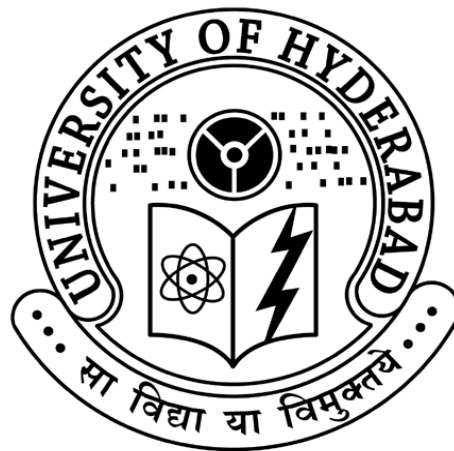


**TECHNOLOGY ENABLED DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY:  
A CROSS-COUNTRY STUDY OF PRACTICES**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED DURING THE YEAR 2016 TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**BY**

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December 2016**

*“I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion” – Thomas Jefferson*

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD**

\*\*\*\*\*

**DECLARATION**

*I hereby declare that the work embodied in the present thesis entitled “**Technology Enabled Deliberative Democracy: A Cross-Country Study of Practices**” is an original research work carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr. E. Venkatesu**, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science from the University of Hyderabad. I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis is earlier submitted for the award of any research degree in part or full to any other university, and that the thesis is plagiarism free.*

**Date:**

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**Place: Hyderabad**

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Technology Enabled Deliberative Democracy: A Cross-Country Study of Practices**” submitted by **A. Umapathi** bearing registration number **11SPPH10** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science is a bonafide work carried out by him under my guidance.

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1.	SP600	Research Methodology I	4.00	Pass
2.	SP601	Research Methodology II	4.00	Pass
3.	SP604	Advance Theories in Public Policy and Public Administration	4.00	Pass
4.	SP608	The Politics of Public Realm and the Private: The Case of Media in India	4.00	Pass

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**Dean of School**

## ***Acknowledgements***

*I thank my supervisor Dr. E. Venkatesu for his valuable insights, kind cooperation and patient understanding during my entire research. I thank my doctoral committee Prof. G. Sudharshanam and Prof. I. Ramabrahmam for spending their valuable time in shaping my research. I thank Prof. K. C. Suri and Prof. Sanjay Pulshikar for their valuable insights that helped me in shaping the thesis. I thank Prof. Vasanthi Srinivasan (Head, Department of Political Science) and other faculty members for their support during the entire duration of the research. I thank the political science department staff for their support during the entire duration of the research. I am thankful to my family and friends for making this thesis possible.*

*A. Umapathi*

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## Glossary of Terms

*(Notes: Below definitions are based on researcher's understanding of the terms, and should not be compared to any standard definitions found in different books or definitions given by particular authors)*

**Communicative Rationality or Communicative Reason:** The reasoned position that an individual takes after proper communication.

**Deliberative Polling:** A polling practice that depends on different sampling techniques to select the deliberators in a deliberative democracy.

**Deliberative Democracy:** A democratic practice that depends on deliberation (by public, stakeholders etc.) and consensus generation as a central approach to decision making.

**Deliberative Opinion Poll:** Opinion generated by the deliberators (selected through deliberative polling) after thorough deliberation.

**Democratic Diarchy:** A two way mechanism of interest generation, interest aggregation, and interest imposition in a representative democratic practice where the public impose their interests on the representative entities—and the representative entities, in turn, generate, aggregate and impose particular interests on the public.

**Democratic Power:** 'Legitimate' power generated by 'people' in a democratic practice through various electoral means.

**Elite Democracy:** A democratic practice where a small section of elite (political parties, corporations, bureaucrats etc.) control significant component of democratic power.

**Liberal Democracy:** A democratic practice that is based on representation—and its allied institutional practices like elections, separation of power, checks and balances etc.

**Mandate-to-Rule:** A representative democratic practice where the mandate (on few aspects) given by the people is considered as an endorsement of all the decisions that the government takes 'on-behalf-of' the people while exercising democratic power.

**Non-Deliberative (Participatory) Democratic Practices:** All democratic practices (except deliberative democracy) where the role of the public is limited to participatory practices without involving them in the decision making process directly.

**Participatory Democracy:** A democratic practice that emphasizes the necessity to engage the public in the democratic practice.

**Push-Button-Democracy:** A drawback of direct democratic practice where the voters depreciate themselves to consent or dissent generating entities—by saying *yes or no* to policy proposals without proper reflection and deliberation.

**Representative Entities:** Different interest articulating, interest aggregating and interest generating entities like political parties, interest groups, pressure groups, civil society organizations, media etc. that 'represent' the interests of the public in a representative democratic practice.

**Strong Democracy:** A variant of participatory democracy that emphasizes the necessity to engage the public in the democratic practice.

## **List of Abbreviations**

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

EU: European Union

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

MNC: Multi-National Corporation

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NHS: National Health Service

SMS: Short Message Service

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UK: United Kingdom

US: United States

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

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## Introduction and Objectives of the Study

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### 1. 1. Introduction

The interface between the public and the government is changing with the advancements in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The government and the governed are getting closer day by day with the spread of ICT. This increased engagement of people with the government is transforming the way the government functions, the way it takes decisions on a particular policy of public importance, and the methods used by it to engage people in the decision making process at different levels. The advancements in ICT also have changed the way we understand and practice concepts like accountability, participation and democracy. The boundaries of these concepts are being redrawn, and the flow of information has become two sided—from the government to the governed—and from the governed to the government. The participation of people in the public affairs or on issues of public importance has increased immensely paving ways for active participation of people in the decision making process. This enhanced participation of the public in the democratic process due to the advancements in ICT is providing us an opportunity to include the public in the decision making process in a deliberative manner<sup>1</sup>.

Democratic government denotes the authority that it commands by the virtue of consent generated by the people<sup>2</sup>. Governments, with the ‘authority’ to govern, have been governing the people by taking decisions on behalf of them. But this trend has been on change in the recent decades with demands for more inclusion of the people in the decision making process. The more the inclusion of the people in the decision making process the more inclusive the democratic practice is, and the legitimacy of the democratic government is positively dependent on how open and how accessible it is to the people<sup>3</sup>. Different variants of democratic

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<sup>1</sup> Dahlberg, L & Siapera, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>2</sup> Pitkin, H, F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. London. University of California Press.

<sup>3</sup> Stoker, G and Chhotray, V. (2009). *Governance Theory and Practice: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

practices like representative democracy, direct democracy, strong democracy, participatory democracy etc. attempt to expand the role of the public in the democratic process by including them in various degrees at various levels. Involving the public in the democratic process adds more legitimacy, transparency, accountability and plurality to a government policy or decision. Different participatory practices like participatory budgeting, community based implementation of the government policies, involving the civil society organizations and NGOs in the governing process, involving the private sector as partners, involving advocacy groups, voluntary associations, youth clubs etc. are aimed at making these democratic practices as participatory as possible<sup>4</sup>.

But all these democratic practices lack one thing in common; the inclusion of citizens in the decision making process. Decisions are taken by the representatives ‘on-behalf’ of the people, and these decisions command legitimacy due to the consent that the representatives are conferred with by the people through different electoral practices. Hence, the elected representatives are the real decision makers in a democracy. Theoretically, the elected representatives aggregate the interests of the people in a continuous manner and take appropriate decisions to address the aggregated interests<sup>5</sup>. But democratic practice, because of its dependency on representative methods, turns out to be a diarchic (Democratic Diarchy) practice where people impose their will on their representatives—and representatives (and the political systemic practices), in turn, impose their will on the people<sup>6</sup>. This diarchic practice, practiced in convergence with numerical majority based representative practices, takes away the role of the voters in the decision making process by depreciating them to consent/dissent expressing entities. Individual voter’s choice becomes untraceable, and choices that win the electoral contest becomes the democratic (forced) choice that the individual voter is ‘consenting’ for. The winning and losing choices of the electorate are choices aggregated (or generated) by different representative entities like political parties, interest groups, media, civil society organizations etc., and how far the aggregations made by these representative entities

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<sup>4</sup> Manoharan, A & Holzer, M. (2012). *E-Governance and Civic Engagement: Factors and Determinants of E-Democracy*. Hershey. Information Science Reference.

<sup>5</sup> Fishkin, J, S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Urbinati, N. (2014). *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

reflect the real choices of the people is questionable. This apparently leads to questions like who is representing who in a representative democracy. Are the peoples' choices getting represented without misrepresentation? Are all the choices expressed by people getting represented or only some choices are getting represented? What is the methodology followed by non-electoral 'representative' entities like mass media and civil society organizations to aggregate the choices of the people? Does the choices picked up by these entities reflect the position of majority public? Are the election based political parties articulating the interests of the public in a precise manner? Or, are they generating particular interests among the public?<sup>7</sup>

All the above mentioned representative entities aggregate the interests of the public—and also generate particular interests among the public<sup>8</sup>. This diarchic way of aggregation and generation of interests by different 'representative' entities leaves the voters choices in the periphery, especially when these entities are generating particular interests among the public. And generation of specific interests or choices among the public has been the dominant activity of different 'representative' entities like political parties, mass media, civil society organizations etc. in a representative democracy<sup>9</sup>. All these 'representative' practices keeps the democratic practice to a minimal level. Public choices and the power of the public to take decisions are taken away from the public by the representative systems in a representative democracy. Hence, representative political systems can be said to be 'un-representative', especially when it comes to representing independent public interests. And what they represent is usually reduced to subsistence related policies that limit the role of the public to endorse or reject a tiny manifesto of a political party or candidate. The manifesto that is endorsed by the public, which becomes a mandate, is taken as 'mandate-to-rule', and the representatives 'legitimately' use this mandate-to-rule to exercise 'democratic-power' for a stipulated period. Meanwhile, the voters, who have been instrumental in generating the democratic-power

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<sup>7</sup> Pitkin, H, F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. London. University of California Press.

<sup>8</sup> Urbinati, N. (2014). *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

<sup>9</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

through different electoral means are excluded from the decision making process during this whole period making representative democracy virtually un-representative of voters choices<sup>10</sup>.

This form of democratic practice retains the decision making powers within the domain of the few elected representatives, and the role of public is limited to different feedback or monitoring activities. This effectively cuts down the public engagement in the decision making process. But measures like involving the community in implementing certain programs, involving the public in the auditing process, creation of different types of transparency and accountability structures, feedback mechanisms about a particular policy, dissemination of information about a policy, restructuring or redesigning the policy in accordance with the feedback of the public etc. non-deliberative participatory practices are used to generate legitimacy<sup>11</sup>.

While representative democracy pushes the voters choices to the periphery, direct democracy, which is supposed to include the people directly in the decision making process, leaves the people unaccountable as it becomes difficult to hold all the people or the majority of the people accountable for their decisions. Besides accountability issues, direct democratic practice turns out to be a frequent vote casting exercise for the electorate without proper deliberation. The electorate, because of their frequent involvement in the decision making process, depreciate themselves to answering machines with yes or no options aggregated through plebiscites or referendums thus reducing direct democratic practice to a “*push-button-democracy*” (p-89)<sup>12</sup>. Discussion among the public about the issue in question becomes a peripheral activity, and the electorate engage themselves in the voting process with minimal or no idea about the issue that they are voting for. Continuous repetition of this process leads to

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<sup>10</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>11</sup> Parkinson, J & Mansbridge, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. See also, Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>12</sup> Hilbert, M. The Maturing Concept of E-Democracy: From E-Voting and Online Consultations to Democratic Value Out of Jumbled Online Chatter. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*. Vol. 6. (2009): 87 – 110.

voter apathy thus leading to ‘engaged-disengagement’ of the electorate in the direct democratic practice<sup>13</sup>.

The failure of representative and direct democratic practices in accommodating the electorate to independently deliberate and to take decisions makes the electorate distant entities to these democratic practice. Representative democratic practices marginalizes the voters’ choices<sup>14</sup>, and direct democratic practices do not allow proper deliberation among the public about the issues and turns out to be a mere voting practice for the electorate<sup>15</sup>. In both these practices policy decisions are taken by the government, and then the public is made to involve in the implementation process either in the form of monitoring and evaluation of policy or in the form of giving feedback regarding various elements of the policy. This process certainly enriches the policy outcome, nonetheless, it misses the basic element of the democratic argument; involving public in the decision making process i.e., the decisions are still made by the government, and people are involved later to generate legitimacy through feedback, plebiscite voting etc. The authority to use democratic power still resides with the government and people are made to feel that they are exercising the democratic power. But the range of ‘power’ that people are exercising makes us wonder whether the concept of democracy has any meaning at all except that it involves the people to add legitimacy to the authority of the government and its decisions. Hence, people are not governing—they are still governed—governed more legitimately. This is where the notion of deliberative democracy promises to make a difference—by making a paradigm shift in the decision making process<sup>16</sup>.

As long as people stay away from the decision making process or as long as someone is taking decisions on behalf of the people, it can be convincingly argued that they are still governed from above—and all the non-deliberative participatory democratic practices are actually meant to add weight to the government’s decisions, or, are ways to shun the

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<sup>13</sup> Urbinati, N. (2014). *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

<sup>14</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>15</sup> Urbinati, N. (2014). *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

<sup>16</sup> Fishkin, J, S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press.

alternatives that could possibly emerge if people were to be *really* involved in the decision making process. Governments taking decisions on behalf of the people intrinsically involves use of authority by the governments and people cannot be said to have exercised this authority unless they are involved in the decision making process in a significant manner<sup>17</sup>. Contrary to non-deliberative representative or direct democratic practices, deliberative democracy involves real bottom-up-approach i.e., proposals for a policy or proposals to change the nature and domain of the state starts from the people<sup>18</sup>. This may sound a bit unrealistic as it is too good to assume that people can come up with their own proposals to govern themselves. This ‘pessimism’ has succeeded in keeping the people away from their power so far, and this approach has its own reasons to believe so as it is not possible for the people to come together to make their own legislations and govern themselves due to limitations in mobility, information, and lack of functional structures to aggregate the opinions of the people. In such a situation it is not realistic to expect the people to come together and govern themselves and it is not realistic on the part of the government to allow people to govern themselves. Hence, different forms of democratic practices that we have been experiencing have been keeping people away from the decision making mechanism. Hence, non-deliberative democratic practices have limitations in terms of including the people in the decision making process as the proposals for a policy do not rise from the public but from the government instead. But as long as power to take decisions reside with the government people cannot be said to be included in the decision making process irrespective of the level of their participation in the implementation process. Democratic practice can be said to be inclusive when the people are really part of decision making process<sup>19</sup>. The demand for a policy—and solution to an issue should rise from the people in a deliberative manner. Such a practice is possible in a

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<sup>17</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan. See also, Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>18</sup> Fishkin, J. S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>19</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan. See also, Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

deliberative democracy. Deliberative democratic practice allows the people to take decisions—and to exercise democratic power in a deliberative manner<sup>20</sup>.

## 1. 2. Review of Literature

As discussed in the introduction, the idea of deliberative democracy is an outcome of failure of representative and direct democratic practices in accommodating the people in the decision making process. Gargarella summarizes the functioning style of non-deliberative democratic practices as;

*“Great political and economic decisions on which the fate of mankind rests no longer result today (if they ever did) from balancing opinions in public debate and counter-debate ... Small and exclusive committees of parties or of party coalitions make their decisions behind closed doors, and what representatives of the big capitalist interest groups agree to in the small committees is more important for the fate of millions of people, perhaps, than any political decision” (p-122)<sup>21</sup>.*

Non-deliberative democratic practices place the decision making power in the hands of few elected representative or small ‘expert’ committees. Contrary to this, deliberative democratic practices are more democratic as it is based on the peoples’ power to take decision—after thorough deliberation. Gutmann and Thompson define deliberative democracy as;

*“a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future” (p-7)<sup>22</sup>.*

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<sup>20</sup> Fishkin, J, S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>21</sup> Gargarella, R. (2000). *The Scepter of Reason: Public Discussion and Political Realism in the Origins of Constitutionalism*. Dordrecht. Springer Sciecn+Business Media Publishers.

<sup>22</sup> Gutmann, A. and Thompson, D. (2004). *Why Deliberative Democracy?* New Jersey. Princeton University Press.

The above definition clearly states the democratic nature of a deliberative decision making—and its limited (democratic) applicability to the contemporaries of that particular decision. It is leaving the posterity out of the bounds of the present deliberative decisions implying that the deliberative democratic practice allows the citizens to continuously revise the existing practices as per time, place, and circumstances. Gutmann and Thompson clarify further on the practice of deliberative democracy as;

*“The general aim of deliberative democracy is to provide the most justifiable conception for dealing with moral disagreement in politics. In pursuing this aim, deliberative democracy serves four related purposes. The first is to promote the legitimacy of collective decisions ... the second purpose of deliberation is to encourage public spirited perspectives on public issues ... the third purpose of deliberation is to promote mutually respectful processes of decision-making ... and the fourth purpose of deliberation is to help correct [past] mistakes” (pp. 10-11)<sup>23</sup>.*

Similar arguments in support of deliberative democratic practices were made by Nino. According to Nino, deliberative democratic practices are based on the moral foundations of acceptance. To quote in Nino’s words;

*“Unlike utilitarianism, the economic theory of democracy, elitism, pluralism, and consent theory, the deliberative conception of democracy sees democracy as deeply intertwined with morality and relies on its power to transform people’s preferences into morally acceptable ones” (p-143)<sup>24</sup>.*

Gutmann and Thompson are also of the opinion that deliberative democratic practices convert the individual choices into choices that are acceptable to others. To put it in their own words, *“a well-constituted deliberative forum provides an opportunity for advancing both individual and collective understanding” (p-12)<sup>25</sup>.* Gargarella’s understanding of deliberative

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Nino, C, S. (1996). *The Constitution of Deliberative Democracy*. New Haven & London. Yale University Press.

<sup>25</sup> Gutmann, A. and Thompson, D. (2004). *Why Deliberative Democracy?* New Jersey. Princeton University Press.

democracy also supports the argument that deliberative democratic practices convert individual choices into choices that are acceptable to others. To quote in Gargarella's words;

*“A deliberative system may force each person to modify his or her favored arguments in order to make them acceptable to others. In effect, the mere desire to convince others of the plausibility of our preferred choices (a somehow natural desire within a deliberative political system) tends to force us, for example, to filter out merely self-interested arguments” (p-96)<sup>26</sup>.*

According to Fung and Wright deliberative democratic practices help in serving democratic values like justice and legitimacy as the decisions are taken by the people after a thorough deliberation<sup>27</sup>. According to Habermas, the communicative-rationality of the people involved in the deliberation process forces the participants to take a rational position that is acceptable to all<sup>28</sup>. Communicative-rationality of individuals play a major role in deliberative democratic practices. Similarly, communication related tools or platforms play an important role in establishing the ground that is required for the deliberative democratic practices to take shape. Hence, according to Habermas, the public sphere that the deliberative practices are grounded in, should accommodate free flow of communication so that the communicative-rationality of the individuals can lead to deliberative outcomes<sup>29</sup>. Different communication related platforms can help individuals to use their communicative-rationality for deliberative decision making purposes. Recent advancements in ICT are creating communicative and conjunctional platforms that are required to practice deliberative democracy<sup>30</sup>. In the wake of

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<sup>26</sup> Gargarella, R. (2000). *The Scepter of Reason: Public Discussion and Political Realism in the Origins of Constitutionalism*. Dordrecht. Springer Science+Business Media Publishers.

<sup>27</sup> Fung, A and Wright, E, O. *Deepening Democracy; Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*. New York, Verso Publishing. 2003.

<sup>28</sup> Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston. Beacon Press.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications. See also, Dahlberg, L. The internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere. *Journal of information, communication & society*. Vo. 4. No. 4. (2001): 615 – 633; Dahlberg, L. The Internet, deliberative democracy, and power: Radicalizing the public sphere. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*. Vo. 3. No. 1. (2007): 47 – 64; Gerodimos, R. Democracy and the Internet: Access, Engagement and Deliberation. *Journal of Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics*. Vo.3. No. 6. (2006): 26 – 31.

these advancements in ICT, communication among the individuals has been leading to escalation in communication-action<sup>31</sup>, thus escalating deliberative democratic practices. These advancements in ICT can be used as platforms through which deliberative democratic practices can be practiced. The present study focusses on to examine how the advancements in ICT are being used as a platform to practice deliberative democracy.

### **1. 3. Objectives of the Study**

- To critically analyze the deficit nature of non-deliberative (representative and direct) democratic practices.
- To examine the notion of deliberative democracy.
- To critically analyze the role of communication methods (mass media, and ICT) in transforming democratic practices.
- To make a cross-country comparison of modalities of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices in different parts of the world.

### **1. 4. Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on the emerging deliberative democratic practices and the role of ICTs in facilitating these practices. As the idea of deliberative democracy through ICTs is in promotion stage, the study will take into consideration the deliberative democratic practices that have been practiced through ICTs in different countries in the last three decades.

### **1. 5. Source of Data and Research Methodology**

The research is based on secondary source of data. Secondary sources of data include case studies developed by analyzing identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices from different counties. The case studies are developed by using various sources like reports compiled by civil society organizations, research institutes, local self-governing bodies,

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<sup>31</sup> Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston. Beacon Press.

community halls, citizens' jury etc. entities that have been involved in deliberative democratic practices. Sources like websites of the above said entities, literature available on the above said practices, books, articles, and scholarly works related to the topic are also used. The research method used for the study include comparative analysis of selected case studies of deliberative democratic practices. Simple random sampling is used for the selection of case studies for the study. The selection of case studies for the study goes like this...

- In stage one, all the ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices around the world are identified through secondary sources of data like reports, books, articles, websites etc.
- In stage two, identified deliberative democratic practices are divided into two categories; (i) deliberative democratic practices with deliberative polling, and (ii) deliberative democratic practices without deliberative polling.
- In stage three, all the identified deliberative democratic practices are grouped into four broad categories based on the regime type of country of their practices. *The Economist—Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015* was used to divide the identified practices into four broad categories based on the regime types which are; (i) ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices in full-democracies, (ii) ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices in flawed-democracies, (iii) ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices in hybrid-regimes, and (iv) ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices in authoritarian-regimes. Other indexes like *Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index 2015* by International Telecommunications Union, and *Freedom House's Freedom Index 2015*, *Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index 2015*, and *Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2015* were also used to categorize the identified deliberative democratic practices.
- In stage four, only deliberative democratic practices with deliberative polling were shortlisted for the study. So, only deliberative democratic practices with deliberative polling acted as the population from which the case studies for the study were taken. Random sampling method was used to select case studies of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices from countries based on the category of the regime type. Care was taken to see that practices from different regimes types were selected for the study.

Specific methodology used by specific deliberative democratic practice has been explained in detail in respective case studies in chapter six.

## **1. 6. Limitations of the Study**

Though care was taken to make the study as critical and as inclusive as possible the study has few limitations which are as follows...

- First, the study is based on the secondary sources of data as it is difficult to collect primary sources of data from different countries.
- Second, the list of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices cannot be said to be exhaustive as these practices are identified based on secondary sources of data like websites, civil society reports, reports by research institutes etc., and many practices may have not been reported through secondary sources. Besides that, ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are in the promotion stage, and the literature available on these practices are scarce. Hence, the list of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices is limited to practices that have been reported widely.
- Third, though simple random sampling was used to select the case studies for deliberative democratic practices, its applicability is limited by factors like unavailability of deliberative democratic practices under certain regime types or countries thus making the study to pick up the limited (or sole) number of deliberative democratic practices available from such regime types. Case studies from China and Uganda fall under this category.

## **1. 7. Chapterization**

The thesis includes seven chapters which are as follows...

1. **Introduction and Objectives of the Study:** This chapter covers the introductory part which deals with the research problem, objectives of the study, research methodology and the chapters planned for the study.
2. **Democracy: A Critical View:** This chapter discusses about the defects in non-deliberative democratic practices, how non-deliberative democratic practices

- effectively disengage people from the decision making process, how non-deliberative democratic practices are limited to majority based number game, and how non-deliberative democratic practices strive to increase the component of ‘legitimate’ state power etc. by generating legitimacy through people and by limiting them to few aspects of the democratic practice like voting.
- 3. Notion of Deliberative Democracy: A Theoretical Framework:** This chapter discusses about deepening the democratic practice by engaging the people in the decision making process. Different variants of democratic practice like Strong Democracy, Participatory Democracy, and Deliberative Democracy are critically discussed. Special emphasis is placed on the notion of Deliberative Democracy, its practice, and the systemic approach required for its practice. The chapter also presents a comparative analysis of strengths and weaknesses of deliberative and non-deliberative democratic practices.
  - 4. ICT based Discursive Public Sphere and Deliberative Democracy:** This chapter critically looks at aspects like transformation of democratic practice in sync with the transformation of the public sphere, and how the transformation of the public sphere is dependent on the changes in the mode of communication related technology. The chapter specially focuses on the aspect of internet derived public sphere and how democratic is this public sphere vis-à-vis Habermas’s public sphere and mass media based public sphere. The necessary conditions required for the practice of deliberative democracy in the background of advancements in ICT derived public sphere is also analyzed critically.
  - 5. ICT enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices: An Overview:** This chapter presents the details of identified ICT enabled deliberative practices, the background of these practices like the regime type in which they are practiced, conditions that are leading to the promotion of such practices, the number of practices at different levels; local, national, transnational etc., whether the practice is ongoing or not etc.
  - 6. Modalities of ICT enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices:** This chapter examines different case studies of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices practiced in different countries at different levels. The chapter also presents different modalities of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices based on the case studies.

7. **Conclusion:** This chapter summarizes the research findings.

## Democracy: A Critical View

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**Abstract:** *This chapter is an attempt to understand the nature of present democracy, its limitations, functional structures, who gets represented, why certain sections represent other sections, how democratic is present democracy etc. Different aspects like different representation mechanisms used in different types of democratic practices, the reasons offered for practicing limited representation, and how consent and legitimacy is generated through minimal representation etc. aspects will be presented critically.*

### 2. 1. Democratic Theory

To start with the famous quotation of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people” (p-819)<sup>32</sup>. This definition of democracy sounds perfectly suited to define what democracy is, how it works, for whom it works etc. but in practice it is questionable whether democracy is really run by the people for themselves. Do all the people really participate in the democratic practice in a democratic manner? If not, who (which components of the population) participates in the democratic process and how are the decisions that they take affect the people? Are the decisions taken by all the people in order to benefit all the people or are the decisions taken by few to benefit few? To address these questions we have to go through how the present form of democracy works, who participates in it, who takes the decisions for whom, and the decision making mechanism that makes it possible or ‘impossible’ for a decision to be taken or for the democracy to be run by the ‘people’ – in a particular ‘democratic’ manner<sup>33</sup>. While the definition given by Lincoln on democracy sounds perfect in an ideal sense different definitions phrased in a pragmatic manner by different social scientists give us altogether a different understanding. These social scientists disagree with Lincoln’s definition of democracy, or has to define democracy in a deviant manner to the one given by Lincoln not because they find problems with Lincoln’s definition

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<sup>32</sup> Epstein, R, A. Direct Democracy: Government of the People, by the People, and for the People. *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*. Vol. 34. No. 3. (2011): 819 – 826.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

of democracy but because his definition is far from what we have been experiencing or practicing in the name of democracy. Now let us have a look at what these social scientists have to say about democracy in a viable sense. Harry Eckstein categorically defines democracy as a method of politics where a set of institutions are established to make the leaders, competitors, political parties or political ideas to compete for the votes of the voters that are taken into count once in a while – periodically in a systematic manner. He filters down the role of democracy to aspects like periodic elections, political equality in a theoretical sense which is limited to universal suffrage, response of the elected leaders in certain policy matters, occasional expansion of the decision making choice to a small segment of the people, and voters right to control the elected leaders from taking arbitrary decisions or decisions that are partisan in nature to the benefit of those in office<sup>34</sup>.

## **2. 2. Representative Democracy: Theory and Practice**

These two definitions, one by Lincoln and another by Harry Eckstein give us a wide range of possibilities to define democracy – both in extremely optimistic—and extremely pessimistic ways. This proves that the concept of democracy is not a static one and that it is obsessively wrong to oversimplify it with a definition and situating it to a time, place and circumstance. It goes on changing with the time, place and in sync with the changing societal environment. If we were to agree with Dryzek that democracy keeps on redefining itself, there are three important aspects that we need to observe in a democracy; franchise, scope, and authenticity. Franchise defines how inclusive a democracy is in expanding the decision making power to the people, scope decides the length and breadth of the issues that are covered or not covered, and finally authenticity defines how the decisions are arrived at—with the participation of all the stakeholders or not<sup>35</sup>.

The present form of democracy i.e., elite democracy, works in the name of the people, and it is not democracy by the people. The government in power legislates or formulates policies on behalf of the people – though with ‘due’ consultation of the stakeholders – but in

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<sup>34</sup> Pitkin, H, F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. London. University of California Press.

<sup>35</sup> Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

actuality neither the legislation is done by the people for themselves nor they are widely consulted on all the policies all the time<sup>36</sup>. In democracy deliberation is done for the people by few; hence it cannot be called as deliberation by the people. Government, bureaucracy, different special committees or teams appointed by the government or legislative bodies constituted for specific purposes play a major role in deliberating policies for the people. These deliberations are taken as democratically arrived at since these committees, teams or government derive their legitimacy to do so from the democratically elected legislatures<sup>37</sup>. According to Barber, the present form of liberal democracy is very limited. It is primarily concerned with aspects like individual liberty, property rights, privacy and rights of the individuals so as to make sure that these individuals do not unite against the arbitrary or skewed policies of the government<sup>38</sup>. Ambrose Bierce cynically defines democracy as “*the conduct of public affairs for private advantage*” (p-4)<sup>39</sup> and Winston Churchill defines democracy as “*the worst form of government in the world, except for all the other forms*” (p-4)<sup>40</sup>.

