

Democratic Deification of 'we the People': Myth or Reality in India

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Abstract

Unearthed from the word demos, democracy has been subject to varied interpretations having deleterious on what we understand, define, theorize, and practice as democratic system of government. Though the Mesopotamian origin of demos kratia long before Greeks could think over it, meant the undying penchant for power among the dispossessed rich farmers, but redounding to one's political goal, it has been made synonymous with rule by the people. In simple democracy it has been misused and misconstrued as a cliché or demagogue to reinforce, legitimize, and perpetuate one political party or leader of a party in power in the name of we the people. A reification of dictate, command domination and application of force has taken place over the people asking the latter to be obeisant to the sovereign state. But in reality, and practice it has never been so anywhere in the world as rule by the people. Complex democracy, on the other hand advocates to bust the mystery build around the word democracy by advocating breaking up the system, disintegration, separation and decentralization of power of every organ such as legislature from the executive like on till everything and everybody stands unencumbered. It is the people who controls, governs and rules the leader, the party and state not the vice versa. Nobody commands only follows the principles and nuances of equality, freedom and justice. The traditional notion that the king is the representative of God omniscient, indivisible and immortal has been strewn around the sovereign state represented by the party in power. This mystic element that the king as God does not do any wrong applied to the party in power in democracy needs to be dismantled. The head of the king is to be chopped off. This has been studied in the context of India arguing for deification of 'we the people' written in the preamble to Indian constitution.

INTRODUCTION

There is no dearth of definitions about what democracy is or what constitutes democracy or what democracy should be. The myriad of views and theories of democracy existing in the lexicon of Political Science condescends to this pronouncement that democracy envisages a form of government or system of governance in which the people of a state participate actively in decision making and are free to deliberate upon issues pertaining to their welfare and development. In short, it is understood as rule by the people deriving its meaning and nomenclature from the time long practice of the people in Greek ages since 500 BC (Dahl, 2001: 3405). There is no system of governance that matches this above definition. Of all the definitions no definition is the ideal type. But mostly alluded to, widely acclaimed and often excerpted and turned out to be a cliché has been Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy as of the people, by the people and for the people. Borrowed from the speeches of Daniel Webster, a lawyer and politician as well, this definition of Lincoln subsequently well ingrained in the writings and speeches of intellectuals, scholars and social scientists and policy makers has become the ideal type of democracy. They have never delved deep to unearth the context and circumstances in which this type of understanding of democracy has emerged. This has been at best a referent point or cliché to be cited by politicians and

political parties of different hues to justify their own style of rule and understanding. The ruling establishment and opposition parties both lambast each other as not being adherent to the nuances of what has made a state truly democratic. This cliché has been a communication bridge among various groups and people becoming a rallying point for engendering more discussion, debate and altercations and ultimately to arrive at a point where democracy seems easily comprehensible. On the contrary, these clichés have been used by devious actors to deform or muddle its meaning to suit their political interests or settle scores with their opponents. These have deluded people into a confused and complicated understanding of what the actors are intending to say. Such a state of affairs has created political turmoil and cleaves in the society. For example, Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India while speaking so voluminously about democracy used it as a convenient cliché to suppress freedom and put opposition leaders rising in revolt against her misrule in jail. The result was the infamous declaration of emergency in 1975 and deforming and defacing the constitution of India. In response to this all the opposition parties using Lincoln's definition of democracy as a cliché got united and fought against her in the next hustings and succeeded in dethroning her from power. The cliché 'democracy as rule by the people' is used to bind people to the ideas, novelties of views and intentions of the

ruling parties as well as opponents. Thus, dragging people into the cusp of contradictory views about democracy the citizens become discontent, confused about the ways democracy and its associated institution function. There is no democracy in the world which is governed directly by the people of the state. The electoral democracy that is found in all democratic states of the world represents people which is less than fifty percent. In the name of the people democracy is run by few people.

Simple Democracy

This simplistic way of defining democracy as rule by the people or categorising it as simple democracy has been found almost non-existent in the world. It might be true in Greek city states or Gandhian concept of village republic. The countries or ruling and opposition parties accustomed to using it as a convenient cliché have been boasting of treading the path of this simple democracy but in reality, they are far away from what they say about democracy. The simple democracy seems almost impracticable. It has become platitudinous on the part of both democratic states like US and Britain and totalitarian states like communist states to claim that they are the real democracies. But this is merely travesty of truth. While democratic states are in the stage of becoming, the communist regimes are far away from this.

