

The background of the image is a dark blue and purple night sky filled with numerous white stars of varying sizes. In the foreground, there is a dark silhouette of a forest of evergreen trees. The overall aesthetic is serene and celestial.

# TOPIC OF THE WEEK

APR'19 (25 Apr to 01 May)

## **Ideology and government**

Government is so ingrained in our culture and so much a part of our everyday lives that most of us, when asked, can't offer a very good definition of the actual word. Dr. Harold Damerow, a professor of government and history, gets a bit more specific with his definition. He says that government is 'responsible primarily for making public policy for an entire society.' He also mentions that government is 'the steering mechanism for a given society.' It forms the policies that keep a particular society heading in the right direction. Finally, Black's Law Dictionary mentions that institutions of the government 'regulate the relationships among members of a society and between the society and outsiders' and that they 'have the authority to make decisions for the society' to meet goals and maintain order. While all of these definitions help us grasp the meaning of the word 'government,' they provide a lot to remember, so let's summarize. Government, whether we refer to the system or institutions in operation, the group of people in charge, or the process in use, is the authority that sets rules for a society, helps its members relate to one another and to others, and keeps it running smoothly, securely, and

peacefully. In the case of its broad definition, government normally consists of legislators, administrators, and arbitrators. There are different forms of government like authoritarian, totalitarian, fascist governments and etc.

First we will talk about non-democratic form of government like Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism, and Dictatorship. So, Authoritarianism is a theory and a system of government customarily linked with dictatorship, in contrast to democracy. It is a principle based on obedience to authority, and opposes autonomy of individuals in thought and action. As a form of government, authoritarianism concentrates power in a leader or in a small elite not constitutionally accountable to the people. Unlike totalitarian systems, authoritarian governments usually lack a highly developed ideology. Also, the latter tends to tolerate a degree of pluralism in social organization, usually lacks the power to mobilize the nation for collective goals, and exercises its power within limits. Leaders in authoritarian systems often exercise their power arbitrarily and consider themselves above existing law. Modern authoritarian systems usually operate through single, dominant parties, which

control government and other key parts of society, including the economy, media, and education. They usually do not hold free elections, which could replace them with a competing party (see Political Parties). It is either difficult or impossible for citizens to create opposition groups or parties.

Authoritarianism provides the conceptual framework of modern dictatorship, and the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. The latter is a form of government in which one person or a small elite group wields absolute power with few or no constitutional restrictions. The term originates from the Roman Republic dictator, who was a temporary magistrate, granted extra powers to deal with state emergencies. In the twentieth century, dictators have also claimed extraordinary powers to deal with state crises and exercise despotic powers, using coercion, terror, and suppression to hold control, and they employ modern propaganda to maintain popular support.

War, industrialization, revolution and decolonization destroyed many old political systems, including traditional monarchies, and left little in their place.

Attempts to establish constitution democracies (see Constitutional Government) were often frustrated by the magnitude of political and economic crisis. Often the emergence of charismatic leaders, who promised solutions, if given extraordinary powers, provided fertile grounds for dictatorships. Post-First World War, Europe both demonized and romanticized the Bolshevik revolution as cutting the Gordian knot of “talk shop” democracy. Democracy and capitalism’s failures were magnified and multiplied in the world depression of the 1930s. Dictators took responsibility not only for mobilizing the state, but the economy as well. Lenin, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin were men of action.

Economic and social system in which all (or nearly all) property and resources are collectively owned by a classless society and not by individual citizens. Based on the 1848 publication 'Communist Manifesto' by two German political philosophers, Karl Marx (1818-1883) and his close associate Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), it envisaged common ownership of all land and capital and withering away of the coercive power of the state. In such a society, social relations were to be regulated on the fairest of all principles: from each according to his

ability, to each according to his needs. Differences between manual and intellectual labor and between rural and urban life were to disappear, opening up the way for unlimited development of human potential. According to Marx a class is defined by the relations of its members to the means of production. He proclaimed that history is the chronology of class struggles, wars, and uprisings. Under capitalism, Marx continues, the workers, in order to support their families are paid a bare minimum wage or salary. The worker is alienated because he has no control over the labor or product which he produces. The capitalists sell the products produced by the workers at a proportional value as related to the labor involved. Surplus value is the difference between what the worker is paid and the price for which the product is sold.

