

## Democracy and Development: The Criteria of Democracy as factors of Development.

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### **Abstract:**

*Achieving the goal of development has become a race in which all the nations of the world are participating. Therefore, it is not only important to know where to go, but it is also necessary to know which ways to follow to reach the destination. This reflection has led the countries to imitate one another in establishing a model of governance known as democracy. Democracy is a system of government in which power resides in the hand of the people and it is used for the good of these people. This paper aims to show the effectiveness of democracy in achieving development in a nation. In its first section, it looks backwards to the foundation of democracy. The second section discusses the different features or components of a democratic system or government. In the last section, it shows the relationship between these components of democracy or more explicitly demonstrates how they interact in achieving the goal of development.*

**Key words:** Democracy, Criteria, Development

### **Résumé:**

*L'atteinte du développement est une compétition à laquelle participent tous les pays du monde entier. Ainsi, il n'est pas seulement important de savoir où aller, mais il est aussi nécessaire de connaître les voies à suivre pour atteindre cette destination. Cette réflexion a conduit les pays à s'imiter dans la mise en place d'un modèle de gouvernance appelé démocratie. La démocratie est un système de gouvernance où le pouvoir appartient au peuple et s'utilise pour les biens du peuple. Cet article a pour objectif de démontrer l'efficacité de la démocratie pour atteindre le seuil de développement. La première partie est un aperçu historique de la démocratie selon les sources littéraires. La deuxième partie constitue les*

*caractéristiques ou les composantes d'un régime ou d'un système démocratique. En fin, la dernière partie établit non seulement le lien entre ces composantes mais essaie de découvrir aussi comment l'existence de ces composantes peut permettre d'atteindre un seuil de développement.*

**Mots clés:** *Démocraties, Composantes, Développement*

In any social group, a system of governance or leading is set up by its members in order to have harmony and improvement. Living in harmony refers to preventing conflicts or violence between the members of a social group. Democracy as a system of governance has been set up and is being used by many countries to achieve the goal of development. According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, democracy is “a system of governance in which every citizen in the country can vote to elect its government officials.” In an article, Menocal uses Schmpeter`s definition of democracy as “that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.” (p. 5). In the same vein, on the title paper of a discussion document of the UN, the editor writes: The effectiveness of institutions and the soundness of democracy politics are acknowledged as catalysts of development.” In light of this assertion, it is evident that robust institutions and democratic governance contribute significantly to societal advancement. However, it is equally important to examine the extent to which democracy itself functions as a catalyst for the establishment of effective institutions. As a system of governance, democracy attains its full potential only when all its fundamental components operate in synergy. Conversely, the absence or weakness of any of these elements can obstruct national development.

This article will first provide a brief overview of the historical evolution of democracy. It will then analyze the key components that constitute democratic systems, before concluding with an exploration of how these components interact to foster a conducive environment for sustainable development.

## **I. A brief history of democracy.**

Democracy has followed many steps and forms before being the final product we are using today. Its origin is rooted in man's history and it has many forms.

Early people came to require a way to organize large-scale building. Thus, some 5,000 years ago, the first governments were established in four great river valley civilizations: Mesopotamia, Egypt, India; and China. For 2,000 years, civilizations were ruled mainly by powerful monarchs or groups of nobles. Then, about 2,500 years ago, the first democratic government took shape in Greece. Indeed, *democracy* is a Greek word that means 'rule by the people.' Although their first political institutions did not survive, the Greeks' achievements greatly influenced later thinking about democracy. Other major influences from ancient times include Roman law and the religious traditions of Jews and Christians.

In ancient Greece several principles were established and became crucial to the shaping of Western civilization and its political values. These gave ideas such as the worth and dignity of the individual, rational thought, citizenship, and political freedom. Rome's great achievement was in the area

of law. The Romans believed that law should be based on the principles of reason and justice.

The concept of political freedom found one of its earliest and most profound articulations in the Athenian city-state during its Golden Age in the fifth century B.C. Athens pioneered a system of direct democracy in which all adult male citizens were entitled to participate in the Ecclesia, or Assembly—the principal legislative body. Although women were considered citizens, they were excluded from political participation, along with slaves and metics (foreign residents). The Assembly convened approximately forty times a year, providing a forum in which citizens could deliberate on critical issues such as war declarations, diplomatic treaties, and the allocation of public funds. The principle of political equality ensured that even the humblest artisan, provided he held citizenship, enjoyed the same rights as the wealthiest aristocrat to vote, hold office, and express his views in public debate.

