

Vol. 8, Issue-II (April 2017)

ISSN: 0976-8165

THE CRITERION

An International Journal in English

Bi-monthly, Peer-Reviewed, Open Access eJournal



UGC Approved Journal [Arts and Humanities, Sr. No. 40]

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ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

www.galaxyimrj.com

Election System in Ancient Indian Administration

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Article History: Submitted-30/03/2017, Revised-27/04/2017, Accepted-28/04/2017, Published-30/04/2017.

Abstract:

In all independent nations like India, where parliamentary form of government has been adopted, parliament is formed by the system of elections. In this system, the people of country elect their representatives for the parliament. These representatives govern the country on the behalf of the people of country. There is a certain procedure for such elections, which is systematically described in the Constitution of India. The constitution gets its basic structure as a result of various historical events and processes. This research article explores those events and processes of ancient Indian history by which the present Indian political, administrative and election system have come into their original shape.

Keywords: Democracy, Vedic and Epic Era, Indus Civilization, Mauryan Era, Administration, Bukti, Election, Local Self Administration.

Democracy is a system in which the public elects its ruler himself. The word democracy is used for both democratic order and state. Although the term democracy is used in a political context, the principle of democracy is also compatible with other groups and organizations. Democracy is made up of a mixture of different theories, but polling is considered to be a characteristic of most types of democracy.

The public elects public officials directly in the representative democracy. Representatives are elected from any district or parliamentary constituency or represent all the voters in many proportional arrangements. Mixed systems are used in some countries. Although representatives of this type of democracy are elected by the public, but the representatives of the representatives themselves decide to act in the public interest. Some factors, such as party policies, voters in the electorate, re-election, affect the representatives, but usually only some of these are binding instructions. The biggest feature of this system is that the pressure of mandate works on the policy deviation, because elections are mandatory for the validity of power at regular intervals.

This is a general assumption that in the administrative system was only contained in the king in ancient India, who got their power under the succession system, by defeating the ruler or any other circumstances, but in reality this assumption can be easily proved wrong.

In this research paper when we go through point-to-point study and analysis, we get the conclusion that there were a continuous chain of elections in ancient times. Their ideal form is seen in the republics, the election system was also present and in other empires, but its form was different in each administrative system.

Let us present administrative arrangements and developments for election in ancient india through this research paper.

In ancient times, there was a strong administrative system in India. Its evidence is obtained from ancient literature, coins and records. There is evidence in the description of foreign travelers and scholars.

Indus Valley Civilization

In the absence of written evidence, it is extremely difficult to determine the Indus Valley Civil Status. Therefore, the scholars have rendered their opinions on the basis of estimates. *Hunter* is of the opinion that the governance was not monarchy but democratic, while according to *Meike*, A representative ruler in Mohenjodaro was ruling. The idea of *wheeler*, that the administration of Mohenjodaro was centralized in the hands of the Gurus and the priests, who acted as the people's representatives. Given the planned construction, it is estimated that there must be an institution like the municipality. Residents of Sindhu civilization were peaceful. So his life was peaceful even from political point of view. Being a peaceful political nature, the life of the inhabitants was full of happiness and prosperity.

Vedic and Epic Era

There are two types of kingdoms in ancient times. One under King's rule and the second under *Gana's* rule. Where *Ganas* or many people were ruled, they were called under *Gana's* state. The interpretation of *Panini* in this particular sense is clear and sure. He has called *Gana* a synonym of union. From the literature, it is known that there were many republics in the period of *Panini* and *Buddha*. From *Tirhut* to *Kapilvastu*, a small bunch of republics was spread from Ganga to the valley. *Buddha* was born in *Shakya gana*. The Republic of *Lichchhavians* was the most powerful in it, its capital was *Vaishali*, but the largest expansion of republics in India was in the *vahik* (modern Punjab) state. *Panini* has called the *Aayudhjivi Sangh* to these republics of the North West. They are the only known economics negotiators. These people relied on negotiations in peace or agriculture, but during the war period, they used to fight as a warrior according to their constitution. Their political organization was very strong and they were relatively developed. Among them there are special mention of the minor and two republics of *kshudrak* and *Malva*. They had fought a fierce battle against *Yavan* invader *Alexander*. He had also injured by the arrows of the *Malavas*. For the combined army of these two republics of *kshudrak* and *Malva*, *Panini* has mentioned the *Kshaudrakamalyi* term in *Ganapath*. In the northwest and northeast of Punjab there were also many small obsolete republics, one of their series was expanded in the hill state of *Trigarta* (now Kangada), which was called the *Parvtiya Sangh*. The second series was of the strongest castes inhabiting on the banks of the Indus river. which were called *Gramaniya Sangh*. They are the *Kabayali* in present. Their constitution did not develop as

