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National government vs. policy making

The history of the United States of America has been one that has been riddled with conflicts, clashes, innovations and much more. All these were done for some motive or the other but the underlying reason for all these events was the protection of individualism and individualistic rights. This is even more predominant in the constitution of the United States of America. It states that the United States of America was made by the people and for the people. So, it is ingrained in the culture of this country, to have their own individualistic identity and be able to protect it as well. In this manner, the biggest scuffle that the United States of America has had to face is the clash between the powers of the central or the national government and the powers of the state governments. Where there is a belief that the expanding powers of the central government will have a tumultuous effect on the policy making. However, the reality is very different.

Take the case of the commerce clause that grants the authority to the Congress and the scope of this clause has also increased. This has led to the expansion in the powers of the central government. Here some have argued that this expansion of powers of the Congress will come at the expense of the liberties of an individual. In Federalist No. 10, James Madison explains that the primary purpose of the concept of federalism is to limit the powers of the central or national government (Federalist Papers No. 10). This is done by separating powers between the state and the central government. Furthermore, this will also protect the individualistic liberties of citizens when they are threatened by one form of government, they will have the option of seeking help from the other. Moreover, with a proper separation of powers, the threat to the individual liberties would itself be minimized because officials in each form of government would have to work hard for the affection of the people.

Take the case of the commerce clause which gives the power to the Congress to regulate commerce with other nations and the other states and the Indian tribes. The meaning of the word commerce has also been developed over the years and currently refers to buying and selling activities that come into operation after production and before the goods can come to rest. Now this clause has given congress enumerated powers and has come under fire as it has been thought of as a good catch for the Congress. Mostly, the naysayers base their arguments on the fact that for states to function properly, they need to have their own individualistic presence and autonomy. This is the basis of the articles of confederation, which focuses more on the importance of the states being more powerful than the central government (Articles of Confederation).

This same concern was also shared by Brutus who was of the view how can the people of a country that are very diverse in nature can be united under one government and sacrifice the blessings of self-government and liberty (Brutus No 1). However, with the expansion of the powers of the central government, people are even more protected from any protectionist measures that the states might employ. Take the example of the Gibbons versus Ogden case of 1824, where the interpretation of the word commerce by the Supreme Court stopped the monopoly that was granted to the steamboat captains between New York and New Jersey waterways. There are several more acts such as these that have occurred in the history of the United States of America that show that the expansion of the powers of the National government can prove to be very beneficial for policy making.

Works Cited

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