Athenian democracy has frequently been described as a government of amateurs, a system devoid of professional politicians, judges, bureaucrats, or military officers. Civic duties were carried out by ordinary citizens, and public officials were chosen by lot for one-year terms, with reappointment prohibited. This method of selection reflected the deeply held conviction that every citizen possessed the capacity to contribute intelligently to public affairs.

The ideals underpinning this democratic experiment were eloquently expressed by Pericles, Athens' most influential statesman, in his renowned Funeral Oration. His remarks not only capture the Athenian vision of democratic

governance but also underscore the values of equality, meritocracy, civic freedom, and respect for the rule of law:

*“Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands of the many and not the few. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law, when it is question of putting one responsibility, what counts is not membership of particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state is kept in political obscurity because of poverty. And, just as our political life is free and open, so is our day-to-day life in our relations with each other. We do not get into a state with our next-door neighbor if he enjoys himself in his own way, nor do we give him the kind of black looks which, though they do not real harm, still do hurt people’s feelings. We are free and tolerant in our private lives; but in public affairs, we keep to the law. This is because it commands our deep respect...”*

*Here each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well: even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well informed on general politics. We do not say that a man who takes interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all.’ (quoted by Perry and Scholl, p 8)*

The ideal of the democratic state could only emerge in a society that valued human intelligence and the power of reason. Among ancient civilizations, the Greeks were the first to engage in systematic, rational inquiry into both the natural world and human society. Their intellectual legacy revealed

the capacity of the human mind to question, analyze, and understand the world independently of myth or tradition, thereby laying the foundations for scientific reasoning and critical thought in future civilizations.

In earlier societies—including pre-classical Greece—natural phenomena were typically explained through mythological narratives. Divine beings and supernatural forces were thought to control the world's workings. For instance, the Babylonians attributed the end of a catastrophic drought to the intervention of a mythical bird, which summoned rain by spreading its wings across the sky and defeating the fiery "Bull of Heaven."

In contrast, the first Greek philosophers challenged these traditional explanations. Dissatisfied with mythic interpretations, they sought naturalistic explanations for physical events. Their approach marked a significant epistemological shift: nature, they argued, was not governed by arbitrary deities but operated according to universal and predictable laws—what they termed natural law. These laws, they believed, could be discovered and understood through careful observation and rational analysis.

This intellectual revolution represented a profound break from the past. As Greek civilization evolved, its achievements in science, philosophy, literature, art, and politics increasingly reflected a commitment to reason and empirical inquiry, rather than dependence on supernatural or inherited beliefs. This rational worldview became one of the cornerstones of Western thought, influencing later

developments in governance, ethics, and scientific investigation.

Another civilization central to the formation of Western values was Rome. Centered in the city of Rome in present-day Italy, the Roman people established a republic in 509 B.C., rejecting monarchic rule in favor of a government without a king or queen. Although the Roman Republic endured for nearly five centuries, it eventually gave way to imperial rule. Nevertheless, the Roman Empire accomplished something historically unique: it expanded not only through military conquest, but also by integrating conquered peoples into its political and legal systems. This inclusive and institutional approach contributed significantly to the enduring legacy of Roman law, governance, and citizenship in Western political traditions.

While the Greeks had lived in small city-states, each governed by different laws, the Romans controlled an enormous amount of territory. They allowed conquered peoples to live according to their traditions in many areas, but they also tried to create a system of laws that could be used throughout the Empire. The Romans, like the Greeks, believed that law should be based on principles of reason and justice and should protect citizens and their property. This idea, applied to all peoples regardless of their nationality, had a great influence on the development of democracy throughout the Western world. Some provisions of Roman law are readily recognizable in modern legal systems

*Justice is constant, unfailing disposition to give*

*everyone his legal due. In the case of major offenses, it makes difference whether something is committed purposely or accidentally.*

*The guilty or punishment of a father can impose no stigma (lasting disgrace) upon the son, for every individual is subjected to treatment in accordance with his own action, and no one is made the inheritor of the guilty of another.*

*In inflicting penalties, the age...of the guilty party must be taken into account.'* (Perry and Scholl, p 9)

In the most distant provinces of the ancient Roman Empire, a person was proud to be able to say, '*Civis Romanus sum*-I am a Roman citizen!' Roman citizenship was a kind of invisible shield of respect. It meant that the citizen was protected by the laws of the great Roman Empire.