Complex Democracy

Complex democracy is defined as a non-violent way of power sharing among the people. People in heterogeneity and in their multiplicity ways of thinking, ideas, and ways of living participate actively in decision making of the state with distribution of power among themselves at various levels. Metaphorically, it is like king without head. It is based on the concept that nobody rules, but it is ruled by all. It should not be misconstrued as being degenerated into an anarchical system of governance. It is system of governance and decision making in which the will of everybody has been appended. The decision making is no longer confined to a coterie of political and bureaucratic elite. A widening base of participation and decision making is ensured. Nobody can claim that the decision is his/her. The decisions of the citizens are the decision of the state. The widening base of participation, power sharing and decision making will enable the will of the people expressed through plurality of channels and democratic institutions within the state. It will get a riddance of the deeply ingrained clichés in the political system and of the language and spirit associated with the rule by the people. The pre- Greek and Greek connotations of democracy as harbinger of real democracy have been debunked by this complex democracy. The misuse and abuse of simple democracy as clichés to reinforce the vested interests of the political parties have been exposed. The redundancy and irrelevance of the simple democracy being manipulated and misused as clichés to meet the contemporary imperatives to redefine democracy have been brought to limelight.

Etymological Interpretation

The Greeks took the credit for having invented the word 'democracy' as rule by the sovereign people around 5th and 6th century BC. The text book and research studies on the origin of democracy and history of the origin of democratic institutions add credence to this Athenian claims. The contemporary research has busted this myth. Its origin has been traced back to Mesopotamia where the people were assembled in assembly to elect their kings (Evans, 1958: 1-11). The roots of democracy can be harked back to the Mycenaean period (1500-1200 BC). It is predated the ancient Greek city states. To them democracy

meant *demos* + *kratia*. *Demos* is used as a noun to denote a group of rich land owners deprived of power and possessions (Effenterre H. M. 384-396). The term *damos* seems to have been one member of a family of terms, such as *Damocles* whose meaning remains nebulous within the archaeological evidences. The deniability of power and possessions to these land owners and their exclusion have been incorporated into *demokratia* to mean democracy to the Greeks and to the modern theoreticians as power to the people which was actually not then and now. Keeping in mind the exclusionary vested interest of this group it can be said that the members of this group were virulent opponents to democracy or power to the people. It was seen also in Athens when aristocrats fought against each other and with their arch opponents one commonality found in this class of aristocrats with the rich group in Mesopotamia was their hostile attitude for a sectional group which was propertyless and was hungry for power. These two examples would explain why the intellectual bastion of scholars defining democracy (*demos kratia*) in simplistic way as power to the people collapses and why its critics point to this as dangerous to the political community.

The original *kratia* means to be master of, to conquer, to lord over, to be stronger, to prevail or get the upper hand over somebody. Homer's *Odyssey* and Sappho's supplement both uses *kratian* in this way. The noun *Kratos* from which the compound democratic was formed similarly refers to might, strength, imperial majesty, toughness, triumphant power and victory over others through application of force (*Odyssey* Homer, II 485; George Henry et al 1819; Lampe ed. 1961). Thus, democracy conveys the meaning as *demoskrateo* meant exercise of power by a group over others through might or physical force.

As gleaned from the above historical analysis, the modern connotations of democracy understood and explained in complex ways as power to the people, equality of all, constitutional guarantee of freedom and respect for individual dignity and plurality, stands in contradiction to the original meaning of *demokratia* rooted in a particular circumstance. Understood in this way modern democracy stands untrue to itself and to its advocates, because it conveys altogether a different meaning. In classical sense *demokratia* connotes the pursuit of the sinister and vested interest of the rich people by exercising power over the others. A cursory glance over the declaration of property by Ministers in the Central Cabinet and state cabinets in India will evidence the fact that a few rich sections of the society who are millionaires have in the name of democracy been able to occupy power. The repository of both wealth and power is found concentrated in them. 'We the people' in India is no longer a decision making and deliberative body but a divisive and fractured vote politic body manipulatively played against each other in the chess board of Indian politics by the few rich individuals (*demos*) to their political advantage. "We the People" has been turned out to be a convenient cliché in the hands of the few rich to exercise power over the majority. This 'we the people' has become a useful garb to hide their wolfish nature and to come out at appropriate and right time to dominate others.