The legitimacy of a democratic system also comes under the hammer as it leads to important questions like whether it is in a position to convince the people that democracy, with representative practices, is the most appropriate form of political system suitable to the society. In Robert Graftin’s view democracy “*equates legitimacy with stable and effective power, reducing it to a routine submission to authority*” (p-22)<sup>41</sup>. The strength of a democracy depends on how active its citizens are. Bentham and J. S. Mill were of the opinion that people should act against the sinister interests of the government so as to ensure a fair democracy that works for the people. J. S. Mill in particular was of the opinion that the peoples’ sympathies should be for one another and they should cooperate among themselves to negate any personal

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<sup>36</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited. See also, Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>37</sup> Fishkin, J, S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>38</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Parkinson, J. (2006). *Deliberating in the Real World: Problems of Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy*. New York. Oxford University Press.

interests of those in power<sup>42</sup>. Schumpeter was of the opinion that if a democracy was to succeed people should know what exactly they want from the government that is governing them and they should arrive at clear conclusions regarding what they should seek independent of various pressure groups and political propaganda<sup>43</sup>. This gives scope for the people to think and push about things that they face daily. Without such vigilance from the citizens the legitimacy of a political system would take a plummet. Time-series studies that have been done in European countries since 1960s reveal that the trust on the political system has been on a decline continuously in all most all countries. The reason for this decline in confidence on a political system can be attributed to the weak form of liberal democracy that acts ‘on behalf’ of the people, but not acted by the people. Citizens feel let down by the ‘democratic’ system that is in place and is resulting in citizen apathy<sup>44</sup>.

According to Benjamin Barber, citizen apathy seems to be a planned aspect rather than a by-product of liberal democracy<sup>45</sup>. Barber convincingly argues that citizen apathy is a result of planned negative projection of human nature that pitches individuals against each other in the name of individual freedom, privacy, private property, and their fundamental inability to live closely with other individuals<sup>46</sup>. To put it in his own words “*all the three variants (anarchist, realist, and minimalist) of liberal democracy thus seek to structure human relations by keeping men apart rather than by bringing them together. It is their mutual incompatibility that turns men into reluctant citizens and their aggressive solitude that makes them into wary neighbors*” (p-21)<sup>47</sup>. This type of orientation about human nature usually results in mistrust among individuals which keeps them apart in most of the times – making it easy for a system like liberal democracy to put citizens in a condition of apathy when it comes to public matters thus paving a smooth way for the liberal democracy to carry forward in the name of the people without their involvement. The ground work for this type of projection seems to have started

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<sup>42</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Gibson, R, K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>45</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

in pre-theories of liberal democracy itself. Liberalism or liberal democracy succeeded in projecting human beings as materialistic in nature and mutually exclusive thus making them think that human beings are by nature self-centered beasts. To put it in Barber's words "*the axiom sets up materialism as a pre-theoretical base, while the corollaries deal with atomism, indivisibility, commensurability, mutual exclusivity, and sensationalism (as a psychology)*" (p-32)<sup>48</sup>. In the pre-theories of liberal democracy, human beings are projected as unique and each individual is projected as exclusive not only in physical sense but also in socio-political and psychological aspects. While it may be true that human beings can be different in physical and psychological aspects, it is not apparent how they are unique in social and political aspects as these aspects are result of ideas constructed by human being in the historical course, and can be altered, dissuaded, or recreated according to the surrounding environment. This is where success can be attributed to the liberal democracy – constructing human nature as individual and self-centered thus giving clearance for minimal rule and minimal participation<sup>49</sup>.

These conclusions about human nature are generally derived from a peculiar and particular stand point which the individual forgets to recollect after going through different stages of assumptions, hypothetical positions and peculiar experiences taken to influence the outcome. A theory is generally pushed on to an individual by asking her to assume *A*, and through that the *B, C, D ... to N*, final result being *N*. *N* may sound reasonable to the individual as it is derived from *A* in a continuous and logical manner. It is *A* which is illogical—but the individual who has gone through *A* to *N* would not question *A* as she was asked to assume that *A* is a hypothetical position to explore the possibilities till *N*. Arthur Lovejoy points to the "*uniformitarian rationality*" (p-31)<sup>50</sup> that these theoreticians employ so as to make the individuals arrive at one model of reasoning. Lovejoy recalls the name of Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Rawls, Nozick etc. who fall under this category of theoreticians who always ask us to assume things till they make us to arrive at what they want us to understand in the manner they wanted it to be understood but leave the starting point defenseless<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

These type of hypothetical interpretations and conclusions usually make the public believe that there is really no other alternative rather than believing in the one presented to them thus forcing them to stick to the status quo. In such conditions the public sphere also gets manipulated accordingly and the ideas or counter ideas that originate from this manipulated public sphere usually goes hand in hand with the existing power structures. Besides, how vibrant the public sphere is simply depends on the state and the government that controls the public sphere. The ideas or counter ideas that originate from the public sphere can be controlled, planted, manipulated or twisted in accordance with the demands of the state. To quote in Dryzek's words "*the public sphere only takes shape in the presence of the state – however oppositional the stance taken by its key actors and movements*" (p-81)<sup>52</sup>. But it is also true that, historically, expansion of democracy or rights have taken place due to the oppositional stand of public sphere, not because of the state itself though the continuum of the public sphere is often derived from the nature of government in power. Expansion or contraction of the public sphere is often controlled by state through expansion of franchise, by guaranteeing certain rights, and by giving more space for the citizens to participate in the decision making process—though sometimes the public sphere decides the nature of the state like in case of revolutions or successful agitations or freedom movements. But it is also true that a vibrant public sphere continuously tries to put pressure on the state so as to modify it, change it, or to bring it in liaison with the demands of the public. What happens if the public sphere is continuously filled with a certain set of ideas which subsequently would start reinforcing these ideas on the state? We may end up repeating the same ideas, always talking about the same possibilities or impossibilities. The public sphere under the present liberal democracy is fixed in this manner; it is vibrant, but not vibrant enough to fight for expansion of decision making powers to the people, it is changing continuously but the pace is slow enough for the state to maintain status quo<sup>53</sup>.

Certain liberal aspects like franchise, individual freedom, privacy etc. which are predominant part of our public sphere seem to have been given to us so as to make us free from

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<sup>52</sup> Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>53</sup> Livingstone, S. (2005). *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere – Changing Media, Changing Europe Volume 2*. Bristol. Intellect Books.

politics that takes place in the name of democracy. This is what Barber thinks; “*the modern liberal appears to regard it as a republican ideal; man at rest, inactive, non-participating, isolated, un-interfered with, privatized, and thus free*” (p-36)<sup>54</sup>. But Schumpeter’s understanding of the public sphere in liberal democracy is somewhat different and he thinks that the citizen apathy is result of people’s indifferent attitude towards politics and is not a by-product of the public sphere. But Barber disagrees with Schumpeter and alleges that citizen apathy is nothing but a planned aspect to exclude the majority from genuine participation<sup>55</sup>. Fishkin, agreeing with Barber observes that there seems to be demobilization tactics also which is usually employed to demobilize the opposition votes so as to make sure that the opposition party falls short of your own party in elections<sup>56</sup>.

Different dispositions of democracy like anarchist, realist, and minimalist versions also defend democracy in a minimal sense. These dispositions defend minimal democracy by interpreting the basics of human condition. The anarchists look at human beings as autonomous beings with specific wants and needs and believe that these wants and needs can be addressed at without being part to any coercive communities, society or state. The realists believe that politics is all about power and results in aspects like manipulation, fear of the other, individual interest over the interests of others, and the existence of human relations under forced circumstances. The minimalist disposition of liberal democracy is a by-product of the earlier two variants—anarchist and realist, and believes that neither anarchist nor realist disposition of democracy is poised to maintain the required balance. According to minimalist disposition of democracy, individual interest has to be protected but in a controlled manner, power must be exercised by the government but with provision for guaranteed rights to the individuals or groups, and difference must be ‘tolerated’ with reasonable space for everyone to adjust among themselves in a continuously evolving manner. This includes ‘tolerated’ role of government in all socio-economic and political matters. While this type of tolerance can be assumed to work in certain aspects like right to freedom of speech and expression, it is not apparent how this

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<sup>54</sup> Barber, B. R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Fishkin, J. S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press.

tolerance or minimalism will do a justifiable job when it comes to allocation of economic and political opportunities<sup>57</sup>.

These dispositions enjoy the support of many social scientists, who, more or less, think in the same lines when it comes to how the form and nature of democracy ought to be. Schumpeter defines democracy as a competitive institutional arrangement for leadership. To put in his own words, democracy is “*institutional arrangements for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote*” (p-4)<sup>58</sup>. Clearly, Schumpeter was talking about the elections to elect leaders, and the leader’s capability to convince the voters to vote for her—assuming that the voter is driven by rationality. The basic assumption here is that the voter’s decision to elect a particular candidate to a particular office is conceived as rationally arrived at whereas an extension of decision making power to the voter is viewed with skepticism for various reasons, first among them the mere difficulty for all the voters to gather at one place and reason what ought to be done followed by different policy related technicalities and the knowledge or expertise that is required on that particular policy. Schumpeter also opined that mass people are incapable of action and rational judgment, and must only be allowed to choose their leaders just like the way they select a product in the market according to their necessity or wish. To put it in his own words, “*voters like consumers choose between the policies (products) offered by competing political entrepreneurs and the parties regulate the competition like trade associations in the economic sphere*” (p-4)<sup>59</sup>.

Schumpeter did not stop here but went a step further and claimed that the popular will is irrational and prone to manipulation by advertising and propaganda – hence popular democracy is unfeasible. If we were to believe in what Schumpeter had arrived at, the next question that needs to be answered is – how can the popular will be trusted in a representative democracy? Schumpeter answers the question himself by explaining that though the majority lacks the required intellect to govern themselves, somehow they got the ability to judge who

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<sup>57</sup> Barber, B. R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>58</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

can govern them well. But it is not apparent how an individual who cannot govern herself be in a better position to choose who can govern her well<sup>60</sup>. It is reasonable to assume that if the people are capable of electing good leaders, as endorsed by Schumpeter, they must be capable of judging the course of the public policy or its impact or after-effects of their vote or endorsement of a particular policy or leader. This forces us to infer that the masses are capable of taking proper decisions given the chance to govern themselves. But Schumpeter thinks the other way around and suggests that the leadership be given to a small section of people with ‘inborn’ capability to rule, who are naturally intellectual in nature, and this leadership can be selected by the masses in a competitive way through elections as he believes that masses are capable of electing good leaders<sup>61</sup>. Walter Lippmann, just like Schumpeter, was also of the opinion that the majority are incapable of governing themselves and advocates representative democracy as the best form of democracy as it is possible for the masses in a representative democracy to handover the decision making process to the representatives who are elected in a competitive manner from among the competing elite<sup>62</sup>.

Berelson, another classical theorist also opined that maximum participation is not one of the characters required for a democracy<sup>63</sup>. It is not apparent why a small section of people are in a position to devote time to the socio-economic and political understanding of the society whereas those who cannot afford to do so lag behind the others in political awareness and understanding of complex issues. Is it really because some people are by birth born with superior intellect, with vision to understand things? Or is this understanding a by-product of the societal position they enjoy that allows them leisure to think and practice politics? Obviously, it is not that some sections are superior or naturally capable of ruling, but that the position that they are in gives them enough time and necessary support so as to make them capable of holding the strings of power<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>63</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>64</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

It is true that people may not understand many political issues, but many issues may not sound like issues at all once people start exercising their choice. People may start giving preference to altogether different issues. They may re-arrange the priorities, scarp certain norms or policies, and may altogether redefine the nature of democracy. The priorities of the government are arrived at by the decision of the few elected legislatures without significant legitimate consent of the people who vote them to power. The consent of the voters is taken once in a while in a periodical manner and they do not play any role thereafter till next elections. In between, the so called legitimately and democratically elected government takes policy decisions on ‘behalf’ of the people who put them in power. The ‘democratically’ elected government can take whatever decision it likes and through that particular decision or policy it may favor or suppress which ever section it likes. What the voters can do is wait for four or five years to throw that ‘democratically’ elected government out of power and put another ‘democratically’ elected government to do the things that their old governments have done. This boils down to the question; how is an elected government superior to a government by the people? Do the ‘democratically’ elected governments take right and rational decisions all the time? Democratic practice based on elections limits the number of people who can participate or deliberate in a democratic process. Democratic practice is limited based on arguments like the functional difficulty in making all the people to come together to discuss and deliberate. Instead of looking for ways to accommodate people in the decision making process, democratic practice is concerned about the survival of the system in a slow, systematic and incremental manner – with the main motive of making the system adjust to the changing circumstances<sup>65</sup>.

These types of definitions make us arrive at the conclusion that democracy is all about peoples ‘control’ over their elected leaders. The control is relatively high in a democracy when compared to other forms of governments. Is this ‘control’ sufficient enough for the people to be called as part of the ‘democratic’ government? Or should the people go for more rights and decision making powers? So far, the citizens seem to be performing the ritual of giving legitimacy to the liberal democracy through voting. And this is how Carole Pateman summarizes the whole process that is happening in the name of liberal democracy; “*In short,*

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<sup>65</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

*limited participation and apathy have a passive function for the whole system by cushioning the shock of disagreement, adjustment and change” (p-7)<sup>66</sup>. The role of the citizens in today’s democracy is to run the democracy with or without their conscious consent. An individual may feel that she is exercising some amount of control over her government but the uncoordinated voting pattern alienates her from the rest of the voters and vice-versa. The number of issues that the parties or competing candidates discuss in their election manifesto and the number of legislations they make, usually much higher than the number of issues they discuss in their manifesto, alienates the voter from the decision making process. It is like the voters vote for a party or candidate keeping in mind a set of policy options that a particular party or candidate has promised but as soon as that party or candidate comes to power they may or may not work on those policy options. Even if they take care of the policy options that they have promised in their manifesto, the governments usually makes legislations on *N* number of polices for which they may or may not have taken the consent of the people. The ‘democratically’ elected government defends these decisions with excuses like urgent nature of the policy or the difficulty in consulting the broader public for each and every policy. Hence the participation of people in a ‘democracy’ is usually slimmed down to a dozen or so points that the parties or candidates promise to work on once they are voted to power—and if these parties fail to come up with proper legislations on their promises or if they misuse their power to legislate on totally different set of new policies or extra policies, and if the voters don’t like their ‘democratically’ elected governments they can always vote them out in the next elections, after four or five years, and replace it with another ‘democratically’ elected government<sup>67</sup>.*

Critics of participatory democracy like Madison think that engaging citizens in the decision making process in a continuous manner places too much burden on the citizens<sup>68</sup>. Another routine argument that we come across in liberal democracy is that the mere number of issues and the complexities involved in handling these issues makes a majority of the citizens ineligible to be part of the decision making process. The ‘ordinary’ folk may not have acquired the necessary skills to think about these issues in a proper manner. But Rogers argues

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

that peoples' participation could change everything and simplify the present complex system and the type of issues that can be decided democratically<sup>69</sup>.

## **2. 2. 1. Limitations of Representation**

Representation is the basic foundation of democracy. All modern democracies depend on some form of representation, including the so called direct democracies like Switzerland. So the legitimacy of a democratic system depends on how representative the system is. Different types of representative methods are used in different countries but all the representative methods seem to fall short of properly representing the people<sup>70</sup>. A look at few important representative methods may give us an idea about how un-representative representative democracy is. It is believed that in a representative democracy the voter will consult a mature representative to represent her interests. But what is the guarantee that a voter will consult or elect a mature representative and on what basis can a voter decide that she has consulted a mature representative? If the voter is in a position to decide who can represent her choices in a mature manner why cannot the voter present her choices on her own to the decision making body or why cannot she be a member of the decision making body? It is argued that the voter may not be able to think and analyze everything on her own, but somehow she can identify a right person to think what she is thinking and represent her choice or her overall view on a particular issue, policy or legislation. Representative democracy also believes that some type of input into the citizens' ears is unavoidable. If the voter is in such an ignorant position, and if the voter regularly needs the necessary inputs from the representative, is not the election of the representative by that particular voter an immature choice? Doesn't it undermine the very basic of representative democracy—getting elected by 'ignorant' voters? How legitimate is such a representative democracy<sup>71</sup>?

Some arguments in favor of and against the representative democracy may help us understand how legitimate representative democracy is. To start with, J. S. Mill was in favor

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Pitkin, H, F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. London. University of California Press.

<sup>71</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. See also, Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

of representative democracy. He was of the opinion that the elite has all the qualities like intellect, education, temperance, and virtues that are required to run a government and was of the opinion that the elite will use all these virtues to the good of the normal people. Mill was of the positive opinion that the elite would dispatch appropriate information to the masses and that the masses should accept them. Mill also recognizes the danger that the elite may not behave responsibly once they are in power. Now it becomes difficult for us to understand what Mill was proposing. Mill was proposing a representative democracy with ‘proper’ checks and balances so that the elite can rule on behalf of the masses and their power to do so can be checked quite often by the masses. Mill believes that the elite model of representative democracy provides competitive space for the political parties that may lead to proper representation<sup>72</sup>. Joseph Schumpeter also supported representative democracy. To put it in his own words *“those with inborn capacity for leadership, including intellect and moral character, would naturally comprise a ruling class, from which viable candidates would promote themselves or receive support from a political party, providing that enough citizens participated in the elections of their representatives, the democratic method would work most effectively if elected leaders were left to make decisions without any need to be accountable to the public, until next elections” (p-11)*<sup>73</sup>. As per Schumpeter ‘normal’ people are not eligible to govern and they should not even question their representatives’ decisions or discretion until next election, but can over throw them if they feel that their representatives have not done well in the last government. So, representative democracy is all about electing representatives—good or bad—and staying silent for the whole duration of the government and electing another representative government—repeating the same cycle<sup>74</sup>.

G. D. H. Cole opines that representative democracy is not democracy at all for two reasons. First, it assumes that an individual can be represented by another individual in the fullest form, with which Cole disagrees. Cole believes that a person cannot be represented by another person. Secondly, the idea of representation takes away the decision making power of the voters. According to Cole, people who simply vote are slaves and representative democracy

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<sup>72</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

is another form of slavery. He terms the representative democracy as theoretical democracy which in practice is nothing but practice by those in power to reinforce the centuries old power structure in a new format<sup>75</sup>. Representative democracy is about restricting the people's choices, domain, and to work within that limited domain<sup>76</sup>. Certain checks and balances that are practiced in a representative democracy like referendum, plebiscite, recall etc. are also not in favor of the voters all the time, and certainly they are not in favor of different marginalized sections like gays, lesbians or atheists. To use the tools like referendum, plebiscite or recall, the voters need to win the number game as these tools heavily depend on the number of voters proposing or opposing a certain policy. People usually hold opinions on issues that influence them, not on the issues that do not concern them. In such a scenario it is possible that people may not hold any opinion at all on number of issues. In such a situation tools like referendum or plebiscite may not go in favor of those who wanted a positive legislation on certain aspects. The same tools also allow the opposing forces of a policy to block the proposed policy through referendum or plebiscite by sheer advantage of the number of supporters who oppose such proposal—resulting in number game again. The solution to all these issues in a representative democracy seems to be elections. Elections are a way to choose the 'appropriate' representatives<sup>77</sup>.

The legitimacy of a representative democracy depends on how representative it is to the people it represents. In other words the representation method it uses to aggregate the interests of its people decides whether the system is using most appropriate type of possible representation to read the pulse of the people it represents. To identify the best suitable type of representation method for a representative democracy we need to go through the types of representation that are in practice so far. The word representation means re-presentation i.e., to present again – a representative re-presenting something to a committee, forum or decision making body, what the voters from her constituency have presented to her<sup>78</sup>. Though the meaning of representation, as we understand it today, started evolving during the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, some form of representation has been there historically in all forms of

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Gibson, R. K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>77</sup> Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. London. University of California Press.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

governments. Now let us start with the most preliminary form of representation as explained by Hobbes. Though Hobbes did not define representation in a direct manner, he is credited with, as a thinker, for creating some preliminary glimpses of what representation is. Hobbes, while explaining his social contract theory, defines what representation is, though he never used the word. According to Hobbes, representation is about ‘acting for’ on behalf of the subjects. Hobbes’s understanding of representation stands contradictory in nature to how we understand representation today as Hobbes advocated that no constraints should be placed on the representatives. Hobbes was in favor of unrestrained powers to the representative and that the representative’s actions and the consequent results should not be questioned by the people<sup>79</sup>. For Hobbes, representation is “*a contractual arrangement (a warrant, license or commission) whereby the actor (the representative) comes to act by the authority of the author (the represented). And by agreeing to the contract the author is also agreeing to own whatever actions are performed in his name*” (pp. 25-26)<sup>80</sup>. Apparently, Hobbes was describing the type of representation that was suitable to an absolute sovereign—the king or the queen. Hence, we do not serve ourselves well in criticizing his understanding and comparing it to contemporary understanding of representation. But Locke’s understanding of representation is relevant to the present understanding of representation. According to Locke “*all legitimate authority must rest on the rational consent of individuals, and what any of us will rationally consent to is limited by what each of us has a right to – our lives, our liberty and our estates – and consent is required at the inception of a legitimate state, in choosing the representatives to give consent on their behalf*” (pp. 30-31)<sup>81</sup>. J. S. Mill’s idea of representation also stands similar to how Locke understands it. Though Mill thinks that representatives emerge from a small class of people with high caliber, intellect and capacity to understand, he thinks that they must be responsible to the citizens and that their actions can be questioned and checked. Mill also projects representation in a utilitarian dimension saying that the representatives should try to represent the people in a maximum manner and in a maximum number of cases possible. The utilitarian way of understanding is basically concerned with how an individual sees representation from her point of view. According to utilitarian way of understanding people

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<sup>79</sup> Shapiro, I. S., Stokes, S. C., Wood, E. J., and Kirshner, A. S. (2009). *Political Representation*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>80</sup> Vieira, M. B., and Runciman, D. (2008). *Representation*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

are usually motivated by self-interest and it is difficult for them to identify their interest with the interests of others. Nevertheless, the utilitarian understanding of representation believes that some basic interests coincide naturally and the representative's role is to represent these basic interests only. Utilitarian way of understanding representation heavily depends on numbers, the maximum utility to maximum number of people, which means it is always concerned about the majority, and this apparently means the majority stands to succeed all the time. Utilitarian way of looking at representation may hold true in majority of circumstances for the majority but what would be the situation of those who are in minority who cannot push through their stand or interest over the majority? This understanding of representation may lead to majoritarian democracy<sup>82</sup>.

The authoritarian version of representation is somewhat different from present representative practices. According to the authoritarian version of representation the representative is free to do as per her wish and people who elect the representatives have limited control on the representatives thus leading to a situation of un-representativeness in fuller sense, which may eventually deteriorate to a situation of losing the meaning of representation itself<sup>83</sup>. The understanding of representation by accountability theorists is totally in contradiction to the understanding by authoritarians. Representation according to accountability theorists include accountability of the representative to whoever she represents—and her position must reflect the presumed position of the people she represents. According to the accountability theorists, people's choices, their political stand on a policy matter, and their own form of governance matters in a representative democracy (Pitkin, 1967)<sup>84</sup>.

Representation is a continuous process of struggle for understanding between the representatives and the represented<sup>85</sup>. Representation is not so easy to observe as we can see the representative but how far and what aspects the representative is representing or un-representing is difficult to analyze or observe, and it is difficult to tell whether a person is truly represented or not. The 'aggregated' ideas represented by the representative may not be the

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Pitkin, H, F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. London. University of California Press.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

ones held by the voters at all. Sometimes the representative may present something thinking that this is what her constituents wanted. This may make her think that she is representing – but in actuality she may be representing something that her constituents have not consented for, or may not have consented if proper consultation was done before representing. This leads to a series of question about representation – whether it is re-representation or presentation – because governments usually make *N* number of legislations and they consult people on some issues only. They usually defend their decision by defending that the representatives’ power or position to represent is derived from people (through mandate-to-rule), hence the representatives’ positions ‘reflects’ the ‘possible’ position that the voters would have taken had they been consulted thus blurring the difference between re-representation and presentation<sup>86</sup>.

Hobbes makes the difference between re-representation and presentation even difficult by drawing distinction between artificial persons and natural persons. This forces us to infer that the presentation of opinions held by the natural persons alone can be called as representation and that the ‘representation’ of the opinions held by the artificial persons should be called as presentation i.e., presentation by representatives. For our understanding, let us see how Hobbes defines artificial and natural persons. Hobbes defines natural person as a man/person who can speak, think and act – free from all outside pressures, where as an artificial person is one who is heavily influenced by surrounding pressures<sup>87</sup>. But it is difficult to categorize who are natural persons and who are artificial persons as it is not easy to stay un-influenced by surrounding circumstances, especially in present times where information and related technology play a crucial role in influencing the choices we make and the conclusions we arrive at on different aspects. If we were to look at representation in this particular sense it is difficult to assess whether today’s representation is really about representing natural persons. It is even difficult to make a proper demarcation between the participants and non-participants in the electoral or political process. Can we say that the persons who are participating actively in the political process are natural persons – assuming that they are thinking independently? We cannot be certain about that as the ones who participate in the political process are heavily influenced by media, political parties, political personalities, ideologies, ideas, manifestos,

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

identities etc. What about the case of non-participants then? Are not they influenced by the above said factors? Is it because they are not influenced by all these factors that they decide not to participate in the political process? In that case, is not the decision taken by them making them un-representative? On the contrary, we can also infer that they have decided not to participate in the political process based on different types of influences they are exposed to. Hobbes was of the opinion that rationality and the consciousness of a person makes her eligible to be called as a natural person. This leads to the question whether rationality and consciousness of a person stay un-influenced by the surrounding circumstances. Or is it that getting influenced to surrounding circumstances – though in a ‘rational’ manner – can be called as a rational outcome? Eventually the argument boils down to the issue of representation. Who is getting represented, natural persons or artificial persons, or both? And who is getting un-represented or what is making them un-representable? We do not seem to find a way to assess who is getting represented. But according to Hobbes, natural persons can be represented<sup>88</sup>.

Now let us see how far these ‘natural’ persons are getting represented under different types of representative methods and how far these representative methods can convince us that representative democracy really represents natural persons. In a representative democracy the agents, politicians and the personal of the government are accountable to the society as a whole – at least to the natural persons – since they are the ones who can be represented ‘truly’. The representative is usually given limited power to represent limited aspects but in practice she may misrepresent or she may not represent what she is supposed to represent, but she may ‘present’ aspects for which the voters have not consented. The intrinsic idea of representation is to represent the intrinsic feeling, choice, spirit and reason of the nation in a holistic sense. The purpose of representation and its meaning keeps on changing based on the time and circumstance, and the way of doing just representation is, sometimes, making the absent thing present and convince the voters about its necessity<sup>89</sup>. Hobbes explains representation in the background of the social contract keeping in view the ‘common-wealth’ that the people create in social contract. This is where Hobbes implicitly discusses about representation. To put it in Hobbes words “*a commonwealth is said to be constituted, when a multitude of men do agree, and covenant, everyone with everyone, that to whatsoever man, or assembly of men, shall be*

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

given by the major part, the right to present the person of them all, that is to say, to be their representative; everyone ... shall authorize all the actions and judgments, of that man, or assembly of men, in the same manner, as if they were his own" (p-30)<sup>90</sup>. This seems to be the preliminary glimpse of how representation was understood then. This definition may hold true in the backdrop of social contract, considering the times Hobbes was writing, but in the context of representative democracy that we are experiencing, the concept of representation is understood in a much broader sense, and yet we are not in full agreement with what it as we are not sure whether we are properly represented. Representation must be similar to a map representing important topographies; otherwise it will become a majority rule. If representation is to be made in such a detailed and inclusive manner different questions regarding possibilities and the difficulties in implementing such a representative system arise<sup>91</sup>.

## 2. 2. 2. Representative Democracy: A Number Game?

Representative democracy is all about the majority in a technical sense and the majority gets decided once in a while—through general elections or through special elections like referendum or plebiscite. The decisions are arrived at based on the numbers and competition among the parties, leaders or ideas. Hence, numbers dominate the representative democracy. Democracy as we understand it now is based on the institutional arrangements made by the ruling elite to preserve the privileges that they have been enjoying in the present setup. In a theoretical sense, democracy is a political system in which power is distributed as such that the control over the authoritative allocation of resources rests in the hands of the people. But in practice, what rests in the hands of the people is how to give up the decision making powers in the name of democracy<sup>92</sup>.

The solution to the problem of numerical majority in democratic practice can be found in consensus based decisions. But it is questionable whether consensus based decisions are possible in a representative democracy. Barber wonders whether a democracy without a

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

mechanism for consensus based decision process can be called as a democracy at all<sup>93</sup>. Can a representative democracy be called as a democracy at all? Not if we were to believe in what Rousseau says about ‘to-will’ and ‘to-choose’. ‘To-will’, according to Rousseau, is to create choices whereas ‘to-choose’ is to pick up a choice among the given choices. To-will creates new choices whereas to-choose restricts us to the existing choices. And by choosing the choices that the representative democracy provides us, we voluntarily give up our power ‘to-will’<sup>94</sup>. But the immediate problem that arises if the people decide to ‘will’ for themselves is will they be in a position to ‘will’ on all aspects? Or will they have to delegate certain aspects to selected committees or representatives? If so, is a relatively more representative democracy desirable than the present form of representative democracy?

### **2. 2. 3. Democratic Deficit**

Different types of representation methods make us wonder whether democracy is limited to zoo keeping. All that the representative democracy does is to limit the activities that a government can do, limit the people who can take decisions in the name of democracy and limit the people to vote once in a while. In this way, a democracy can truly disengage citizens and make them think that active political participation is not their cup of coffee. Hence, citizens become subjects to the laws that they do not really enact. These laws reinforce themselves furthering the exclusion of citizens from the decision making process. Those who engage themselves in the decision making process—the tiny minority, are concerned with a handful of issues. Thus, representative democracy can be understood as an act of zoo keeping where ‘free citizens’ can be controlled and channeled in a way befitting the democratic practice<sup>95</sup>. In the present form of democracy, people are delegating the decision making process to a small elect people who in turn subjugate people with different socio-economic and political tools off which many of them ‘may not’ be necessary if people were to rule themselves. In the present form of democracy, wider acceptance of a political system is considered as consent<sup>96</sup>. But

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<sup>93</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

wider acceptance of a political system may not be a satisfactory condition for a system to be called as democratic. It has to fulfil the basic criteria; real participation of people in the decision making process<sup>97</sup>. The planned un-democratic public sphere that we live in, the limited representative methods that the present democracy uses, the systematic exclusion of citizens from the decision making process by perpetual delegation methods, and the slim consent that is generated by the state through general elections etc. makes us to infer that the citizens are made to disengage from the democratic process<sup>98</sup>.