Since the days of the Republic, Rome had extended citizenship to conquer people. Finding that it was a good way to win people's allegiance, Roman emperors had continued the practice. By about A.D. 212, most free men and women throughout the empire were citizens. Only male citizens, however, could hold office; they were also expected to fight for Rome.

The idea of "citizenship", like many of our basic ideas about government, began with the ancient Greek city-states and the Roman Republic. Before this, people were simply considered 'subjects' of a monarch or ruler. When they began to have both rights and responsibility in their community, people became 'citizens.' As modern states developed, the term *citizen* became common again. During the French Revolution, people who welcomed a republican government addressed each other as 'Citizen' and "Citizensess."

All modern nations –not just democracies –have citizens, though their rights and responsibilities vary. In

general, citizens are expected to be loyal to the nation, obey its laws, pay taxes, and perhaps give military service. The state in turn is supposed to protect its citizens.

A particular important feature of Roman law was the idea of “natural law”. As you have read, early Greek philosophers declared that the rules of nature could be discovered through careful observation. Natural law as the Romans understood it held that there are in nature certain rational principles and standards that apply to all people in all times. The Romans were introduced to the idea of natural law by the Stoics, a group of Greek thinkers whose philosophy, called stoicism, arose about 300 B.C.

The Stoics said that every person was with the capacity to reason. Not everyone had this capacity to the same degree, and even those who had the same inborn ability might not have the opportunity to develop it as fully as others. Still, all human beings could reason, and it was this capacity that set them apart from other creatures. Since reason was common to all people – Greek and non-Greek, slave and free, rich and poor – all people were basically equal. Cicero, a leading Roman statesman and orator from the first century B.C summed up this idea as follows: *“There is no difference in kind between man and man; for...for reason, which alone raises us above the level of the beasts... is certainly common to us all.”*

Since human beings are fundamentally alike, said the Stoics, they are all subject to the moral laws and principles. The Stoics argued that human laws should agree with the natural law governing the universe. This Stoic belief that human should not violate the higher natural law was central to Roman thinking about the legal system. As we shall see, it also entered into modern democratic through Enlightenment thinkers. It is the basic principle underlying the modern theory

that people have certain natural rights that no legitimate government can deny them.

Ancient Greece and Rome are one source of Western democratic ideals. A second source is called the “Judeo-Christian Tradition”. The ancient Hebrews, or Jews, were the first people to believe in one God. Earlier peoples had believed in many gods, and they thought that the gods had the same weaknesses and concerns as human beings –they were often wicked, selfish, envious, or dishonest; they needed amusement, food, drink, and sleep; and they were mortal.

The Hebrews discarded these beliefs. They believed in one God, a God that is perfect, all-knowing, all-powerful, and eternal. Earlier peoples had generally thought that what the gods wanted from human beings was the performance of rituals and sacrifices in their honor. The Hebrews believed that it was God’s wish for people to live moral lives.

The Hebrews Scriptures (the Old Testament to Christians) state that human beings created in God’s image. The Hebrews interpreted this to mean that each human being has a divine spark within, and that the existence of this spark gives each person a dignity that can never be taken away. For the Greeks and Romans, the individual had dignity because of his or her ability to reason. For the Hebrews, each person had dignity simply by being a child of God. The Hebrews believed that God had given human beings moral freedom –the capacity to choose between good and evil. Therefore, each person was responsible for the choices he or she made. These beliefs led to a new emphasis on individual worth.

A creative expansion of Hebrew religious thought occurred with the emergence of the prophetic movement in the eighth century B.C. the prophets were spiritually inspired leaders who were believed by the Hebrews to be messengers

from God. The prophets attacked war, oppression, and greed in the statements such as these, expressed in the Scriptures:

*“They shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. [Isaiah2:4]*

*Shed not innocent blood. [Jeremiah7:6]*

*Oppress not widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor. [Zechariah7:10]*

*Let not the rich man glory in his riches. [Jeremiah9:23].”*

The Hebrew prophetic tradition played a pivotal role in shaping the moral and social conscience that would later become foundational to Western ethical thought. The Hebrew prophets emphasized that justice, compassion, and human dignity were not only divine imperatives but also societal responsibilities. Central to their message was the belief that every individual possesses the right to be treated with fairness and respect, and that all members of a community share a moral duty to oppose injustice and aid the vulnerable. The prophets rejected fatalism and insisted that poverty, oppression, and immorality were not inevitable, but could be overcome through ethical living and collective responsibility.

