entire
political community” is the further clarified in verse 8 which refers to a large number which
composed the gana.\textsuperscript{26} The whole body is mentioned in verse.\textsuperscript{27} Which describes the authorities
through whom power should be wielded\textsuperscript{28}

The gana is not the government body which is composed few and not of chosen of the
classification of people. The gana it was Mukyas and perdhans (chiefs and perdhans). Whose
jurisdiction it was to conduct affairs of the community were included in it.

\textbf{Classification of Republics:} - According to the Panini republics are classified on the basis of
principles-

\textbf{(1)} A particular class of families was entitled to govern the state on behalf of the entire people.
In some of the gana the member of the governing class were awarded the title of ‘Raja’ and were
allowed to enjoy some superior powers than the ordinary members of gana. It implies that the
principles of equality and liberty which form the fundamental basis of a republic were found in a
different form in the republican state in ancient India.

\textbf{(2)} Another type of republics which were organized on the basis of ‘Varnas’. Thus these are
Kshatriya-Samghas, Brahmana-Samghas and also Sudra-Samgha. In all these ganas the
Kshatriya, Brahmans and Sudra were given prominence in their respective organization.
(3) Some republics are apparently seen as examples of an aristocratic state because the right of partition in the affairs of the state because the right of participation in the affairs of the state and government is given to the distinguished class of citizen. This type of republics mainly discussed the class of state. This type of republic mainly discussed in the Shanti Pravan of Mahabharata Panini describes the new type of republics found in ‘Vahika’ countries, of the north-west of India. It is said that only 100 organized themselves a Kshatriya community with the title of Raja to each of them.

(4) Panini also refers to a different type of republic which are given in Jataka stories. In the capital of ‘Cheta State’ mention is made of 60,000 Kshatriya all whom titled as rajas. These 60,000 men must have represented so many Kshatriya members constituting that state. The traditional member of 7707 king comprising the ruling body in the Lichchavis has been carefully preserved in Pali canon.

(5) From the large no. of rajas and Kshatriya ruling own the masses, we can well imagine that it was aristocratic state, yet the aristocratic body that dealt in the political matters was more or less numerous to that each family had one representative in a governing body. The remaining bulk of the society recognized the authority of this representative body by showing their loyalty to the state. Panini takes ‘Bhakti’ to denote loyalty of the citizen to the state where a king or a republic.

Nature of Hindu Political Concept: - Rights of the individual do not figure prominently in Hindu political ideas. The individual and the state do not pose as two separate entities antagonistic to each other. Hindus political thought does not fall under any of the accepted categories of western speculations. It stand by itself in their fundamental assumptions Hindu writers come somewhat near the idealism which we associate with the Greeks found a resurrection in Rousseau to form the idealistic philosophy in Germany and England. The Greek
city states which emerged out of the Homeric tradition of supreme king reserved among the toik was ingrained in new spirit of life, a remarkable order of society. This spirit and a new order of society have a peculiar resemblance with the sentiments of ancient Hindu republics. Before the claim of the city, all other human relations took a secondary place. Kingship, the strongest social bond of primitive life lost its per-eminence and found its chief recognition as admitting to a condition more highly prized, that of citizenship---No priest by order reinforced among than that sense of subjection to authority which their king30 bads fails to maintain---a people so minded, were prepared for the great social and political experiment—-for which the environment has particularly been set. In fact, the family once transferred in to an association, and the city now appears as an essential community is only a part of it and nothing more. Men in new sense 'citizen'. They identify civilization itself with the process of incorporation in the city detached form the 'natural' environment where immobility and tradition strength each other, they are free to make for themselves a new unity and a new life.31

The concept of a 'new unity' is in time with the modern organic view of state and Jain texts speak almost in the same strain. Concept of Corporate life in the Jain text. A Jaina text is explaining 'gana' says that with reference to society gana is a group with the main characteristic of 'possessing a mind' of being conscious. According to the text there is also an abuse of the term. The example given of its right use are 'the gana of the Malhas' (a known republican community), as we shall presently see32 'the gana of the pura' i.e. the pura assembly.33 In the "Avadan Satak", gana rule is apposed to a royal rule. Merchant form the middle country of northern India had gone the Deccan in the time of Buddha. They were asked by the king of the Deccan, Who is the king (in northern India)? The merchant replied 'some countries are under the
'gana' and some are under the kings. Therefore the royal form of government is contrasted with the form of gana.

