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Essay:

“Democracy as a culture, not just a process: A Comparative analysis of Developed and Developing Nations”

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## "Democracy as a Culture, Not Just a Process: A Comparative Analysis of Developing World and Developed Nations"

Wisdom is the element that differentiates a man from animal kingdom. It is this speciality of mind and heart that makes a man

'The Crown of Creation'. Using this faculty of mind, man has tried many models of governance. All the models except democracy have resulted in nothing but the exploitation of civic rights. Democracy, on the other hand, has not produced the desired results. It is not that democracy has failed, rather it is the people who failed to uphold it in its true sense. The defeat of fascism, authoritarianism and communism by democracy has compelled the world to adopt this model of governance. Those countries that adopted this model and inculcated it in their governance in its true spirit have seen political stability, tolerance in the political setup, inclusive approach



that led to social development, civil liberty and gender development. On the contrary, those countries that did not take it as in its essence have observed military intervention, political victimization, growing gender disparity, marginalization of people and no liberty to publically express views. Those states that inculcated democracy in their culture have observed social development and political stability, while other have observed political instability and social decay.

To begin with, it is imperative to understand the terms; democracy as culture and democracy as process.

Democracy as process, to put simply, is the concept that democracy has not prevailed in a country in its true sense. In such countries where democracy is just a process, the democratic norms are seen nowhere. Usually, the ruling government, which is in the hands of political parties, camouflage people in the name of democracy. Their endeavors



are, merely, to accomplish their political goals. On the contrary, democracy as a culture is a form of governance in which democracy is followed in its true spirit. The legitimate government represents its people and thrives to address public aspirations. In the succeeding paragraphs, a comparative analysis of democracy as a culture in the 'Developed World' is being elucidated.

Firstly, the smooth transition of power has been observed in almost all countries where democracy as a culture has prevailed. Naming few countries; the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), France, Germany and Nordic States, all these countries have smooth transition of power for over century. There have been seen no military coups in the aforementioned countries as they have strong democratic culture. The rulers and the people being ruled have firm belief in democracy. That is the reason, there are no upheavals in the political setup and



democratic transition of power is always ~~often~~ seen, which manifest the tolerant behavior to the opposition.

Adding on, the tolerance towards the opinions of opposition parties in the parliament is the true actualization of democratic culture in Developed World. Tolerance towards the opposition is the pivotal feature of democracy. It usually seen as an opposition, but in real sense, it is the force that checks the activities of government in rule. In Developed countries, tolerant behavior is common and is considered as a part of governance. One such deviance is the Watergate Scandal in the early 1970s, when Richard Nixon was impeached on the account of recording overtly the conversation of opposition in the Congress. It proves that deviance from democratic norms is not acceptable in the countries with democratic culture.

Moreover, the freedom of expression and free media are the realization of



true democracy in Developed World. The freedom to express ideas is the birth-right of every citizen, which the democracy promises. In the democratic culture, states allow their citizens to share their opinions and ideas about the governance, whether they are in their favor or against. Along with citizen's freedom of expression, media is also free to ~~criticize~~ criticize the government policies. An evident case is the New York Times versus The USA. New York Times, a well-known print media was barred ~~for~~ by American president to publish a report that was presumably against him. But the Supreme Court of the USA ordered to let the newspaper publish that report. Thus, the freedom to express ideas and views about the government is preserved in the Developed Countries with democratic culture.

Moving on, the backbone of democracy ~~is~~ is the inclusive approach, which is followed in the Developed nations. Inclusive approach is the one



in which talent is promoted and people, belonging to any background, can have access to any public post in governmental setup. Such is ~~the~~ thing that ~~is~~ differentiates Developed and Developing nations. Multiple examples are there to quote.

The most recent one is the appointment of Rishi Sunak, an Indian-born, as the Prime minister of United Kingdom. Besides, in all other spheres of life, inclusive approach is obvious that differentiate Developed countries from Developing countries having democratic norms intact.

Furthermore, loyalty to the Constitution is the tenet of democracy that is observed in the Developed countries. Constitution - the sacred booklet of laws to govern a state - is strictly followed by every public and private institute in the Developed countries. No political pressure or something else can deviate them. A recent manifestation of such principle is the speech of US Army Chief, Patrick Sanders, who said that no



political pressure, whatsoever, would deviate him from trampling the constitution. Hence, keeping the constitution as the directive booklet manifests the presence of democratic culture in Developed countries.

Importantly, gender equality increasing rapidly manifests that the democratic culture is prevalent in the Developed countries. Gender equality is the most important element of democratic world. Gender sensitization in the Developed countries has coerced the government to make such policies that empower the genders. Gender empowerment and democracy have a causal relationship. The developed nations reached to the their pinnacle of success through empowering and including women in policy making. Thereby, the presence of genders in mainstream political setup actualize the democratic culture in Developed nations.

To add on, education has been



given the importance more than anything else. Literacy is the real force that led to the social, economic and political development in Developed states. It is that weapon that guarantees success in every sector of life. The developed nations such as Finland, Luxemborg, Andora, have literacy rate little less than hundred per cent. Thereby, high literacy rate and promotion of education is the real manifestation of Developed World's holding onto democratic culture.