### **2. 3. Participatory Democracy: An Answer to Democratic Deficit?**

Democracy can be defined as a societal value, and a true democracy ought to resemble an ideal society<sup>99</sup>. Participation of people in the process of decision making is absolutely important as it is the people who have to bear the fruits and the burdens of a particular decision. Participation of people in the decision making process could alleviate the negative effects of a particular decision, and may contribute to a pragmatically possible solution<sup>100</sup>. Participatory democracy may present multiple opportunities and ways to solve a problem. In a participatory democracy only ‘genuine’ steps will be taken with the consent of ‘all’ the affected members thus alleviating the chance of a policy or program getting failed. Citizens also gain skills in a participatory democracy. Participatory democracy leads to decentralization. Heterogeneous democratic practices that can fit to a particular context or circumstances can be explored in a participatory democracy. Participatory democracy could be more useful in heterogeneous societies where the requirements of each and every group could be different from the larger society. Participatory democracy thickens the frequency of direct consultation<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>97</sup> Fishkin, J, S. (1992). *The Dialogue of Justice: Towards a Self-Reflective Society*. New Haven. Yale University Press.

<sup>98</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>99</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>100</sup> Fishkin, J, S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>101</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

Participatory democracy seems to have long roots since the times of Rousseau. Though Rousseau did not mention any thing about participatory democracy, he seems to have laid a strong foundation for the cause by discussing about how citizens could come together, legislate and administer their own affairs. According to Carole Pateman, Rousseau actually seems to have favored participatory democracy by proposing General Will<sup>102</sup>. Rousseau's social contract seems to provide preliminary glimpses of participatory democracy. To put it in Rousseau's own words "*the use of reason allowed human beings to freely come together and work out how to naturally free individuals acting alone. It is on this basis that the abdication of natural freedom and the conformity to reason was justifiable. The common good could not be realized simply by individuals confronting the majority decision. It can only be discovered through the process of using reason to formulate the general-will as a cooperative outcome of reasoned deliberation, to the intellectual satisfaction of all concerned individuals*" (p-129)<sup>103</sup>. These sentences let us infer that some form of participatory democracy can be observed in Rousseau's arguments.

The process of deciding the general-will itself is a participatory process where all the citizens come together to 'will'. According to Rousseau, each individual should force herself to participate in the political process, otherwise she will be subjugated by the laws of others. By not participating in the law making process, individuals let themselves play into the hands of the others, which according to Rousseau, is nothing but choosing un-freedom. Hence, individuals should force themselves to 'will', thus paving the way for participatory democracy. According to Rousseau, one must be master to oneself and one can enhance ones freedom. Being master to one can only happen if the concerned individual participates actively in the process of 'will' making and see to that her voice and choice is heard and taken into consideration. Similar kind of approach by all the free individuals can lead to an atmosphere where all the individuals can come together and 'will' according to their position and requirement. Rousseau was of the opinion that participation in the process of creation of 'will'

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<sup>102</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>103</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

gives educative value to the individual. Rousseau also felt that for a participatory democracy to succeed, there must be some necessary conditions like economic equality and economic independence. Without being economically free, the individuals may become tools in the hands of those who are opulent, and the decisions taken by those who are not economically free may be heavily influenced by the well-off individuals. Hence, equality of education, equality of income and equality of wealth are pre-conditions for people to participate in the democratic process so as to formulate a 'will'. Rousseau also warned that people may force themselves to be free or force themselves to subjugation by their own laws, hence people are responsible for themselves for whatever outcome the 'will' will result in. Rousseau also opined that individuals should act based on their individual ideas and understanding only and should not get carried away by any group or organization. The ideal situation for the people to 'will' can happen when individuals are free from each other and free from any outside influence, be it pressure groups, political parties, or other individuals. It sounds reasonable that organizations should not be there and they should not be allowed to influence the participatory nature of the citizens. Instead, people should act on individual basis so that all the individuals can think in an independent manner. But the problem with this requirement is that at some stage or other the interests of the people and their stand needs to be aggregated, assessed, re-assessed and re-aggregated so as to arrive at a decision. And in the process, people may put themselves in the hands of the political parties, organizations, or pressure groups in order to get their opinions aggregated and presentable (or representable)<sup>104</sup>.

We can see glimpses of support to participatory democracy in the writings of J. S. Mill as well. According to Mill, the greatest damage to democracy lies in the sinister interests of the holders of power. Hence, it is necessary to increase the component of power holders i.e., more people should be encouraged to participate in the political process. Mill was of the opinion that through political discussion an individual becomes a conscious member of the greater community. Mill was of the opinion that the educative function of the citizens should be carried out at the local level so as to equip them with necessary skills required to run the

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<sup>104</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. See also, Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

government. Citizens should be equipped with proper political skills so as to make them capable of arriving at their own conclusions. Most of the socio-economic and political events need to be explained to the public. Decisions are not formed in vacuum, and as said by Mill, decisions of an individual are heavily influenced by friends, books, and surrounding circumstances etc. Hence, citizens should be well equipped with information that is required for them to arrive at certain political conclusions<sup>105</sup>.

Apart from Rousseau and Mill, other thinkers like Godwin and G. D. H. Cole also played a crucial role in grounding the arguments for participatory democracy in their works. Godwin advocated participatory democracy way back in 1793. Godwin also advocated community based governments where people can directly participate to decide important matters. Cole, based on Rousseau's general-will and Mill's theory of democracy, developed the required framework for participatory democracy and applied it in forming industrial guilds. Experiments like market socialism in Yugoslavia and Mondragon Cooperative in Spain can be considered as examples of industrial guilds based on the Cole's idea of participatory democracy. Strong roots of participatory democracy, especially in industrial sector, can be said to have started during the 1960s<sup>106</sup>.

The basic assumption of participatory democracy is that if a political system provides reasonable opportunities to the people in terms of participation in the political process and empowers them politically, their participation increases and the number of occasions for the people to participate in the decision making process also increases. Advocates of participatory democracy strongly believe that people should be allowed to participate at national level decision making process through referendums and plebiscite, especially if the issue involved is of serious nature and they are also of the opinion that people can be involved in all most all affairs pertaining to the local governments<sup>107</sup>. But there are certain minimum conditions required for a participatory democracy to become participatory enough. Firstly, sufficient autonomy should be there for the people, group or community to adjust to the democratic practices. The type of issues and the range of issues that can be discussed within a certain

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Mutz, D, C. (2006). *Hearing the Other Side*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

participatory democratic setup should be clear. Then only it is possible for the people to participate and to think about the issues that are up for participatory discussion or participatory voting. But active participation leaves us an important question; do active citizens give weight to their opponents' viewpoints? Research suggests that people who participate actively in politics tend to be extreme in their choices and this may become unrepresentative of those who do not participate. Hence it is believed that participation should be maximized as much as possible so as to counter the choices of the small ruling elite. Steps should be taken to thicken the thin democracy through extensive participation of the people in the political process<sup>108</sup>.

Some thinkers think that extensive participation of the people in the political process may not work at all and it may lead to nothing but chaos. They come up with questions like; *"how could a mass democracy work if all the people were deeply involved in politics?"* (p-8)<sup>109</sup>. And they answer these questions by saying that *"democracy is government by the people, but the responsibility for the survival of democracy rests on the shoulders of the elite... if the survival of the democracy depends on an active citizens democracy would have disappeared long ago... but fortunately masses do not lead, they follow"* (p-8)<sup>110</sup>. This pessimistic (maybe pragmatic) view of participatory democracy leaves us with another question: does participation really change the face of democracy or does it make it worse? Should we consider sufficient participation as a basic criterion for the success of the democracy or should we measure, control, channelize, and direct the participation in a particular manner? If we were to take it as granted that maximum participation will strengthen the democracy then we may have to think about the skeptical points expressed by those who oppose participatory democracy by saying that it may lead to nothing but chaos. It is reasonably true that it is not possible for all the people to be active in politics – may be they can – but they may not come together to take policy related decisions from time to time. This makes us to think that only a few or a 'reasonable' size of the people should be allowed to take decisions. If we were to accept this position we will have to answer the question; who should be allowed to take decisions, who

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

decides that who should take decisions on behalf of whom<sup>111</sup>? While we struggle with these types of questions there seems to be a section of social scientists supporting maximum participation and they have come up with a concept called ‘maximum feasible participation’. And what is this maximum feasible participation? Is it different from participatory democracy?

The concept ‘maximum feasible participation’ seems to have emerged during the 1950s–60s, as an amalgamation of different practices from three countries; France, Britain and United States of America<sup>112</sup>. Just like participatory democracy, maximum feasible participation offers nothing new. Both participatory democracy and maximum feasible participation agree with the point that participation of the people should be maximized so as to thicken the democratic process. But both the versions are not clear about how to widen the engagement of people in the political process. Is maximum feasible participation possible, and if possible, is it good or bad for a democracy? It depends on the quality of participation and the quality of choices people make. Coming to the quality of participation and the voters’ choices, how do we differentiate the quality of the voters and the quality of their choices? Is it possible at all to classify the voters into quality voters and non-quality voters? Benjamin Barber seems to have classified the strength of the voters’ choices and thinks that “*unable to recognize qualitative differences in voter’s motivations, it precipitates one of representative democracy’s classical dilemmas: that the weak and complacent majority can unthinkingly overrule an impassioned and obdurate minority*” (p-199)<sup>113</sup>. Majority voters, according to Barber, do not seem to be qualitative in their choices, and even worse, they tend to overturn the decisions of ‘qualitative’ minority. Barber further says that it is possible to differentiate the quality of choices of the voters by looking at the intensity of the discussion whereas it is not possible to measure the quality of votes. A vote is a vote. Hence, all votes are ‘equal’. In such a scenario, should not we take it as granted that voting equals qualitative participation<sup>114</sup>?

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>113</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

## 2. 4. Strong Democracy: Another Form of Participatory Democracy?

Strong democracy is a ‘deviant’ form of participatory democracy which rests on the idea of self-governing citizens formed into communities or small groups like guilds. These groups are basically heterogeneous in nature with common goals or interests. These groups are supposed to participate heavily in the decision making process, at least in the decisions that concern them. Defining strong democracy is a bit difficult as the features of strong democracy also seem to coincide with that of participatory democracy. But certain ‘unique’ aspects of strong democracy make it different from participatory democracy. Let us see whether the difference it has got has anything to do with the prospects of how a democracy ought to be. To define it loosely, strong democracy is defined by different aspects like self-government by citizens – not necessarily all the time but when important factors are up for decision or when significant amount of power is for redistribution or when the decisions directly influence the lives of the participants. Benjamin Barber describes the process of strong democracy as “*politics in the participatory mode where conflict is resolved in the absence of an independent ground through a participatory process of ongoing, proximate self-legislation and the creation of a political community capable of transforming dependent, private individuals into free citizens and partial and private interests into public goods*” (p-132)<sup>115</sup>. Strong democracy is based on many aspects like participation, transparency, responsibility etc. and contributes in furthering the democratic application. Strong democracy is not a direct democracy by the people or masses, but they participate as citizens, more frequently in the governing process.<sup>116</sup>

As the participation of people increases in the strong democracy, the chances for the policy makers (active citizens in this case) to commit mistakes or to come up with skewed policies decreases immensely. To say it in Roosevelt’s words “*the majority of the plain people will day in and day out make fewer mistakes in governing themselves than any smaller body of men will make in trying to govern them*” (p-151)<sup>117</sup>. Strong democracy enlightens the people and makes passive people active thus laying foundation for a participatory approach to decision making. The type of questions to be asked and addressed are also be decided by the citizens in

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

a strong democracy. Issues that may sound more complex in present liberal democracy may not rise at all in the strong democracy. After all, issues is a result of a particular type of socio-economic and political set up. Strong democracy actually addresses the conflict whereas the anarchist, realist and minimal forms of liberal democracies always try to evade the solution for the conflict in one way or the other. Strong democracy symbolizes a cable woven with many strands, each community or group of people symbolizing each strand, but all the strands move together in an interwoven manner to create the totality<sup>118</sup>.

In such a scenario, people across all communities or groups, tend to make sure that their choices, issues, or solutions are in sync with the choices or solutions of other communities that are involved in the political process. All the communities or groups that participate in the political process command equal voice just like the strands in a cable. But it is possible that a particular string (community or section) could be very strong and may influence the whole cable (strong democracy) and the cable's flexibility, or how it bends or holds. Does strong democracy have any solutions for such a scenario? Yes, it seems the solution is proper deliberation has to be done before a policy or decision is made and in the process of discussion proper weight should be given to the gravity of the issue and the available choices. Strong democracy gives significant scope and weight for the minorities to voice their choices. Since participatory discussion is the central pillar of the strong democracy, enough space for deliberation will be there for different groups to aggregate, present, push their ideas and convince other participants about their position<sup>119</sup>. The basic question that citizens should ask themselves in a strong democracy is "*what shall we do when something has to be done that affects all*" (p-120)<sup>120</sup>.

This approach acts as a platform for the citizens to participate and deliberate whenever they come across an issue that affects them all. Then what about the issues that affects only a partial section of the people? Should the people who are not affected by the issue participate in the discussion? Not necessarily as in a strong democracy participation is usually issue based. Only those citizens who are getting affected by a particular issue participate in the discussion

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

and decision making process. But the citizens should make sure that whatever decisions they take – after proper discussion – should not affect the non-participants. If the decisions taken by the participants affect the interests and choices of the non-participants then non-participants have to become participants and make counter deliberations or policies nullifying or weakening the policies or choices made by the earlier participants. Hence, significant amount of caution should be displayed and different options that are available should be weighed before arriving at a final decision. Different circumstances may force the participants to take choices that may hurt the interests of certain sections but the participants should make sure that the damage from such a policy is alleviated to the greatest extent possible and that they should go for such a policy only if it is compulsory and when no other alternative is available. Participating citizens should base their judgments or conclusions on independent and neutral grounds, they should not come with premeditated judgments or options and they must be prepared to change their stand and be ready to get swayed by the arguments of different participating groups<sup>121</sup>.

For a strong democracy to be successful, certain conditions like active public action, agreed choices, and absence of private interests of the participants should be there. Strong democracy is in strong contradiction with present liberal democracy. While strong democracy tries to solve the issues through proper participation of the people by following methods like discussion by free individuals where they try to iron out their self-interests and make them coincide with the interests of the community, liberal democracy propagates ideas like free market, individual choice, or group choices that clash with the interests of other individuals and groups and puts them into competitive mode thus resulting in political realism as a basic approach to problem solving. This kind of political realism that is extensively followed in liberal democracy forces the participants to pitch for their private or sectional interests over the interests of the general public. Competitive bargaining becomes the basic principle of liberal democracy where only those who are in a position to compete win, resulting in significant lose to those who are powerless or not competitive because of their weak socio-economic and political background<sup>122</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

Contrary to this, strong democracy is participatory in nature and decentralized. Strong democracy is also different from social libertarianism or anarchism in the sense that strong democracy actually tries to revolutionize the existing liberal democracy by decentralizing it whereas anarchism or social libertarianism tries to overthrow the existing structures for no structures. It is not apparent how a community or society will allocate itself the resources in an egalitarian or sustainable manner without its people coming together to discuss and deliberate. Even strong democracy also believes in the concept of withering away of the state, but in a slow manner, in accordance with the capabilities of the citizens to legislate, participate, and administer their own affairs. Trying to speed up the strong democracy may turn into a majoritarian totalitarianism. If the citizens are not mature enough regarding the issues that need to be discussed or the type of issues that need to be raised, there is every possibility that the decision making power that they enjoy can turn into majoritarian rule. To avoid this kind of situation, citizens should be cautious about the nature of issues that they make legislations on, the position of the minorities should be taken note off and weight should be given to the rationality of the argument rather than to the numbers that a particular argument commands<sup>123</sup>.

In strong democracy, citizens may push themselves to take some action on non-political and non-economic issues also. Non-political and non-economic issues such as cultural aspects, religious aspects etc. should be omitted from the domain of strong democracy, and citizens should stay away from making legislations on issues that do not have socio-economic and political solution. The concept of strong democracy could misfire in heterogeneous forms of society where people tend to react strongly to religious and customary issues. Once freed from metaphysical aspects, strong democracy could concentrate on issues of daily importance. But, is it guaranteed that strong democracy stops there? If it extends to metaphysical aspects, or issues of obscure nature, citizens may be forced to take a stand on these particular issues, which could be unreasonable or more damaging to the society than a non-decision on such issues. Obviously, citizens are always in a state of confusion when it comes to the issues of metaphysical nature. Hence, issues of obscure nature should be left out of the sphere of strong

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid. See also, Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

democracy. If strong democracy tries to interfere with philosophical issues, there is every possibility that it could lead to barbarianism where citizens of the strong democracy may fight for not so reasoned positions or issues of obscure nature. Once citizens in strong democracy try to take some stand on issues that are not fully understood by human beings, the present misconception or conception arrived through strong democracy could lead to some result which may fit/misfit the ‘truth’ gravely. Making legislations on these issues may hurt the participants and non-participants badly as it leaves no choice for the people except to follow them in forced circumstances. Such a situation could lead to totalitarianism where people are forced by few people to follow obscure laws on obscure issues<sup>124</sup>.

Barber identifies seven important steps that are required for a strong democracy to be successful. They are; action – citizens should act in order to solve their problems, publicness – a public capable of reasoned deliberation should be present, necessity – people should react based on the necessity of the issue, choice – available choices should be weighed properly, reasonableness – the choices should be reasonable and not arbitrary in nature, conflict – proper mechanism should be there to resolve conflict of interests in a participatory manner, and absence of independent ground – the decisions or non-decisions that are arrived at should be independent to the surrounding influences<sup>125</sup>. Certain important aspects like articulation of interests, opportunity to arrive at a bargained position, exploring mutually acceptable solutions, maintaining significant amount of autonomy, and common goals for the participants should be there for a strong democracy to be successful<sup>126</sup>.

#### **2. 4. 1. Limitations of Participatory and Strong Democracies**

After going through the concept of strong democracy, and it’s potential to turn out to be a real democracy we could reasonably conclude that strong democracy is an option to be explored to make ‘democracy’ really democratic. But it is not free from pitfalls as it does not clearly define different aspects like the domain that the participating citizens should restrain

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

themselves to, the types of issues that people can tackle and the type of issues that they need to delegate to others etc. If they decide to delegate a category of issues to the representatives does it mean that strong democracy will work with in a representative framework or does it mean that certain issues will be deliberated by people of ‘higher’ intellect whose duty is to make legislations of significant importance? Should strong democracy restrain itself to the local level – where its practice can be guaranteed to some extent – or should it be expanded to regional and national level also? It is argued that strong democracy should not take care of the issues of obscure or philosophical nature so as to avoid arbitrary legislation; does it mean they should avoid highly technical issues that come up in science? If not, who is going to take care of these issues—representatives again, or experts perhaps? Who selects or elects the representatives or experts in a strong democracy and by what methods? Is selection made through random selection, or through voting by few or through universal adult franchise a best way to decide the representatives or experts? The answer is strong democracy can only sustain within the frame work of a representative democracy and lacks any structural mechanisms to engage the people in the decision making process. Then what is the necessity of following a strong democracy? Are not we going back to the representative democracy in a different path—and again getting disengaged ‘democratically’?

## **2. 5. Direct Democracy: Theory, Practice and Limitations**

After going through different variants of democracy such as representative democracy, participatory democracy, strong democracy etc., we can reasonable conclude that we are still stuck with some form of representative democracy and we are still disengaging ourselves from the democratic process – except that we vote once in a while and participate rarely—that too in a thin manner on small matters. This makes us to stand with the arguments of Antony Downs who reasoned that individuals are not concerned about the outcome as they would feel that their vote—one in a million—will not influence the outcome, hence not worth thinking while voting or not worth voting at all<sup>127</sup>. Accepting this stand means we are disengaging ourselves completely (or being disengaged ‘democratically’) from the political process.

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<sup>127</sup> Gibson, R. K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

As representative democracy and its variants do not provide us the required space to engage ourselves in the political process, we have to search for other options. As we are looking for a form of government that is decided by people or run by people why should not we think about directly involving all the citizens in the decision making process? Is there such an option that can allow all the citizens to participate directly in the decision making process? Yes it seems; direct democracy—in a technical sense though. And let us see what it means and whether it can really engage us in the political process. Direct democracy, in a theoretical sense, is a political process where it can be said that all the citizens are directly involved in the decision making process. But how far it is practical and what institutional structures does it offer to make such a direct participation by the citizens need to be explored. The apparent belief that forms the basis of direct democracy is that the citizens know their interests better than anyone else. Hence, they should decide themselves what is required from the political system. All the complexities of representative democracy such as aggregating the interests of the citizens, re-presentation of these interests by some elected or selected representatives, looking for best possible method of representation, deciding the domain of the representatives etc. options are virtually out of the table in a direct democracy—at least in a theoretical sense. The core aspects of direct democracy are that the citizens are assumed to participate directly in the decision making process, keep track of the policies that they make, and always be aware of the socio-economic and political affairs of the nation without depending on any type of representation<sup>128</sup>.

Is such a type of democracy possible where all the people can come together all the time and deliberate on all types of issues? Sounds possible in a direct democracy with limitations based on the size of the population involved in the political process. Certain examples like Ecclesia in Athens, Lombard League of Northern Italy, and The Paris Commune etc. are considered as direct democracies. All these examples have one thing in common – small population size. During the times of The Paris Commune, Paris was divided into 60 small districts in which people used to legislate and administer their own affairs. All these experiments could not persist. If direct democracy could not survive in these small states or

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

units, how could we expect it to be introduced in the modern states with huge population size? Normal general elections that take place once in four or five years to elect a representative government usually take a month's time. In general-elections citizens simply vote and get themselves disengaged from the political process after the voting. If simple voting that happens once in a while is consuming such an amount of time what would be the time required for all the citizens to discuss and deliberate on a particular issue and how would this process go on repeating each and every time? People would have to spend their whole time on deliberating something all the time. So, direct democracy does not sound to be a fit option for the modern states. Besides, it is difficult to bind the people for their decisions in a direct democracy. And if we were to allow some form of indirect participation or representation, our primary goal of engaging the people in the political process gets defeated. Allowing such an option pushes us to decide the extent of decision making powers that we need to give to our representatives or delegates. Thus, direct democracy sounds to be a difficult option to opt for and practice<sup>129</sup>.

So, should we end up with representative democracy? Should we engage ourselves to be disengaged? Or should we go for an option that is virtually a direct democracy with some representative touch? Is such an option available where people can deliberate at multiple levels without burdening themselves like in a direct democracy, and without being disengaged from the decision making process like in a representative democracy? The notion of deliberative democracy, discussed in next chapter, seems to provide such an option.

## **Summary**

The present form of liberal democracy—whether representative or direct – is deficient in terms of representing the people. This chapter addressed different questions related to representative/direct democracy like who takes the decisions on behalf of whom, the decision making mechanism, the functional reasons behind a particular type of democratic practice etc. The chapter summarizes that the present democracy is limited to certain basic political principles like voting in periodical elections, political equality in theoretical sense, and

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<sup>129</sup> Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

occasional decision making choice to the people once in a while through plebiscites or referendums. The chapter explores the theoretical assumptions or propositions of different thinkers and why they favored a limited version of democracy, and how they defended their orientations towards limited democracy etc. Different arguments in favor of putting limitations on the decision making power of the people, how normal citizens are ‘incapable’ of coming together to take decisions etc. are covered. The chapter analyses how numerical majority plays a crucial role in representative or direct democracies, and how politics revolve around gaining numerical strength rather than looking at the broader issues of the public. The chapter also looks at how representative/direct democratic practices are limited to zoo keeping i.e., controlling the citizens in various ways, and restricting them to limited ideas and to a limited version of democracy.

## Notion of Deliberative Democracy: A Theoretical Framework

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**Abstract:** *The chapter is an attempt to explore the notion of deliberative democracy and how it can fill the democratic deficit that is present in non-deliberative (representative and direct) democratic practices. In the process of exploring the notion of deliberative democracy, the chapter tries to explore different aspects related to the concept like deliberative democratic theory, its practice, strengths and weaknesses, conditions required for its practice, and how it can be practiced in convergence with non-deliberative democratic practices etc.*

### 3. 1. Introduction

The term deliberative democracy was first used by Joseph Bessette in 1980<sup>130</sup>. Deliberative democracy is a result of underlying concepts of many thinkers like Habermas, John Rawls and James Fishkin. According to the Deliberative Democracy Consortium “*deliberation is an approach to decision-making in which citizens consider relevant facts from multiple points of view, converse with one another to think critically about options before them and enlarge their perspectives, opinions and understandings. Deliberative democracy strengthens citizens’ voice in governance by including people of all races, classes, ages and geographies in deliberations that directly affect public decisions. As a result, citizens influence – and can see the result of their influence on – the policy and resource decisions that impact their daily lives and their future*” (p-1)<sup>131</sup>. To put it in a broader sense deliberative democracy is a political process to arrive at a rationally motivated consensus, a process to solve socio-economic and political problems in a cooperative manner, through a reasoned discussion among equals about public issues, and an act of collective decision making. Deliberation is “*an unconstrained exchange of arguments that involves practical reasoning and always*

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<sup>130</sup> Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>131</sup> Hartz-Karp, J. A Case Study in Deliberative Democracy: Dialogue with the city. *Journal of Public Deliberation*. Vol. 1. No. 1. (2005): 1 – 15.

*potentially leads to a transformation of preferences” (p-12)<sup>132</sup>. Deliberative democracy is an attempt to address the questions; who guards the guardians? Should the guardians be guarded by the constitution or by people through different electoral methods? Why should not citizens be given the role to take decisions, to implement them and be responsible for their acts? Political thinkers like John Rawls and Habermas who are credited with for their emphasis on deliberation through their works think that citizens can be given the opportunity to govern themselves. These thinkers think that public reason should not be exercised by the state, but in the public sphere by free and equal citizens through proper deliberation. This emphasizes the fact that these thinkers are in favor of wider participation of citizens in the decision making process<sup>133</sup>.*

### **3. 2. Deliberation as Democratic Practice**

Habermas’s communicative-action is similar to political deliberation by citizens. In communicative-action, emphasis is placed on the language, which, according to Habermas, is used as a medium for an understanding among the actors<sup>134</sup>. Through language and through verbal discourse, people will arrive at a proper understanding of the issue and will arrive at a reasoned conclusion. The underlying assumption of deliberation is to get the moral and psychological benefits of democracy emphasizing people’s need to participate and create policies and choices, and not simply choose among the options provided by their representatives<sup>135</sup>. The options provided by the representatives or delegates are limited in its domain, limited in its choice and innovation whereas the options or choices created by free citizens are innumerable and could appropriately fit to the situation as people are the ones who really know what they want. Hence, the choices of the people could be more mature in the sense that they could clearly create choices according to the situation and the order of preference to the created choices will also be mature depending on the necessity. Hence, citizens should be involved as much as possible, and the democratization strategy should try

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<sup>132</sup> Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Habermas, J. (1990). *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Massachusetts. MIT Press.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. See also, Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

to include as many interests as possible. Let us see how deliberative democracy can involve people in the decision making process, and at what levels. True deliberation should resemble a court room, where a panel of judges deliberate, discuss, and look out for different options that are available before arriving at a judgment. The consultation process among the judges is straight and verbal discourse is present in a continuous manner. Sufficient space will be there for the judges to raise all the points that fit the circumstances and sufficient space will be there for counter points raised by different members<sup>136</sup>.

Another example of deliberation is constitution making where all the members of the committee discuss each and every aspect before arriving at a final law. But we have a problem with these examples. A panel of judges in a court room or constitution making is certainly a good example of deliberative decision making process, but who is deliberating on these occasions? Only a handful of persons elected or selected deliberators for this sole purpose deliberate in these cases. These examples certainly are best examples for reasoned deliberation—and similarly all the policies can be said to be the outcome of the deliberative process but these deliberations are not done by the people. A panel of judges or a constitution committee is formed based on the participating members' capacity to reason and certain qualifications<sup>137</sup>. Now, what should be the criteria for the citizens to be part of the deliberative process? Should we include all the citizens or only some? Unless all the citizens are engaged in the deliberative process deliberative democracy becomes inadequate. Including all the citizens in the deliberation process would consume as much time as it takes in a direct democracy. Hence, the option is out of the table. So, should we include only some citizens in the deliberative process? On what basis should we decide the ones to be included in the deliberative process? Should it be based on the citizens' capacity to reason? Who decides who has the capacity to reason<sup>138</sup>?

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<sup>136</sup> Habermas, J. (1990). *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Massachusetts. MIT Press. See also, Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press; Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>137</sup> Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>138</sup> OECD. (2003). *Promise and Problems of E-Democracy: Challenges of Online Citizen Engagement*. Paris. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The very purpose of deliberative democracy is to expand the deliberative decision making to all the citizens. The following lines summarize the importance of deliberative power to all the citizens; “when articulation expands throughout society, the representation will also expand until limit is reached where the membership of the society has become politically articulate down to the last individual, and correspondingly, the society becomes the representative of itself” (p-45)<sup>139</sup>. Twentieth century was about extending the voting rights to people, establishing democracies, and expanding the democratic institutions, now why should not we extend the power quotient to the people and let them take decisions for themselves and govern themselves<sup>140</sup>. Citizens can make actual and original contribution in a deliberative democracy. Public spirit, understanding of the other, commitment to the policy, immediate correction or termination of inappropriate policies etc. are the direct benefits of deliberative democracy. With high involvement of people, decisions and perceptions go on changing in the deliberative democracy thus furthering the possible solutions to socio-economic and political issues<sup>141</sup>.

Deliberative democracy basically works on the principle of reasoned agreement. Reasoned agreement is the outcome of proper deliberation among the participants. The principle of reasoned agreement plays a crucial role in the decision making process. Unlike in representative democracy or even in direct democracy, reasoned agreement does not depend on the number game. An insignificant minority of voters or participants can convince the majority participants if the minority’s stand is reasonable. In representative democracy and direct democracy the issues that enjoy the support of the majority voters gets addressed, whereas some issues, especially the ones that the minorities face gets neglected as it becomes difficult for the minorities to win the number game. Different heterogeneous groups, ethnic and religious minorities, and marginalized sections feel the heat of socio-economic and political exclusion in a representative or direct democracy. Numbers always dominate the issue

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<sup>139</sup> Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. London. University of California Press.