On the basis of government is heredity right of a single royal family and royal authority of collectiveness, directly exercised by the entire community or through a smaller group of persons, recommended or chosen by the people. In Rome we have seen franchise was confined to a strictly limited aristocracy which itself was dominated by small oligarchies. In the medieval period republics we find the same state of the affairs after the closing of the council. Seven states of Nether-lands have been recognized as a republic. This republic was governed no doubt by an elected state holder but he was raised to that position by the votes of a very small body of burgs who only had the franchise.

According to the basic principal of a non-monarchical state given above, Rome medieval republics or the Nether-lands are intense of state aristocratic or oligarchic in the form but republic in spirit. Even in our own times in U.S.A. millions of the Negroes had no franchise for the long time. England had number of pocket-boroughs till middle of nineteenth century.

Changes in political outlook of the ancient Greeks: - A Change in the political concepts and the corresponding institution was perceptible in Greece during the sixth and seventh century. During the growing social unrest, the distinctive character of Athenian state was the different of political power right were being extended to the lower classes of the population who were denied these privileges before. Officers were enlarged. The fourth class of the city of was given admission in to the popular assembly. On the other hand, old aristocratic council was transformed by a system of recruitment form ex-magistrates and at the same time of its supreme authority over administrative authority was being limited. On the whole the city states were
undergoing a process of expansion towards larger democracies with more of liberalism and the heartedness towards the average and ordinary citizen.

Changes in the political outlook during the time of Buddha similar changes towards democracy were marked in eastern horizon during the time of Buddha. Mahabharata confirms the state of affairs that the members of a gana were equals to another in respect of birth and family. The Mahabharata offers the ready materials to Dr. A. S. Agarwala to prove that the consequent group of a gana state were conscious of the principal which formed the basis of the non-monarchical political organization. The difference between the gana of ancient India and the city republics Greece is not in the forms of states.

Notes and References

1- Encyclopedia Britannica vol.19, Page 201.

2- Encyclopedia of Social Sciences Vol XIII, Page 317-20

3- Walliam Y. Elliot and N. A. Mc Donald: Western Political Heritage, Page 262.

4- Ibid, Page 263

5- Dunning W. A.: Political Theories vol. II, Page 399.

6- Ibid, Page 401


10- Ibid, Page 17

11- Laski Harold: American Democracy, Page 20

12- Maciver: The Modern State, Page 75


14- अनस्य लोकस्य पद आचर्यस्थान यज्ञ-Sabda kalpadruma.

15- The word ‘Jana’ is derived from the root ‘Jana’ meaning to give or take

and has been used in the sense of people as a whole for e.g. ‘Paurajanpada’

Mahabharata Ashram 9,18,10,1:18,25 etc.

16- अनं विभाली वहुः विवाचसं नामाध्यमं पृथिवी यथाकरम्।

17- Agarwal V.S.: India as known to Panini, Page 424.

18- Ibid, Page 426.

19- Mahavagga II, 18 (Translation by Rhys Davids) Oldenburg in

S.B.E. vol: XIII. Page 269.

20- Jataka I:422.

21- Digha Nikaya.II, Page 72-75 .

22- Anguttar Nikaya IV, Page 17-20.


24- In that meaning it is used also the Divyavadan which calls the body of ministers the ‘Gana’ or

ministers.

26-Mahabharata ch.107 Santiparava

मद्वृत्तिः विनाशी हि गणानामुपलकवयः
मन्त सवरण हुश बहुमिति में मति।।

27-Ibid. मन्त्रमुक्तः प्राधान्यु चाररणावली--कषणः

न गणः कृत्तनशो मन्त्र श्रुत्महिः भारतः

28-Ibid. तस्मानपनायोति यान्ति गणामुखः: प्राधान्यः

लोकनाया समायप्ता शृवशी तेषु पार्थिवः।।

29-Agarwala V.S.: India as known to Panini, Page 430 and Mahabharata

Karnaparvan, Page 49.


31-Maciver: The Modern State Ch.III, Page 70-73.


अथ मथ्यदेशोऽन्याः दक्षिणापथ गताः।

tे राजा महाकुपूर्फणस्य प्रामुन्तमुनिताम्।
राजा उत्तरं भो वणजः कस्तर्ष्ट्र राजेति। वणजं कथविनी।
देव कोशजेशा गणाहीनः कोशजात्जाठीनः इति।”

35-Mukharjee Sobha: Republican Trends in Ancient India, Page 17.

36-Agarwala V.S.: India as known to Panini, Page 429.

66-Fleet Gupta Inscription App.IV.