Strategic Abuses of Democracy

A monumental paradox has been revealed with the modern democracies and its proponents trying to imbibe the classical *demokratia*- the emblematic representation of the politics of the excluded few land owners deprived of property and power. Modernization has not yet been able to wipe out this paradox. If the working of modern democracies is vivisected, it is found it is no longer rule by the sovereign people. Both the ruling party

and opposition parties are found busy adducing their respective versions as the real definition of democracy. For example, when Ann Hazare spearheading the Civil Society Movement in India puts the onus on central government to introduce his version of a strong Jan Lokpal Bill to wipe out corruption and keep in its ambit the top echelons of power including Prime Minister, the ruling Congress Party ministers at centre stated that Ann Hazare has no right to dictate Parliament as it is a sovereign body to take the fizz out from his campaign by citing the commonly adduced cliché 'the sovereignty of the people'.

Whereas democracy is proclaimed as rule by the sovereign people, in reality it has turned out to be a struggle for power among groups and vested interest. Misusing this as a cliché as noted by François Guizot (1852: 69-70) his father's and later on his own government were dismantled by the revolutionary forces with the advocacy that God is one, all powerful and His reasoning is also uncontested. Hence, power with the party in power is absolute and indivisible. But there may be plethora of interpretations about God. Power is never indivisible, and presupposes multiple claimants to power. Guizot is of the view that the proponents of popular sovereignty are reluctant to accept this dictum. People unlike God are not homogeneous and do not express their views in one voice. Hence, democracy has turned out to be a play of numbers; those who managed the required juggernaut of numbers become the rulers in the name of the people. It reinforces the rule and dominance of the majority over the minority or rest. The sovereignty of people has become a euphemism for enjoying the loaves and fishes of the office and legitimized the privilege and despotic rule of the majority over the minority. To say that all individuals without any discrimination have rightful claims to sovereign power and are equal in exercising power, is rarely visible in democracy. In the name of democracy using the word popular sovereignty it has legitimized dominance and exercise of force of the majority over the minority (Guizot, 69-70). Though in Parliament it is numerical majority that determines the power that be but in comparison with number of 'We the people' it is minuscule minority kept at the helm to enjoy all the privileges of power. This is the most perverted form of democracy in the name of popular sovereignty. The preamble to the Indian constitution begins with 'We the people' which has been anthropomorphised into a sacrosanct hypothetical myth to seek allegiance from the people and future generations that constitution of India has been made by the people of India with a purpose to winnow their legitimacy to the party in power. The truth is that the constitution has never been made by the people of India. In reality, it was imposed on the people by the political party and few leaders who played a prominent role in bringing independence to India.

In the grand architecture of modern democracy, the French revolution is adored as the first foundation stone to give legitimacy to popular sovereignty, which has become in subsequent years as Robespierre once said using Rousseau's General Will, my will is the general will of the people. What my party expresses is the will of the people. It is illustrative of the fact that popular sovereignty has opened itself to frequent misuse and political contrivance for legitimizing tyranny of one man or group of men, a political party or majority in the Parliament over the minority or over those who have had a different notion and understanding of democracy. Here, simple democracy is not just a dispassionate spectator to what is happening to its functioning. It is not like a living organism having or developed within itself forces which create its own mechanisms of bulwarks to fight out those external or internal disruptive agencies; it can at best stir up the hornet's nest of struggle for power among various groups and people.

If complex democracy is understood as non-violent way of power sharing, it has not been seen anywhere in the world of democracies. There is no democratic state in the world which can take credit for having facilitated and created provisions for people's direct participation in law making and in decision making with scope for deliberation and discussions. The concept of popular sovereignty has been misused as a camouflage to legitimize the rule by the party in power in the name of popular sovereignty. How an individual or person can be represented by another in the parliament? It is the paradox of modern democracy. It is nothing but sell out of the individuality, freedom of thinking and thought and freedom of conscience at the altar of parliamentarianism. In hustings in India many factors including money, muscle, bullying, caste, religion, language and regionalism play a significant role. In the complex web of these varieties of factors it is not will of the people rather the computerized calculation of manipulating a single factor in combination with others helps a party or leader to win in the election. Rajni Kothari, an Indian political thinker is of the view that "political forces that appeal to the people typically have anti-democratic effects". The rise of charismatic leadership catching people's emotions is likely to debilitate democratic institutions and plummet people's role in democratic systems (Kothari, 2001: 106-07). In the same vein famous playwright Oscar Wilde said, democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people, by the people and for the people' (Wilde 1891).

Democracy and Power Sharing

The above critical remarks and vitriolic words swirled at democracy being afflicted by clichés, shibboleths and demagogues should not deflect us from the established notion that there exists today no system of governance that is alternative to democracy. Democracy being an irreplaceable system gives importance to public opinion and role of people in the functioning of the system. It is people that breathes into democracy the breath of dynamism, strength and vigour. Delving deep insightfully into the working of democracy we can discover the weaknesses and suggest ways to remedy those for making it ethically more appealing and strengthening it institutionally with ways to privilege not few but 'we the people' to share in power and decision making.