much as other republics of that time. He was often wielding a living by burglary or robbery. Those who were developed in these called *Puga* and those who were backward called *Brat*. A third bunch of *Sangh* or *Ganas* was expanded in *Saurashtra*. The Sangh or the Republic of the *Andhakvrishniyans* was very famous Among them. *Krishna* was a member of this sangh and therefore he has been called *Ardhbhaukta* in *ShantiParva*. It is known that this series of republics ranged on both sides of the river Indus expanded upto *Saurashtra*, because several descriptions of these *Ganas* in the state of *Sindh* also. In which *Muchkarna*, *Brahminak* and *Shudrak* were main. In this period, the process of administration and election was slightly different from today's era. Not all citizens had the right to vote. *Rig Veda* and Vedic codes have confirmed many methods of selection or nomination of *Raja*, but they have not given any light on the right to vote.

In the ancient democratic system, there was an election system for the ruler and other office bearers of the government like today. They were elected on the basis of merit and qualities. Councils were built in ancient times just like in the present Parliament. Which was similar to the current parliamentary system. The policies of the Republic or the Union were governed by these councils. The number of its members was huge. At that time, the most famous republic of *Lichchhavi* had 7707 members in the Central Council. *Yodheya's* Central Council had 5000 members. As with the current parliamentary session, the conferences of the councils were regular.

It was openly discussed among the members before deciding on any issue. There was strong debate on the Opposition for the right-to-wrong assessment. After that the decision was unanimously conjectured. The majority process was adopted if not everyone agreed. In many places it was compulsory to have consensus. The decision taken with the majority was called '*Bhooyisikkim*'. It had to resort to voting. The vote was called '*Chhand*', There was also an officer who looked after election like Election Commissioner, who was called *Shalakagrahak*. The following three systems of voting were prevalent -

- (1) *Goodhak* (secretly) - By writing a letter on its own, in which the name of the person who voted did not disclosed.
- (2) *Vivritak* (Openly) - In this process, the person used to appear in front of everyone to clear the issue. That means open general announcement.
- (3) *Sankarnjalpak* (To say secretly in the ears of the *Shalakagrahak*) –

Members were free to adopt one process out of three. The *Shalakagrahak* used to calculate for these votes, with full commitment and honesty.

In this way we find that from ancient times our country had a glorious democratic tradition. Apart from this, a number of ministries were also created for the operation of orderly governance. The officials of these ministries were selected on the basis of best qualities and merit.

The main departments of the Ministries were-

- (1) Department of Industries and Craft
- (2) Foreign Department
- (3) Census
- (4) Determination of the rules of purchase and sales Department

The cabinet is mentioned in '*Arthshastra*', '*Manusmriti*', '*Shukraniti*', '*Mahabharat*', etc., They were called '*Rattani*' in the *Yajurveda* and *Brahmin Granths*. According to the *Mahabharata*, there were 6 members in the cabinet, while Manu told this number to 7-8. *Shukra* had set the number to 10.

Their works were as follows -

(1) *Purohit* - it was considered to be the master of the king. this post had given only to the person wise both in politics and religion.

(2) *Upraj* (Raj Printidhi) - Its function was to govern the rule in the absence of the king.

(3) *Pradhan*- *Pradhan* or the Prime Minister was the most important member of the Cabinet. He cared for all the departments

(4) *Sachiv* - Its work was to see the security related work of the state like Defense Minister of the present.

(5) *Sumantra* - His job was to keep account of income expenditure of the state. Chanakya had called it *Samhartta*.

(6) *Amatya* - The work of *Amatya* was to regulate the natural resources of the entire state.

(7) *Doot* - The task of *Doot*, was to organize the detective department like the Intelligence Department of the present time. It was considered as a very important and sensitive department of the state.