This vision found renewed expression in the first century A.D., through the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish teacher in Roman-occupied Palestine. Jesus drew heavily on the moral framework of the Hebrew prophets, reaffirming the belief in the inherent worth of every person as a child of God and in the obligation to live according to elevated ethical standards. He echoed the prophetic view that

morality was the heart of true religious faith. One of his most succinct and enduring moral pronouncements—known as the Golden Rule—embodies this ethos: *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” [Matthew7:12].* In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went beyond traditional ideas of morality:

*“Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. [Matthew5:43-45].”* (quoted by Perry and Scholl p 12)

Unlike the Hebrews, the Christians were evangelists. That is, they strove to spread their beliefs to all peoples. Christian missionaries worked throughout the Roman Empire to bring the Gospels to all peoples alike. The most famous of these missionaries, the apostle Paul, stressed the essential equality of all human beings: *“for there is neither Jew nor Greek there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

Thus from the Judeo-Christian tradition there emerged several ideals that have been crucial to the shaping of democratic outlook: the sacred worth of the individual, the duty of the individual and of the community to combat oppression and the equality of people before God.

Democracy remains the most widely adopted form of governance in the modern world. Prior to its emergence in the

ancient Greek city-states, human societies were predominantly governed by authoritarian systems, often led by chiefs, monarchs, or pharaohs who held absolute power. The Greeks introduced a revolutionary concept: that ordinary citizens could govern themselves. This marked a decisive break from traditional models of rule and laid the foundation for participatory governance. While democratic systems have evolved significantly over time and vary across cultural and historical contexts, their core principle has remained constant—the guarantee of political freedom and choice. Even in the present day, individuals in various parts of the world continue to struggle, resist, and even sacrifice their lives to attain or preserve the democratic right to self-governance.

## **II. The characteristics of a democratic system.**

From its definition as a system of governance, it appears clearly that democracy is made up with some criteria. Dahl identifies seven criteria which put together form a democratic environment and consider such system of governance as “polyarchy”. These include:

(1) control over governmental decisions about policy constitutionally vested in elected officials; (2) relatively frequent, fair and free elections; (3) universal adult suffrage; (4) the right to run for public office; (5) freedom of expression; (6) access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolized by either the government or any other single group; and (7) freedom of association (i.e. the right to form and join autonomous associations such as political parties, interest groups) (p 2).

This work will reformulate some of these criteria and add new others such as power distribution, gender equality, rule by law

## **1. Frequent, fair and free elections.**

In a democratic system, elections constitute the way by which the citizens choose their leaders. Elections give the opportunities to citizen to be among the persons who could be elected. Perry and Scholl sustain that “in stable democratic societies, all groups agree to accept the results of elections. This is possible because they recognize that the people are the highest authority and because they know that elections – which are used to determine the will of people –are free and fair” (p 4). Elections have many steps and these latter could be explained in the following.

Prior to elections, an organ is set up in order to regulate them. This organ or committee works independently in order to prevent frustration from the candidates and their supporters. An electoral campaign is opened to give the candidates the possibilities to meet the citizens and present to them their future program for the country. However, elections should be frequent, fair and free. Let’s have a look on these adjectives in the domain of elections.

“Frequent elections” means their regular organization according to the deadline of a mandate in respect to the country’s constitution. That is to say, the constitution of each country predict the number of year (the duration) of a democratic mandate. Thus, there is necessity to prepare elections before the deadline of the mandate in order to avoid overpassing it. By doing so, the ruling group does not have any right to modify a constitution in the intention to eternize on power.

The fairness of elections resides in the sense that the ambitious candidates gain the same treatment from the

committee in charge of organizing the elections. By same treatment, we refer to the neutrality of the committee. They should look into the candidates' files in spite of any political or religious adherence; or and without pretending to any financial reward. Yet, all the process of the vote, that is the operations and the results should not be manipulated to favor any candidate.