Like living organisms developing within themselves the antibodies or inward ramparts against the attack of pathogens or viruses, democracy through its process of evolution and going through a tumultuous process of contradictions, debates, deliberations and conflicts and gaining from the experiences rises to a stage of maturity where political consciousness, understanding, tolerance of divergent views and development of institutions for more power sharing among divergent groups and people have been deeply rooted. Democracy thus develops within itself the fortified mechanisms by which it saves and protects itself from degenerating into totalitarian or despotic rules. Living beings develop their immune system through various means. Similarly, democracy today faces the fiercest challenge to develop within itself the internal immune system that will stand it in good stead against all kinds of despotic tendencies and moral hazards.

If by democracy we mean rule by the people, it requires complete implementation in spirit and letter devoid of any language that has undemocratic undertones. The ways of life, approach to life and thinking must be democratized. Our propensities to exercise power over others in an arrogant, imperial and dictatorial way should be revisited. The original and classical meaning of democracy susceptible to politically

advantageous clichés and shibboleths to bully people into subjugation should be replaced, reinvented and supplanted with a new meaning that gives primacy to openness, plurality of views, diverse ways of life and thinking, non-violent power sharing, widening and broadening of ideas and thinking that will reflect 'we being together' or togetherness in living and thinking. Creation of more institutions will lead to more devolution of power and power sharing with people actively participating in decision making. Modern democracies have traversed a long way in decentralizing and dividing power among people and allowing the demos- the people to share in power structure and decision making. The paradoxical and imaginary walls of demokratia have started collapsing.

'We the people' not an organic being but a heterogeneous basket

The declaratory part of the Indian constitution- preamble is very eloquent in ascribing the formation of a sovereign and democratic state to 'We the people'. The pertinent question is whether 'We the people' participated in the making of the constitution. If the composition and function of the Constituent Assembly is any indication, then it clearly amplifies the fact that not 'We the People' but a few representatives played a prominent role in making of the constitution using 'We the People' as a cliché. The voice of the representatives was considered as the voice of the people not vice versa. This stands contradictory to simple democracy which is defined as 'of the people, by the people and for the people'. This is a constitution 'from above' not 'from below' taking demos (we the people) for granted. To further this argument, we confront another question whether demos in India is an undivided homogenous unit identified as body politic. In reality it is not so; it is highly heterogeneous, divided and criss- crossed on caste, religion, gender, poor and rich. How these divergent voices are heard in the imagined 'We the people'? In this imagined demos is heard the voice of those upper crust of the Indian society who are in power and not the voice of the excluded and marginalized from the body politic. After independence the various social upsurges, movements and protestations and above all the rise of civil society adds credence to the main thrust of the argument that voice of the imagined "We the people" is not necessarily coeval with these fractured and divergent voices. Rather it is this increasing discrepancy between the two and tendency to play the cliché 'we the people' on the part of both the ruling and opposition class that has given rise such politico- socio-economic volatility in India. The ruling section constituting politicians, bureaucrats, industrialists and corporate sector presupposes that they are themselves the legitimate body politic immune from the penetration from these divergent voices. This illustrates the tradition of 16th-17th century monarchs holding their body as the body politic of the entire empire. Any act of threats to this body of kings was considered sacrilegious and threat to the people. Similarly, using the 'We the people' as a convenient self- perpetuating cliché the ruling class has been able to castigate any voice not in conformity with this imagined voice as a threat contributing to democratic disarray. This remains the problematic in Indian democracy. The long tradition of a harmonious society maintaining unity in diversities disappeared with the divisive politic used by the powers that be in centre and states in India among various communities on caste, religion, language and region. The ingrained proclivities of the rich few to perpetuate themselves in power by using the common cliché 'We the people' has enabled them to play one section against the other. The 'We the people' during these last decades has been reduced to mere vote bank. Nothing was done

during these years to make 'We the people' the real architect of Indian democracy.

