

The Corruption of Lobbying in Democracy

Most Democratic nations allow lobbying institutionally where wealthy individuals or corporations fund electoral candidates with an unstated expectation on return of favours. These favours handed down in the form of legislation that secures or furthers the interests of the corporations and in most cases against the interests of the very constituency or country that they are supposed to represent. Lobbying has been legal in the U.S, the supposed greatest democracy on the planet, since the First Amendment to its Constitution in the year 1791 [1]. The Democratic framework allows this kind of funding and political influence by Corporates and wealthy elites as they are part of the people who have the right to influence the elected representatives of the parliament in passing laws that benefit the masses [2]. For instance in the US corporate donors have a reported spend of over \$2.6 billion a year as lobbying expenditures [3].

The situation is no different when compared to the largest democracy on the planet, India. A new model of funding political parties called “Electoral Bonds Scheme” was introduced by the NDA government in 2017 claiming to curb under-the-table transactions and thereby eradicating black money [4]. Through this scheme, the funding of political parties by corporates and wealthy business elite has been legalized, thereby giving them undue political influence. This process is termed as Lobbying. The current ruling BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) got the lion’s share of Rs 1451 crores (almost 75%) in the year 2019 through this scheme [5].

Flawed representative model of Democracy

The corporate companies and business elite always compete for political influence through their influence of the elected members of parliament who are the representatives of the people. Funding by these elite has always given them an edge over the political process in representing their own selfish interests rather than the interests of the masses. The periodic election campaigning of political parties involves huge funds spent on all means of advertisements and publicity campaigns. These funds provided by the corporate lobbies’ help the political parties come to power. The return of investment for the corporate lobbies are the laws passed in the parliament to serve their interests at the cost of the interests of the masses which the Democratic political system claims to represent.

Corporates and the wealthy elite are the major contributors of the GDP. According to the Capitalist thought, they are the prominent producers of the limited resources who would satisfy the unlimited needs of the masses. This entails the theory that the well-being of the Capitalist is the well-being of the people as the needs of the people would be satisfied by increasing production. This is why even when laws are passed apparently benefitting these corporations, it is not seen as a problem because this would help them contribute better to the GDP which is a measure of the health of a country’s economy [6]. The fundamental theory of Capitalism claims that the needs of man are unlimited whereas the resources required to satisfy these needs are limited. Therefore, the economic problem in Capitalism is making the resources available through production to satisfy the unlimited needs.

The Islamic model

Allah (swt) has revealed a unique system for humankind which is free from the flaws of the man-made Democratic system. There are various checks and balances in the Islamic system that prevent corruptive practices like lobbying.

1. Under the Khilafah (Caliphate), sovereignty is for the laws of Allah (swt) which is objective and cannot be manipulated to serve the interest of the wealthy elite. The objective Sharia laws benefit humankind and not the wealthy elites at the cost of the welfare of the

people.

2. Unlike the Democratic system, there are no periodic elections in the Khilafah. According to the Article 39 and Article 40 of the Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir, there is no limitation on the Khaleefah's period in office unless the situation of the Khaleefah changes where either one of his qualifying conditions becomes void or he loses the ability to fulfil his responsibilities. Moreover, there is no election campaigning like in Democracies, which demands huge funds, as the duty of the evaluation and nomination for the post of the Khaleefah is performed by the Majlis-al-Ummah. The Majlis-al-Ummah assesses the conformity of the suitable candidates based on the contractual conditions and presents the credentials of the candidates to the Ummah. This process is explained in Article 34.

3. The Mahkamatul-Mazalim (The Court of Unjust Acts) which is part of the judicial system of the Khilafah keeps a check on such influences on government officials. In case of involvement of any such corrupt practices by the Khaleefah, the Mahkamatul-Mazalim has the right to remove him as mentioned in Article 41 of the Draft Constitution.

4. The focus of the Economic system of Islam is on distribution of resources and not on the production of resources. Islam defines the economic problem as the presence of poverty and inability to satisfy the basic needs i.e. food, shelter and clothing. The design of the Islamic economic system is such that it paves way for the flow and distribution of wealth as compared to the Capitalist economic system which results in the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. Rasoolullah (saw) said: «لَيْسَ لِابْنِ آدَمَ حَقٌّ فِي سِوَى هَذِهِ الْخِصَالِ بَيْنَتْ يَسْكُنُهُ وَتَوْبٌ يُؤَارِي عَوْرَتَهُ وَجَنْفُ الْخُبْزِ وَالْمَاءُ» ***"The Son of Adam has no better right than that he would have a house wherein he may live, a piece of clothing whereby he may hide his nakedness and a piece of bread and some water."*** [Tirmidhi]

Conclusion

Muslims must reject this deceptive kufr system of Democracy which is full of inconsistencies and contradictions and must call for the system of Allah (swt) i.e. the just system of Khilafah, the only system that can bring mankind from the Darkness of democracy to the Light of Islam.

Allah (swt) says:

﴿الرَّ كِتَابَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ﴾

“[This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that you might bring mankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord - to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy” [14:1].

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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