Then, free elections sounds with the absence of any oppression and corruption. It is important for candidates during an electoral campaign to present a clear and convincing program which makes the voters adhere to it instead of pouring bank sheets in their hands. In addition, there should not be any form of oppression to force the citizens to choose a candidate.

These free characteristics of elections enable the nation to have good government officials and institutions that can lead the administration. Such a government is called representative. The people do not vote directly on each law or issue. Instead, they elect officials to do the work of government. This system is known as representative democracy, because the elected officials represent the people who elected them. If the people do not like the way their representative perform their jobs, they can vote them out of office in the next election. This makes possible a democratic alternation.

## **2. Power distribution.**

In a democratic system, power is shared according to the institutional diagram of the country. In other words, the institutions in the country work cooperatively in harmony but each one has to accomplish its tasks in respect to its

legislation. Simply put, the different institutions should work independently. Perry and Scholl argue that “in stable democracies, where the idea of rule by the people is firmly established, there are orderly transfers of power after elections” (p 4).

### **3. Freedom of expression**

The democratic atmosphere needs to be a place where all the citizens have the opportunity to express their thought especially in the ways the country is led. Freedom of expression maintains citizens in the absolute feeling of uttering their opinion in a given situation.

### **4. Freedom of association**

Democracy is a system of gathering people to accept and support ideologies. In this sense, democracy has given the citizen the free will to gather themselves according to certain principles and interests. It is in the concretization of this idea that political parties, workers' unions and believing groups are created in accordance to the country's regulation. No one should be forced to follow an ideology he or she suspects to be incapable to meet the country's goal of development. Moreover, no one should not accept to stay alone and being destroyed or marginalized by the ruling ideology while there is an opportunity to join their forces to fight for their rights.

### **5. Gender equality.**

The system of leadership has been for a long time monopolized by one gender group which is generally male.

The arrival of democracy is in normal circumstances the end of this “mono-gender ruling system. Since we have stated above, the opportunity to run for public office for men and women, the power therefore resides in both hands. Women as well as men can occupy any position in the institutional diagram of the country. In other words, women gain the same chances as men do.

## **6. Rule by Law**

Another essential feature of democracy is rule by law. In a democracy, no person is above the law. Everyone, from the most powerful government official to the poorest citizen, must obey the law. The personal opinions, wishes, or prejudices of officials cannot take precedence over legal and constitutional procedures. For this reason, it is important that citizens know what the laws are. Most democratic nations have written constitutions. A written constitution serves to establish the basic laws by which the people are to be governed.

Written laws are an important protection against abuses of power by government officials. In a democracy, the laws give people both power and protection. That is not to say that all laws are good. Nor does it suggest that laws must exist forever. A person who thinks a law is unjust can work to persuade a majority that it should be changed. There are legally acceptable ways to do this.

At times, however, people have felt the need to challenge a law in order to force people to confront an issue. This was the case with Martin Luther King, Jr., whose stand in defense of African Americans’ rights sometimes led to his arrest. In 1963 he wrote a letter from the city jail in

Birmingham, Alabama, to eight prominent religious leaders who had criticized his activities. In the letter explained his nonviolent "direct action" against segregation:

'One may well ask, "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" the answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has amoral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.'

Martin Luther King, Jr., based his actions on strong moral convictions. Neither he nor his followers denied responsibility for breaking the law. Nor did they question the right of society to enforce the law. They knew what they were doing, and they were prepared for the consequences. Their willingness to endure time in jail was later rewarded when many of unjust laws they opposed were changed. The individual thought was able to change bad laws.

## **7. Individual Rights**

A third essential feature of democracy is the belief that each person has basic human rights and freedoms. This belief stems from the traditional Western emphasis on individual worth. Because every individual is important, each one has the right to make his or her own personal choices and decisions, even if some are bad. The alternative –having the government make all decisions –is considered far worse.

In democracy the government is obliged to protect the civil rights of its citizens. Civil rights are the rights of citizens to be treated equally under the law and to have equality of opportunity. For example, in the United States, each citizen has equal right to vote, and each citizen's vote has equal

weight. The government cannot discriminate against certain people or groups, in the electoral process or otherwise. Indeed, the government must defend its citizens against discrimination.