Conceding to the above analysis means the whole nation or state is heterogeneous and diverse and dictated by divisive forces. However diverse Indian society is, it has the hoary tradition of believing in living 'in togetherness' or always being together in their behaviour and conduct towards each other and towards the society, nation and state. It takes pride in living up to the ideal of 'the whole universe as a family' when humans rise above the narrow grooves of thinking. This is also true of family, society and nation. Attributing a heterogeneity character to 'we the people' savours of a divided and divisive society. On the other, 'we the people' is diverse in its composition but in its functions, it is the undying living spirit inspiring the people, the leaders and the policy makers to weave all these diversities into unity. To be imbibed with this ideal is not enough, the real challenge lies in removal of all barriers and divisive forces acting against this ideal and promoting equality among all without any discrimination and ushering in an era where this ideal is translated into making 'we the people' the real decision makers and promoters of good governance.

Straitjacketing western model forecloses Indian possibility

Attainment of independence provided an opportunity to the Indian people to devise a constitution rooted in its soil, history, culture and civilisation instead of outsourcing it from outside world. Strict adherence to and conformity with the established western model and Westphalian tradition was considered as knowledge. Carbon copying the West ministerial model was the hallmark of intellectual dexterity. In the making of the constitution no innovativeness and discourse based upon India's hoary tradition, enriched culture and civilization away from western model emerged betraying the impression that India suffers from 'poverty of philosophy'. How a nation uprooted from its treasure-trove of having a different vision, way of life and a feeling of interconnectedness inextricably woven with the universe could thrive amidst scourges of crises baffling the Indian nation? Riding on the crest of heightened glory of having provided the beacon of light to the world it had once mastered the science of control over everything that happened and would happen. Now the realised masters of God realisation from India are much needed in the West to teach the art and techniques of how to get peace to the miserable and peace deprived west. Culturally an uprooted India divested of its civilizational values and thrown completely into western straitjacket remains the greatest challenge to the functioning of democracy within the bounds of "We the people".

Conforming to a specific European historical context in which originated secularization of politics and Westphalia convention became the sine qua non of Indian politico- socio-economic life devoid of any ethics and values. Their internecine religious wars and monarch's vested interest to remain perpetuated in power by keeping the pope off the hook from state affairs could become our venerable tradition and lay the foundation stone of our modern independent and so called civilised political life. Our priceless heritage bequeathed to us by our seers and immortal scriptures to carve out the way of life for Indians in a changing world was thrown into scrapheap as mere folklores not kept as a marionette's compass to guide us in the turbulent seas of human life. India is replete with examples to illustrate how in the unrecorded history of India the seers and scriptures were guiding the kings to usher in a righteous administration and look after the welfare of the people. There is no dearth of record in modern history to show how sages and seers

were engaged in various social works, removal of superstitions and dogmatism from Indian society and welfare activities. How long Indian political system and life can sustain the reification of western system with religious adherence and attitude ignoring a very important aspect of Indian spiritual life monitored under the stewardship of Indian seers and sages? At present, with BJP in power at centre and various states under the leadership of Modi the revival of Indian culture and its great spiritual tradition is on the ascendancy. A new meaning to 'we the people' is being added in India's Sanatan Dharmic and civilizational and cultural tradition which has invited many criticisms from opposition parties igniting the politics of divisions. The spiritual upsurges and movements to rethink Indian coupling with western historical context and to build a new India not necessarily on western lines but on templates of Indian long cherished values would remain the greatest challenge to democracy. Indian spiritual sector forming the most powerful base of Indian way of life will no longer remain a silent spectator to what is happening to Indian politic in the name of being relegated to otherworldly.

Widening Representativeness by dividing

To absolve demos having originated in the pangs of the dispossessed rich farmers for power some centuries ago, of being lured into cliches as we the people or rule by the sovereign people, many governments have been trying to widen the base of democratic representativeness and democratic decision making qualitatively by reserving certain seats for the marginalized and excluded people. As is observed in India reservation of some seats on quota basis for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Parliament, state legislative assemblies and other local bodies and nomination of two members from the Anglo – Indian community, puts restrictions on general voters right to be elected and the right of choosing candidates of their choice. This constitutional provision though intended to provide the under privileged and marginalized sections of the society the opportunity to participate in politics, is seen to be contradictory to the very concept of equality as one of the cardinal principles of democracy. These provisions having far reaching effects on the theory and working of democracy have sown the seeds of divisive politics into the soil of Indian democracy. It is also lampooned that the provisions for reservation of certain quota for women in local bodies have gendered Indian democracy and injected the divisive and fractured democracy into Indian body politic (Inter Parliamentary Union, 1999). This argument is ill founded. Women constitutes roughly half of the population of India. Male dominated politics has left little space for women to grasp the nature of politics and contribute their knowledge, understanding and experiences to the working of democracy. Looking at the nature of politics from their own perspectives would have added a qualitative dimension to politics. This exclusionary politics has rather fractured the body politics in the sense that without women participation and sharing of power at par with men politics looks broken and divisive. We the people looks incomplete without women. We the people should not be gendered; it is constitutive of both men and women not people in abstract. While making legislations or taking important decisions listening to women in debates and discussions would indubitably provide a new dimension and different perspective to the decisions thus enriching qualitatively the functioning of democracy. Despite protest movements by feminists in India the required reservation for women in Indian Parliament and state assemblies is yet to see its mention in Indian constitution.