Apart from these, there were several departments, *Panchayat* system also gets us to see in our country like the present era. The root unit of the government was considered as the village itself. There was a *Gram Sabha* in every village, who carried out the judicial system, the administration system and every welfare work of the village, from of the village, from. Their task was to prepare an ideal village by settling every problem of the village, establishing economic progress, defense work, an advanced governance system. The head of the *Gram Sabha* was called *Gramani* .

The whole state was divided into small government units and each unit had a small state in its own right and it was full for local government. The rule of all the states was under one assembly, whose members were the heads of those governing units. For a certain period

everyone was elected a chief or president. If the meeting was large, then an executive committee was elected by mixing some of its members. This governance was similar to that of the Constitution of *Cleisthenes in Athens*. The people in the meeting were young and old people of all ages. Their meeting took place in a building, which was called the auditorium.

There were many republics in the country. The rise of the Maurya Empire proved to be devastating for these republics. But after the fall of the Mauryan Empire some new democratic states were born, such as *Yaudheya, Manav and Aarjuniyan* etc. History of the ups and downs of the republics ranges from almost a thousand years (600 B.P. to 400 AD) in India. His last glimpse is seen till the rise of the Gupta Empire. Republicans merged with Samudragupta's military campaign aimed for damages. Some articles of republics, coins and clay beads have been found in the excavation of the Archaeological archaeological heritage. Particularly found in the connection of the victorious Yudhaya Republic, some authentic materials have been found.

In the Vedic era of Indian history, the representative institutions of republics were *Vidath, Sabha* and *Samiti*. Further, their nature changed into *Varga, Shreni, poog and Janpad*. The struggle for republican and monarchical traditions continued. The Republic and monarchy were interchanged simultaneously. *Uttarkulas of Aitrey Brahmins* and *Uttar Madra*, who went across the Himalayas, they settled in Punjab in the form of monarchists named *Kuru* and *Madra*. Later, *Shivi, Panchal, Malla* and *Videh* became republics like *Madra* and *Kuru*.

In the Mahabharata era, the Association of *Andhak Vrishniyan* was republican. The emperor of his kingdom, able to participate in the rivalry of empires, began to turn the Mahabharata politics into a turning point. At the time of *Panini* (5th-7th century BC), all the *Vahik Desh* (Punjab and Sindh) had been full of republics. Mahavir and Buddha not only immortalized jyatris and Shakyas but also overturned the Indian history. In their era, the main area of the north eastern India was the republics and *Lichchhavi, Vidheh, Shakya, Malla, Koliya, Moriya, Bulee* and *Bhagg* were their main representatives. The *Lichchhavis* became the colt of the emerging state of Magadha with its power and prestige. But they should not be left behind in their defense. Sometimes with *Malls* and sometimes around other *Ganas*, they formed the union which became famous as the name of *Vazzi Sangh*.

Mauryan Administrative System

Maurya Empire was the largest empire of India and it established a new type of governance i.e. centralized government for the first time. The rule of Chandragupta Maurya was largely based on the system of the prerogatives of Magadha, but the credit for its expansion and sophistication should be given to the creative talents of Chandragupta Maurya and Kautilya. The importance of the administrative system established by Maurya is evident from the fact that the succeeding Indian rulers have tried to imitate and follow them.

The main features of the Maurya Administration were the ideology of the philanthropic state, the high concentration of power, the developed officer system, the harsh

judicial system, the efficient city administration, the organized intelligence system, the well-developed revenue administration and the major works for the public welfare.

It is true that the rule of Chandragupta and Ashoka was absolutent, the penal system was rigid and there was a complete lack of freedom of the person. But all this was done keeping in mind the wider interests of the empire and the people. The Maurya Administration always holds the ideal of a patriotic state in the original. On the one hand, many concrete steps were taken for economic development and prosperity of the state and safeguarding the livelihood of artisans and merchants, on the other, strict rules were also made to protect the public from their unfair and exploitative activities. There are detailed rules to protect servants and employees from the atrocities of the owners. The burden of the maintenance of orphans, poor, dead soldiers and policemen was above the state. The extreme goal of Maurya's regime is evident from the following quote from economics-

Prajasukhe Sukham Ragyah Prajanam Cha Hite Hitam

Natampriye Hitam Ragyah: Prajnam tu Priyam Hitam

(That is, the happiness of the king lies in the happiness of the people and the goodness of the king is the goodness of the people. Whatever is good to the king is not beneficial, but whatever is good to people is beneficial).