<sup>140</sup> Gibson, R. K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>141</sup> Fishkin, J. S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press.

and the very mechanism of following the numbers to arrive at a decision kills the true spirit of democracy. It is obvious that whenever a clash of interest or opinion on a particular issue arises, the most appropriate way to take a decision in a representative or direct democracy is to follow the majority opinion. Following the majority becomes a convention over a period of time and the majority always keeps on gaining at the cost of minorities. This continuous process of the majority winning over the minority makes the minorities lose the battle all the time thus effectively excluding them from the political process. Both representative and direct democracy compete with each other when it comes to excluding the minorities. Representative democracy is simply unrepresentative of certain sections as the representatives are elected by following different voting methods that always end up on the side of numerical majority. The dominant sections in the constituency win the election process. Similarly, in a direct democracy also, dominant sections tend to win the electoral process leading to exclusion of different types of minorities. People can use tools like referendum, plebiscite, recall etc. in a direct democracy to push through a policy or call back the ones they have elected for the office. This provision makes direct democracy relatively a better option when compared to the representative democracy, but, while using these options also, the majority wins. Minorities tend to lose their voice in a direct democracy also and it is not apparent how far the majority voters will think about the position of minority opinion holders. Only reasoned agreement in a deliberative democracy seems to address this issue. Deliberation among the voters or participants takes place at every stage in a deliberative democracy. Minority opinion holders may convince the majority opinion holders about the necessity to look into the depth of the issue or stand taken by the minorities. Just like in the movie “*12 Angry Men*”, which is a perfect example of deliberation by jury members in a court room, the minority opinion holders may reason with the majority and prove them why the stand taken by the minority is important and why it should be pursued in place of the majority opinion. In a deliberative democracy, reasoned agreement may sometimes produce near consensus thus giving real deliberative space<sup>142</sup>.

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<sup>142</sup> Hans, V, P. *Deliberation and Dissent: 12 Angry Men versus the Empirical Reality of Juries*. *Chicago-Kent Law Review*. Vol. 82. No. 2. (2007): 579 – 589; See also, Wheatley, S. *Deliberative Democracy and Minorities*. *EJIL*. Vol. 14. (2003): 507 – 527; Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

But there are problems in reasoned agreement also. Reasoned agreement can be achieved by few people in the presence of lot of people. Everyone may not talk in a committee or deliberative space. Only those who are well versed with the issue or only those who have good oratory skills tend to push their views on others while those who do not have such skills tend to be in a defensive mode. Besides, there will be a lot of free riders who simply may not show interest on the ongoing discussion or debate about a particular question and they may not show any concern to any particular outcome. If this process keeps on repeating repeatedly, even in a deliberative democracy also, participation of the citizens in the political process may become weak and may lead to citizen apathy. In a deliberative democracy, reasoned agreement can be arrived at in most of the times, but the question is, is reasoned agreement equal to consensus? As discussed above, most of the times reasoned agreement is formed among a few active individuals. Then, is reasoned agreement better than a majority based voting system? The answer is an affirmative yes. At least it is giving space to the minority opinion holders to push their point. The participants may not go through the depths or take pain to discuss thoroughly each and every issue but whenever the issue involved is of serious nature, just like in *12 Angry Men*, the strength of reasoned agreement delivers. In a deliberative democracy, common principles can be framed in case of clear values where citizens feel that these values affects them. Otherwise, issues that influence partial sections can be left to those sections to decide<sup>143</sup> (Hans, 2007; Dryzek, 2000).

### **3. 3. Difference between Deliberative and Non-Deliberative (Representative and Direct) Democratic Practice**

Deliberative democracy is totally different from representative or direct democracy in the sense that deliberative democracy gives space to reasoning, whereas in representative or direct democracy, instead of reasoning, it is the bargaining power or the numbers that rule. Bargaining power or number based decision making mechanisms act as a hindrance to create

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<sup>143</sup> Hans, V, P. *Deliberation and Dissent: 12 Angry Men versus the Empirical Reality of Juries. Chicago-Kent Law Review*. Vol. 82. No. 2. (2007): 579 – 589. See also, Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

fairer chances to all the participants in the political process as all the sections of the society may not be having the same range of bargaining power or numerical strength. The sections or participants who do not have bargaining power obviously tend to lose the opportunities that the political system creates and face ‘democratic’ exclusion. Deliberative democracy addresses this weakness through reasoning. Reasoning allows the participants, like in *12 Angry Men*, to discuss the issue thoroughly and think about alternatives that do not harm anyone, or at least, it tries to create options that could possibly address the issues of the least advantaged groups or individuals. This is where John Rawls equality principle plays a major role and this is why he is credited with for his underlying arguments favoring deliberative democracy<sup>144</sup>.

There is a possibility in deliberative democracy that instead of mature discussion the forum could turn into a place for dominance if the competing participants do not think through the issue properly. Participants should give sufficient space to others, and keep aside their preferences till they hear the position of other participants so that all the participants can weigh the available options and the reasons behind such options. In a deliberative democracy, through reasoning, ill-informed and private opinions are transformed into informed, other-regarding ideas. Deliberative democracy gives broader assent to the decisions made through reasoned deliberation. Hence, deliberation should take place in all types of institutions at all levels<sup>145</sup>. But it becomes difficult for all the people to gather and deliberate at a time. To quote Walter, “it is difficult to see how hundreds, let alone millions, of people can ‘plausibly’ reason together given the need for all participants to have equal time to raise proposals and to have those subjected to critical exploration in any depth” (p-6)<sup>146</sup>. Hence, deliberative democratic practice requires specific methods to choose the deliberators.

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<sup>144</sup> Hans, V, P. Deliberation and Dissent: 12 Angry Men versus the Empirical Reality of Juries. *Chicago-Kent Law Review*. Vol. 82. No. 2. (2007): 579 – 589. See also, Parkinson, J. (2006). *Deliberating in the Real World: Problems of Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>145</sup> Druckman, J, N and Nelson, K, R. Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens’ Conversations Limit Elite Influence. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 47. No. 4. (2003): 729 – 745. See also, Gutmann, A. and Thompson, D. (2004). *Why Deliberative Democracy?* New Jersey. Princeton University Press.

<sup>146</sup> Parkinson, J. (2006). *Deliberating in the Real World: Problems of Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy*. New York. Oxford University Press.

### **3. 4. Deliberative Polling**

Unlike elections in representative or direct democracy, deliberative democracy follows a different approach to select deliberators. Deliberative democracy uses a combination of different sampling methods to select the representatives or deliberators. Advocates of deliberative democracy are critical about different electoral practices in representative and direct democracies. According to them, electoral practices used in representative and direct democratic practices reduce the democratic discourse to numerical majority i.e., parties, candidates or policies that generate the required numbers to exercise democratic power win over others. This practice has become an inherent convention in representative and direct democracies to elect the representatives or to choose the policies. Numerical majority based election, selection, and decision making is used at different stages to arrive at conclusions. This forces the candidates, parties, interest groups and etc. representative entities to generate positions or alternatives that command the required majority, and democratic practice is reduced to the bargaining power that a representative entity commands or generates. To gain bargaining power, representative entities involve in grounding their choices or manifestos that address the concerns of specific groups based on their numerical strength and identity related aspects like culture, language, race, ethnicity etc. While rallying around peoples' identity itself cannot be called as an undemocratic practice, advocates of deliberative poll argue that it is the compulsions of the numerical majority that forces the representative entities to ground their politics on these identities in a representative or direct democracy. Hence, identities or classes that command numerical majority, or identities or classes that could converge their interests tend to gain in elections based democratic practices. These electoral practices marginalize the voice of the groups that fail to garner the required majority. And the fact that electoral wins are gained with slim majorities indicate the exclusion of those identities that fail to cross the winning margin. Besides the disadvantage of promoting numerical majority based democratic practices, electoral practices fortify the winning chances of particular representative entities, and their choices. And these choices become the choices that the electorate has to comply with. Contrary to this, deliberative polls based on different sampling techniques, creates a random deliberative group that is inclusive of all the identities of the electorate. Deliberative polls, with inclusive sampling techniques, generates a deliberative group that is free from the pressures of

political parties, interest groups, class and identity politics, money and numerical power, and ideological fortifications. Deliberative polls create absolutely equal conditions for everyone to get selected. These randomly selected deliberators deliberate on behalf of the people unlike in representative or direct democratic practices where elections decide the representatives or policy outcomes<sup>147</sup>.

### **3. 5. Deliberative Decision Making**

Deliberative democracy sounds to be a rational choice when we compare it with other forms of democracies like representative/direct democracy but how far consensus is possible in deliberative democracy is a big question. It may happen, even in a deliberative democracy also, that the participants may not be able to arrive at a reasoned agreement and may have to decide the outcome based on the numerical support to take a particular decision. In such a situation, voting may become as an unavoidable yardstick to aggregate or measure the choices or demands of the participants in the deliberative process. Hence, in a deliberative democracy also, counting of votes or going for the majority opinion comes into play at some point of time. Voting is next best to consensus and reasoned agreement, hence voting may stand to retain its importance in deliberative democracy also as it is difficult to arrive at a consensus all the time. Hence, deliberative democracy may also need proper institutional mechanisms like voting, administrative setup etc. But what would be the difference between deliberative democracy and representative or direct democracy if we were to accept the principle of voting to arrive at a decision? Would not it become a convention in the long term? This may become a regular option for the participants in the deliberative process and the participants may start using this option quite often thus downplaying thorough deliberation on a given issue. To avoid this

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<sup>147</sup> Ackerman, B and Fishkin, J, S. (2004). *Deliberation Day*. New Haven & London. Yale University Press. See also, Fishkin, J, S and Luskin, R, C. Experimenting with a Democratic Ideal: Deliberative Polling and Public Opinion. *Acta Politica*. Vol. 40. (2005): 284 – 298; Fishkin, J, S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press; Olsen, E, D, H and Trenz, H. The Micro-Macro Link in Deliberative Polling: Deliberative Experiments and Democratic Legitimacy. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. (2015): 1 – 18.

problem, deliberative process should try to arrive at the outcome through three preferred methods in a hierarchical manner; consensus, reasoned agreement, and voting. First preference should be given to consensus where all the participants in the deliberative process must try their best to arrive at a decision that is acceptable to all, second preference must be given to reasoned agreement where all the participants can reason to agree to a position without much difference and without the necessity to go for voting and, the third and the last option should be voting, if the first two options fail to work. Following such a procedure may avoid the use of voting as a method to arrive at deliberative decisions in most of the times and may give scope for reasoning based consensus or reasoned agreement<sup>148</sup>.

Apart from the consensus, or reasoned agreement based outcome, deliberative democracy also brings broader positive benefits with it. Deliberative democracy has an educational effect<sup>149</sup> and improves the quality of opinions among the participants (may not improve as well)<sup>150</sup>. With continuous discussion and with regular efforts to arrive at a consensus or reasoned agreement, the participants enrich themselves with the art of reasoning. Participants will be able to hear the arguments favoring or opposing different views and the reasons behind such positions. Participants will be able to understand the issue in a multidimensional way which will make them to think in multidimensional ways in the subsequent cases. With sufficient space to discuss and deliberate, the outcome of the deliberation will also be of a good quality. The effect of deliberation on the justification of the outcome may also be rational and may be free from errors most of the times as the decisions are taken by all the participants after thoroughly merited weighing of the available options. The tolerance levels of the participants also increase significantly in a deliberative democracy as the participants repeatedly hear and try to understand the position of remaining participants.

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<sup>148</sup> Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press. See also, Addis, A. Constitutionalizing Deliberative Democracy in Multilingual Societies. *Berkeley Journal of International Law*. Vol. 25. No. 2. (2007): 117 – 164.

<sup>149</sup> Cooke, M. Five Arguments for Deliberative Democracy. *Political Studies*. Vol. 48. (2000): 947 – 969. See also, Anderson, V, N and Hansen, K, M. How Deliberation makes better citizens: The Danish Deliberative Poll on the Euro. *European Journal of Political Research*. Vol. 46. (2007): 531 – 556; Hanson, J. S and Howe, K, R. The Potential for Deliberative democratic Civic Education. *Democracy and Education*. Vol. 19. No. 2. (2011): 1 – 9.

<sup>150</sup> Simon, I. Deliberative Democracy and Political Ignorance. *Critical Review (Symposium on Deliberative Democracy)*. Vol. 22. No. 2-3. (2010): 253 – 279.

The participant herself may always want her voice or opinion to be heard in a deliberative environment thus making her understand the value of tolerance when involved in the deliberation process. Such experienced tolerance towards the ideas of other participants makes the individual participants tolerant about the views of other participants as they keep on anticipating wider choices to come out from other participants. The tolerance that is acquired through repeated reasoning equips the participants to always try for a consensus or reasoned agreement. Deliberative process also empowers the participants in the sense that the participants are the real political power holders and each participant—with her capacity and opportunity to deliberate, and with her tolerance towards the ideas of other participants – may feel that the political power is in her hand or that she can convince other participants about the position to be taken on a particular issue. Deliberative process is inclusive in nature as it allows all the participants to express their views on a given issue and gives them a chance to convince other participants about the necessity to take a particular stand on a given issue. Since the decisions are taken in a reasoned manner; consensus, reasoned agreement, and voting (in unavoidable circumstances), even small groups or a single individual gets a chance to participate, convince others and fight for what they/she think is right. The effect of deliberation on the implementation of the outcome may also be positive as the outcome is a result of reasoned consensus or reasoned agreement among the participants who are also the subjects of the law or the rules that they pass<sup>151</sup>.

### **3. 6. Conversion of Individual Choice into Social Choice in a Deliberative Democratic Practice**

Now let us come to the basic question whether the participants in a deliberative process need to follow rational choice or social choice while deliberating. Does deliberation allow everyone's interest to be articulated or addressed? Deliberative process gives ample scope for

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<sup>151</sup> McCoy, M, L. and Scully, P, L. Deliberative Dialogue to Expand Civic Engagement: What Kind of Talk Does Democracy Need? *National Civic Review*. Vol. 91. No. 2. (2002): 117 – 135. See also, Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

the participants to be rational about their choices. As soon as the participants get a chance to pursue their rational choice or take position based on their self-interest, the apparent result might be that the participants may try to pitch for the position that benefits them and may not think about what is good for the general public. A participant with a rational choice may go for her choice instead of choosing the choice suitable to majority people, but this is where deliberation plays a crucial role by eliminating the extremes by making way for the choices that are beneficial to the general public. It is true that a rational choice pushes the individual to decide or choose her own path or preferences in most of the times in a purely individual centric manner, but this is why rational choice is said to be of help in deliberative process as everyone would be pushing to pursue their choices. This makes the participants to think about how hard or important the choices of the opponents are for their opponents. To say it in simple terms, if all the people take part in the decision making, the probability to arrive at a rational and suitable position that suits the needs of the general public is high, whereas, if we prefer rational choice in a representative democracy the ruling classes may go for the choices that suit them. Collective choice may not be viable all the time, but it has to be decided through deliberation, where sufficient space will be there to decide whether to go for collective choice, or to take up a minority voice. The complexity to arrive at a rationally suitable position to all forces the participants in a deliberative democracy to choose a rational choice that is social as well<sup>152</sup>.

Deliberation is not aimed at achieving uniformity and deliberation is not aimed at clear cut heterogeneity either. The lived experiences of participants in the deliberative process intrinsically involves defending ones position or stand on a particular issue, and it is not known how the participants will respond to various issues that needs to be deliberated on. Discarding certain ideas of the participants at once may not be possible in a deliberative democracy and allowing deliberation on everything may not work as well. The central disposition of deliberative democracy rests on the assumption that the participants are presumed to reflect on

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<sup>152</sup> Cooke, M. Five Arguments for Deliberative Democracy. *Political Studies*. Vol. 48. (2000): 947 – 969. See also, Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press; Baccaro, L. Civil society meets the state: towards associational democracy? *Socio-Economic Review*. (2005): 1 – 24; Storsul, T. Deliberation or Self-Presentation? Young People, Politics and Social Media. *Nordicom Review*. Vol. 35. No. 2. (2014): 17 – 28; Hughes, T & Pollard, A. Changing Hats: How Deliberation Impacts Citizens. *Sciencewise expert resource center*. (2014): 1 – 11.

reason behind a position instead of pushing for the premeditated opinion that they have been carrying with them. The presumption that participants take part in rational-critical debate in deliberation process heavily depends on the presumption that participants explore different alternatives keeping in view the overall good of the society just like the way people in a veil of ignorance are supposed to behave in Rawls social contract—the only difference being that in the veil of ignorance the contracting parties do not know the outcome of their position, hence they go for equality of positions or delete extremely disadvantageous positions. Contrary to this, in a deliberative democracy, the participants know the outcome of their deliberation and their position in their deliberative outcome. Hence, participants may go for self-interest based rational positions that benefit them instead of taking a ‘rational’ position that may benefit others. Hence, deliberative process may turn into a political game to win ones position rather than to think about the overall benefits to the society<sup>153</sup>. This questions the fundamentals of the deliberation process as it may lead to disempowerment of different parties of the deliberation if the deliberation process is not balanced.

### **3. 7. Conditions Required for Deliberative Democratic Practice**

Certain fundamental circumstances are essential for a deliberative democracy to be successful. One among them is economic and educational equality of the participants. Without educational and economic equality it is difficult for the participants to participate in the deliberation process in an equal manner. Differences in educational levels usually lead to differences in rationalization capacity hampering the deliberative atmosphere<sup>154</sup>. Similarly, differences in economic standards of the participants may lead to unequal participation as those who are not well off may not find time to participate, or they may not act in an independent

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<sup>153</sup> Addis, A. Constitutionalizing Deliberative Democracy in Multilingual Societies. *Berkeley Journal of International Law*. Vol. 25. No. 2. (2007): 117 – 164. See also, Lawrence, E. Side, J and Farrell, H. Self-Segregation or Deliberation? Blog, Readership, Participation, and Polarization in American Politics. *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol. 8. No. 1. (2010): 141 – 157; Landemore, H and Mercier, H. Talking it out with others vs. deliberation within and the law of group polarization: Some implications of the argumentative theory of reasoning for deliberative democracy. *Analise Social*. Vol. 41. No. 4. (2012): 910 – 934; Parkinson, J & Mansbridge, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>154</sup> Simon, I. Deliberative Democracy and Political Ignorance. *Critical Review (Symposium on Deliberative Democracy)*. Vol. 22. No. 2-3. (2010): 253 – 279.

manner due to their dependency on the economically well off participants<sup>155</sup>. Mature environment is also an essential requirement for the deliberative democracy to be successful. Maturity of the field reflects the appropriate timing and the circumstances that could lay a platform for the deliberative democracy<sup>156</sup>. The type of issues that can be discussed in the deliberative process should also be clear to the participants. How to avoid irrelevant things or how to limit the democratic process to important, tangible and useful aspects that affects everyone's lives is also important. There is no need to look for solutions for questions of philosophical nature all the time. A majority of people may not 'understand' these aspects, and may misdirect themselves, but the chances for the normal people to misguide themselves when asked to choose between tangible issues and other non-tangible things is minimal<sup>157</sup>. This is where the example of guild socialism resemblances deliberative democracy. In guild socialism workers of a factory or firm form into a group and take control of the production process. G. D. H. Cole was one of the main influential persons who propagated guild socialism. According to Cole, an individual is free when she co-operates with her equals in an equal manner in all affairs i.e., in the decision making and implementation process. Cole was of the opinion that individuals must work in a co-operative manner to satisfy their needs. He believed firmly that, individuals, through participation at local level, learn democracy. Cole was of the strong opinion that the experience in the industry or how an industry works acts as a best example for the participation in the political process. Industry provides alternative models or acts as a replica to participation at local level. Cole felt that the object of social organization is not merely material benefits but it is an opportunity to express oneself in fullest form<sup>158</sup>.

Specific socio-economic and political conditions are required for a deliberative democracy to be successful. For a deliberative democracy to be successful, political discourse should take place in an equal manner among the equals. Participants in the political process

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<sup>155</sup> Fishkin, J, S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press. See also, Fung, A. *Deliberation's Darker Side: Six Questions for Iris Marion Young and Jane Mansbridge*. *National Civic Review*. (2004): 47 – 54.

<sup>156</sup> Dryzek, J, S. (2000). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>157</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

<sup>158</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

should be economically and educationally equal so as to enjoy equal voice in the political process. Deliberation should lead to consensus most of the times as there is no point in arriving at a decision based on the majority votes of the participants as this may lead to the adaptation of drawbacks that we have seen in representative and direct democracies, eventually leading to the situation where the majority tends to win all the time<sup>159</sup>.

Different aspects on which deliberation can be made and the aspects that should be left out of the deliberation process should also be decided. Should everyday general talk among the people be considered as a step in the process of deliberation? Everyday general talk allows people to understand the issues that they are facing and may lead to possible solutions to the issue. Though general talk in public places end without arriving at any final decision it allows people free space to express their opinions in a free and informal manner and forms the basis for the deliberative process. Critics argue that general talk cannot be called as a process of deliberation as it is not focused and is not discussed at length till a decision is arrived at. General talk is usually uncoordinated and people who have same opinion on a particular issue usually come together and involve in such talks. Day to day normal experiences that people experience play a major role in the deliberative outcome but are not sufficient to be considered as an example of perfect deliberation<sup>160</sup>.

Participants' turnout should also be good for the deliberative process. Low turnout in the deliberation process does not automatically mean that the deliberative process is weak or that the citizenry is inactive, but it certainly is an indication that the people are not concerned about the issue in question or that the people have less faith in the deliberative process or that they could be of the opinion that their participation is not going to show much difference in the outcome of the deliberation. As deliberation cannot be practiced at each and every stage, its domain or range regarding the aspects where deliberation can be practiced need to be decided. Just like the theories of the middle range, deliberative democracy needs a medium approach, not too broad, not too narrow. Deliberative process also helps the participants to engage with the viewpoints of the opposition. This gives the participants to think and express

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<sup>159</sup> Mutz, D, C. (2006). *Hearing the Other Side*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

their opinion on a particular issue with that of the opinions held by their opposing participants<sup>161</sup>. J. S. Mill was of the opinion that lack of proper communication with the opposition's opinion may lead to a lethargic public sphere. The following lines by Mill shows the importance of engaging with the public sphere; *“if the opinion is right they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error”* (p-8)<sup>162</sup>.

### **3. 8. Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democratic Practice**

The practice of democracy differs widely based on different institutional mechanisms used to arrive at a democratic decision. There seems to be no single method or institutional mechanism that we can say is a true replicate of perfect democracy. Different democracies adopt different institutional mechanisms to practice democracies. Institutional variations in various democratic practices include variations in electoral methods, party systems, legislature composition, direct or indirect systems, referendums, non-legislative bodies like judiciary etc. Different states adopt different combinations of the above said institutional mechanisms or may go for altogether new set of institutional mechanisms to practice their own version of democracy. The strength or weakness of these democracies depend on how representative, deliberative, or inclusive are the institutional mechanisms, and how do these institutional mechanisms function when it comes to exercising democratic-power. Different institutions contribute to the deliberation process in different ways in different democracies, and their strengths and weakness can be assessed in a relative sense only. An institution that is a perfect fit in a particular set of larger institutional setup may not fit in another environment, and similarly a particular democratic method that is well established and considered as an example for a good democratic practice may fit one environment and may not fit another environment. Nevertheless, all these institutional mechanisms can be democratic (or undemocratic) in varying degrees and may or may not have deliberative practices in varying degrees. Some institutional mechanisms may allow more deliberative space and some may not allow sufficient

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

space, and in some institutions the deliberative space may be exclusively reserved for some ‘selected’ or ‘elected’ members only whereas in other set of institutional mechanisms the deliberative power is extended to ‘others’ also apart from the selected or elected leaders<sup>163</sup>.

All forms of democracy, whether representative, deliberative, or direct, have some deliberative components in them – in varying degrees though – and in every democracy, aggregation of opinions take place whether through political parties, through voting in referendums or by direct participation of people in the decision making process. The difference lies in who deliberates for whom? Who represents who? How direct or indirect is the participation or deliberation process in the decision making? And every democratic model involves some form of representation. But in a deliberative democracy, the component of representation has to be minimized as much as possible contrary to the fixed models of representation that we see in representative democracies. This minimal, unavoidable representation should constitute a constellation of members from different fields who can act as active members in the system parts, in their respective fields of expertise, and be as connecting line between their particular system part and the overall system. In other words, this minimum unavoidable representation should be made as diverse as possible to include diverse issues, and as flexible as possible to accommodate the inflow of fresh ideas or demands from the continuously emerging parts. This way, deliberative democratic practice can become a supplement to the representative democracy rather than an as an alternative to it. Representation stays in deliberative democracy also but in a deliberative manner. It is a shift from exclusive voting (done by few elected people repeatedly) centric democracy to deliberation (done by appropriate parts of system) centric democracy<sup>164</sup>.

Certain practices in classical Athens can be considered as examples for deliberative practices in history. But the type of deliberative sphere that was created in these examples did not include all the sections in the deliberative process as deliberation was limited to certain category of ‘citizens’ only. Issues relating to these citizens were deliberated by these citizens

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<sup>163</sup> Karpowitz, C, F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>164</sup> Parkinson, J & Mansbridge, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

and the issues of ‘non-citizens’ were non-existent as these non-citizens were not part of the deliberative public sphere. The public sphere then was totally controlled by the ruling class and alternatives to it were non-existent—and there was only one public sphere; the public sphere of the mainstream ideas. In a democracy, a wide variety of institutions, both formal and informal, involve in the political process, and all the institutions like the mass media, civil society, pressure groups, political parties, courts, legislature, religious groups, and non-governmental organizations play an important role in shaping the decisions that are formally given final shape by the legislatures. But the involvement of these groups in shaping the outcome is not systematically managed. The involvement of these groups in the decision making process takes place randomly and on uneven levels. Some groups or sections tend to be more active in enforcing their position on the legislature and some groups are less active in putting forward their viewpoint, and some groups are absent altogether. This type of uneven participation, basically due to the differences in their capabilities to pursue their interests, leads to uneven representation and uneven outcome. Hence the deliberative process has to be made systematic, by involving more and more groups in a rational manner based on the issue<sup>165</sup>.

A deliberative decision regarding school education can involve the representatives of the schools or school related departments in the region or country, and other groups that are going to get affected by the deliberation or decision making on this particular issue can also be involved in the deliberation process in a broader sense. Such categorical, yet systematic selection or inclusion of groups gives a stratified composition of groups that could participate in the deliberation process thus strengthening the democratic decision making process. Deliberative decision making can be dispersed in different directions and among different groups instead of looking to a particular group of persons to take the decisions all the time. Multiple tasks can be allotted to multiple groups as it is reasonable to conclude that it is not possible for a single group to take all the decisions on all matters. A particular set of people may be fit to take a particular decision. Trying to find a common group to take all the decisions

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<sup>165</sup> Karpowitz, C. F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

may not work because it is difficult to find a single group who can possess deliberative capabilities on all range of issues<sup>166</sup>.

Systemic approach to deliberative democracy gives the advantage of creating loose, yet broadly planned system environments to carry various kinds of deliberations. The basic problem with deliberative democracy where deliberation is expected to take place in the form of face-to-face interaction is it becomes difficult to make arrangements to include all the participants in the deliberation process due to the space constraints. Hence, deliberation is supposed to take place in small groups which restricts the deliberation process to limited populace. Citing it as a reason for limiting the deliberation to small groups may eventually result in restricting the deliberation process to selected people only making it not so different from the representative forms of government that we are experiencing now. Hence, a systemic approach is necessary to practice deliberative democracy in an inclusive manner. A systemic and stratified approach helps in creating various parts that are specialized in specific tasks or issues, and the specialized parts or groups carry out the deliberation process and decision making on issues that fall under their area of specialization. The division need not be necessarily clear cut and tight. Some overlapping or convergence of areas can be there but the division can be more or less specific in a broader sense. An issue relating to the school education can be deliberated by the school administration related people but may also include the teachers and parents associations etc. and the people who have expertise in higher education related matters and employment related matters can also be included in the broader group that deliberates on school education. Similarly, a group that deliberates on road safety may also include a few members from the surrounding hospitals, emergency services, traffic controlling department etc. This type of combination creates a possibility to include maximum possible representative environment for the deliberation process to take place and at the same time it can avoid the chaos that would take place if all the people were to come together to deliberate.

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<sup>166</sup> Savic, V. Integration of Deliberative Democracy and Policy Making: A Vision of a Deliberative System. *New Perspectives on Deliberative Democracy*. Vol. 23. No. 4. (2012): 170 – 189. See also, Karpowitz, C, F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

This also avoids the drawbacks that the present liberal representative democracy has i.e., representation by one elected group on all issues all the time<sup>167</sup>.

The systemic approach also helps in identifying the appropriate segments of population in the deliberation process. A farmer can discuss about the farming related issues better than a member of parliament or a bureaucrat. Hence, including the farmer in the decision making group makes sense. The farmer may be a poor analyzer of non-farming issues like higher education, health, foreigner affairs or defense, but when it comes to the issue of farming her contribution to the deliberation can be of immense value when compared to the benefits that come from the deliberation of other members like members of parliament or bureaucrats. Hence, including a team or committee of farmers in the deliberation process makes more sense than asking the bureaucrats or elected representatives to come up with suggestions or recommendations on farming related issues. Or, creating a council consisting of farmers and giving them some weight to question the decisions of the representatives may also be of help. One group or part of a system may be weak in many aspects but the contribution of that particular part in that particular matter can be invaluable that cannot be replaced by other parts. Regular deliberative mechanisms that exist in a representative democracy like a team of representatives, a committee or a group of consultants may have the deliberative quality that they have acquired due to their continuous exposure to deliberative environment but they may lack the specialization on issues as these committees are the ones that are consulted routinely regarding policy matters. Hence, a convergence of specialized parts can contribute more to the system than the system itself taking decisions all the time<sup>168</sup>.

A deliberative system can be defined as a system consisting of loosely related parts not necessarily connected to each other. Changes in one part may or may not bring changes in other parts. Nonetheless, all the parts work under the same system. It is not necessary that all the parts need to be active in the deliberation process or decision making process, and some parts can stay away from the deliberation process altogether if the issue involved does not fall under the domain of those parts. But the parts will be broadly categorized based on the division

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Karpowitz, C, F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

of labor thus making them specialized in one particular field but it can be connected to other parts also if convergence is required. Parts that are concerned with the issue stay active in the deliberation process and they become inactive or give space to other parts as soon as their work is over and whenever other parts of the system need the space for deliberation. New parts in the system may evolve based on the necessity and old parts may wither away if the issues related to that part do not popup again. Hence, the shape of the system can be said to be ever changing, and the definition or form of the deliberative system changes quite frequently based on the addition or deletion of parts and based on how these parts take shape and reshape the system. The parts in a deliberative system may or may not be having a well-defined domain. Sometimes the parts work independent of other parts and sometimes convergence of domains of different parts may take place thus making the parts to converge their deliberative domains in accordance with the range of convergence that becomes a prerequisite for the particular issue to be deliberatively discussed. In other words, convergence of domains between different parts of a system and the range of convergence necessary to deliberate on a particular issue depends on the nature of the issue and is decided from time to time based on the dynamics of the issues involved<sup>169</sup>.