Rise of Civil Society

Nowhere in democracies of the world, 'we the people' rules, rather it is the state – its efficient head, the government rules. Another noticeable development in recent years that subverts or tries to intervene into the affairs of the state is the rise of civil societies which work as an intermediary between people and the state. It manufactures public opinion to suit its interest. But in reality, it is quite contradictory and divisive. Comprised of elites and professionals from industries, business circles, corporates, bureaucracies, social activists and human rights activists, civil societies serve the interests of those they represent. They try to bully government into pressurized politics to serve their vested interests. For example, the trade unions, business groups, social activists and human rights activists being well organized try to inject their own ideological moorings into body politics by stirring sectional interests to the notice of the government at the expense of the interest of the less organized, illiterate and politically inactive and unconscious. These bodies by their pressure tactics enter into the domain of policy making. In the name of efficient and effective administration they tend to ignore the interests of the ordinary citizens (Maier Charles S, 1975); Berger Suzanne, 1981; Koppell, 2003).

Candidly speaking civil society is not society. It is a miniscule organization of elites representing the sectional interests of the group they lead. Through the use of their ideological differences with the party in power, it has the capability to ferment popular discontentment with the government into a formidable force to be reckoned with. It easily magnifies the sectional interests as people's interest. This exposes the fractured and divisive politics of the civil society by using 'we the people' as a politically motivated cliché. They are not elected bodies but they pretend to enjoy the benefits the elected representatives enjoy by wishing to have all political decisions hatched and groomed by them.

The attempts by the civil society to replace 'we the people' have been a monstrous development in the contemporary politics leading to malfunctioning of democracy and hamstringing of democratization of civil society. For example, the Human Rights based groups claim for justice and rights of not only citizens but also that of terrorists undermining the rights of military forces and victims of the society exposes the political vendetta they have against the government in their quivers of narrow politics directed and funded by outside forces. These groups try to create certain legal entitlements to citizens as a different group of equals within a well governed political community. Without effectiveness and efficacy of democratic governance to meet the various basic human needs, aspirations, and hopes of people and to realise human rights, to render justice to the marginalised and excluded section of the society and to ensure that administration is based on transparency and principles of natural justice, in India is recently found emergence of an activated civil society supposedly representing the voice of 'We the people' in India. The growing number of NGOs addressing people's concerns, active participation of individuals in Civil Society movements as evidenced for Ann Hazare's and Ramdev's clarion call to government to take strong measures to remove corruption from Indian body politic in the form of a Jan Lokpal bill and rise of individuals through a network of various organisations seem to form the hyphen that joins the 'We the people' with functionaries of democratic governance and remains the formidable challenge to the accountability of the government. Many NGOs allegedly receiving huge funds from abroad and agencies in the name of serving the people for disintegrating India, converting Hindus into other religions have been on the radar of the BJP government and some have been banned. Sometimes, it has taken the degenerated form of urban Naxalites supporting the

Maoists in India and helping the missionaries.

Democracy and rule by nobody

The continuing debates and various reflective interpretations caught in the contradiction between the classical origin of democracy in the demos and the present cliché to identify with rule by the people have immensely influenced our understanding of democracy. Michael Mann quite aware of these clichés working in democracy infested with violence, stressed on the need for sharpening one's gaze into the functioning of popular sovereignty (1999: 18-45). Highly critical of the ubiquitously imitated western liberal democracy and people's fiendish for its market economy and territorially defined sovereign state, he suggested a melange of measures to blot out violence from democracy that include ban on arms sale, political and military interventions, and perpetration of crimes against humanity. Democracy has not become a solution or alternative to authoritarianism, dictatorial or military or totalitarian regimes rather turned out to be more problematic. It is too far stretched a conclusion to be simply acquiesced in. Mann has underrated many modern democratic systems having created many institutions to ensure people's participation and sharing in power. He seems to have reiterated what Carl Schmitt has said in his critique of democracy (1985:8). He simply ignored the possibilities for new thinking in democracy that would get a riddance of violence and clichés.