Having manifested 'Democracy as a Culture' in the Developed World, the succeeding paragraphs would highlight 'Democracy as just a process' in the Developing Nations.

In Developing States, there are recurrent military coup d'état that are against the norms of democratic culture. Legitimate and smooth power transition is the most essential component of



democracy. But, in Third World countries, there are de facto governments. It is because the norms of democracy have not been absorbed by the politicians. In other words, democracy is just on the paper and its features are not practiced. Multitude of countries in Africa and Asia are governed by illegitimate governments, particularly through military coups. Naming few countries; Niger, Gabon, Myanmar, Somalia are those states where there are either illegal military takeovers or unconstitutional government. Hence, countries where democracy is just a process ~~are~~ have illegal and unconstitutional power transitions.

Furthermore, countries with weak democracy are marred with political victimization. In such countries, the tug of war between government and opposition results in the deterioration of political setup. Lack of



cooperation and most of the part, tolerance, lead to the political victimization. History of these countries is replete with the cases where established governments have marginalized the opposition and its significant role is suppressed. This results in the weakening of democracy and falter the well-being of people. So, political victimization witnesses the lack of democratic culture in under-developed countries.

One of the most ~~heinous~~ heinous action taken in under-developed countries is devoiding people of their basic right of expression. Developing countries, for most of the part, take strict actions against their citizens or even media, ~~which~~ who express their views about the policies the governments make. As compared to the Developed Nations, Developing ones do not allow any section of society and media to go



against the government policies. The European Commission have raised serious concerns <sup>about</sup> the strictness of Government of Pakistan regarding the freedom of expression. The situation is more grave in African countries, particularly those under military rule. Thus, coercing people and media not to express their views that go against the will of the government is the manifestation of lack of democratic culture in Third World Countries.

Exclusive model of governance that is against the spirit of democracy prevails in Developing Nations. Exclusive model of governance is the one in which all the citizens do not have equal and fair opportunity to take part in policy making or running the state affairs. It is the anti-thesis of inclusive model of governance where all the citizens have equal opportunities to play their substantive role in governance. In



most of the Developing Nations, nepotism, favouritism and Dynasticism are prevailed. Industrialists, business tycoons and landlords are the policy maker. They manipulate the policies for their political interests. On contrary, Developed Nations provide opportunities for to common citizens to reach to any public office as per law. Taking the example of Sri Lanka and Pakistan, where few families are ruling for decades, spoiling the democratic culture. Thereby, it shows that democracy is just a process in Developing World.

Adding on, trampling the sanctity of constitution in Developing countries is common norm. Constitution is the supreme law of the land that guarantees the provision of fundamental rights to all the citizens. In the Developing Nations, constitutions are just regarded as the pieces of paper. And when the constitutions are abrogated, all the fundamental



rights are taken away. A country with no constitution can never see the benefits and privilege of true democracy. In Pakistan, for instance, constitution of 1956 and 1962 were abrogated. These events pose serious threats for democracy to survive in that country. However, it is not the case in the Developed World. So, democracy as a process can be realized in Developing Nations.

Unfortunately, gender disparity is in Developing Nations is beyond description. Developing Nations with immature democratic culture do not pay heed to this critical issue. It is one of the most common reasons that Developing countries are always in a turbulent situation. Roughly, every country on earth has female population half of the total. However, their representation is extremely low. Moreover, they are just the matter of object - having no freedom to make



choices. To their grief, they cannot rise to mainstream governance. Thereby, their significant role in the development of country and well-being of people is restricted in Developing countries. Afghanistan, for instance, is an obvious example where genders are the most suppressed. Hence, dismal situation of gender equality in Developing states manifests that democracy is just a process there.

Lastly, high ~~ill~~ illiteracy rates in the Developing world actualize that democracy as a culture has not prevailed. The development, prosperity and foreseeable future of a nation can be envisaged by the literacy rate. In Developing Nations, millions of people do not know how to write. Regrettably, the number of out of school children is immense in Africa and Asia. Africa, according to UNICEF, hosts greatest number of illiterate adults and out of school children. Pakistan is



another example where out of school children are around 22.3 million. These stats depict the lack of democracy in true sense. Hence, Developing Nations with alarming situation of illiteracy manifest that democracy as a process is prevalent.

In a nut shell, democracy as a culture prevails in the Developed World, while Developing Nations have democracy as a process. Democracy as a culture in countries guarantees social development and well-being of people. On the other hand, Democracy as just a process guarantees development and well-being of citizens only on the papers, and not in the practical life. Democracy as culture in the Developed World can be ~~manifested~~ manifested by the political certainty, rule and law, presence of



fundamental rights, people-centric policies and women empowerment. Contrarily, Democracy as just a process prevails in Developing Nations. It is, therefore, the reason those countries are facing political instability, gender discrimination, lack of human agency, devoiding people of freedom to express their views and lack of people-centric policies. Conclusively, Democracy as a culture prevails in the Developed Nations, while Democracy as a process prevalent in the Developing World.