

Features of Real Democracy

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"As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master." These words of the US former President Abraham Lincoln described ~~the~~ his idea of democracy. Real democracy, unlike representative democracy, involves direct citizen's partnership in formulation and implementation of policies and in political processes.

~~In representative dem~~ In today's world, representative democracy is everywhere but real democracy in true spirit can be seldom seen.

These are certain features of real democracy which include guarantee of civil liberties, accountability across the board and rule of law. Moreover, it involves

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inclusive political system, independent judiciary and freedom of expression. Free and fair election is another feature of real democracy. These features of real democracy are threatened by certain challenges including rise in authoritarianism, rise of nationalism, illiteracy and biased media. These threats can be curbed by keeping an eye on undemocratic powers, promoting literacy and education, and accountability of media houses. It can also be tackled by ensuring inclusive political system. Real democracy is the active and direct participation of citizens in political processes. It fosters inclusivity and accountability. However, it is facing certain challenges that need to be addressed.

Real democracy is the active participation of citizens into political process and formulation of ~~pol~~ policies. Unlike representative democracy where citizens elect their representatives and ~~they~~^{they} formulate policies on ~~their~~ behalf of voters, real democracy involves direct

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participation. The direct participation is made through different mechanisms such as referendums, town-hall meetings, civil assemblies and online platforms. For instance, Brexit in 2016 of England was done through referendum. The English people directly voted in favour of Brexit.

The current scenario of real democracy in world is that it is not functioning everywhere. It can be seen that representative democratic system is adopted by many countries but real democracy is not thriving in true spirit. As per report of the Economical Unit Annual Survey, only 8% countries are enjoying fruit of real democracy. This report also revealed that 38% countries are under hybrid democracy and 22% countries are under autocratic regimes.

Following paragraphs will shed light on the features of real democracy.

Firstly, real democracy is the guarantor of civil liberties.

It provides an environment to the people or citizens in which they can enjoy their freedom. Real democracy is direct involvement of citizens into democratic processes. The citizens actively participate and make choices of their own.

Secondly, real democracy makes the accountability across the board possible.

There is no selected accountability. According to Simon Johnson, a political activist, in real democratic country, institutions keep an eye on each other and make themselves accountable before the law. People everywhere try to grab powers for the sake of their interests but it is responsibility of democratic country to control them, otherwise watch your nation fail.

Thirdly, there is a rule of law in real democracy. The laws are above anything and every institution comes under the law. Kennedy in his book "The Bedrock of Democracy" argues that the rule of law is an integral component in a flourishing democratic system. The judiciary should make independent decisions irrespective of the political winds are blowing in any side.

Moreover, real democracy is the ← provides of inclusive political systems.

Inclusive political system is a system in which people of different interests and political views thrive together.

Real democracy is all about co-existing, not muscling each other. In a book, "Why Nation Fails", the author remarks that

inclusive institutions create job opportunities, innovations and foster economic sustainability.

Those nations having inclusive political systems are better performer in political and economical domain while have extractive institutions are pushing towards verge of failure in both domains.

Besides provider of inclusive political system, real democracy have independent judiciary. Independent judiciary does not influence by any other institutions. The US system of separation of powers are included in the constitution for the sake of independent judiciary. The executive, legislature and judiciary are completely work in different domains and their functions do not influence each other. However, there is also a check and balance system to keep an eye on each other. In this way, independent judiciary is feature of real democracy.

Additionally, freedom of expression is integral feature of real democracy. Real democratic country has independent

media which makes unbiased opinion on any matter. People are free to express their views on social media and criticize on government's policies. The freedom of expression is basic right of any citizen which constitution provides and real democracy protects this right.

Lastly, free and fair elections are another characteristic of real democracy. The peaceful transition of power between two democratic governments is possible through transparent elections. Free and fair elections are done under the independent electoral institutions and people freely elect their representatives by using freedom of expression. Hence, free and fair election is feature of real democracy.

The ~~features~~ real democracy can be threatened by certain challenges which are explained below.

Firstly, the rise of authoritarianism in the world is challenging the spirit of real democracy. There are 22% countries under authoritarianism as per report aforementioned.

The author argues in the book "How Democracies Die" that rise of authoritarian regimes in the world are threat to democracy. These regimes reject the democratic values and encourage the extremism. Democracy is not only the set of democratic institutions but also

a culture of tolerance and mutual respect. In this way, rise in authoritarianism is threat to real democracy.

Secondly, rise of nationalism is another challenge for real democracy to thrive. The nationalism allows people to become over possessive about their nationality and in a result, they can not accept others. It deteriorates the social fabric of society. Arun Aditya, an Indian author, considers nationalism a threat to the democratic government. India is becoming a hyper nationalist state and social unrest is prevailing there. The dominant Hinduvata ideology has left little space for other ideologies to survive. Hence, rise of nationalism is challenge to democracy.

Thirdly, illiteracy breeds the ground for undemocratic powers to fill the vacuum. Democracy demands active and responsible participation of citizens. If citizens are literate, they can decide better decisions. Illiteracy leads to the less citizen participation in political process and support undemocratic moves. Education and democracy go hand in hand. So, illiteracy is challenge to democracy.

Lastly, the biased media is challenge for real democracy. The biased media shaped the public opinion for particular interests and do

propaganda for others. This is called political engineering. It is dangerous for the real democracy as opinion of majority becomes dimmed. The narrative of specific group flourish on surface which purposely damage the truest meaning of democracy.

The above mentioned challenges ~~can~~ need to be addressed. Following are some suggestions to tackle these challenges.

Foremost suggestion is to keep an eye on undemocratic powers by various mechanism. The undemocratic powers include foreign interference, overpowering of one institution and hybrid regimes. All these powers need to be checked.

Secondly, the government should promote literacy and education. The educated citizens can not become tool of undemocratic powers and are well aware of democracy.

They participate in democratic processes and share their opinion which led country to on way of democracy.

Thirdly, there should be accountability of media houses and they should promote state narrative and safeguard national interests. The media houses become unguided missiles if there is no accountability. Therefore, it is mandatory to make them accountable.

Lastly, the government must ensure inclusive political system.

Inclusive political system provides

Space for opposition to criticize the governmental policies. The criticism is an essence of democracy. An inclusive political system includes all political parties to participate in formulation of policies. Democratic governments channel through political parties to present different interests and opinions. So, there should be assurance of inclusive political system.

In a nut shell, real democracy is the active and direct participation of citizens into political system. Real democracy fosters accountability, economic equality and inclusiveness. The real democracy is guarantor of civil liberties, uphold the rule of law and provide freedom of expression. There are certain challenges to real democracy which needs to be addressed in order to flourish real democracy.