If classical origin of demos is any indication, then what we say as democracy is not true democracy. It originated as a struggle for power by the rich disposed farmers and till now continues to be struggle for power among various groups, political parties and vested interest. The myth of popular sovereignty was created to camouflage people into accepting the rule by the party in power. In the name of 'we the people', democracy has been deified to enforce the rule by the vested interests in power over the people. To define democracy as rule by 'we the people' in theory and practice is an ideal, a distant goal or signpost to be attained by the people themselves. We are far away from this goal. But setting our eyes on this distant and reachable goal enkindles in us an undying urge for more new thinking and exploring innovative ways by which the flawed democratic regimes could be reinvented to make people in their pluralities and multiplicity of thinking, ideas and interactions and interconnectedness the real decision makers, the real custodian and enjoyer of power. It is not an exercise of power over others. It is just facilitating what is good for others. The others are free to define and monitor what is good to them. It envisages and outlines the glow of a new democratic system not necessarily built on western foundation that demystifies 'we the people' devoid of all clichés, myths, and demagogues and nips in the bud the scope for application of physical forces. There will be no occasion to cite the mystical metaphor 'we the people' to perpetuate the rule by the vested interests by the might of the sword (Croce, 1954:94).

Since the origin of demos defining democracy, many strides have been taken to identify it with rule by the people. Though it has not yet been translated into reality in practice it remains till today an ideal type inspiring and obligating nations to reach the goal. The more it cruises to the goal, the more one state is considered democratic. Here, the people are considered as the disembodied decision-making edifice bound by equality, freedom and plurality of ideas, thinking and ways of life within the broad mainstream of the immortal values and ideals enshrined in its glorified culture and spiritual tradition. Plurality and diversities are to be promoted and encouraged to the extent that these are not disturbing the overall spirit of unity. All these

are like individualized threads woven together in harmony to produce the beautiful tapestry. Before the advent of democracy or when it was in its incipience, in all political systems was found the centrality of the mystic body politic identified with the body of the kings or monarchs (Kantorowicz, 1957).

King was considered as the direct representative of God. Like God, he was immortal, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. His body was considered immortal representing the body politic, the physical body of God. It never dies. Kings may go and come but the body politic remains forever as mystically representing the immortality of God. It continues unbreakably. In democratic regimes with the change of prime ministers or rulers, the body politic continues and never breaks held together or integrated by the mystical belief in the immortality of God and so the body of kings. With the replacement of these monarchical regimes by democratic systems, the immortality of unbreakable body politic continues by constantly recharging the mystical faith in the immortality of God and so the body of the king, His representative. So, in democratic regimes the mystical and unbreakable body politic is said to be represented by the party in power and the people are asked to obey the mystical body politic with a religious dedication and obeisance as they obey the immortal God. To hold it the other way that we the people represents the body of God and is the receptacle of sovereignty. The aphorism that voice of people is the voice of God is what makes democracy truly perfect in allowing people to rule.

To make a fetish of leaders larger than the life size of body politic remains the greatest nuisance to the 'We the people'. The personal motivations, prejudices, and inclination to identify them with the position they are holding will seriously affect the functioning of democracy. In the past this was true of Mussolini. Hitler, Lenin and Mao making a deification of their rule to which the people remained subjugated. During emergency period in 1975 the common cliché doing the rounds throughout India was 'Indira is India'. That the government is not to dictate, command and order but to carry out and translate the wishes of 'We the people' constitutes one of the basic nuances of governance and is yet to characterize the body politic. 'Rule by nobody' gives the impression of an anarchic state. But the implication in a democracy is that 'we the people' get so much involved in decision making and deliberations that it seems democracy is not rule by a particular leader but by the whole.

CONCLUSION

Democracy has been very conveniently identified with rule by the people. The people are not an identifiable entity which eludes any kind of location. It has become just a mysterious abstraction of the multiplicity and heterogeneity of individuals assembled with different interests, attitudes, aspirations, cultures and values. The body politic is identifiable with that of the leader in power. One example from early 2004: Vice President of US Dick Cheney who suffers from a well-known heart complaint suddenly retired from a Washington press conference with a grim look on his face saying: I feel laughter coming on (Berman, 2004). It is not we the people that rules. It is nobody who rules. Body politic is not immortal as the body of the king or God. It is no longer crowned with the mystery of immortality. It has been subject to contestations, questioning and breaking into fragmentations. It is not vertically placed to issue commands, and pontificate others. It is flattened to the ground where people as individuals live. There is no longer the rule, the dictates of the leader or party in power. There exists no hierarchical command-obedience relationship. 'Nobody rules' means those who exercise power are also guided by various mechanisms, limitations and

nuances of power sharing. Exercising power with an imperial clout or attitude of a master subduing the subordinate, bullying or applying force over others to accept the commands as law are anathema to the art of governance.