Now while talking about first let's understand the meaning of Democracy, which literally means rule by the people. The term is derived from the Greek *dēmokratiā*, which was coined from *dēmos* ("people") and *kratos* ("rule") in the middle of the 5th century BCE to denote the political systems then existing in some Greek city-states, notably Athens. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, both the theory and the practice of democracy

have undergone profound changes for thousands of years the kind of association in which democracy was practiced, the tribe or the city-state, was small enough to be suitable for some form of democracy by assembly, or “direct democracy.” Much later, beginning in the 18th century, as the typical association became the nation-state or country, direct democracy gave way to representative democracy—a transformation so sweeping that, from the perspective of a citizen of ancient Athens, the governments of gigantic associations such as France or the United States might not have appeared democratic at all Representative democracy would require a set of political institutions radically different from those of all earlier democracies. About 500 BCE, conditions favorable to democracy reappeared in several places, and a few small groups began to create popular governments. Primitive democracy, one might say, was reinvented in more advanced forms. The most crucial developments occurred in two areas of the Mediterranean, Greece and Rome.

During the 20th century the number of countries possessing the basic political institutions of representative democracy increased significantly. At the beginning of the 21st century, independent observers agreed that more than one-third of the world's nominally independent countries possessed

Democratic institutions comparable to those of the English-speaking countries and the older democracies of continental Europe. In an additional one-sixth of the world's countries, these institutions, though somewhat defective, nevertheless provided historically high levels of democratic government. Altogether, these democratic and near-democratic countries contained nearly half the world's population.

While talking about the failure of democracy we must include this significant part in the explanation that all the main alternatives to democracy—whether of ancient or of modern origins—suffered political, economic, diplomatic, and military failures that greatly lessened their appeal. With the victory of the Allies in World War I, the ancient systems of monarchy, aristocracy, and oligarchy ceased to be legitimate. Following the military defeat of Italy and



Germany in World War II, the newer alternative of fascism was likewise discredited, as was Soviet-style communism after the economic and political collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990–91. Similar failures contributed to the gradual disappearance of military dictatorships in Latin America in the 1980s and '90s. At the beginning of the 21st century, democracy faced a number of challenges, some of which had been problems of long standing, others of which were of more recent origin.

1. **Inequality of resources-** Although decentralized market economies encouraged the spread of democracy, in countries where they were not sufficiently regulated such economies eventually produced large inequalities in economic and social resources, from wealth and income to education and social status.
2. **Immigration-** After World War II, immigration to the countries of Western Europe, Australia, and the United States, both legal and illegal, increased dramatically. Seeking to escape poverty or oppression in their homelands and usually lacking education, immigrants primarily from the developing world typically took menial jobs in

service industries or agriculture. In the early 21st century, anti-immigrant sentiment fueled a revival of chauvinistic parties and movements in Western Europe and contributed to the electoral victory of U.S. presidential candidate Donald J. Trump in 2016.

3. **Terrorism-** Acts of terrorism committed within democratic countries or against their interests in other parts of the world occurred with increasing frequency beginning in the 1970s. In response to some horrific events and especially in the wake of the September 11 attacks, democratic governments adopted various measures designed to enhance the ability of police and other law-enforcement agencies to protect their countries against terrorism. Some of these initiative sentailed new restrictions on citizens' civil and political liberties and were accordingly criticized as unconstitutional or otherwise inconsistent with democratic principles. In the early 21st century it remained to be seen whether democratic governments could strike a satisfactory balance between the sometimes conflicting imperatives of ensuring security and preserving democracy.

Yet, despite these adversities, the odds are great that in the foreseeable future a very large share of the world's population, in a very large share of the world's countries, will live under democratic forms of government that continue to evolve in order to meet challenges both old and new.

**For reference:-**

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