In a democracy, irrelevant to its form or extent, decision making involves involving experts at some stage, and deliberative democracy is no exception to this thumb rule except that it may reduce the role of the ‘experts’ as defined in the present representative democracy. In fact, in deliberative democracy, experts play the crucial role and they form the parts of the system. Sometimes the parts may be consisting of experts only and their decisions or the decision of that particular part on a particular issue can become the exclusive platform on which policies or decisions regarding that issue can be taken. This is not to suggest that deliberation process should be handled by the experts alone, but it is aimed at improving the quality of deliberation by involving the core members from that particular issue type. A little clarity about who is an expert in a deliberative environment can reflect more light on why expert decisions can play an important role in a deliberative atmosphere. An expert, unlike in non-deliberative democracies, is one who is involved in a particular activity for a long time. This is not the case with the experts in a representative democracy where an expert means she

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

has been well educated, qualified to be expert because of her official position etc. and she is allowed to take part in the deliberation process because of her position as representative. This does not make her an expert in real sense, and the most troubling part in this type of expert system is these experts will be taking all the decisions. But the expert in deliberative environment is someone with real expertise on the issue, farmers taking decision on farming related issues, daily wage laborers taking part in the wage related decisions, medical experts taking part in the medical services related issues etc. Though this kind of involving the experts is there in non-deliberative methods also, the final call is made by the representatives or same team of experts on all most all matters in a non-deliberative democracy<sup>170</sup>.

It is difficult to expect all the people to deliberate in a given circumstance, and some people tend to miss the deliberation process either because of functional problems like difficulty in coming together to deliberate or due to lack of sufficient knowledge about the issue in question. In such a situation, some participants deliberate on behalf of others, and as is apparent, this small group of people represent other people who are not present in the deliberation process. This small deliberative group can be dynamic in representing the absent members or may altogether not represent those who are absent. The intrinsic nature of this deliberation is inherently ‘representative’, and representation seems unavoidable in deliberative democratic practices also. The representation can be in the form of participation of few people only out of the total populace in the system, participation of few ‘experts’ instead of involving all the people, or involving different institutions at various stages whose members are selected or elected by using various methods. Hence, some form of representation involves in deliberative democratic practice also, but the question is how representative this component is going to be. One point is clear about this representative group – it is dynamic, in the sense that it keeps on changing its form, structure, composition, and size. But the dynamic nature of this type of representation in deliberative democracy puts us in ambiguity about assessing its representativeness. Just like the way the representative group undergoes continuous changes

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<sup>170</sup> Boussaguet, L and Dehousse, R. Lay People’s Europe: A Critical Assessment of the First EU Citizen’s Conference. *European Governance Papers*. (2008): 1 – 23. See also, Karpowitz, C, F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

from time to time and issue to issue, its representative claims for legitimacy also changes in varying degrees – from completely representative to completely unrepresentative, and the most difficult part is how to assess whether a deliberative group represents proper representation or not<sup>171</sup>.

Deliberative atmosphere can be created only in the presence of egalitarian environment. Too much of differences among different classes and the stereotypes that people carry with them because of their exposure to their version of truth alone can only make them to premeditatedly resist the version of others. Certain institutional reforms are necessary to create this egalitarian environment for deliberation. These institutional reforms should be primarily aimed at redistribution of the power in an egalitarian manner to all the sections of the society in a more or less equal manner, and this redistribution has to address the grievances of different classes and sections in the present form of democracy. Addressing does not mean that the egalitarian measures should take care of the privileged interests of those who have. This apparently leads to ending up maintaining status quo as the present classes would obviously want all their privileges to stay with them. At the same time it may not be good to take away all their privileges, because trying to do so would mean that the present privileged classes may be forced to defend themselves, and they can easily defend their position by using all the power, authority, resources, institutional structures, and hegemony centered ideas. Hence, the first deliberative step in the creation of deliberative environment is to deliberate on issues that are aimed at addressing inequality in deliberation. Hence, the deliberative forums that are needed to deliberate on a particular issue in a particular context need to be decided keeping in view different factors like equality of representation, inclusiveness in terms of sections that are going to get affected, representation of sections that could face probable side effects of deliberation on an issue etc.<sup>172</sup>.

To make this possible, the deliberative forums should be of many types among which the participants can choose the most suited one based on the issue and context. Different types of deliberative forums include open forums with open access to all those who are willing to

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<sup>171</sup> Karpowitz, C, F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

participate, closed forums with access to those whose issues are in question, or a mix of both the types of forums that can accommodate the participants whose interests are getting affected and other random participants who can bring balance to the forum with unforeseen dimensions to the issue on which deliberation is planned. The selection of the participants or limitations on the number of participants who can take part in the deliberation process needs to be deliberated in a more or less democratic manner by all those who wish to participate<sup>173</sup>. Supporters of deliberation come up with different methods to select the forum type as well to fill the forum with membership for that particular deliberative forum. A simple random sampling can be followed to select the participants, if the sample composes of participants from same area and reflect some form of equality in their social class, language, educational levels etc. This gives the participants equal access to participation and at the same time it reasonably restricts the number of participants in a scientific manner to create a forum with a size that is ‘appropriate’ for face-to-face deliberation. But following the simple random sampling may not work all the time as most of issues usually affect more than one section and this obviously means affecting different members who may be unequal by the nature of their class. In such a situation following simple random sampling may skew the balance in favor of a particular class of participants. Following stratified sampling coupled with quota sampling may work in this case, and simple random sampling can be used to decide the participants within the decided quota. Sometimes both simple random sampling and stratified-quota sampling may fail to come up with a representative deliberative forum, especially on occasions when the issue involved needs technical knowhow like in the fields of medicine or engineering. On these occasions going for a closed forum by restricting the participation to specific type of people like doctors and engineers etc. may work<sup>174</sup>.

### **3. 9. Limitations of Deliberative Democracy**

There is growing support for the argument that a democracy’s strength or success depends on the deliberative structures that it provides to its citizens. Analysts point to the fact

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<sup>173</sup> Huitema, D. Kerkhof, M, V, D. and Pesch, Udo. The nature of the beast: are citizens’ juries deliberative or pluralist? *Policy Sci.* (2007).

<sup>174</sup> Karpowitz, C, F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

that participation of people at different levels of decision making enhances the choices that can be created within a democratic setup. It may not be possible to include all the people in the decision making process but it is strongly believed that different ranges of deliberation can be made at different levels so as to make the decision making process relatively more democratic when compared to the non-deliberative democratic practices. Representation becomes unavoidable in deliberative democracies also as it is not possible for deliberation to be done by all, but citizens can create favorable conditions where the decision making process can be extended beyond the present legislative structures by creating certain designs that can accommodate multiple levels of deliberative platforms by including more citizens—at least from the relevant groups. This may end the monopoly of the *all in one* legislature in the present representative democracies that makes decisions on all issues<sup>175</sup>.

But deliberative practice is not free from drawbacks as different types of disempowerment can hamper the participants from taking part in the deliberation process or sometimes the deliberative mechanism itself may depower some participants. Broadly, three categories of disempowerment of certain section of participants can take place in any deliberative forum. First, politically disempowered groups that have been historically placed in disadvantageous position obviously will be in a disadvantaged situation as these groups may not find the deliberative forum as conducive as it should be to accommodate deliberation on equal terms. Second, even a powerful group may get disempowered temporarily as the issue involved may not allow them the advantage or the equality that they used to have in earlier deliberative or non-deliberative forums. These groups can be termed as situationally disempowered groups. Third, any group can get disempowered because of the deliberation process itself or its terms and conditions, and because of weaknesses in composition of the group and decision making process etc. Politically disempowered groups are groups which are socially, economically or politically excluded from the groups that are part of mainstream politics. This type of exclusion varies based on the place and time. A particular group may have faced exclusion at a particular point of history but may have recovered its space in another time. Similarly, a particular type of group may face exclusion in one forum and may feel

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<sup>175</sup> Parkinson, J & Mansbridge, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

included in another forum. This type of situation makes the situation fluid and the group that faces exclusion in a given situation changes continuously based on the context. Some examples for groups that have been facing perpetual exclusion include gender based discrimination, color and race based discrimination, caste based discrimination, and tribe or clan based discrimination<sup>176</sup>. These are some broader examples and obviously cannot be called as an exhaustive list of politically disempowered groups. Participants from these groups usually will be weaker in terms of representing their cause, articulating their ideas and the orientation that is needed for deliberation. The influence that these groups command can be minimal or completely absent sometimes, making them ‘incompetent’ for a competitive deliberation if appropriate measures are not taken. The identification of these groups depends on place and time, and deliberative forums must be designed to address these types of exclusion. Situational disempowerment can happen if a group is getting disempowered because of a particular type of issue that specifically puts this group in a weak position. The group may be a powerful group on other occasions in the same deliberative forum or in other deliberative forums, but the specific issue in question may weaken this particular group. For example, a group having land as property can be an empowered group in terms of socio-economic and political status, but its situation may suddenly change if the same land is to be taken away from them to construct a dam or for mining etc. These situations may severely disempower even powerful groups also. This type of exclusion should be kept in view while forming the deliberative forum as mere numbers may not work here as the majority might be in favor of the dam or mining<sup>177</sup>.

There must be some equality among the participants who engage in the deliberation process. The participants should feel that the other participants will treat them equally in terms of giving respect to their opinion. Differential treatment among the participants may lead to a situation where some participants may think that their voices do not carry any weight or respect and that their opinions may be looked down or ridiculed. This situation may force some of the potential participants to keep away from the deliberation process citing some reasons. An

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<sup>176</sup> Karpowitz, C, F. Mendelberg, T and Shaker, L. Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation. *American Political Science Review*. (2012): 1 – 15. See also, Fung, A. Deliberation before the Revolution: Towards and Ethics of Deliberative Democracy in an Unjust World. *Political Theory*. Vol. 33. No. 2. (2005): 397 – 419.

<sup>177</sup> Karpowitz, C, F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

inclusive environment in every sense – social, political, and cultural – has to be present for an equal deliberation to take place. Low levels of awareness about the issues that are in discourse in the public sphere also seem to reduce the enthusiasm among the participants to participate in the deliberation process<sup>178</sup>.

Deliberative structures, sometimes disempower certain sections which can be a result of the way a deliberative forum is formed, the rules or methods followed to select the participants, inequalities among the members in terms of their educational attainments or understanding levels, differences in language that the participants speak, or cultural prejudices that may restrict them in participating or speaking in the public forum etc. related issues<sup>179</sup>. In such conditions, deliberative structures may actually disempower these groups by making them participate in an imbalanced deliberation process. Commonality of language becomes a ‘prerequisite’ for a deliberative atmosphere as people at local level can only interact if the language used is understandable to all. Some analysts point to the possibility that deliberative practices may exclude some sections based on their linguistic or communicative capabilities<sup>180</sup>. Everything happens in a cultural context and deliberation also takes place in a cultural context where cultures, languages or communicative methods may enjoy particular status or may face particular type of stigma that have been accorded to them historically. Culture certainly plays a major role in giving weight to certain linguistic forms and ways of expression. Participants’ stereotyped position against a particular linguistic group or their expression may make them think that certain types of engagement are irrational, time taking, or do not fall in the domain of critical-rational thinking. This stereotype or orientation towards a particular group of participants may diminish their chances to convince other participants about the reason behind their stand point. This apparently results in lowered value to their voices. A particular type of communicative-action, such as storytelling type of narration may make others think that this

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<sup>178</sup> Dahlgren, P. The Internet, Public Sphere, and Political Communications: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Journal of Political Communication*. Vol. 22 (2005): 147 – 162.

<sup>179</sup> Sanders, L, M. Against Deliberation. *Political Theory*. Vol. 25. No. 3. (1997); 1 – 17. See also, Fung, A. Deliberation before the Revolution: Towards and Ethics of Deliberative Democracy in an Unjust World. *Political Theory*. Vol. 33. No. 2. (2005): 397 – 419.

<sup>180</sup> Boussaguet, L and Dehousse, R. Lay People’s Europe: A Critical Assessment of the First EU Citizen’s Conference. *European Governance Papers*. (2008): 1 – 23. See also, Sanders, L, M. Against Deliberation. *Political Theory*. Vol. 25. No. 3. (1997); 1 – 17

does not constitute critical rational talk, or an incoherent way of expression by a linguistically ‘weak’ group (in a particular social context) could turn out to be disadvantageous to them. Since everything happens in a cultural context, the basic assumption that deliberation takes place in a rational and unbiased manner becomes questionable<sup>181</sup>.

As soon as we recognize the fact that culture plays a crucial role in setting the atmosphere of the deliberative sphere, we come to recognize that it is not going to be a completely reason based deliberative sphere – prejudices play important role. This cultural tag to the ‘deliberative’ sphere apparently tilts the outcomes in favor of some groups considered as culturally advanced in their reasoning, linguistic capabilities, expression in certain language may be considered as precise and rational, and expression in a particular language may in fact carry more weight because of its use by socially advanced groups or ‘intellectually’ advanced groups, and there may be words for each and everything in a particular language and the same thing cannot be expected from other languages<sup>182</sup>. All these linguistic and cultural practices of the participants play a major role in deciding how ‘deliberative’ the deliberative atmosphere is. Hence, cultural and linguistic forms of exclusion cannot be said to be completely absent in a deliberative practice. In fact, critics of deliberative democracy argue that the exclusion that results because of the deliberation process may not sound like exclusion at all as the deliberative process may make the participants think that they have consented to the outcome in a deliberative manner. But the fact could be the other way around as they may have consented because of their weak articulation, or analytical skills which may make them to think that the outcome was thoroughly deliberated and it could not have been better. This *consented-exclusion* may go unnoticed because of the intrinsic assumption that it was the outcome of a consensus deliberation thus resulting in a ‘well’ deliberated exclusion. This type of deliberated

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<sup>181</sup> Karpowitz, C, F. & Raphael, C. (2014). *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums: Improving Equality and Publicity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>182</sup> Dahlberg, L & Siaper, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan. See also, Hans, V, P. Deliberation and Dissent: 12 Angry Men versus the Empirical Reality of Juries. *Chicago-Kent Law Review*. Vol. 82. No. 2. (2007): 579 – 589.

exclusion may happen on other occasions also in the case of those who are new to the political process<sup>183</sup>.

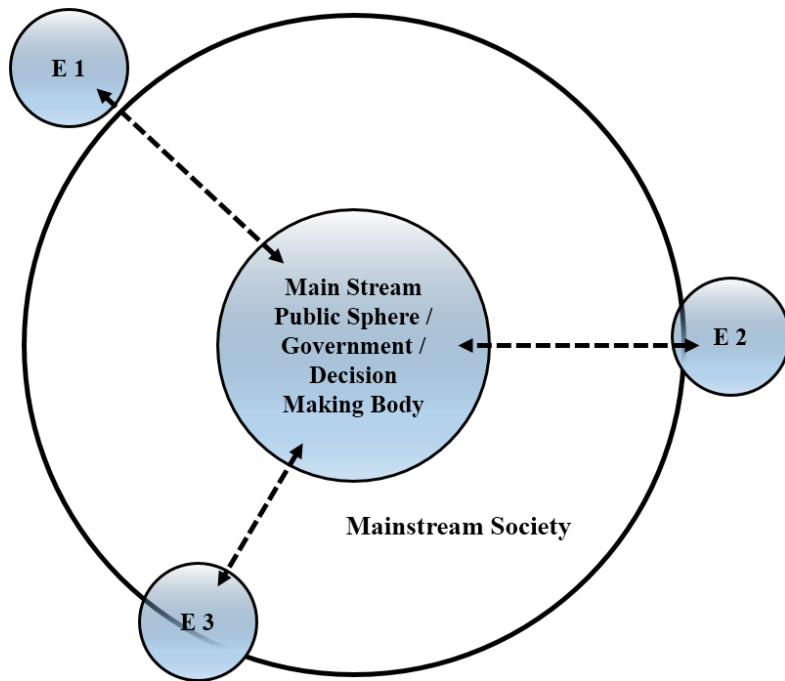
To address this issue, some analysts suggest using enclave forums as deliberative forums. Enclave forums are basically closed forums based on ethnicities, clans, or specific identities. In this form of deliberation, the enclaves take active part in the deliberation process when the issue involved concerns these ethnicities or clans—and remain inactive or outside the broader public sphere when they do not have anything in common with the broader public sphere. This is nothing short of assuring autonomy from the state or autonomy from the mainstream public sphere itself. This kind of deliberation may work in case of special groups who wish to maintain their autonomy from the mainstream society. The language and methods of deliberation used in this type of deliberation depends on the comfort, values and practices of the particular clan or ethnicity that is engaging in the deliberation process. This process obviously creates a reasonable deliberative forum for these enclaves as deliberation process takes place in their own language and rules of deliberation are framed according to their own norms. This particular form of deliberation process also becomes problematic when the enclave needs to be engaged in a multiple public spheres with multiple deliberative forums<sup>184</sup>. Diagram 3.1 illustrates the interaction between mainstream public sphere and enclave public spheres.

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<sup>183</sup> Dahlberg, L & Siapera, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan. See also, Hans, V, P. Deliberation and Dissent: 12 Angry Men versus the Empirical Reality of Juries. *Chicago-Kent Law Review*. Vol. 82. No. 2. (2007): 579 – 589; Fung, A. Deliberation before the Revolution: Towards and Ethics of Deliberative Democracy in an Unjust World. *Political Theory*. Vol. 33. No. 2. (2005): 397 – 419.

<sup>184</sup> Dahlberg, L & Siapera, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan. See also, Sunstein, C, R. The Law of Group Polarization. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*. Vol. 10. No. 2. (2002): 175 – 195; Fung, A. Deliberation's Darker Side: Six Questions for Iris Marion Young and Jane Mansbridge. *National Civic Review*. (2004): 47 – 54.

**Digram 3.1: Interaction of Enclave Public Spheres with Mainstream Public Sphere**



*Source: Researcher's illustration based on adaptation from Dahlgren (2007) and Dahlberg (2007).  
Notes: E – enclave (public sphere). Arrows represent interaction.*

According to the critics of deliberative democracy, deliberative democrats depend heavily on coercing the participants to fit into a particular form of public sphere and impose its 'deliberative' structures on the participants in a non-deliberative manner to 'standardize' a particular way of communication. Forms of communication or forms of public sphere that are 'considered' deliberative are imposed on those who deviate from this form of 'deliberative' public sphere. It is also criticized that the 'normalized' forms of communication that fits the deliberative public sphere are more closer to urban centric western audience who can use these modes sophisticatedly vis-à-vis those who are not so close to these modes of communication or those who have not been part of these type of public spheres historically<sup>185</sup>. Hence, deliberative public sphere based democracy is also not free from the clutches of exclusion and coercion. But those who defend deliberative democracy argue that all democracies, whatever their form maybe, try to normalize things, which is nothing but coercion in a sense, and even deliberative democracy is not free from normalizing, which may create and exert some amount of coercion

<sup>185</sup> Storsul, T. Deliberation or Self-Presentation? Young People, Politics and Social Media. *Nordicom Review*. Vol. 35. No. 2. (2014): 17 – 28

on the participants in it. Nonetheless, the deliberative public sphere that constitutes the basis of the deliberative democracy more or less can ensure that this normalization takes place only after having rational and critical deliberation by the participants in it<sup>186</sup>.

The process of deliberation itself, more or less, can be called as an agreement to impose ones ideas on others and results in some ideas replacing the other ideas, or a convergence of ideas coming together to take the shape of a better idea thus eventually arriving at an ‘inclusive’ decision to pursue something over other things. This should not deter the participants in taking part in the deliberative process as the alternatives i.e., different forms of non-deliberative democracies do not have proper deliberative mechanisms to take into account the voices of the people. Deliberative democracy, by default, can promise at least one thing – deliberative public sphere, as it is the foundation on which it ought to be built. It can be argued here that the present public sphere, more or less deliberative because of the internet, can be called as a by-product of liberal democracy. The question then is; why look for deliberative democracy? It is true that the present public sphere is more or less deliberative, at least in a relative sense when we compare it to what it was a decade or century ago, but non-deliberative democracies ‘do not’ take into account the synthesis that is being generated in the public sphere. But a deliberative democracy, in a deliberative environment, could create conditions to maximize the inclusion, and reshape the existing institutional arrangements in accordance with the deliberation based public sphere<sup>187</sup>.

### **3. 9. 1. Is Deliberative Polling Democratic?**

Elections, a fundamental method to elect people to the public offices, plays a crucial role in deciding the set of people who can exercise the democratic-power in a representative or direct democracy. Elected representatives are mandated by the people to carry out specific functions. The mandate resembles the successful approximation of continuous democratic discourse between the representative entities and the electorate. The representative entities, in

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<sup>186</sup> Dahlberg, L & Siapera, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

a functional sense, are responsible to the public for their acts while exercising the democratic-power. This responsibility forces the representative entities in a representative or direct democracy to ground their electoral manifesto in sync with the preferences of the electorate. Thus, manifestos that win the acceptance of the public enjoy their legitimate endorsement. Contrary to this, deliberative polling depends on different sampling methods to elect the deliberators. The elected deliberators are not endorsed by the electorate, and the issues that the deliberators choose to deliberate is not the result of negotiated outcome that the electorate may or may not have preferred. Deliberative polls detach the electorate from the democratic-power itself, and hence, undermines the legitimacy of the deliberators to deliberate on behalf of the electorate<sup>188</sup>.

### **3. 9. 2. Accountability Crisis in Deliberative Democracy**

Elected representatives are accountable to the electorate in a representative or direct democratic practice. Periodical elections, democratic institutional practices like parliamentary accountability, plebiscitary polls, and referendums etc. methods force the elected representatives to reflect the choices of the electorate. Contrary to this, the deliberators in a deliberative democracy are not accountable to the public. The deliberators, selected by employing various sampling methods, deliberate on behalf of the people and are out of their positions once the deliberations are done. Unlike the representatives' necessity to gain the trust of the electorate in a representative or direct democracy, deliberative polling leaves the deliberators detached from the electorate. This may make the deliberators to deliberate on something irrelevant to the electorate. Besides accountability deficiencies, deliberative polling also fails to carry the set of preferred or important choices that the representative entities carry over multiple electoral contests. These issues, choices or solutions are repeatedly tested in

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<sup>188</sup> Kadlec, A and Friedman, W. Deliberative Democracy and the Problem of Power. *Journal of Public Deliberation*. Vol. 3. No. 2. (2007): 1 – 26. See also, Olsen, E, D, H and Trenz, H. The Micro-Macro Link in Deliberative Polling: Deliberative Experiments and Democratic Legitimacy. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. (2015): 1 – 18; Urbinati, N. (2014). *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

multiple electoral contests, and shaping and reshaping of these choice takes place in a continuous manner over many electoral contests in a representative or direct democratic practice. And the representative entities carry forward these preferences over multiple electoral contests based on functional possibilities, presumed long term goals of the electorate etc. Contrary to this, such a practice cannot be expected from the deliberators in a deliberative democracy. So, deliberative democratic practices can be said to be lacking accountability mechanisms<sup>189</sup>.

### **3. 10. Synthesizing Deliberative Democratic Practices with Representative and Direct Democratic Practices**

All democratic practices – representative, direct, and deliberative – have limitations in their capacities to approximate the choices of the public. Representative practices, due to functional difficulties in aggregating the choices of the electorate, marginalizes the voters’ choices. And the electorate end up choosing choices that may or may not coincide with their individual choices. Direct democratic practices, though engage the electorate in the decision making process in a direct manner, reduce the democratic practice to frequent voting without proper deliberation. And deliberative practices, because of its dependence on deliberative polling, end up *producing* choices that may or may not reflect the choices of the general public. And all the above three democratic practices have their own strengths; representative practices give wider scope to different representative entities to ‘approximate’ the choices of the electorate in a perpetual manner, direct democratic practices directly places the democratic-power in the hands of the electorate, and deliberative democratic practices provide discursive environment that is necessary for the democratic discourse. Hence, a synthesis of representative and deliberative democratic practices or direct and deliberative democratic practices may produce a democratic practice that is discursive, representative and directly practiced by the citizens. But critics of such a synthesized deliberative-representative or deliberative-direct democratic practice argue that it may lead to a situation where democratically (through elections) generated democratic-power may get challenged by non-

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<sup>189</sup> Kadlec, A and Friedman, W. Deliberative Democracy and the Problem of Power. *Journal of Public Deliberation*. Vol. 3. No. 2. (2007): 1 – 26.

democratically (randomly) generated power of the deliberators. Representatives' opinions are outcomes that the general election registers whereas the opinions of the deliberators do not enjoy the backing of the electorate<sup>190</sup>. But advocates of deliberative democracy argue that if the opinions registered through general elections are not in sync with the opinions of the randomly selected deliberators then the opinions generated by the general elections is not a true reflection of the opinions of the electorate. Hence, deliberative polling is as democratic as elections<sup>191</sup>. Deliberative polling, and deliberative opinion seeking is also free from restrictions like party structure, money power, and ideological prejudices. So, all three variants of democratic practices (representative, direct and deliberative) have their own strengths and weaknesses. Hence, a synthesis of these democratic practices could produce a democratic practice that is more representative as well as deliberative in nature.

## Summary

The chapter discussed about various aspects related to deliberative democracy like the notion of deliberative democracy, how deliberative democracy is different from representative and direct democracy, how deliberation is made in deliberative democracy, how deliberative polls are used to select the deliberative group, and how deliberative democracy emphasizes on consensus decision making through deliberation. Special emphasis was focused in the chapter on systemic approach to practice deliberative democracy. The chapter also discussed about the limitations of deliberative democracy like whether deliberative polling is democratic or not, whether deliberators can be held accountable for their choices etc. Finally, the chapter discussed about the necessity to synthesize deliberative and representative/direct democratic practices to engineer a democratic practice that is discursive in nature with representational or direct democratic features.

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<sup>190</sup> Urbinati, N. (2014). *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

<sup>191</sup> Fishkin, J, S and Luskin, R, C. Experimenting with a Democratic Ideal: Deliberative Polling and Public Opinion. *Acta Politica*. Vol. 40. (2005): 284 – 298.

## **Information and Communications Technology based Discursive Public Sphere and Deliberative Democracy**

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**Abstract:** *This chapter is an attempt to understand the concept of public sphere, and its role in transforming democracy. This chapter attempts to look at the transformation of public sphere in sync with the changes in the communication mediums like mass media and internet. The chapter tries to distinguish between different public spheres like Habermas's bourgeoisie public sphere, mass media based public sphere and internet based public sphere. In the process of discussing the differences between mass media based public sphere and internet based public sphere, the chapter attempts to look at the structural functional differences and economic compulsions between these two modes of communication and how these differences led to two different types of public spheres. The chapter also makes an attempt to look at the discursive nature of internet and makes an attempt to look at whether internet can act as a functional medium for deliberative democratic practices.*

### **4. 1. Public Sphere and Democracy**

Public sphere can be understood as existence or prevalence of multiple domains for rational and communicative space for exchange of ideas in a free and unrestrained manner<sup>192</sup>. The legitimacy of a government depends on how open it is to the public sphere of that particular society that usually engages in accommodating debates on issues of public importance<sup>193</sup>. Public sphere endorses and brings legitimacy to the way democratic or sovereign power is exercised<sup>194</sup>. The public sphere is a sphere where people of all classes, ages, gender, or races can come together, assemble and express their opinions freely without any external force. In a theoretical sense the definition points to the fact that *all* the people should be in a position to

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<sup>192</sup> Dahlgren, P. The Internet, Public Sphere, and Political Communications: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Journal of Political Communication*. Vo. 22 (2005): 147 – 162.

<sup>193</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

<sup>194</sup> Fossum, J, E. & Schlesinger, P. (Eds.). (2007). *The European Union and the Public Sphere: A Communicative Space in the Making?* New York. Routledge.

access the public domain. But in practice the public domain is severely restricted due to different constraints like physical space like land or a meeting place that can accommodate people to come together, meet and discuss. Similar restrictions can be clearly seen in other types of public sphere related components like newspapers, journals, radio, television, books etc. as all of these components face restrictions in the form of paper space, limitations in circulation, limitations in transportation, airing time etc.<sup>195</sup>.

The public sphere must provide equal access to all the participants disregarding to the status of the participants so as to make sure that everyone gets a chance to express their opinion on a subject. The effectiveness of the public sphere depends on how accommodative it is to heterogeneous classes, sections, regions, or gender. Mere accommodation of the participants does not ensure that the public sphere is vibrant or effective; it is vibrant and effective to those who get access and is non-existent to the remaining folks<sup>196</sup>. Access to public spaces or public platforms is important in a political space. Access to political space gives an individual the power and control over the political affairs that concern her. Access to political platforms decides the outcome of the political systems and restrictions on accessing these platforms result in political exclusion<sup>197</sup>. Public sphere is a space which is not restricted or governed by a family or government nor it is a space that can be bought from the market or supplied by it, rather, it is a place or forum where public reasoning of the private citizens take place<sup>198</sup>.

Issues that concern ‘all’, or considered as ‘common’ to all are discussed in the public sphere. A person discussing her private matters with her friend or a family member in an open space does not constitute an act that falls under the public sphere. In fact, it is difficult to demarcate what constitutes or fits public sphere and what are the aspects that should be limited to private sphere. If a person is discussing a personal matter that concerns only her then it can be called as a matter that fits private sphere, whereas, the same issue can be said to be suitable to fit the public sphere if significant number of ‘others’ are also facing the same issue, and

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<sup>195</sup> Orr, A. (2010). *Blogging, Deliberation and Public Sphere*. New South Wales. University of New South Wales – School of Social Science and International Studies. 1 – 11.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Gerodimos, R. Democracy and the Internet: Access, Engagement and Deliberation. *Journal of Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics*. Vo.3. No. 6. (2006): 26 – 31.

<sup>198</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

needs the attention of the public sphere to address it<sup>199</sup>. Public sphere plays an important role in facilitating deliberation on issues that affect the collective. Public sphere plays a crucial role in controlling and driving the political power in the correct direction. Interaction in the public sphere leads to new ideas, expression or exchange of ideas among people creates new possibilities as human beings are capable of synthesis based on their experiences<sup>200</sup>.