The *Pradeshik* was the principal officer or administrator of the state. Under him, *Rajuka* and under *Rajuka*, *Yukta* were working. Asoka handed over the territories to the *Pradeshiks* along with *Rajukas* and *Yuktas* to carry out *dhamma-propaganda*.

It is known that *Nagar-Vyavharik* (*Nagar-viohalak*) was the status of *Mahamatra* by the records of Ashoka, The *Nagar-Vyavharik* was the head judicial officer or judge of the city. Ashoka's first Kalinga inscription states that *Nagar-Vyavharik* make sure that no one can get rapid imprisonment or punishment (without adequate reason) all the time'. According to some scholars. *Nagarak* as mentioned by Kautilya and *Nagar-Vyavharik* in Ashoka's records are same officer .

The village was the smallest unit of administration. The importance of village-rule was also understood in the centralized empire of Maurya. *Gaon* was ruled by *Gram Sabha*. The Head of *Gram Sabha* was known as *Gramik*. There is no name for *Gramik* in the salaried office bearers in *Arthashastra*. It appears from the fact that he was not a state employee, but he was elected by the people of the village. The *Gram Sabha* had too mush rights. In the *Arthashastra*, *Gram Vriddhas* has been mentioned in many places. 'They must have been working to tackle the small disputes of villages and provide support to the employees of the states.No doubt, rural people will have enough freedom in local government. There was *Gopa* for managing ten villages. There was a *Sthanik* over many *gopas*.

Megasthenes described the administrative system of *Pataliputra* in detail. It is believed that this kind of city administration would normally have been in other cities too. According to Megasthenes, a town council (like the modern municipal board) of 30 members

to rule Pataliputra was divided into six committees to perform different tasks- (1) Art & craft Committee, (2) Foreign Travelers Committee, (3) Census Committee, (4) Commerce Committee, (5) Industry Committee and (6) Tax Committee. In Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, there is a complete chapter (*Nagarak Pranidhih*) in terms of urban governance rules. According to Kautilya, the chief officer of the town was *Nagarak* (like the modern district magistrate). The citizens were responsible for the safety of the livelihood of the residents and the implementation of the rules related to city administration.

It was a great achievement of Maurya's, that in the history of India, they not only established a vast and unified empire for the first time, but also made an admirable effort to provide a systematic, efficient and philanthropic administration to this empire. According to *Nilkantha Shastri*, "First of all in India, the Mauryan Empire had tried very centralized administration, but this centralized was not conducive to modern centralization, in which ruthlessness was integrated into the policy, and fully organized and fully localized autonomy. It is noteworthy that in the case of governance, the Maurya kings were not traditionists. They created new traditions by abandoning ancient traditions with courage. Ashoka made this administration as *dhamma-centric* and presented a unique model in front of the world. In his administration there was such a beautiful reconciliation of justice and charity that could not be seen elsewhere.

Administrative System in Post Mauryan India

After the fall of the Maurya dynasty, India's political unity was destroyed. Many small states emerged in place of the Maurya Empire, from which the new dynasty came to power, the collapse of the Maurya Empire was mainly benefited by foreign invaders and local tribes in the south. During this, the suspicion of the people of the political and administrative system of India and the Kushan castes took full advantage. Kushan ruler Kanishka became the most qualified ruler administratively. It laid the foundation of a vast empire, Kanishka established administrative system for peace and order in its empire. He probably adopted the prevalent *Kshatrap* arrangement in Greece and Iran. He has to appoint *Kshatrap*s in various territories of the empire, but his detailed information is not available.

Administrative System in the Gupta Empire

In Indian history, the political situation between the decline of the Kushan dynasty and the middle of the Gupta dynasty has been commonly termed as 'dark age'. After the end of this era, the central power that was emerged in India is known as the Gupta Dynasty. The rule of this era is called 'Indian renaissance' or 'golden age'. After the Mauryas, the Gupta rulers again established the political unity and administrative system in India. The details of their administrative arrangements are provided by the Gupta periods, postures and literary texts. The principal administrative feature of the Gupta period was the decentralization of power. Secondly, subordinate rulers had to get administrative autonomy. Under them, the republics became completely extinct and the monarchy system was established everywhere. The Gupta's administrative system was as follows -

Central Administration

The empire's supreme power was of the emperor, but in practice, the emperor used to use this power with the help of ministers and assistants. There was a central political office in the state capital.

