How can a democracy government (freedom) becomes “too free”

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Democracy is defined as a type of government in which people make laws and enact them accordingly. A government formed on a democratic model gives maximum power to the people. It is defined by Abraham Lincoln in these words, “democracy is a government” of the people, by the people, and for the people” ((What Is a Democracy? [Ushistory.org],” n.d.)). Freedom is linked to democracy and both the ideas share close proximity but these two terms cannot be interchanged because freedom is materialized through democracy in the society. Civil liberties, human rights, rule of law and equality are fundamental characteristics of a democratic system of government.

Democracy is of two types, direct democracy, and representative democracy. Direct democracy allows the general public to contribute directly in making decisions that concern the public. In this type, people do not need an elected representative or spokespersons to represent their concerns. However, direct democracy can only be formed in a small area where people are not in a large number, for instance, a community or a tribal population. People can discuss their issues in the form of a meeting and can resolve their concerns through discussion at a small level. For example, union members or student societies follow this conduct in their sessions and meetings. The first direct democratic system was formed in Ancient Athens, where a number of 5,000 – 6,000 people gathered in a place and made decisions through this process (“When ‘Democracy’ Becomes a Threat to Liberty – AIER,” n.d.).

In modern times, it is next to impossible that billion of people can be gathered for an assembly to make decisions. Therefore, representative democracy serves this purpose in modern societies and people cast their votes to elect their representatives. These representatives then forward the concerns and problems of the people at the state and administrative levels. This process follows a due process and immediate results cannot occur in this form of democracy. Likewise, the election process of these representatives varies from country to country. In this process, one representative is elected from every district and these representatives form a national assembly. The same process is then opted in order to form local and provincial assemblies or in some cases, members can be elected by conducting a group consensus. The representatives at both the national and provincial levels remain answerable to the public for their policies and actions.

Moreover, in a democratic government, the tax and revenue collection are greater in number as compared to the situation in a non-democratic state. In a democracy, people can openly voice their opinion so chances of disagreement are less and the situations of conflict and war do not occur. Similarly, corruption and fraudulent attempts do not take place at a greater scale in democracy because people can question their elected representatives. Every individual who elects a representative whether he is rich or poor has a right of saying yes or no. Every opinion carries the same value in democracy, be it in favor of something or against it. The only similarity between a democratic system and a socialist system is the concept of equality. Democracy ensures equal treatment in liberty whereas, in socialism, everyone's right to liberty is taken away on an equal basis. Moreover, democracies keep a check and balance on the representatives and their efforts for the greater good of the masses so that legislative power remains superior to the supreme power. The elected members cannot ignore the concerns and needs of their people because of the trust and sense of responsibility that democracy places on them (When ‘Democracy’ Becomes a Threat to Liberty – AIER, n.d.).

A country and its citizens maintain a sense of unity under a democratic rule because everyone's rights and needs are being catered equally by the state. In a direct democracy, there is no concept of a centralized government because no one can dictate the system and all units of the government have to follow an equal process, rules, and regulations. Similarly, the subunits and subsidiaries can exercise their right to vote when things do not go well. Under a democratic rule, equal opportunities are created for its citizens so they all can strive equally to fulfill their dreams and both the citizens and nation progresses.

Democracy is an ideal governmental system because it creates equality among masses devoid of their race, class and social status. It also ensures that law and legislation processes remain equal for everyone and every citizen can voice his or her opinion openly. Internal and external conflicts do not surface in this type of government because citizens and government appear on one page. There are more unity and equity under a democratic rule of law.

However, democracy has many downsides attached to it which makes it ambiguous and exploitative instead of beneficial to the masses of a country. It can be exploitative when masses are not educated enough to use the power of their votes wisely. In this case, the selected representative can misuse the authority given to him by the people. President Roosevelt once put it as that a vote is similar to a rifle because its use depends on the character of the one using it. They say that the majority is the authority and sometimes the majority can fight to seek unethical and immoral decisions such as mob killing and riots. For instance, majority rule cannot allow immigrants, exiled and displaced ones in their country. Moreover, within the country, people stop appreciating the difference of opinion and like to make groups with likeminded people. A democratic state cannot make decisions in exigency because every decision or amendment has to be first approved from micro-level till the macro-level (“When ‘Democracy’ Becomes a Threat to Liberty – AIER,” n.d.). Similarly, the legislative process and amendments in the laws take years and court proceedings extend itself to multiple years because of the slow process. It takes even more years to enact or uplift any rule at a local level under a democratic system of government. If any rule or law does not get the majority vote, it will remain unchanged because in a democracy every yes or no is taken into consideration. In such a situation, the level of uncertainty always prevails and masses cannot reach a single decision in most cases.

In a democracy, individuality is more apparent instead of a collective voice that is why people put their interests above the interests of country. Moreover, the majority silences the minority's voice and in a multicultural country, minority ethnic groups and immigrants, suffer through the unwise decisions taken by the former. The famous British political economist and philosopher, John Stuart Mill writes in his essay, *On Liberty*, that although democracy played an important role in many movements of liberal rights it can be as dictatorial and dangerous like any monarchy (Mills). It also poses a threat to the individual voices of a minority group and among so many languages, cultures, and religions, only the majority group gets the right of representation.

Freedom of speech is one of the advantages of democracy but if not handled carefully, free speech converts itself into compulsory speech. For instance, in America, ongoing racial issues depict that for centuries African Americans were not given the right to speak for themselves. Their freedom of speech was taken over by the White Americans and they controlled the narrative and subjective opinion of the Black minority. Similarly, abortion issues are still unresolved because some extremist groups or majority religious group does not allow women the liberty over their own bodies. They link abortion practices as going against the faith by killing a life instead they do not accept a woman's right over her own body while living in a democratic state. In such cases, democracy becomes a tool in the hands of majority groups and violent mobs (Morlino).

Moreover, although democracy generates revenue when assemblies dissolve, the new election process results in delayed deliverance of justice and also effects a country's wealth. Elections are conducted every four to five years and many times people have to elect the same representatives and in case of incompetent Member of Parliament or assembly, people of that area remain unrepresented. The state's interference in the internal matters is next to impossible in case of democracy because people enjoy their status as the policymakers. Writ of law is continuously challenged by people and sometimes states cannot safeguard the rights of minority groups due to the fear of severe backlash from the majority group. When a state tries to intervene or mediate among the masses, it is mistaken as either fascism or anarchy.

According to Greek philosopher Socrates, there is a difference between intellectual democracy and democracy as a birthright. When a vote is not combined with wisdom, empires fail, just like he predicted for the Greeks. A sovereign state cannot be formed in the presence of democracy because military, state or establishment cannot make collective decisions. In matters of national security, a layman cannot interact because he does not know about geopolitics or the upcoming threats due to tension between two countries. That is why, these matters should be handled at the state level and not through the slow process of democracy (Why Socrates Hated Democracy -The Book of Life, n.d.).

There are good or bad democracies but democracy is suitable in a homogenous country or state where people belonging from only one religion, speaking a monolingual language reside. The delayed legislative processes, compulsory speech, and majority group rules are the flaws of democracy and hinder the process of implementing a democratic rule in its truest sense. Moreover, in democracy, rules are made and enforced on the basis of the majority opinion and sometimes the majority opinion can be ethically wrong. For instance, not letting immigrants come into their countries. Democracy is great but only if it is manifested in its true sense and really provides everyone with the equal freedom of right and freedom of speech. Freedom is the birthright of every person but when it becomes too free, the citizens get to have too much freedom that they start patronizing the individual voices and cannot unite on a single issue as a nation.

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