Expression involves building up of new ideas, not mere reproduction of the ideas that a person has known so far. Expression involves subjectivity of the persons involved in the dialogue which leads to connecting their ideas with the ideas of the others who may also be experiencing similar type of subjectivity. This leads to building of new concepts, or ideas that can replace the existing ideas partially or fully. Hence, talk in public sphere leads to generation of new ideas that brings change in the social structure or the environment in which the individuals are living<sup>201</sup>. Some of the basic tenets of rational-critical communication in the public sphere includes inclusiveness of all ideas, communicative space for all participants, respect for the ideas of the others, and freedom for reasoning etc.<sup>202</sup> Freedom is not only the ultimate end, but an ultimate mean to achieve something, irrelevant to its usage by an individual, and the public sphere must ensure this freedom to all individuals in an equal manner irrespective of their background and the opinions they hold<sup>203</sup>.

## 4. 2. Habermas's Bourgeoisie Public Sphere

Habermas defines public sphere as a space where citizens can discuss with each other about various things, basically through different mediums like letters, newspapers, journals,

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<sup>199</sup> Orr, A. (2010). *Bloggging, Deliberation and Public Sphere*. New South Wales. University of New South Wales – School of Social Science and International Studies. 1 – 11.

<sup>200</sup> Gerhards, J. & Schafer, M, S. Is internet a better public sphere? Comparing old and new media in the US and Germany. *Journal of New Media & Society*. Vo. XX(X). (2009): 1 – 18.

<sup>201</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

<sup>202</sup> Jacobs, L, R., Cook, F, L., and Carpini, M, X, D. (2009). *Talking Together: Public Deliberation and Political Participation in America*. London. The University of Chicago Press.

<sup>203</sup> Ziyaad, L. The internet and the public sphere: evidence from civil society in developing countries. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*. Vo. 35. No. 3. (2008): 1 – 12.

books, television etc.<sup>204</sup> This situation has changed with the advent and advancement of the internet. Access to internet is not restricted to one class or section of the society and the space available on internet has become unlimited. This challenges the definition of public sphere by Habermas, and opens up new platforms of communication and interaction that is non-conflicting in physical domain unlike newspapers or television where the available space is limited<sup>205</sup>. Habermas's idea of public sphere is made up of elite spaces like coffee shops, restaurants, or theatres. Only a small section of people can spend time in these places and can use their leisure to discuss various matters that are active in their surrounding environment. Besides access, only a few elite can afford the leisure to visit these places. The public sphere in Europe during late 1700s was more urban centric in nature because of certain commonalities among its elites like culture, French as their elite language, and a common French media. The French enlightenment has created an environment for the emergence of the European public sphere that was limited to elite thus making it an elite public sphere<sup>206</sup>.

The concept of public sphere, according to Habermas, has started taking roots in the eighteenth century Europe with the emergence of the liberal capitalism, and was specific to societal conditions of then Britain, France and Germany<sup>207</sup>. This public sphere was particularly bourgeoisie in nature as it was this class that got the privilege of meeting the social requirements of the then emerging public sphere. Certain factors like declining feudalism, formation of national boundaries based on the concept of nation state, emergence of a middle class in place of the bourgeois class, the advent of printing press, and formation of an education class etc. have instigated the emergence of a public sphere that was not there earlier. Earlier to

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<sup>204</sup> Habermas, J. (Translation: Burger, Thomas). (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Massachusetts. The MIT Press – Cambridge.

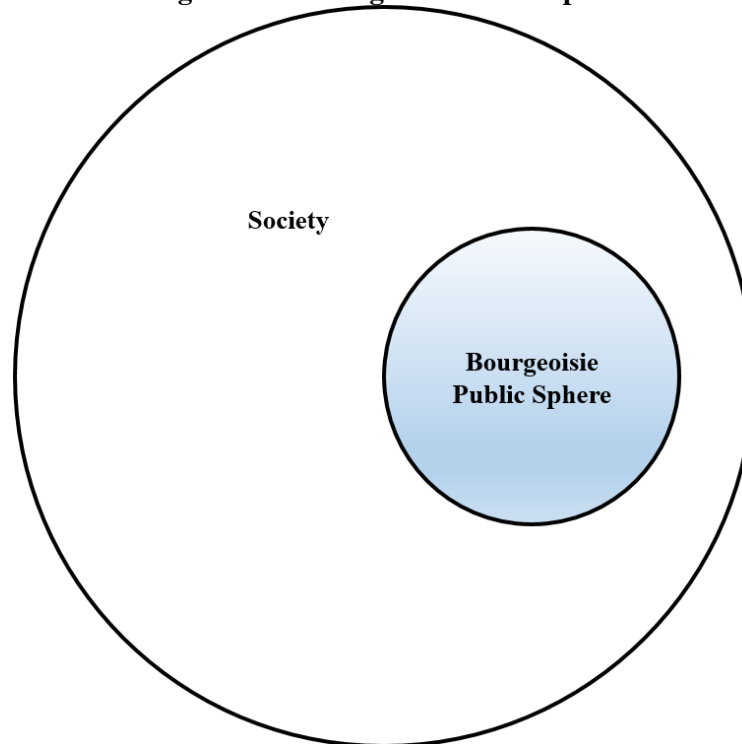
<sup>205</sup> Orr, A. (2010). *Blogging, Deliberation and Public Sphere*. New South Wales. University of New South Wales – School of Social Science and International Studies. 1 – 11.

<sup>206</sup> Barker, H. & Burrows, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America, 1760 – 1820*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>207</sup> Habermas, J. (Translation: Burger, Thomas). (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Massachusetts. The MIT Press – Cambridge.

this there was no such a space called public sphere, and most of the ‘public’ affairs were not in the hands of the citizens<sup>208</sup>. Diagram 4.1 illustrates the nature of bourgeoisie public sphere.

**Diagram 4.1: Bourgeoisie Public Sphere**



*Source - Researcher's illustration based on adaptation from Habermas (1991).*

*Notes: Only a small urban centric bourgeoisie constituted and dominated the public sphere, and only these sections were part of the democratization process.*

While the public sphere that Habermas has analyzed heavily depended on the rational-communicative discourse that took place among the ‘public’ about socio-economic and political issues that affect public, there existed a similar type of public sphere in the then Americas, and there was no proper definition or domain to this public sphere like in the case of the public sphere in Western Europe, but was generally referred to as *citizens*. The apparent belief of this type of public sphere was that the ‘free citizens’, after going through diverse opinions and available choices, would come to a broader opinion regarding what was required from the state or society and participate accordingly in the political affairs of their locality or nation. The citizen centric public sphere of Americas was also not inclusive as only free

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<sup>208</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

citizens used to take part in the discourse related to the public and no particular physical place was categorized as public sphere like coffee shops or saloons like in the case of public sphere in Western Europe. But political and economic discourse used to take place in the ‘market’ signifying that the society was largely market driven and economic matters mattered most in the public sphere of American citizens, signifying subtle nurturing of liberalism. This citizen-market centric public sphere also faced deficiencies in the form of concentration of economic power in the hands of the few who controlled the print media and political power, and was heavily dominated by the presence of ‘homogenous’ cultural practices of the European Americans that suppressed the voices of the African Americans<sup>209</sup>.

According to Habermas public sphere does not mean existence of a mass of people<sup>210</sup>. Mere existence of people does not constitute public sphere unless they exchange opinions actively and try to bring shape to their opinions. The interaction side of people forms the public sphere, not their mere presence. Habermas has been criticized for his analysis of mainstream public sphere as he neglected the ‘private-public sphere’ of the excluded groups like women, gays, or oppressed classes. The private-public spheres of these subaltern groups played a propellant role in transforming the mainstream public sphere. This version of analysis sounds legit as it is apparent that the mainstream ideas, whether in the case of public sphere or any other dominant institutional practices, continuously face challenges from subaltern ideas, resulting in the accommodation of the subaltern ideas by the mainstream public sphere<sup>211</sup>. Diagram 4.2 illustrates the presence and interaction between subaltern or heterogeneous public spheres and the mainstream public sphere.

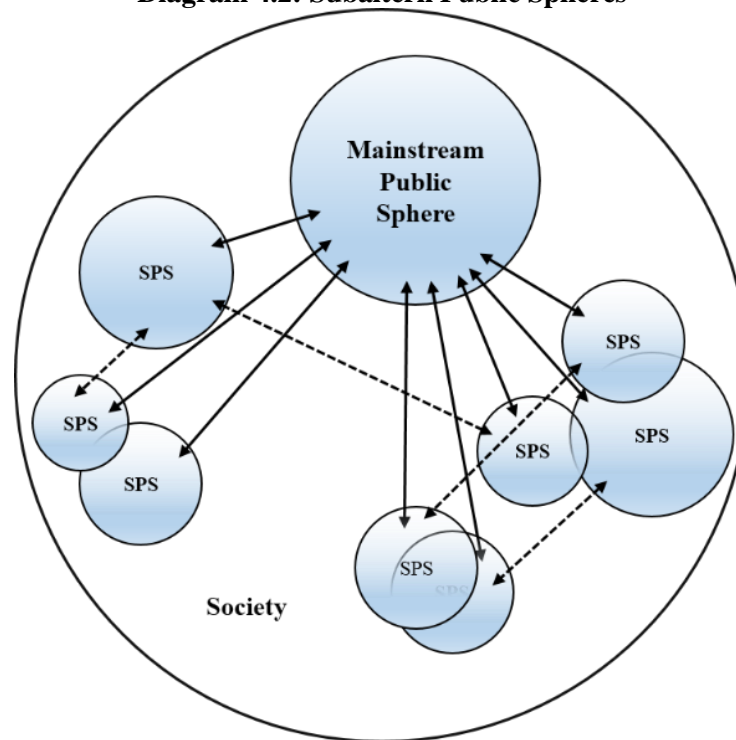
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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Habermas, J. (Translation: Burger, Thomas). (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Massachusetts. The MIT Press – Cambridge.

<sup>211</sup> Ziyaad, L. The internet and the public sphere: evidence from civil society in developing countries. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*. Vo. 35. No. 3. (2008): 1 – 12.

**Diagram 4.2: Subaltern Public Spheres**



*Source: Researcher's illustration based on adaptation from Ziyaad (2008).  
Notes: SPS = Subaltern Public Sphere, Arrows represent interaction.*

Habermas has been criticized for exploring a public sphere that is 'static' in nature, and that he did not take into account the identity politics in multicultural societies that create parallel public spheres with different domains that act independently and indifferently from the mainstream public sphere. These parallel subaltern public spheres coexist in the same geographical area, sometimes in contradiction to each other, and sometimes in conjunction with each other – but challenging the mainstream public sphere continuously. Presence of multiple subaltern public spheres can result in harboring of multiple ideas, especially ideas that are considered 'unacceptable' in one public sphere can get accommodated in another public sphere, or the idea itself may lead to the creation of a new subaltern public sphere if the existing mainstream or subaltern public spheres are not allowing the idea. These heterogeneous public spheres can sensitize the mainstream public sphere regarding the importance of independent subaltern public spheres and the necessity for interaction between the subaltern public spheres and the mainstream public sphere as it becomes necessary, at least when it comes to the

functional stage that these public spheres have to agree on something to get some outcome from the conflicts or deliberations that take place in these public spheres<sup>212</sup>.

There is significant and valid criticism of Habermas's public sphere, especially his demarcation of public and private spheres. Contenders of Habermas's public sphere argue that the private sphere as defined by Habermas acts as a shield to shield certain aspects from coming into light like issues that do not concern the ruling elite. Those who are part of the private sphere like the working class with no time to take advantage of the public sphere and women who have been restricted to their homes could not be part of the Habermas's public sphere. This exclusion is perpetual in nature and is observable in all cultures, and significant sections get excluded from the public sphere thus putting an end to the rise of issues that concern these sections. The idea of existence of multiple spheres has gained pace primarily as a counter point to the Habermas's public sphere. The apparent argument of this idea is that the public sphere is multi-layered with different alternatives crossing, conflicting or coexisting with the dominant public sphere. The alternatives may be weak or low in their capacity to get hold of the dominant public sphere, nonetheless, this does not rule out their existence and the ideas prevalent in these alternative public spheres cannot be ruled out as irrelevant as these are the ideas or issues that the people of non-mainstream public sphere are concerned with<sup>213</sup>. Fraser proposes a public sphere that is not limited to public and private discourses of the dominant public sphere only, but a public sphere that has more threads to it or intertwined spheres with strong and weak discourses. He describes the weak discourses as those discourses that end their journey with opinion formation on a given issue and the strong discourse as the one that continues its journey till a deliberative decision is made. There are many public spheres based on the demarcation of the domain like public and private spheres, strong and weak spheres, mainstream and fractured spheres, online and offline spheres etc.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>214</sup> Volkmer, I. (2014). *The Global Public Sphere; Public Communication in the Age of Reflective Interdependence*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

The presence of public sphere does not automatically ensure that it will promote democracy as it depends on the institutions that promote it. Formal institutions play a crucial role in promoting or restricting the transformation of the public sphere, and may also shape a particular type of public sphere, that can, for the time being, look like an all-inclusive public sphere, but in fact, may turn out to be a cloak that hides the other alternatives. Hence, presence of a public sphere does not ensure democracy by default. Discursive opportunities, the opportunities to express ones opinions and transform these opinions to actions, or result oriented outcomes simply depends on the power structure that the public sphere is located in and the appropriate negotiation strategies that the participants create for themselves within the public sphere that fits the structure. Most of the times, the public in the public sphere stick to the domain of the public sphere that moves like a shadow with the state, but on occasions, the public sphere may overshadow the power of the state structure thus forcing the power structure to alter itself in accordance with the changing nature of the public sphere, but the frequency of such changes cannot be seen quite often<sup>215</sup>.

The democratic character of the public sphere can be negotiated from time to time based on surrounding circumstances; the more democratic the public sphere is the more possibilities for its expansion. Its own values create possibilities for its presence or absence. The expansion or contraction of the public sphere and the breadth of opportunities available to it to assert its influence fluctuates with the changes in the power structure of the state, though it is possible for the public sphere to flex its muscles against the state on some occasions. The opportunities for the public sphere to showcase its *will* depends on many aspects like the cultural environment that it is located in, the power of the state to resist or facilitate the public sphere, presence of different organizations or groups like interest groups, political parties, civil society organizations etc.<sup>216</sup> The type of issues that fall under the public and private spheres has been decided, historically, by the dominant or mainstream public sphere. It is true that there needs to be a private sphere in which the individuals can have individual centric autonomy, but the

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<sup>215</sup> Dahlgren, P. The Internet, Public Sphere, and Political Communications: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Journal of Political Communication*. Vo. 22 (2005): 147 – 162.

<sup>216</sup> Ferree, M, M. Gamson, W, A and Gerhards, J. et. al. (2004). *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

issues that fall under the domain of private sphere should be decided rationally in a deliberative public sphere that does not allow outweighing of ‘unconventional’ ideas by mainstream ideas. Issues cannot be called as public or private unless it is decided in a deliberative manner in the public sphere. All ideas have to go through the process of public deliberation to be classified as issues that fall under public or private sphere, and issues cannot be allowed to fall under the private sphere simply because some sections think that they ought to be in the private domain. All issues, by default, should fall under the public sphere, and should be scrutinized thoroughly in the public sphere in a deliberative manner before they get harbored in the domain of private sphere<sup>217</sup>.

#### **4. 3. Transformation from Habermas’s Bourgeois Public Sphere to Mass Media Manufactured Public Sphere**

While Habermas’s bourgeois public sphere started gaining prominence during the eighteenth century in the back drop of declining feudalism, emerging middle class and print media, its decline also started in the same century, specifically towards the end of the eighteenth century when the second phase of public sphere started emerging with the advancement of industrial capitalism that emphasized on the spread of democracy. The second phase of public sphere started including the masses in the public sphere which led to the loss of exclusivity of access to public sphere by the bourgeois class alone. This led to the dominance of the public sphere by the masses under the banner of democracy. This does not mean that the masses gained total control or significant control over the affairs of the state, economy or social conditions, but it put an end to the bourgeoisie polarized public sphere thus bringing relatively more diversity to the then existing bourgeois public sphere. The second phase of ‘mass’ based public sphere was dominated by different modern concepts like interventionist state to manage the tensions among different classes and to facilitate mercantilism and industrial output, to accommodate the emergence of political parties and interest groups, to facilitate mass media to cater ‘information’ to the masses and to generate consent among them etc. This eventually

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<sup>217</sup> Dahlberg, L & Siaper, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

led to the re-feudalization of the public sphere by state and mass media—with the ‘consent’ of the masses though. At this particular stage, the public sphere can be said to have depreciated to a mere presence of incoherent masses in the public domain with incoherent ideas, or purpose, and the public can be said to have lost their autonomous ways of thinking to the mass media. This public sphere was heavily controlled by the mass media, and its expansion or contraction on a particular issue, and its response mechanism was totally controlled by the mass media that was in the hands of the elite class<sup>218</sup>.

The second phase of public sphere was expansive in its inclusiveness as it accommodated all the masses who got some education, and was more inclusive in nature in terms of representing diverse issues also but was very weak in terms of control over what was going in the public sphere as the control was in the hands of the mass media. Hence, the second phase of public sphere can be called as a public sphere that accommodated the masses extensively but with their voices being controlled by the mass media<sup>219</sup>. Mass media builds its own public sphere in which people are made part of<sup>220</sup>. Mass media’s mediated representation i.e., the re-presentation made by the media cannot be trusted with, as it can refract the rational-critical discourse that actually takes place in the public sphere<sup>221</sup>. The mass media based news is basically directed at audience who are usually comfortable with the status quo. Hence, mass media acts as a filter of ideas and filters out ideas that have only few takers. The production cost of the mass media also forces it to see the commercial or utilitarian side of the news rather than its innovation or complementary position to the status quo, and the chances for an idea to be published or televised simply depends on the media’s calculations about the number of takers of that particular opinion. This acts as a principle basis on which mass media filters the

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<sup>218</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

<sup>221</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

news items before publishing them, apparently resulting in filtering out of ‘controversial’ or ‘unconventional’ ideas<sup>222</sup>.

The mass media of 20th century – unlike the mass media in 19th century – subverted the public sphere and democracy by harboring the vested political interests of the elite. In fact, the media became a weapon in the hands of the elite in manufacturing or dismantling ideas. The modern public sphere of the late 20th century has become a zone of ideological polarizations rather than a space for free discussion, selection or creation of choices. The choices that are prevalent and dominant in this type of public sphere is an enforcement of the dominant thoughts that suit the position of the elite, whether it is in liberalism, communism, or other forms of ideologies, and the basic idea is to spread the tentacles of one’s own ideological position through different tools that define the public sphere. 20<sup>th</sup> century public sphere was dominated by the mass media as a primary platform for discussions, and other alternatives like the talks in saloons or coffee shops were heavily influenced or derived from what the mass media reports. Hence it can be argued that the saloons or coffee shops that acted as independent platforms of public sphere during the 18th and 19th centuries have turned out to be auxiliary platforms to the mass media based public sphere in the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>223</sup>.

#### **4. 3. 1. Print Media based Public Sphere**

Mass media faces restrictions in different aspects like requirement of space to publish information in the form of paper space and time whereas the space available on internet is indefinite, virtually unending, and not controlled by a small group of media corporations. We can publish all the information on the internet whereas in the mass media we have to find space and time to publish a particular information. And publishing a particular information in mass media means giving preference to a certain set of ‘facts’ and omitting other set of facts. Suppose a newspaper decides to publish a news item, editorial article or advertisement, it is actually making a decision to use its print space to publish a particular news item, editorial article or advertisement – by overlooking other news items, editorial articles on other issues,

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<sup>222</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

<sup>223</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

and advertisements of lesser returns to it. It is about making a decision about what to publish or what not to publish, or it is about controlling the communicative space due to various reasons like restrictions on the number of pages, restriction on timing of the news items etc. Apparently, a newspaper or a television channel cannot publish everything it has in its possession or every 'fact'. Hence, decision to exclude certain news items has to be made<sup>224</sup>.

The clutches to maintain status quo, or to publish information that is favorably biased to the ruling elite or the existing power structures starts at this point. As soon as the compulsion to exclude certain category of news items comes into picture, the role of the editor of the newspaper or the media corporation comes into picture. Editing and exclusion go hand in hand in this case. It apparently leads to questions like who edits or excludes the news items and what could be the possible reasons to exclude certain items and publish certain news items etc. Should we assume that the editor or the media corporation decides to publish or not to publish a particular news item based on its relevance to the people or society? Who decides what is relevant to the people and on what basis? Based on the pulse of the people? How do the editors or the mass media read the pulse of the people? Is not the 'pulse of the people' a forced and reinforced pulse that the mass media has been continuously imposing on the people? This is where the manufacturing of consent or dissent starts. Controlling the communicative space is a compulsion for the mass media. Mass media constructs, edits, prioritizes, excludes, and highlights ideas according to its 'discretion'. Suppose a newspaper receives a hundred articles or write-ups on different issues, and the newspaper has space for only one piece, it has to take a decision to publish one piece among the hundred pieces it receives—it has to decide to filter out, exclude or suppress ninety nine pieces. Ninety nine write-ups on different issues simply gets filtered out based on the 'discretion' of the editor or owner of the newspaper. If the publisher is left oriented she may decide to omit liberal views, a religious editor may omit serious questions questioning the religion, a secessionist newspaper may support secession and a unionist media may oppose secession, a male chauvinist media may decide to suppress arguments favoring equality among the genders etc. So the 'communicative' space that the

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<sup>224</sup> Dahlberg, L. The internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere. *Journal of information, communication & society*. Vo. 4. No. 4. (2001): 615 – 633.

editor or the media corporation controls is actually ‘exclusive communicative’ space. The editor or the media enjoys this exclusive ‘right’; exclusive in the sense that the editor or the media corporation can only have a say on this space, and how to use this space in a ‘communicative’ manner—and the ‘right’ to do so apparently comes through ownership. Hence, exclusive is ‘exclusion’ – and this exclusive space is not free from politics. In fact, politics of ‘communication’, politics of consent or dissent, politics of legitimacy, politics of articulation, politics of choice, and politics of exclusion – excluding or un-publishing ideas that challenge the status quo etc. seem to originate from this exclusive space<sup>225</sup>.

Whatever the media expects from the people or its audience, it actually imposes it on the readers. The readers are left with no option but to follow whatever the media says. There are no other alternatives to the ‘exclusive communicative’ space in the mass media. This exclusive communicative space is created with huge investments and less well-off investors may not compete economically with the big media corporations to get hold of the exclusive communicative space that has been in the command of the riches. This exclusive communicative space is an exclusive tool in the hands of the ruling elite. Now that the rich or ruling elite have the exclusive communicative space in their hands let us see how they use it to ‘educate’ the readers on different socio-economic and political issues. We have discussed above how the editors or the media corporations edit out or excludes different news items or issues because of the constraints on the communicative space that the newspaper or magazine has in its command. Now that it is clear that the mass media has to make cuts to the items that it can publish, and at the same time it has to decide what to publish, it would be fascinating to see how it uses its discretion to cut out something or hold something back from publishing and publish some other items or issues. Apparently no media corporation would want to publish something that can potentially damage its reputation, survival or existing privileges. So the items that these editors or media corporations exclude or decide to edit out are ideas that

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<sup>225</sup> Dahlberg, L. The internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere. *Journal of information, communication & society*. Vo. 4. No. 4. (2001): 615 – 633.

challenge the present status of the mass media and its surrounding socio-economic and political system that supports or boosts the survival of the mass media<sup>226</sup>.

By editing out such news items or issues, the mass media is actually editing out innovative thoughts, questions that question the status quo, possible alternatives to the existing problems or system, and most importantly it edits out ‘unconventional’ voices. Then what do they decide to publish? Arguments or options that perpetually support the existing power structures, ‘innovative’ ideas within the limits of the present system, and items to kill the extra time or leisure of the audience so that they could actually disengage them from thinking about socio-economic and political issues. Hence the items that these media corporations decide to publish are ‘vibrant’ within the framework of the existing political system – like a pendulum in a clock—always on the move—but in the same path and same place – helping the clock to move on, just like the way a political system functions – in a constant, consistent and routine manner. This is how the mass media works exactly – repeating the same arguments in support of the existing power structures within the limits of the ‘communicative space’ they have got. It is criticized that all the institutions or power structures, including all forms of democracies are built on the grounds of what constitutes reasonableness according to the mass media. Changes in the system, expansion or contraction of a particular idea, mobilizing support or dissent to these ideas, and generation of collectiveness, agreement etc. have been generated by the ruling ideas. In addition to the routine performance they do in the ‘exclusive communicative space’ which the mass media has got, they use additional tactics to use this ‘exclusive communicative medium’ as a catalyst to disengage citizens from the democratic process by making this ‘exclusive communicative medium’ as unproductive as possible with ‘entertainment’<sup>227</sup>.

#### **4. 3. 2. Electronic Media based Public Sphere**

Television as mass media is more effective than print based mass media. Television adds visual dimension to the presentation that can emotionally influence the audience. Some

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

analysts consider television as an industry that creates a commercial public sphere where audiences tend to be reactive to the programs or talks that are shown on the television. The basic purpose of these shows or programs are to capitalize the emotions of the audience by analyzing how they respond to certain things so as to predict their next response, and response patterns. This analysis helps in predicting their behavior next time, and subsequently, it helps the television industry in many ways in terms of advertising, program planning, opinion manufacturing etc. The talks or shows that take place on television are not discourses in simple sense, they are communicative talk targeted at the audience, that too with properly researched conclusions regarding the section of audience that are targeted, how they can be targeted, and why they should be targeted etc. The non-communicative talk or shows on television that are ‘not’ part of the political communication like entertainment activities, sports, advertisement etc. also fall under the category of ‘non-communicative’ communication i.e., the shows are targeted at a particular section of audience to restrict them from being communicated by other means i.e., to keep them engaged with them, with their views – in other words the television does not like its audience to be pulled off from its hold<sup>228</sup>. And most of the television shows are fundamentally based on the “*tyranny of intimacy and feel good factors*” (p-23)<sup>229</sup>.

The difference between entertainment and information on television is usually blurry. Programs that are supposed to be informative are turning out to be programs of entertainment and programs that are supposed to give mere entertainment carry information that is aimed at a particular section of audience. News that is supposed to carry serious information to the audience is becoming more and more entertainment kind of thing. Many issues that cannot be considered as news are being televised under the category of news like information about sports, movies, adventure etc., and news about socio-economic and political issues of the society or nation are being presented as a form of entertainment in the form of special shows, and debates that turn into ugly fights most of the times. Besides, what constitutes news or information and what is entertainment also depends on the way something is presented on the television. Most of the programs that are categorized as entertainment actually carry so much of information like movies, documentaries, music albums or videos etc., and similarly most of

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

the programs that are supposed to be informative in nature end up providing entertainment like debates between the leaders of the political parties, especially televised debates, face-to-face interviews or interaction programs etc. Most of the entertainment programs carry certain set of ideologies, values orientations, prejudices, fear psychosis, or despicable humor that is aimed at degrading a section of people or their values<sup>230</sup>.

Television always tries to run ‘popular’ programs, and what is popular is decided by the television. Popular, from the perspective of television represents programs, shows etc. that appeal to the most number of audience in a given context, and there are certain programs that are famous on television compared to other programs, or certain sports are popular when compared to other sports like cricket in India or soccer in European countries. ‘Popular’ represents the aspects that are accepted by the majority, or made to be accepted by the majority. This makes the television to identify itself with the popular culture, majority language, and nuances of majority culture like festivals, dressing, customs, value orientations etc. This orientation of television automatically imposes the popular culture on the audience from heterogeneous cultures. This tuning makes the audience from heterogeneous cultures believe that there is a mainstream culture or practice which is ‘superior’ to their practice and that it needs to be adopted. This makes the television audience to lose their identity, especially audience from the subaltern cultures strive to become part of the mainstream culture thus taking the first step of the ladder laid by the television industry to ‘normalize’ the public sphere so as to expand the reach of its programs<sup>231</sup>.

There is larger politics involved in assimilating the television audience into one broad popular culture; more number of audience can be manipulated at a time, and more number of audience can be mobilized to the products that they advertise on the television set – this includes advertising political ideas, supporting or opposing a particular party, candidate, political position, particular policy outcome, choice etc. By polarizing the audience into one popular culture the television industry makes the ground ready for engaging or disengaging audience in a particular manner. The polarized audience start taking things that appear on

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<sup>230</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

television very seriously and a particular type of uniformity can be expected from this audience in the way they consume particular news item or watch a particular entertainment program. This design of bringing multiple cultures on to single platform of 'popular' culture apparently strengthens the mainstream public sphere at the cost of the subaltern public spheres<sup>232</sup>. What is wrong with this type of public sphere? Robert Putnam's analysis of impact of television on the declining social capital of America reveals what happens if the television starts creating a popular public sphere that in fact is not a public sphere at all. The television audiences, according to Robert Putnam, are disengaged from the surroundings, as they spend their leisure time in front of the television boxes watching the programs that are in fact designed to disengage the audience from the public sphere<sup>233</sup>.

Television basically addresses its audience with effective ways of expression or presentation, and each and every way of presentation or representation can be termed as a peculiar manipulation strategy. Emotions play a bigger role in shaping the thinking of the television audience which can be said to be absent in a relative sense in the print journalism. The audiences of the print journalism have to hermeneutically construct everything to feel the depth, seriousness or humorous side of the news, and this may not happen among the majority of the audience. But television is different in the sense that it can present the content hermeneutically to the audience which usually generates emotion among the viewers. This emotion is analyzed and reinforcement of emotion takes place continuously thus shaping the emotional response of the audience. As soon as the television gets control on the emotions of the audience, manipulation of emotions begin. Emotions of the television audience are manipulated for various reasons by employing ideas like nationalism, identity, language, patriotism, value orientations, traditions, mannerisms etc. Repeated telecasting of a certain issue like a situation relating to nationalism or xenophobia may provoke further nationalism or xenophobia, or it may educate also depending on the presentation of the issue and the emotional appeal that is subtly used in news or programs. Similarly, an artificial or emotional consent can be generated among the viewers by appealing to the audience about something that may

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Putnam, R. D. (Ed.). (2002). *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*. New York. Oxford University Press.

not prove to be important at the end of the day. Polarization of emotions can be carried out systematically through television, and these polarized emotions can be channelized in favor of or against anything that favors television industry and the ruling elite<sup>234</sup>.