Throughout history many countries have had different laws for different classes of people. In Europe, until about 200 years ago, aristocrats were tried by different laws and in different courts than common people. Taxes, too, varied among classes. Often the aristocrats paid no taxes. Important positions in the government, the army and navy, and the Church were open only to aristocrats. Commoners, no matter how intelligent, hardworking, or well-educated, had no chance of gaining these positions. The modern democracies that grew up during the nineteenth century gradually rejected these form of discrimination. They held that all citizens were equal before the law. In 1896 Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan started the principle, as it applies in the United States, this way:

*In view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in the country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizen. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful.'* (Perry and Scholl, p 5)

Though Justice Harlan spoke for many when he made this statement, in reality there were still many years of struggle ahead before the principle was widely applied. Women and minorities, including African American citizens, would not achieve equality under the law until later. Nevertheless, the

principle served as a guiding light for legislators promoting civil rights, and it eventually prevailed.

Democratic governments are bound not only to protect citizens' civil rights but to respect their civil liberties as well. Civil liberties are the protections that the law gives to people's freedom of thought and action. Civil liberties include the right to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion.

In a democracy the majority rules, but the minority still has the right to express its opinions. The English philosopher John Stuart Mill quoted by Perry and Scholl wrote in 1859:

*If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. (p 5)*

Mill also made clear, however, that individuals cannot be totally free to do as they please. Each person's liberties, Mill believed, were limited by the rights of others. As he put it, 'Your freedom to move your arm ends where my nose begins.' Underlying all of these features of democracy is the great value placed on reason. Democratic governments base their decisions not on traditions that defy logic but on reasoned argument. The debates in our legislatures are aimed at resolving disagreements and finding the best solutions to problems through the exchange for information and opinions. The foundation of democracy is the idea that the average citizen can participate intelligently and responsibly in these debates.

By and large, this section has discussed the different aspects of a democratic ruling system. Though all the

democratic governments or systems are not alike, they all protect the individual right and rely on the free and force of the majority. In the coming point, the study links these components to show how they enable to development in a country.

### **III. The components of democracy and their effectiveness to development**

The relationship between the different criteria or components of democracy is so close that we cannot consider them to be efficient individually. More explicitly, any of these components can work without the support of the other. In this view, they appear to be complementary partners. They work together to achieve the goal of any social system which is to satisfy the needs of the citizens. This social satisfaction is what we call here development. Then what is development and what are its different dimensions?

#### ***a. Development***

The term development in a simple way can mean advancement. Introducing the concept of development, Singh declares that “every political system attempts its best to bring about large scale change in the desired direction. In pursuance of its objective, it exploits available resources to the maximum extent in a centralized or coordinated manner” (p1). Development in other terms is bringing to an end people’s sufferings such as “malnutrition, poverty and diseases” (Singh p 3). Moreover, Singh expands his definition by adding the previous features that “in positive terms some advocate a commitment to development that transcends the limiting terms of economic growth to embrace such features of social

justice as equality of opportunity, full employment, generally available social services, equitable distribution of income and basic political freedoms” (p3). Thus, development has three major dimensions: economic, social and political.

### ***b. Economic Development***

Some economists have used the concepts of economic growth and economic development interchangeably. The economic growth refers to the rise in per capita income while economic development refers to the rise in income and changes in economic and social structure. Thus economic growth and the economic development refer to quantitative and qualitative aspects of development, the former being quantitative and the latter qualitative in nature. The themes of economic development as pointed out by various economists move around two central issues: i) Capital formation and ii) technical progress. Technical progress generally promotes capital formation and capital formation encourages technical progress.

Economic development of the society alone cannot raise the living standard of the society as a whole. The process of distributive justice is quite significant for ensuring a fairly balanced development of society. In this context state becomes an effective instrument of political development and legitimizes economic and social institutions and their networks.

### ***c. Political Development***

The political development in a democratic context refers to the ways institutions are set up. This echoes their compositions, missions, objectives and strategies, and the way the cooperate to be more effective. Scholars have produced

literature which has established relationship between economic development and political development. They have confirmed that there is in general a “high, positive relationship between economic development and political development” (Singh p 4). This relationship no doubt develops a country, but at the same time creates disparities among its members. These disparities have drawn the attention of social scientists “from particularistic development to societal development”. They advocate that the development of the society as a whole is possible only when the society develops economically, politically and socially.