Democracy is otherwise called a system of disjoining and separating as Pierre Manent has observed (2001: Chapter one) to instantiate that nobody rules. In democracies, everything seems separated and disconnected: civil society from government, representatives from those whom they represent, executives from legislatures, majorities from minorities, civil power from military and police power, parties from voters, consumption from production, journalists from audiences, workers from capitalists, lawyers from clients, doctors from patients. All institutions, civil society and government are internally fragmented, interconnected and separated from each other and criss-crossed in multiple ways. These are the result of individual and citizens' freedom from concentration of power in few hands. There is power percolated to all the levels, groups and individuals and in complex democracies power is without any sting. Power here is not command or application of force. It is the art of sharing power among all. It is providing opportunities to share in decision making on the basis of equality and freedom. Power limits the power itself. Power is exercised from a position of powerlessness. There is always an exit door from power.

It is a misnomer to say complex democracies as polyarchies (Dahl, 1956). Dahl's original choice of the term polyarchy was unfortunate, for note that the original Greek term *polyarchia* by virtue of its dependence upon the verb *archein* (to command, to rule, used interchangeably with *kratein*) is a carrier of exactly same connotations of violent rule as *demokratia* (Dahl, 1956, chapter-3). Democracies advocate decentralization of power by building these into a web of multiple and differentiated institutions. These are characterized by equalization of freedom, delegitimization of violent power, demystifying we the people and cracking the notion of homogenous integrated body politic. In complex democracies there is nothing like winners and losers. All are gainers only. Winners exercise as much [power as the losers do. Provisions of a free and fair elections with not only one vote for one man in relation to one interest but with multiple votes in relation to plurality of interests (Cole, 1920). All are not mere pawns in the crisscross game of politics of chess but are equally active in their moves and counter moves. Moves and counter moves are equally rewarded on the basis of equality, freedom and justice.

All said above does not mean that complex democracies lead to chaos and anarchy. They enforce rule by nobody replacing the fictional myth 'we the people'. They ensure a power structure decentralized and decentred at every level of multiplicities in the society. Power is like a net where every node in it reflects the will and aspiration of the other node while expressing its own. The ultimate power that delivers judgment and takes the decision, in reality reflects power at every centre of multiplicity of institutions, organizations, and human relations giving the impression that it is nobody that rules for more efficiency and effectiveness. With no overarching ultimate centre of power, these democracies open up the possibilities of change, correction or reversion of every decision or judgment taken. Mechanisms of citizens' forum alternative communication and information centres for interpretations of decisions are there to rethink the decisions already taken. Protestations, countermoves and free debates without any hindrances are like fresh air of dynamism that are breathed into the working of democracies as a new way of life, a new of thinking and a new way of governing. Nothing like

we the people remains. The citizen's participation is not subject to any control by the government. They are not bound by any identity with the state or defined by the state or by their position in the society (Foucault, 1983). The traditionally ingrained view that king represents the sovereignty and is as powerful as the God, has been carried on till today as the mythical aspect of democracy. What requires is to "cut off the head of the king" ((Foucault, 1972/1980: 121). It is not the government that rules and controls the people, it is the people that rules and governs the government.

Though there have been many provisions in the constitution of India facilitating people's participation in the system of governance and sharing of power, the 'we the people', the real fountain of sovereign power of the state does hardly find any active participation in the decision making. 'We the people' stands for togetherness. In practice it is not. It is not homogeneous. It is constituted of people belonging to different categories in terms of demography, possessions rich and poor, haves and have nots, educated and not educated, employed and unemployed, urban and rural, tribal and non-tribal and in terms of caste and religion. On political and socio-economic issues, all categories do not stand together. All are guided by their own vested interests. The togetherness is found absent on issues affecting the poor, marginalized and tribal people of the country. The political parties and pressure groups try to convert these issues as national issues but it is for their political interests and to settle scores against the ruling parties. On grave issues affecting national unity and integrity of the nation the togetherness or we the people get tied together by the emotional and psychological identity with the nation. 'We the people' has become a convenient working hypothesis for the power at the centre or national level to establish legitimacy and has set the goal for the ruling parties to create more and more constitutional provisions for people's participation in decision making taking into account their needs, aspirations and demands. Ultimately, democracy will get a real metamorphosis with 'we the people' getting closer to togetherness.

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