The 24 X 7 format news channels started playing with the news. The new 24 X 7 format news need more news to fill the time. Requirement for more news forced the television industry to convert some non-news into news, and they also increased the length of explanations for every event thus giving more scope for interpretation or representation rather than simply presenting what has happened i.e., the television industry started re-presenting the news. To represent the news the television industry adds programs or trailers to the actual news. Special programs in the form of ‘expert’ opinions or discussions on a particular issue, opinion collection from the public, live telecast of certain events, televising raw footage of a certain incident or event etc. have come into play with news and with the opinion and position of the television viewers. This entire ‘extra’ in-depth coverage or telecast of the news apparently adds value orientation to the news, and adds value orientation to the audience who watch it. Selection of experts to express opinions on an issue, selection of items to live telecast, editing or deleting of raw footage, selecting the public for public opinion etc. activities involves discretion—discretion of the television ownership. The discretion of one person or few persons influence the position of the viewers, and these viewers form the television derived public sphere. Re-presentations plays a major role in every stage of news making, whether it is selection of news, timing of the news, duration of the news, extra programs televised for particular news items, raw footages used for certain news items etc. Certain ‘inappropriate’ news items are edited out whereas certain ‘important’ news items are repeatedly televised for the sake of audience ‘understanding’. Expert opinions are taken and televised on selected issues of ‘importance’, and certain issues are not covered because of their contextual ‘insignificance’. So, the aura of the public sphere (sometimes private sphere also) gets filled with the opinions that the television constructs<sup>235</sup>.

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<sup>234</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

Commoditization of news items, especially as a form of entertainment is the biggest threat to rational critical debate. Timeliness airing of the news forced the media to forget about the time line of the events which are in fact very important to understand the present news. Most of the news is presented in trailer formats which make it difficult to understand the past and present of the news, or sometime it is presented in an entertainment format just like a movie or documentary making the audience believe in nothing else except what they have seen on their television set<sup>236</sup>. Even constructivism at national or international level depends on how mass media projects certain issues, cultures, values to be pursued etc. since mass media is basically concerned about the ‘popular’ culture and is owned by the dominant classes or people belonging to dominant cultures. Besides promoting the popular culture or values of the dominant sections the media also belittles or downgrades other cultures in order to gain advantage over them as culture and imperialism go hand in hand. Television plays a major role in shaping the way people look at different cultures. Television creates different cultural stereotypes in the minds of the people living in the television controlled public sphere<sup>237</sup>.

#### **4. 3. 3. Economic Compulsions of Mass Media and Public Sphere**

The basic problem with mass media is they have to look for profits by being facilitators of the public sphere and this apparently drives them to look for ideas that go smoothly with the ‘public’; ideas that can generate readership or viewership, ideas that can generate curiosity, ideas that sound ‘reasonable’ or ‘contextual’ with the readers, ideas that are ‘justifiable’ according to the dominant public sphere. Hence, media creates its own public sphere to generate profits and limit the readers to this public sphere. Most of the items in mass media are prepared to entertain the audience, the news has taken the shape of a form of entertainment which fills the public sphere, and news has turned into emotional appeal rather than neutral reporting. This emotional appeal has its negative side as it subjugates the subconscious of the audience and makes them to stick to the things that are presented on the television or in the print media. Commercialization of the news led to the capturing of the public sphere by the mass media; the domain, range, and depth of the public sphere has been decided by the mass

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<sup>236</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>237</sup> Jamal, A. (2009). *The Arab Public Sphere in Israel: Media Space and Cultural Resistance*. Bloomington. Indiana University Press.

media, and the issues that are vibrant in the public sphere are usually manufactured by the mass media. The air in the public sphere is usually filled with the aroma that the elites like or the elites want; everything from consent to dissent, status quo to alternatives, cultures and counter-cultures are presented by media in a way to look like as if they are the only available alternatives endorsed by the people. The mass media gives life or death to new ideas. Mass media became a gate way through which ideas can be filtered and catered for the consumption by the people. And in the process of filtering, the mass media filters out ideas that are ‘not fit’ according to them and presents the ideas that ‘fits’ the socio-economic, cultural and political context of the public sphere, or to put it rather simply the mass media filters out ideas that threaten its existence and publishes ideas that protect its interests<sup>238</sup>.

In the eyes of the mass media all audience are potential customers of news, products, entertainment, ideas, leisure or opinion—and the role of the mass media is to create consumer base that is as big as possible to feed on them. Apart from manipulating the politically ‘relevant’ news, the media also presents ‘rewarding’ news to its consumers; financially rewarding to the mass media and psychologically ‘rewarding’ to the audience in the form of comics, disasters, sports, movies, gossips etc. These items bring money to the media, satisfy the audiences, and *kill* the leisure of the audience thus effectively restricting them from investing their time on serious socio-economic and political issues. De-politicization of the public is one of the major activities of the mass media. The public are made to think that they are very active but in fact they are being made active consumers of the de-politicized topics or activities, and in fact, the mass media fills the public sphere with issues of lesser significance so as to keep the citizens fully occupied within the system. A report on the conditions of the bus stops or municipal roads may make the citizens ‘aware’ of the their surrounding conditions, may unify them to fight for the rectification of these negligence, and may even make them feel empowered if they succeed in putting the things back to work – but certainly they are part of the larger schemes of the mass media that does not want its audience to concentrate on much bigger and broader issues like property rights, decision making process, sovereignty, privatization, inequality, altering the socio-economic and political structures of the society<sup>239</sup>.

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<sup>238</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

Most of the mass media is in the hands of the big multinational companies. How far it is reliable to expect new and innovative ideas from the corporate media regarding property rights, economic equality, conducting the affairs of the state, and political participation? Corporate ownership of the mass media does not allow critical evaluation and reporting of the facts that are required to bring change in the socio-economic and political scenario of the society. Corporate media is concerned about three aspects; news content, news production, and audience reaction to whatever news the corporate media publishes. Corporate controlled mass media usually ponders to the prejudices of the customers to maintain status quo, to increase circulation or ratings for their media. Mass media helps to sustain the existing political leaders, political system, economic institutions, and the existing power structures, and continuously convinces the ordinary citizens to support these structures. Mass media continuously defines the existing structures as best suitable to the surrounding ‘circumstances’, and that only these structures, leaders, or parties will bring the required change in the socio-economic and political conditions of the society<sup>240</sup>.

General discussion in the mass media is usually limited to whatever aspects the representatives, political parties, or ruling elite want the people to discuss, and the position that the citizens take after going through all the stuff that the mass media prints or circulates is usually presented to make the citizen end up in taking the position that their representatives, political parties or governments want them to take. Even the alternative ideas, or substitute to ‘popular’ ideas that mass media projects are projected in advance so as to make sure that the audience will go for the alternatives provided by the mass media only thus limiting the danger of change—effectively restricting the audience to alternatives that do not challenge the power structure. Voice is given to the ‘experts’ in the mass media and they usually go for opinion polls on the issue in question. The ‘response’ of the audience polls are projected as a legitimate stand, or general ‘will’ of the people, and changes are made to the existing policies or programs based on these expert opinions, or mass media polls subsequently making it easy for the government to defend its specific stand. Common public are usually attracted to the prominent

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<sup>240</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

ideas that are on air and in newspapers, or to whatever their representatives keep on repeating in the mass media. ‘Facts’ supporting a particular stand of the representative, party or the government is usually widely circulated and the contradictory arguments to these facts are usually suppressed or not aired. Sometimes the contradictory or alternative arguments that are aired are so weak that the citizens ‘democratically’ or ‘consensually’ decide to take the stand that their representatives, parties or governments have taken<sup>241</sup>.

The number of issues that the mass media picks up is limited to aspects that revolve around the position of prominent leaders, parties or governments on a ‘particular’ set of issues, and reasons behind such a stand and the possible new alternatives are explored less often. Mass media always projects the existing economic institutions or model of democracy as pragmatically fit to the situation and creates hope among the public that only existing institutions or structures can change the socio-economic and political situation in an incremental manner. Any deviation from the existing procedures or form of governance is usually branded as anarchical or radical in nature, or branded as attempts to put the affairs of the governance in the hands of the ‘ordinary’ citizens who ‘do-not-know’ the knowhow of governing themselves. Apparently, mass media is created to generate profits for the media corporations and the nexus between mass media and the corporate sector plays a central role in holding their journey together towards maintaining the status quo i.e., their effort in supporting the existing power structures so as to reap benefits for each other. Mass media depends on the corporate sector for revenue through different channels like advertisement money, sales promotion, and to persuade the consumers to go with a particular taste, preference, or choice. Mass media involves in propaganda, consent or dissent manufacturing, and in establishing ideological base for the survival of the private sector. Before the advancement of the internet the mass media had strong base with wider audience that helped them to influence the big crowd in a uniform manner. The alternatives available are also from similar kind of corporate controlled mass media which means monopolization of the communication medium, though there exists an ‘inside-competition’ among the mass media

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<sup>241</sup> Chomsky, N. & Herman, E. S. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York. Pantheon Books.

corporations. Hence, the news items or issues covered in these ‘competitive’ mass media are of same genre—reinforcing the status quo. Thinkers like Walter Lippmann defend the media’s propaganda role as a necessary tool to channelize the masses, and considers it as necessary in a ‘democracy’, but the same propaganda techniques were used by non-democratic regimes like Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Communist Russia for non-democratic purposes. Hence, it is not guaranteed that media’s propaganda capacity will be used to enhance democracy<sup>242</sup>.

Mass media plays very important role in politically socializing the public. The political socialization process is more state oriented and the methods used and stepwise approaches employed to train the young minds to be citizens of the country constitutes the first step in laying a foundation for the ‘consent’ to ‘democratic’ methods. The level of engagement, the type of engagement that a citizen feels as engagement, the issues that the citizens think are important, the value orientations that they pick up, the level of dissent that they think is reasonable, the duties that a citizen ‘should’ carry out morally, the demarcation of public and private spheres that decide the levels of exclusion of issues, and the level of engaged disengagement that the citizens need to adopt etc. are part of systematic inception that the mass media carries through socialization in support of a particular political system<sup>243</sup>.

The socialization process in the neo-liberal setup is basically centered on ‘economic man’, stressing the importance of contributing to your own economic wellbeing and overall wellbeing of the nation highlighting the direction that the individuals are supposed to take. The apparent idea behind such an approach is to make the citizens duty bound to the state by making them think that they have the responsibility to take care of their own welfare (in whatever way possible, within the framework of liberalism) and to contribute to the state in the form of relieving the state from taking up welfare or egalitarian measures. This approach to socialization gives moral endorsement to the state to stay away from many responsibilities that the state is supposed to take to take care of the overall welfare of the people. The boundaries that define the domain of the state are so cleverly and subtly framed that it can expect

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<sup>242</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>243</sup> Demetriou, K, N. (Ed.). (2013). *Democracy in Transition: Political Participation in the European Union*. Heidelberg. Springer.

subordination from its citizens in the name of order, necessity, social contract, democracy etc. but can evade many things by throwing them back to the 'private' domain of the individuals. While it is true that every person has to labor for living in any socio-economic and political setup, it is not apparent how people will be able to create opportunities to contribute their labor to the nation given the economic and political inequalities that perpetually decide the distribution of opportunities. The state is withdrawing and leaving the people to tackle the unequal allocation of resources and a skewed economy that is tilted in favor of the dominant classes. Ideas like citizenship, freedom, choice etc. have been politically socialized by the state in a way to promote consumerism and citizens are trained to be consumers of many things; consumers of news, consumers of products, consumers of ideas, consumers of culture, consumers of entertainment, consumers of consent and dissent, and finally – consumers of individualism which effectively disengage them from the politics thus effectively concluding the long trip that the state has planned for them<sup>244</sup>. And all these ideas are enforced on the public through mass media.

Economic orientation of people is also decided by mass media to a great extent and media's position on these issues depend primarily on the way the mass media is owned. Mass media that is predominantly owned by the private sector works with the sole motive to broaden its profits, and usually promotes private property and generation of wealth as a primary concern of the individuals. Privately owned mass media obviously promotes the concept of private property. This does not mean that the media owned or run by the state or community promotes the concept of community ownership or rejects the concept of private property, but it can be reasonably assumed to some extent that the orientation of the public owned media will be towards the overall development of the community or society, but again, this depends on the nature of the government that is running the mass media as all governments cannot be said to have the same motive to develop the society in an overall sense. Government owned or community owned mass media can also be partisan in nature and can be controlled by the dominant sections of the society. These dominant sections can create a manipulative or discriminative public sphere that subtly takes care of the good of certain sections and can

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<sup>244</sup> Urbinati, N. (2014). *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

automatically act as a hindrance to other sections in a perpetual manner<sup>245</sup>. The possibilities for feedback from the public sphere are extremely limited in newspaper or television public sphere<sup>246</sup>. Hence, existence of multiple public spheres is important. But this concept also faces criticism as critics of the idea of existence of multiple public spheres think that all public spheres are hegemonic in nature, including the alternative public spheres<sup>247</sup>.

The liberal democracy offers choice to the people to choose which elite they wanted them to be ruled by i.e., people are offered the ‘power’ to rotate, or to alter the elite in a periodical manner. This apparently motivates the ruling elite to de-politicize the public from political aspects, as much as possible—with ‘consent’ though. De-politicization or disengaging the public from the political process benefits those who have private means to pursue their ends in their own manner in an environment that is relatively free from the public. De-politicization leaves many aspects out of the domain of politics. De-politicization creates a vacuum in the civic culture benefiting the class with economic means to take advantage of the weak public sphere, and to drive the institutional power more closely to them. Thus, the dynamics of public sphere is influenced by different aspects like role of mass media in political representation, and the social structure in which the public sphere is located. And mass media plays a major role in de-politicizing the public sphere by making the public disinterested in the political news<sup>248</sup>.

Reasons for decline in interest in political news among audience can be attributed to two aspects; one – coverage of political news, and two – presentation of political news in a mutually exclusive sense i.e., presenting ‘*politics*’ in a negative light and ‘*news*’ without any relevance to the socio-economic and political context of the incident or without reasons that could be the root cause of the event. The mass media has the potential to create news and propagate it and restrict debates or discussions to aspects that are beneficial to the mass media

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<sup>245</sup> Jamal, A. (2009). *The Arab Public Sphere in Israel: Media Space and Cultural Resistance*. Bloomington. Indiana University Press.

<sup>246</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

<sup>247</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>248</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

and its supporting groups. This potential, allied with government's potential to use it extensively, leads to creation of institutions that are considered 'democratic' by 'all'. The depth of the ideas that the mass media implants in the minds of the citizens has become global with the spread of globalization<sup>249</sup>. Globalization is a two way expansion in the form of concentration of all the material wealth in the hands of the global elite, which automatically depletes the resources that are accessible to non-elite, and this is sustainably managed by manufacturing the consent of the masses to the schemes of the governments<sup>250</sup>.

To put in Milosz's words "*any civilization ... will present a number of bizarre features which [people] accept as perfectly natural because they are familiar*" (p-xi)<sup>251</sup>. The coercion that is applied on the citizens 'democratically' may sound good or can be seen as applied with consent, but this does not make these decisions democratic. The consent that the citizens give to the government in any given time or context is limited by various factors like availability of alternative methods to create or express their consent in a continuous manner, to continuously track the applicability of their consent to various aspects that cannot be foreseen by the citizens while expressing their consent, institutional mechanisms available to continuously assess and articulate their consent etc. These functional limitations act as barriers in a democracy to identify and channelize clear consent from time to time, and issue by issue in a continuous manner. The consent of the masses is defined by the intellectuals and the ruling elite in different ways in different times. If the consent is in favor of the ruling elite, or in sync with the ideas of the intellectuals of the day, then the consent is seen or interpreted as just, rational, and general will of the masses, whereas, if the same masses turn against the system, or come up with alternative ideas to challenge the system, then their consent or unity is defined by the intellectuals and the ruling elites as a result of manipulation by the mass media, or that the masses are getting carried away by the false consciousness, or being brain washed or misled by so and so<sup>252</sup>.

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<sup>249</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>250</sup> Crack, A. M. (2008). *Global Communication and Transnational Public Sphere*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>251</sup> Emerson, P. (2012). *Defining Democracy: Voting Procedures in Decision-Making, Elections and Governance*. Heidelberg. Springer.

<sup>252</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

#### 4. 4. Internet's Infinite Communicative Space and Public Sphere

Modern ICT, especially internet is totally different from mass media. With the advancements in ICT, all the information about socio-economic and political conditions of the environment is becoming public, publicized on internet through different forums like social networking sites, personal blogs, community blogs, and various websites or domains maintained by individuals and organizations. Political analysts recognize the importance and the arrival of 'virtual' public sphere, primarily promoted by internet. Eventually, this virtual sphere is presumed to become active and real public sphere<sup>253</sup>. The overall digital literacy rate among the younger generations is creating a new political culture. The socialization process itself is undergoing significant changes because of the advancements in ICT. The socialization process on internet is becoming more inclusive as it is relatively constraint free compared to the non-internet platforms that are limited by space, access, resources, and time etc.<sup>254</sup> Space on internet or cyberspace is redefining concepts like democracy, polity, citizenship, and territorial limitations<sup>255</sup>. Information technology, especially internet has the greatest potential to transform the public sphere<sup>256</sup>. Social scientists recognize the fact that internet is creating a democratic public sphere<sup>257</sup>. According to Habermas, internet can undermine the censorship of the governments as it is difficult to control it unlike newspapers, television or radio<sup>258</sup>. Political scientists think that internet makes a better public sphere than the mass media based public sphere<sup>259</sup>. The possibilities of creating new ideas and the chance for the ideas to challenge other ideas in the form of extensive debate are unlimited in the public sphere that the

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<sup>253</sup> Orr, A. (2010).  *Blogging, Deliberation and Public Sphere*. New South Wales. University of New South Wales – School of Social Science and International Studies. 1 – 11.

<sup>254</sup> Gerodimos, R. Democracy and the Internet: Access, Engagement and Deliberation. *Journal of Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics*. Vo.3. No. 6. (2006): 26 – 31.

<sup>255</sup> Gibson, R, K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>256</sup> Manoharan, A & Holzer, M. (2012). *E-Governance and Civic Engagement: Factors and Determinants of E-Democracy*. Hershey. Information Science Reference.

<sup>257</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>258</sup> Orr, A. (2010).  *Blogging, Deliberation and Public Sphere*. New South Wales. University of New South Wales – School of Social Science and International Studies. 1 – 11.

<sup>259</sup> Gerhards, J. & Schafer, M, S. Is internet a better public sphere? Comparing old and new media in the US and Germany. *Journal of New Media & Society*. Vo. XX(X). (2009): 1 – 18.

internet is creating. Internet is a medium that allows diverse source of information. Internet is considered as a plural communicative medium with indefinite communicative space<sup>260</sup>.

Internet as a medium allows diverse source of information<sup>261</sup>. Mass media produces homogeneity whereas the internet produces heterogeneity<sup>262</sup>. Internet gives space to express one's opinion without depending on the corporate media. Internet creates an indefinite communicative space or domain that plays a vital role in providing unlimited platform for information sharing and exchange<sup>263</sup>. Internet is a two way communication model and is relatively low in cost when compared to the mass media<sup>264</sup>. With the usage of internet one need not wait for the news on television and those who want to share the news need not run their news item through different filters, or editing<sup>265</sup>. Internet can free us from communication and transportation problems which enables us to go closely towards direct democracy. Articulation has become easy with the advancement of internet. Controversies, issues, choices, and other expressions circulate like free air in the internet thus leading to debate, discussion, protest, and possible solution to a problem. With the advancement of ICT it has become easy for the information to flow from one department to the other within the government, and between the government and the people. Internet increases the competition among the parties and it increases inter-party competition and provides scope for direct democracy<sup>266</sup>. Internet, just like the mass media public sphere, meets the basic criteria to be called as public sphere as the people who discuss public issues on internet can be said to be engaged in rational-critical

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<sup>260</sup> Dahlberg, L. The internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere. *Journal of information, communication & society*. Vo. 4. No. 4. (2001): 615 – 633.

<sup>261</sup> Gibson, R, K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>262</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

<sup>263</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>264</sup> Dahlberg, L & Siapera, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>265</sup> Gibson, R, K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>266</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited. \

communication. The outcomes may sometimes give unexpected levels of success or alternatives that the mass media based public sphere has failed to produce<sup>267</sup>.

Habermas's public sphere, analyzed in his work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, was basically based on the interaction spaces of the 18<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois class<sup>268</sup>. These principles can be applied to modern day interactions like blogs or video blogging. Some analysts do not consider the internet space as a public sphere because of its uncontrollable character and border less expansion. The question that strikes us is; is it necessary that public discussion should take place in saloons, restaurants, meeting places or golf grounds? Should we consider only face-to-face conversations as conversations that are eligible for public sphere? Should the domain of the public sphere be decided based on its physical domain or controllability? Agreeing to these definitions mean that we should not consider internet as public sphere. But if we were to stick to the definition of Habermas that public sphere is a domain where all public related matters can be discussed by 'all' without any restrictions in accessing it, then internet certainly fits the concept of public sphere<sup>269</sup>.

Internet acts as a decentralized political sphere, without a defined domain – both in terms of geography and in terms of nature of the issue that is in question<sup>270</sup>. It is a space where each and every citizen can fit into according to one's own ideas and attitudes towards a particular issue. But the same space also makes consensus difficult and the number of issues that the people may need to concentrate in internet may make them very unstable, and may drag them into more than one issue or many issues at a time, and this may weaken their stand on any particular issue<sup>271</sup>. Most of the issues or topics discussed on the internet may not reach realization stage, but it allows the readers to check out all options and filter out the options that

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<sup>267</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

<sup>268</sup> Habermas, J. (Translation: Burger, Thomas). (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Massachusetts. The MIT Press – Cambridge.

<sup>269</sup> Dean, J. Why the net is not a public sphere. *Constellations – Blackwell Publishing Limited*. Vo. 10. No. 1. (2003): 95 – 113.

<sup>270</sup> Baek, Y, M. Wojcieszak, M. and Carpini, M, X, D. Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what Effects? *New Media & Society*. Vo. 14. No. 3. (2011): 363 – 383.

<sup>271</sup> Gibson, R, K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

are not going to work. In this sense, everyone can be said to have engaged in the deliberation process, and the outcome can be said to be the result of intensive deliberation by the public as they go through and listen to all the voices and their opinions which actually adds validity to the finally selected option, and it can be said that the finally selected outcome is the tested outcome, at least in terms of discussion on it. Internet act as a critical public sphere locally, nationally and internationally by establishing a platform for discussion and dissemination of information<sup>272</sup>.

Mass media tries to simplify things in their own way and impose the simplified images on the public – whether it is about politics, economy of the state or public affairs – but internet has changed the scenario as it provides a platform for the people to express. With internet, every individual is like a media. Internet fundamentally differs from other forms of mediums which are usually controlled by the ruling class. Contrary to the costs involved in the non-internet related forms of media, internet is cheap and is relatively more accessible source of communication. Online social networking sites give relatively unrestrained space to its users compared to the non-internet related public sphere platforms like newspapers or television<sup>273</sup>.

The emergence of internet as a public sphere removed the structural barriers that are experienced in the mass media based public sphere. The domain of internet is bigger than mass media in many folds and the unlimited space that it provides accommodates all the ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ discourses that its users will engage in. Hence, attempts to control the explosive expansion of the spread of internet obviously means killing the platform that has the potential to be the public sphere that can become a real alternative to the mass media based public sphere. Hence, any filters on internet simply means cutting down the growing public sphere. Internet individualizes the media that was hitherto a mainstream media that always concentrated on issues that befit mass media based ‘public’ sphere. This individualization provides scope for atomization of views that can, when articulated or countered with the ideas of other similar

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<sup>272</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

<sup>273</sup> Gerhards, J. & Schafer, M, S. Is internet a better public sphere? Comparing old and new media in the US and Germany. *Journal of New Media & Society*. Vo. XX(X). (2009): 1 – 18.

atomized ideas of others individuals may give results that are unconventional, and these new ideas may question everything that has been considered as ‘right’, ‘appropriate’ or ‘contextual’ so far. Internet propels a public sphere that is different in terms of topics, style, and plurality as it is completely individual centric mode of communication where the individual plays the role of editor and acts as filter of her own content. Hence, the diversity of topics is broader than what we see in the mass media based public sphere. Internet also helps in publishing unconventional thoughts as it sometimes allows anonymity. Hence, thoughts that are considered as unconventional in nature can be published in unconventional language, sometimes in uncivil language as well. This may not sound right with most of those who back mass media for its civic language and uniformity in reporting but for those who think that the alternatives must be presented—internet allows it in its public sphere<sup>274</sup>.

In terms of censorship also internet acts as an alternative model to the mass media. The mass media usually sticks to certain standards set by the government, society or the existing dominant ideas that act as a basis for ‘morality’, governance, and order whereas the internet acts in a shackle free manner as it is relatively free from these factors. The sheer diversity of topics that the internet allows may make it difficult for the readers to follow a set of ideas and build their public or civic culture based on it, but issues of severe nature that affects the majority, or even some minority issues that can affect the conscience of the majority can hardly be missed by the public. This can foster a broader public or civic culture in the long term, thus giving scope for the issues that have not been part of the mass media based public sphere so far<sup>275</sup>.

Internet acts as a functional alternative to the mass media in serving the public sphere, and the communication on internet is two dimensional i.e., both the creator of the content and the reader of the content can interact through different modes like e-mails, chats, video conferences etc. and different readers can interact among themselves who can join or counter the first author. Though the mass media also has feedback mechanisms like letters to editors,

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<sup>274</sup> Aiello, L, M and McFarland, D (Eds.). (2014). *Social Informatics*. Heidelberg. Springer. See also, Baek, Y, M. Wojcieszak, M. and Carpini, M, X, D. Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what Effects? *New Media & Society*. Vo. 14. No. 3. (2011): 363 – 383.

<sup>275</sup> Aiello, L, M and McFarland, D (Eds.). (2014). *Social Informatics*. Heidelberg. Springer.

publishing counter articles, live discussions on television channels, SMS polls, televised telephonic debates etc., these methods more or less stick to some structural methods; in the form of picking a few letters among the whole letters that the editor picks based on her 'discretion', selecting the speakers who are going to express their views on television, allowing only a certain cellular service holders to send their opinions in the form of SMS etc. which limits the heterogeneity that can be experienced on internet. Besides editing, screening, or selection of the respondents, the mass media has structural limitations to involve in two way engagements in the form of space available for publication of the responses, broadcasting time, and all the required background works like typing, page setting, camera works, recording and editing works etc. that has to be carried out which obviously escalates the costs involved in creating a vibrant public sphere. This structural limitation forces the mass media to limit its role to dissemination of limited information or opinion, and severely restrict the feedback from the public. Internet is free from most of the above things<sup>276</sup>.

#### **4. 4. 1. Transformation of Audience from Habermas's Bourgeoisie Public Sphere to Internet's Discursive Public Sphere**

Changes took place not only in the media, or in the public sphere, but also among the audience. Attempts to track the broader changes in the audience behavior or how audience responded to different types of developments in the public sphere based on the type of media resulted in three broad categorization of audience; one, face to face interacting public during the 18th century who were doing so with their exposure to the local newspapers or tabloids. The audience in this public sphere interacted directly with each other as it was the only available two way mode of communication<sup>277</sup>.

Two, the mass audience of the print media and the television where the mass media caters to the audience and decides about what the audience should talk about in the public sphere. In this type of public sphere the audience are heavily manipulated or controlled by the mass media and the television. Identical opinions are usually expressed in these media forms

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Livingstone, S. (2005). *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere – Changing Media, Changing Europe Volume 2*. Bristol. Intellect Books.

resulting in more or less similar feedback from the audience. The audiences are bounded by certain ‘standardized’ concepts like nation, language, culture, development, rights, individuality, private realm, political ideologies etc. and usually turn into supporters or reactionaries to these ideas. The public sphere controlled by mass media and television can be said to be made hysterical with the injection of these concepts. All the events like wars, independence movements, protests, ideological orientations, development models can be said to be the outcome of heavy influence exerted by mass media on the audience. This type of public sphere is expansive when compared to the public sphere where people used to interact face-to-face only, but the audience in the mass media public sphere have less control on the public sphere that they are engaging in as the ideas for discussion in the public sphere are derived from what the mass media caters; nationalism, model of economic development, ideology, religion, war and peace, cricket and soccer, movies, music, cultural ‘trends’ etc. Apparently, the audience in this type of public sphere feel empowered due to their connectivity (done by the media) to the larger audience, and they obviously feel that they are running things through their responses to the mass media. Polarization of audience becomes easier in the mass media created public sphere. With polarization or standardization of the expected behavior from the audience, politics starts revolving around the public opinion and emphasis shifts from disseminating information to controlling the public opinion resulting in a reactionary public sphere that reacts to the voice of the mass media. Certain opinions that are generated and spread by the mass media occupies the audience in the public sphere, and certain voices, especially the voices that are not entertained by the mass media end up without any origins<sup>278</sup>.

The third type of audience is fragmented audience that is the result of the advancement of the internet. The audience in this public sphere can be said to be guided by unguided—yet highly advanced communication technology. The role of mass media diminished significantly in this public sphere, or its magic can be said to have alleviated to a greater extent with the advancement of internet based public sphere. The internet acts as a cobweb of communication. Everyone – from an individual to the mass media – acts in a powerful and more or less equal manner in this public sphere as access to communication technologies, scope for dissemination of information and reach etc. stand equally for all those who wish to speak. The audiences in

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

this public sphere can be said to be independent identities in a virtual sense. Though the communication among the audience in this type of public sphere is not face-to-face all the time like in the 18<sup>th</sup> century public sphere the engagement is more or less direct facilitating audience to engage in different modes of direct contact with other audience and the world<sup>279</sup>.

#### **4. 4. 2. Corporate Actors and Internet Public Sphere**

Private corporations that provide internet service also exert a lot of influence on the levels of freedoms that their users enjoy while enjoying their products. Indifferent to the government policies or regulations, these corporations are setting benchmarks on different issues. Some of the orientations they take are based on their own analysis of the issue in question like privacy maintenance promises that they promise to their customers while getting data related to them, or the terms of the contracts that they enter into with the customers on different products etc. Sometimes these companies act as well-wishers of the public in defending the privacy and rights of the individuals to get access to information or to stay away from the public or government monitoring. These corporations, with the help of other organizations or groups like NGOs, judiciary etc. are coming forward to defend the privacy and rights of the individuals against the state intrusion or control. The states are finding it difficult to control or put restriction on these corporations as the sheer size, domain, and impact of these corporations transcend state boundaries. A state's effort to curtail or restrict Google can become important international news that can spread to the world in seconds. Shutting down Google, Facebook or twitter for few minutes will certainly make attention grabbing news around the world, especially if it is done by a state to protect its power. Google or Facebook's decision to shut down their sites for a while as a protest against a state's decision, or a Google doodle opposing or supporting a certain idea, opinion, or government may reach millions across the world in few seconds. No other forms of protest, dissent or assent in history had this type of power in terms of speed and reach that the internet has, and the corporations that control the internet are the ones who know how to use this weapon against a state when the situation arises<sup>280</sup>.