Council of Ministers

The emperor used to consult the Council of Ministers in all the important functions of the government. The functioning of the Central Departments used to be *Pradhan Mantri*, *Amatya*, *Kumaramatya*, *Yuvraj-Kumaramatya* etc. The definite form of different departments of the Council of Ministers can not be seen. Information of the two main ministers of the empire meet with the records- *Sandhi Vighrik* (Minister of War and Treaty) and *Parrastra Mantri* (Foreign Minister).

Provincial Administration

In order to facilitate governance, the empire was divided into many units. The largest unit was the province, which was called *Desh* or *Bhukti*. The main provinces of the Gupta Empire were *Saurashtra*, *Avanti*, (Western Malva), *Earan* (Eastern Malva), *Tir Bhukti* (North Bihar), *Pundrivardhana* (North Bengal),. The provincial rulers were called *Bhogik*, *Bhogapati*, *Gopta*, *Uprike Maharaj* or *Rajasthaniya*. The small unit from the province was called *Pradesh*, which was similar to the division nowadays. The next unit was called *Vishaya*, which was similar to the district. Officials of *Vishaya* were called *Vishayapati*. The smallest unit of governance was village.

Local City Administration

In connection with the *Gupta* municipal administration, there is information from *Damodarpur Tamra-Patra*(Bengal). Local *Shrenis*, rules, etc.had important contributions in the city administration. Mandsaur records mention the construction of a *Surya Mandir* by the makers of *Pattavaya Shreni* of cloth makers. Vaishali seals reveal the existence of *Shresthi*, *Sarthvah* and Corporations in city. The famous cities of the Guptas were Dashpur, Girinagar (Giranar), Ujjaiyini, Pataliputra. The towns were also called *Pur*. The ruler of the city or the *Pur* was called *Nagarapati* or *Purpal*.

Local Village Administration

The head of the village administration was called *Gramik*. The members of the Gram Sabha were called *Mahattar*. The caretaker of the jungle was called *Golmik*. The administration was responsible for the Village Council or Gram Sabha.

Chola's Local Self and Village Administration in South India

Chola, *Cher* and *Pandya* were the dominant states of South India, Chola's scientific system was excellent among them. One of the main characteristics of Chola administration was local self-government and rural system. there was a system of self-rule from the village

to the province in Chola rule,. In the entire Empire was divided in *Mandals* (which was 7 or 8), the *Mandals* were divided into *Nadu*. *Nadu* was divided in *Kurram or Kottam*. There were many villages in each *Kurram*, which was the smallest unit of governance. *Goan's* General Assembly had great importance in governance. In addition to this, there was a delegation in *Kurram, Nadu* and *Mandal*, which was supported by the government. The outline of local self-government can be estimated from the rights and duties of the General Assembly of the *Goan*. It should be remembered that in the Chola administration, the autonomy in the administrative form of the village was remarkable. Officers of Chola rule did not interfere in the affairs of the villages. They only used to give advice or participate in the audience. for this reason, so there was little effect on the lower administration of the upper reversal in the Chola empire. Therefore, local, business and cultural development in Southern India remained unaffected. This was one of the main reasons for the widespread cultural continuity in southern parts than the northern parts of India. In this period, it was believed that the local government should be operated by the local people, behind the prevailing village autonomy. It was also a feature of the village administration that it was organized on a popular basis. The most special thing about the Chola era was that the extraordinary skills and discoveries found in the work of self-governing rural institutions.

Epilogue

Thus, it is noteworthy that Indian society has been present in different geographical regions of ancient times and in different dynasties, almost all the major units of the present political system have been present with various forms and names. In the same way, under all these empires / dynasties, elements of correct election are available in a small quantity or signature form, which can maintain their existence even in the erstwhile monarchical systems. These election arrangements have been able to achieve their present form in the fight against various conflicts and circumstances in time and in this land of the world, the power of the democratic social electoral system has become a strong capital and is uniting the whole world

The objectives of the democratic administrative system are determined by looking at the current needs of the nation. The administrative structures, procedures and practices of that administrative system are inherited from its history. This legacy can be started from ancient Indian administrative system. In this context, it is inevitable to mention that the roots of the current Indian political and administrative system are related to the ancient times of Indian history. Monarchy had been prevalent in ancient Indian political and administrative system, but the lower authorities under King or Monarch had been appointed through elections. This principle founded roots of elections in the future.

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