#### ***d. Social Development***

Social development is a process which can be explained only with the help of economic and political development. It is very much interrelated with these two. The concept of social development has been introduced to appraise the dynamics of the developing societies. Social scientists have enumerated the contents of development under various categories such as nutrition, shelter, health education, leisure and recreation, security and opulence level or under the categories like output and income, conditions of 150 Social Work Intervention with Individuals and Groups production, levels of living, attitude towards life and work, institutions and policies. This has led to a new theoretical and ideological change to move from social development to human development. The concept of human development has been introduced quite recently. This term is used in very broad sense. In this ideology, developmental activities are people centered and economic growth is a means and not an end. It protects life opportunities of the present and future generations and protects natural systems which is the basis of all life. The objective of human

development is to create an atmosphere in which people can expand their capabilities and opportunities for the present and future generations can be enlarged. According to Human Development Report 1990, human development is a process of enlarging people's choices (Singh 4). It is achieved by expansion of human capabilities and functioning. At all the levels of development the three essential capabilities for human development are for people to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living. The realm of human development goes further essential areas of choice, highly valued by people, range from political, economic and social opportunities for being creative and productive to enjoying self-respect, empowerment and a sense of belonging to a community.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) gave serious consideration to the fact that "human" should be in the center of all developmental activities, thus decided to bring out reports on yearly basis since 1990 encompassing human dimensions of development. The Report therefore, proposed a new measure of development known as the Human Development Index (HDI). This index comprises three indicators: life expectancy, adult literacy and income expressed in dollars. The component indicators and the computing process of HDI were modified in subsequent Human Development Report.

There are three basic dimensions of human development in HDI to measure the overall achievements of the country. These are longevity, knowledge and decent standard of living. Thus Human Development Report may be

considered as a modest effort to propagate that there is no automatic link between economic growth and human development. This significant difference can be observed by a glimpse of the ranking of the countries based on per capita income and human development index. Human development index apart from the per capita income included two other variables i.e. life expectancy and literacy rate. The variable like human rights and political freedom were already left out because they could not be quantified. Due to these reasons many countries with moderate per capita income showed a high-level literacy and higher life expectancy, while others with relatively higher per capita income performed poorly with respect to the other two variables.

***e. How do components of democracy ensure these development dimensions?***

This article focuses on addressing the fundamental question of what constitutes development within a country. The presence of democratic criteria—such as regular, free, and fair elections—serves as a reliable indicator of development. Political stability, which largely stems from these electoral processes, is a critical element of development. Such stability facilitates economic growth, strengthens institutional relationships, and ensures both national and international security.

Elected representatives bear the responsibility of fulfilling their mandates, acting as agents of the citizenry with an obligation to address the needs and interests of the population. Citizens, in turn, expect to live in a secure and harmonious environment, relying on the ruling authorities to provide protection and improve living conditions, including

access to healthcare, education, transportation, and fundamental freedoms.

Importantly, individuals are not only consumers within the state but also active contributors to nation-building. Their engagement in various social and civic activities and their fulfillment of civic duties are essential components of development. This participatory role is supported by principles of gender equality, whereby public offices are accessible to all individuals regardless of gender, with equal opportunities and obligations under the law.

Legal frameworks play a dual role in protecting citizens' rights and clearly delineating their responsibilities, allowing for critical evaluation of governance without fear of intimidation or repression.

In light of its multidimensional nature—encompassing economic, political, and social aspects—development emerges from the dynamic interplay between democratic components. Equitable access to public services and the fair distribution of state resources are fundamental to maintaining stability and ensuring security within a nation.

## **Conclusion**

Democracy has followed many steps before being the current product using by the countries to govern. Therefore, it has become the most popular form of governance used to access to development. Democracy as Abdoul-kader opines “gives us the unequalled opportunity to choose our leaders. Having known the danger associated with bad and corrupt leaders on power, we should seize this opportunity offered to us to make sure that only people with recognised moral probity are allowed to run for elections” (69). For this matter,

we should have a committee, which should investigate on the morality of every candidate. Accountability and responsiveness will bring the sanity in the politics and further improve the living condition of people. We should insist on having strong institutions that guarantee the effectiveness of rule of law and give equal chance to all. Finally, schools' curricula should be revamped to insist on moral education and good governance. However, it is not wrong to state that democracy is a panacea. Some countries have developed without democracy. It is up to each nation to shape its own form of democracy in accordance with its realities.

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