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Owen, T. (2015). *Disruptive Power: The Crisis of the State in the Digital Age*. New York. Oxford University Press.

These private corporations can take decisions to restructure their language to accommodate thoughts or ideas that have been considered as ‘unconventional’ so far. The ‘neutral’ language they use on their sites or the way sites like Wikipedia present a topic, idea or issues to the readers can change the opinions of the readers significantly. These ideas are not presented by a state, a party, or a candidate; these ideas are presented by corporations that are spread across the world like cobweb, and this makes it difficult for any government, state, or agency to control the content on the sites like Wikipedia. This advantage or freedom gives these corporations to publish or present ideas that are hitherto considered unconventional. Besides escaping from the state power to control the contents that these corporations present, these corporations also enjoy immunity from the public who are opposed to its content. The consumers cannot prevent the corporations from publishing unconventional content and at the same time they cannot turn their back on these service providers just like the way they dethrone governments in the elections or stop reading a newspaper as these service providers actually give power to the people in the form of information and other things, and cutting down or restricting yourself from using the services of these corporations apparently means losing access to the necessary information that the others are getting<sup>281</sup>.

The example of Wikipedia offers a glimpse of how vibrant the internet based public sphere is. Wikipedia offers altogether a different type of editing process that enriches the topic day by day, with the continuous addition of the authors to the topic. It offers a unique feature that gives the users opportunity to edit or add to the topic that is published in it. Anyone can sign into the site and start editing, adding portions of the topic. Wikipedia saves the changes made by the users and at the same time it has an inbuilt feature that can track back the changes made by different authors, and it also retains the deleted portions in the database and keeps record of the changes made by different authors. The old versions of the topic are not lost and can be accessed anytime thus keeping record of everything about the topic, who initiated it, who made what kind of changes, the login details of the authors etc. and portions of the topic that are edited or deleted. This process continuously adds to the topic as different authors add

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<sup>281</sup> Denardis, L. (2014). *The Global War for Internet Governance*. New Haven and London. Yale University Press.

different dimensions, and if the arguments are convincing then these arguments define the topic. New dimensions keep on adding to the topic making it more and more inclusive and more and more plural in its value orientation. Thus, the public sphere that the Wikipedia creates can be called as deliberative, egalitarian in terms of its access to the customers and scientific in its approach as the topics are reviewed and debated by different audience across the globe. Hence, Wikipedia can be called as a deliberative platform and an example of deliberative dimension of the internet's heterogeneity in terms of representing different cultures, topics, issues, and groups<sup>282</sup>. There is no core or peripheral topics or issues on internet, and this allows any topic or option to beat the existing views or variants thus giving an equal platform for all the versions or opinions. This type of representation has its own negative side as the public may end up picking some option that wins the anarchy. Nonetheless, the winning version can be said to have convinced the public sphere. The journey from heterogeneity to homogeneity itself tells the legitimacy of the options or opinions that finally convince the public sphere<sup>283</sup>.

The reciprocal relationship between the corporations and the consumers will not allow the consumers to disengage themselves from the products of these corporations. Besides, customers cannot stop using Google or Wikipedia based on their stand on a particular issue or the way they present a certain issue as there are other things that the consumers need these corporations for. This makes the consumers to stay with these service providers, and this stay will eventually change the orientation of these consumers over a period due to the continuous exposure to a particular type of analysis or presentation. A Google doodle about AIDS will certainly reach the un-reached sections so far, or sections that have been resistant to the mentioning of topic itself. Similarly a Google doodle on international women's day, evidence of water on mars, or a protest Google doodle against anti-gay laws in some other country etc. reach to millions across the world indifferent to whether they accept it or not. But these corporations cannot be said to be against the state all the time as they have their own interests

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<sup>282</sup> Dahlberg, L. & Siapera, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>283</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

with the state and hence do not always clash with the state. The ideas they present may indeed help some states in some situations and may put other states in a disadvantageous position<sup>284</sup>.

Corporate service providers, under the banner of corporate social responsibility, enact and implement certain voluntary legislations that are intended to uphold human rights, right to freedom of expression, value pluralism, protection of whistle blowers from governments, highlighting the core issues across the globe, mobilizing support for core issues, protecting privacy of the individuals from the governments etc. The convergence of information technology related companies in 2008 to form Global Network Initiative can be taken as an example for voluntary corporate governance. The initiative was aimed at promotion of human rights mentioned in UDHR and the two international covenants. Committing to this initiative certainly makes the internet service providers to support each other or to support the corporations that stand for human rights across the globe, and most of the time the support is against their own governments. The case of big corporations taking such voluntary steps obviously forces other companies to follow these steps. Sometimes corporations take certain types of decisions that a government fails to take or do not want to take in the wake of political calculations that could adversely affect them. These initiatives from the corporate sector set the standards for governments to follow. Google's 'Take Action' initiative which was aimed at securing the future of internet across the globe created a platform where supporters can sign in and get access to internet related legislations by different states. Such an initiative obviously puts the governments on back seat when it comes to issues relating to curtailing the freedom on internet, whether in the form of higher taxes, censoring, access to private data of the consumers etc. The Google's Take Action initiative is a check to the state's capacity to come up with legislations that are aimed at curbing the internet. These initiatives create a vibrant internet based public sphere that acts vigilantly against government's attempts to curb the freedoms of the individuals, either directly or indirectly<sup>285</sup>.

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<sup>284</sup> Denardis, L. (2014). *The Global War for Internet Governance*. New Haven and London. Yale University Press.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

Internet protests can be as damaging as real protests<sup>286</sup>. The Wikipedia's innovative protest against US congress's antipiracy law can give us the glimpse of severity of internet based protests. The Wikipedia shut down its site for 24 hours (January 22, 2012) with a display "Imagine a World without Free Knowledge" in protest against the antipiracy law that was gaining support in the US. Google's protest doodle (February 07, 2014) against the anti-gay legislation in Russia can be called as an example of internet protest. Internet can also be used to obstruct the government activities as done by 'Moveon' that conducted a 'virtual march' (February 26, 2003) on White House over Iraq issue with over 400000 mails and messages, with the help of a convergence of civil society organizations. This has disrupted the communication system of White House for hours<sup>287</sup>. Corporations that provide internet services are creating a 'control free' public sphere. The apparent results of all debates in this public sphere lead to cleansing of political structures that define the socio-economic and political life of the people<sup>288</sup>. Internet can help the developing countries in economic development, in creating transparent political structures, and in strengthening the democracy<sup>289</sup>.

Extensive studies during 1990's prove that ordinary citizens are capable of taking good decisions. Internet also offers the facility of "micro networks". Micro Networks are networks owned by individuals or groups that do not undergo the filtering process of the government or allied corporations thus enabling them to publish whatever they want without facing the axe of the editors or structural filters. Micro Network is a dynamic sphere in terms of its access to people who want to speak their mind or fact in the sense that anyone can create a micro-networking site and use it according to her wish. The outreach of the micro-network can be unlimited based on the content, issues, or the consumption or reaction interests of the readers. Organizations like NGOs, communities, groups, individuals, corporations, and business units

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<sup>286</sup> Owen, T. (2015). *Disruptive Power: The Crisis of the State in the Digital Age*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>287</sup> Dahlberg, L & Siapera, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>288</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

<sup>289</sup> Ziyaad, L. The internet and the public sphere: evidence from civil society in developing countries. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*. Vo. 35. No. 3. (2008): 1 – 12.

use micro-networking to disseminate whatever information that needs to be shared according to them. In short, it can be called as individualization of the public sphere through individualized communicative space where individual centric communication becomes the sole source of dissemination of information; the individual is the creator of news – she is the editor – and she decides what is relevant according to her understanding and context<sup>290</sup>.

#### **4. 4. 3. Limitations of Internet Public Sphere**

But internet based public sphere is not free from drawbacks as political thinkers express different pessimistic (or rational) views about citizen's critical analytical skills, their political understanding and societal orientation. Critics of internet based public sphere are pessimistic about citizens' capacities to use it for critical-rational communication. Based on their understanding the citizens can be divided broadly into three categories based on how 'unfit' they are to take the political affairs in to their hands. The first category of citizens branded as "emotion driven and passionate" are the citizens who fall prey to different irrational aspects. These citizens usually react to situations based on their prejudiced understanding of the situation. The second category of citizens are those who act with "short sight" and do not ground their conclusion on the long term empirical evidence. These citizens tend to respond in a hazy manner resulting in wrong calculations most of the time and the third category of citizens are branded as "puppet citizenry" who do nothing except reacting to the strings held or operated by others (state, media, religion, culture, majority, identity, class, caste, ideologies, and values)<sup>291</sup>. So, ICT may bring people together in large numbers but the people brought together by the ICT may stay silent or simply support the views projected by other individuals. In other words, all the people present may not take part in participation or deliberation actively, thus becoming passive supporters of the few versions projected or talked about by those who

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<sup>290</sup> Volkmer, I. (2014). *The Global Public Sphere; Public Communication in the Age of Reflective Interdependence*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

<sup>291</sup> Jacobs, L, R., Cook, F, L., and Carpini, M, X, D. (2009). *Talking Together: Public Deliberation and Political Participation in America*. London. The University of Chicago Press.

could speak. These projections could be manipulated, created, twisted. Hence, consent or dissent can be manufactured or enforced in deliberative democracy also<sup>292</sup>.

It is criticized that most of the discussion that is carried out by people on internet is un-edited and most of the topics discussed or the language used is un-civic, but this is what is required precisely for a vibrant public sphere. The masses are newly exposed to a potentially new public sphere that could transform their lives socially, economically and politically. They have never been part of a public sphere that is meant to discuss public issues because of various types of exclusions like class, caste, race, gender, physical boundaries, functional difficulties of the system etc. which kept them away from being active in public sphere. The initial reaction of the new public to the public sphere may obviously be messy. Besides, internet is not made primarily to act as a platform for public sphere as it carries out or bridges many others spheres – communicative, entertainment, business etc. and the emergence of the contested public sphere on internet was totally unseen in the early 1990s which makes us to infer that the public sphere on internet is in its infant stage—used mostly in an amateur manner, by all sections of people that includes a significant percentage of new people who have never been part of the public spheres of all forms. Hence, it is not totally unexpected that these newly exposed sections will not be focused while being part of internet based public sphere. Nonetheless, they now get access to a platform through which they can express their opinions that can affect the public sphere<sup>293</sup>.

People may pick news items of their own ‘choices’ like movie, sports, music etc. but this is because they were not part of the decision making process so far. Hence they must be of the opinion that following the news results in nothing, especially if the news is far away from their hands like international politics, international economics, war, space science etc. But the situation may change once people start participation as they can re-arrange priorities according to their own necessity, circumstance and choice. Initially people may show interest on numerous political issues, may not understand the type of issues that the present elite

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<sup>292</sup> Parkinson, J. (2006). *Deliberating in the Real World: Problems of Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy*. New York. Oxford University Press.

<sup>293</sup> Rasmussen, T. The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere. Panel Discussion II; Culture and Media Technology – *NORDICOM Review*. 2013. 1 – 13.

‘democracies’ undertake, but as the days go on people may understand what they want and they may get away from the so called complex issues or decision making process itself. What is the guarantee that people would like to continue with the ‘complex issues’ once they are given power? They may altogether change the issue addressing mechanism itself. They may rearrange priorities. How come a decision taken in a representative democracy to spend taxpayers’ money on a sports event is rational while the same amount could have been spent on feeding the destitute, old or orphans? Another criticism that is made against the internet based public sphere is the fragmentation of the audience. Audience fragmentation produces extreme rhetoric, intolerance to compromise, but it is also true that such divisions are necessary for wider choices to come out. The confusion regarding which decision to follow and choice to choose among the diversified opinions can be there. One village may decide to use the funds to build a school whereas another village may use the funds to build a hospital or library, one village may spend the funds on recreational activities, and the options go on expanding and closer to what people actually need<sup>294</sup>.

Though the online public sphere acts as a relatively restriction free platform for public discourse, research suggests that people polarize with the likeminded ideas and opinions, leading themselves to certain level of homogeneity of thoughts as a ‘solution’ to the anarchic plurality that exists initially<sup>295</sup>. Apparently, all discourses whether online or offline, must end with some agreement or disagreement, but only after it undergoes the process of extensive critical and rational debates. But research suggests that the homogeneity that the online participants arrive at is not a homogeneity that is arrived at after considering all the choices or alternative opinions that are going rounds on the internet, rather, it is a homogeneity that is a result of prejudiced position of the participants on the online public sphere—without even knowing the alternatives sometimes. This situation forces us to be pessimistic about the possible deliberativeness of the public in the internet provided public sphere. The reason that internet based public sphere harbors virtually all ideas because of the unlimited communicative

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<sup>294</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>295</sup> Lawrence, E. Side, J and Farrell, H. Self-Segregation or Deliberation? Blog, Readership, Participation, and Polarization in American Politics. *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol. 8. No. 1. (2010): 141 – 157.

space that it has got makes the participants to go for their prejudiced choices without looking for the alternatives. The anarchy of information forces the participants to settle for a random choice<sup>296</sup>.

Research about internet based deliberation on political issues among the internet users suggest that most of the participants do not engage in rational-critical analysis of the issue and depreciate the deliberation process to a level of supporting their arguments without any supporting evidence or reasons, and the most discouraging findings are that these participants do not seem to give an ear to the position of the other participants, and winning or showing difference seems to be regarded as participation or deliberation. Hence, the present form of internet based public can be called as segmented publics as the chances for them to come closer and move on side by side are very less<sup>297</sup>. Some analysts criticize that emphasizing the use of technology in all fields or that the belief that technology brings positive changes simply constitutes technology determinism. But the fast changes that the world is experiencing in the last couple of decades counter this criticism, as is evident from the convergence and interaction speed of different ideas, cultures, and globalization etc. which are still in their early stages<sup>298</sup>.

Controlling or manipulation of information on internet is another threat that the supporters of internet based deliberation have to contend with. Dissemination of information in exact manner, and understanding of that information in the manner it is supposed to be understood are very important aspects to make people aware of the issues and possible solutions. Information influences the decision making process of the people heavily<sup>299</sup>. Critics fear that MNCs, media corporations and political parties may be holding the strings of the

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<sup>296</sup> Lawrence, E. Side, J and Farrell, H. Self-Segregation or Deliberation? Blog, Readership, Participation, and Polarization in American Politics. *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol. 8. No. 1. (2010): 141 – 157. See also, Davies, T and Gangadharan, S, P. (Eds.) (2009). *Online Deliberation: Design, Research, and Practice*. Stanford. Center for the Study of Language and Information Publications; Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>297</sup> Fossum, J, E. & Schlesinger, P. (Eds.). (2007). *The European Union and the Public Sphere: A Communicative Space in the Making?* New York. Routledge.

<sup>298</sup> Ziyaad, L. The internet and the public sphere: evidence from civil society in developing countries. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*. Vo. 35. No. 3. (2008): 1 – 12.

<sup>299</sup> OECD. (2003). *Promise and Problems of E-Democracy: Challenges of Online Citizen Engagement*. Paris. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

internet, and whatever people are getting may be the image of what these powerful people actually want to project<sup>300</sup>. Colonization of communication related technologies in the hands of few or those close to it pose a bigger threat to the deliberative public sphere that the internet promises<sup>301</sup>.

Significant research is done to know whether existing power structures are taming the ICT to fit their needs or whether the ICT are forcing the existing power structures to change their form and presence? There is every possibility that the internet related technology may adapt to the present form of capitalism, or it may move along with capitalist structures rather than changing it<sup>302</sup>. Another important area that affects the internet based public sphere is “digital divide”. Digital divide can lead to enormous socio-economic and political inequalities. It is criticized that privileged groups get access to internet and dominate public discourse with the issues and solutions that they think are important or necessary<sup>303</sup>. Internet usage and its impact are predominantly dominated by urban young male population. Hence the types of issues that rise to discussion are those that affect these classes<sup>304</sup>. Another problem with the internet based public sphere is that the online discourse is not completely free from the offline structural limitations in the form of monitoring, filtering, government censorship or corporate ownership. Nonetheless the discourse is relatively free from state power due to the functional limitations on the state's capacity to control the online content<sup>305</sup>.

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<sup>300</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>301</sup> Dahlberg, L. The Internet, deliberative democracy, and power: Radicalizing the public sphere. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*. Vo. 3. No. 1. (2007): 47 – 64.

<sup>302</sup> Ziyaad, L. The internet and the public sphere: evidence from civil society in developing countries. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*. Vo. 35. No. 3. (2008): 1 – 12.

<sup>303</sup> OECD. (2003). *Promise and Problems of E-Democracy: Challenges of Online Citizen Engagement*. Paris. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). See also, Baek, Y, M. Wojcieszak, M. and Carpini, M, X, D. Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what Effects? *New Media & Society*. Vo. 14. No. 3. (2011): 363 – 383.

<sup>304</sup> Gibson, R, K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>305</sup> Dahlberg, L. The internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere. *Journal of information, communication & society*. Vo. 4. No. 4. (2001): 615 – 633.

Critics argue that internet cannot be called as a public sphere as it was not created for political interaction among the citizens but to serve all purposes like commerce, communication (basically non-political) and a majority of users use internet for activities that infuse consumerism. There are inequalities in terms of access to internet based on the country's political environment, economic resources, culture, educational levels, and internet cannot yet be called as an alternative space for political communication as the users most of the time use it in non-political ways like casual chats, social networking, entertainment, gossips etc. But it cannot be denied that those who have access to it in an open political environment are using it as a political communication fostering a different level of political culture<sup>306</sup>. Social capital of an individual plays an important role in the internet based public sphere. In fact, it is the social capital of an individual that helps her to spread her voice on the internet related platforms initially, but her voice or opinions may go viral once the contents that she publishes catch the attention of the readers. Social capital might be most prevalent among the advanced sections providing them a platform to stay connected in order to reap the benefits or opportunities that the internet provides. Social capital can also lead to negative consequences as tightly formed social groups without any outward interaction may end up doing bad things like caste bias, religious intolerance and polarized opinions. Governments can also affect the social capital by creating formal or informal institutions or procedures for social interaction or articulation<sup>307</sup>.

Though internet public as a sphere has all these limitations, some analysts believe that internet is propelling altogether a different type of e-democracy. Three dominant categories dominate the arguments in favor of internet derived e-democracy. The three types of e-democracy are; communitarian, liberal individualistic, and deliberative democracy. Communitarian democracy outlines the possibility of internet contributing to the communal spirit or values of the commune in a democracy. The liberal individualist democracy outlines that the individuals, with the help of internet, are bound to be more expressive of their opinions based on individual interest. The third variant is deliberative democracy that outlines the

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<sup>306</sup> Dahlgren, P. The Internet, Public Sphere, and Political Communications: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Journal of Political Communication*. Vo. 22 (2005): 147 – 162.

<sup>307</sup> Putnam, R. D. (Ed.). (2002). *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*. New York. Oxford University Press.

possibility of rational and critical discourse by the citizens outside the control of the corporate or state controlled public sphere which presumably leads to independent deliberative decision making process in a broader sense. Both internet based communitarian democracy and liberal individualist democracy agree on one thing; they reproduce the same stuff and take the same path that the mass media based public sphere has been propagating—limiting the citizens to mainstream ideas. Contradicting these two variants, internet based deliberative public sphere creates an environment conducive to deliberative democracy by harboring ‘all’ the heterogeneous ideas that originates in its public sphere that is free from all the ‘standard’ or ‘established’ norms, values, monitoring or restrictions. Both communitarian model of democracy and liberal individual model of internet based democracies stick to the ideas of the status quo thus trying to change things within the system, and for these two variants, democracy is a competition of ideas or alternatives within the predetermined broader ideas of state, functional system, market, citizenship, established models of development etc., which makes the participants in these two types of internet based democracies to think and debate within in this ‘broader’ domain thus effectively restricting the nurturing of any new ideas that might question the status of status quo. Ideas that are absorbable by the system get encouragement from the public sphere. Both communitarian democracy and liberal individual democracy restrict the public by limiting them to ideas that befits the exclusive concepts of the state and its related institutional mechanisms. Debate in the public sphere is voluntarily restricted to the so called ‘universally’ accepted norms like religion, culture, tradition, sovereignty of the state, ideology, ‘democracy’, economic ‘possibilities’, ‘equality of liberty’, faith, private, sphere, individual liberty etc., and leaves nothing significant for the participants to discuss and change. The rules of the game are usually predetermined and the ‘competing’ ideas in this public sphere have to play under the umbrella of these rules to decide the winning or losing idea. Communitarian and liberal individual models of democracies basically aggregate ideas, uses utilitarian approach in identifying and highlighting the ideas, cites functional limitations of the system for non-acceptance of certain ideas, refers to looming ‘anarchy’ quite frequently to subside the alternative ideas, and eventually binds the participants to few ‘reasonable’ ideas that can bring ‘reasonable’ changes in the system thus giving the participants the pride of ‘participation’ in the public sphere. Both these versions depend heavily on social capital to

achieve their goals and can be more or less called as online equivalents to interest groups or voluntary associations<sup>308</sup>.

The internet also provides scope for the third alternative – deliberative democracy. The internet gives deliberative space that can, at least in a relative sense, bypass the state and corporate sector, thus resulting in a restriction free platform for deliberation, especially deliberations that are asymmetrical with the ideas and structures of the state and corporate sector. These asymmetrical ideas, expressed in an indefinite public sphere like internet, makes deliberative democracy superior when compared to the other two models of democracies – communitarian and liberal individual variants that heavily rely on the complexly weaved status quo structures<sup>309</sup>. Research suggests that internet based deliberative democracy allows participants to express issues that are considered taboo or unconventional in their surrounding environment. The participants in non-internet based public sphere also expressed fears about their identity becoming explicit. Internet based deliberative public sphere rectifies this drawback as the participants can maintain anonymity, and usually start interacting with anonymous audience or those who seem supportive of the participant's opinions. The negative side of this type of participation is that constellation of ideas becomes possible within the constellation, and the positive side is even this constellation was not possible in the non-internet based public sphere, which, encourages the supporters of internet based deliberative public sphere that this constellation of ideas will nurture alternative public spheres that could, on occasions, come together to challenge the 'accepted' and 'conventional' ideas of the mainstream public sphere<sup>310</sup>.

#### **4. 5. Internet's Discursive Public Sphere and Deliberative Democracy**

Every change in technology changes the polity and economy to some extent. Off all, internet is the most radical change till date. This is what Robert Heilbroner has to say about

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<sup>308</sup> Dahlberg, L. The Internet, deliberative democracy, and power: Radicalizing the public sphere. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*. Vo. 3. No. 1. (2007): 47 – 64.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Dahlgren, P. The Internet, Public Sphere, and Political Communications: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Journal of Political Communication*. Vo. 22 (2005): 147 – 162.

the change in technology – “that machines make history in some sense – that the level of technology has direct bearing on the human drama – is of course obvious, that they do not make all of history, however that word is defined, is equally clear. The challenge then, is to see if one can say something systematic about the matter, to whether one can order the problem so that it becomes intellectually manageable” (pp. 150-151)<sup>311</sup>. The rapid change in technology is leading to demand for rights, participation in the political process, transparency from the government etc.<sup>312</sup> Apart from the change in technology certain political changes like rise in the number of countries that follow democracy, aggressive expansion of the civil society, expansive presence of different kinds of media, expansion of the infrastructure facilities etc. have led to the rise in demand for more transparent laws. With all these developments citizens are becoming attentive. Demand for participation of citizens in the decision making process is on rise<sup>313</sup>. Because of the advancements of ICTs, it is now possible for the governments to make and implement big projects in a transparent manner – with the participation of the people or with the deliberation by the people<sup>314</sup>.

Internet acts as a force that nurtures radical democracy because of its inherent mechanism to accommodate the participants in an indefinite manner. First, the space available on internet is not limited unlike the physical space in the form of publishing space in a newspaper or magazine, or airing space on a radio or telecast space on a television. This apparently allows internet to harbor everyone with a view to express which itself is a radical improvement of the public sphere vis-à-vis to the mass media based public sphere. Second, internet can be used by the groups that are so far excluded by the mass media derived public sphere. Internet enables these groups to talk about their identity, language, issues, culture and how they are different from others etc. Third, internet acts as a convergence platform for the

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<sup>311</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>312</sup> Baek, Y, M. Wojcieszak, M. and Carpini, M, X, D. Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what Effects? *New Media & Society*. Vo. 14. No. 3. (2011): 363 – 383.

<sup>313</sup> United Nations. (2007). *Auditing for Social Change: A Strategy for Citizen Engagement in Public Sector Accountability*. New York. Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Division of Public Administration and Development Management – United Nations.

<sup>314</sup> Manoharan, A & Holzer, M. (2012). *E-Governance and Civic Engagement: Factors and Determinants of E-Democracy*. Hershey. Information Science Reference.

so far excluded groups to come together and to share the modes of exclusion that they have been undergoing. This enables them to understand different forms of exclusion that different groups are experiencing in different places under different power structures. This shared knowledge about different forms of exclusion and the possible solutions that can work to fight against these exclusions can be shared among these groups as the depth and width of exclusion may make these groups to understand the suffering that the other groups are going through, and this process may bring them together in creating an alternative opinion or position that acts as a counter force to the status quo. This counter force develops further and further over a time leading to an alliance of counter ideas that can create an alternative public sphere that can be more rational, radical, innovative, democratic, and inclusive in nature and that it can no longer be ignored by the mainstream public sphere. At this stage, a stage is set for the clash of ideas between the dominant or mainstream public sphere and the alternative public sphere that has been created through the convergence of different subaltern public spheres thus escalating the conflict between mainstream ideas and subaltern ideas leading to a situation where the mainstream ideas may have to give way to the subaltern ideas. This becomes unavoidable as the mainstream ideas are not formed through deliberation but has been imposed or made mainstream over a time by the ruling elite by citing the functional deficiencies or difficulties in building a functional structure that is 'all' inclusive. The alternative or counter public sphere, if emerged victorious, replaces or converges with the then existing mainstream public sphere and transforms itself into a new public sphere, which, subsequently may face similar kind of challenge from the new subaltern public spheres that could emerge as a result of the deliberative public sphere that has replaced the mainstream public sphere<sup>315</sup>.

Recent changes in the trends of political participation, protest movements and international mobilization of support to a cause across all sections of the people from all countries contradicts Putnam's bowling alone syndrome that was the result of television. TV divides; internet unites as TV is basically an information giving machine whereas internet acts as a two way medium of communication. Internet may not directly enrich the participation of people in a democratic process, but it reduces the geographical gap among people, thus

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<sup>315</sup> Dahlberg, L. The Internet, deliberative democracy, and power: Radicalizing the public sphere. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*. Vo. 3. No. 1. (2007): 47 – 64.

enabling them to interact and engage with each other in an easy manner<sup>316</sup>. Recent example of Arab Spring can be taken as examples for the influence of internet. Technology brought similar minded people on to a single platform in these cases and created hope among them that they can discuss, come together and take the issues into their own hands. Due to low mobilization costs and absence of hierarchical structures it becomes easy for the activists or internet based groups to gather support for their cause online, but it is also true that due to absence of these structures the number of interest groups or activist groups also increase rapidly making the movements unstable<sup>317</sup>.

Modern technology, especially internet offers new ways to fulfil democratic goals<sup>318</sup>. Internet is considered by some analysts as savior of modern civilization<sup>319</sup>. Internet makes the direct participation of people in decision making more frequent. Internet provides a platform for the citizens to get access to the decision data i.e., the information that gives a detailed picture of how decision are arrived at, and factors and rationality behind such a decision. Information is crucial for the citizens to hold the representatives responsible to the people. Dissemination of policy related information through internet is one of the many steps towards participating in a democracy<sup>320</sup>. ICT also help in expanding the presence of civil society<sup>321</sup>. Extensive expansion of ICT certainly re-distributes the decision making power. Different concepts like electronic democracy, e-governance, smart governance, internet governance etc. are closely related to internet as a medium of communication<sup>322</sup>.

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<sup>316</sup> Baek, Y, M. Wojcieszak, M. and Carpini, M, X, D. Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what Effects? *New Media & Society*. Vo. 14. No. 3. (2011): 363 – 383.

<sup>317</sup> Gibson, R, K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>318</sup> Manoharan, A & Holzer, M. (2012). *E-Governance and Civic Engagement: Factors and Determinants of E-Democracy*. Hershey. Information Science Reference.

<sup>319</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>320</sup> Gibson, R, K., Rommele, A., and Ward, S, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Electronic Democracy: Mobilization, Organization and Participation via New ICTs*. London. Routledge.

<sup>321</sup> OECD. (2003). *Promise and Problems of E-Democracy: Challenges of Online Citizen Engagement*. Paris. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

<sup>322</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

In mass media based public sphere the voice of all cannot be heard or heeded as it is virtually impossible to give time to all the public to express their opinion. Hence, choices have to be made regarding whose voice is going to be heard on a radio, television or newspaper. It is not possible to give space to everyone, and those who are given space also do not usually get unlimited space. The public sphere, before the arrival of internet, faced all these restrictions, and ‘people’ had to participate and express their opinion within this restricted space<sup>323</sup>. These are the structural limitations that a public sphere faces, and the strength of the public sphere depends on three important dimensions; structural, representation and interaction capabilities. The structural dimension of media dependent public sphere explains the environment that the media based public sphere is located in, and the restrictions that the environment puts on this public sphere in the form of government regulations, economic survival of the media, and the environment’s definition of different aspects like democracy, equality, sovereignty, justice, civility, faith, public-private demarcation, culture, entertainment, socialization, political ideas, ethics, property rights, freedoms, social norms etc. All representation or un-representation takes place within the domain of these structures defined public sphere. The representational dimension of the media based public sphere represents how representative is the public sphere in terms of representing divergent voices, opinions etc. In short, how plural the accommodation of voices are in the public sphere in aspects like heterogeneous accommodation of values, inclusive representation etc. decide the breadth of the public sphere. The interaction side of mass media based public sphere can be defined as interaction process it initiates among its members about the issues in the form of person to person interactions, interaction among the groups, or the formal and informal deliberations that takes places in coffees shops, work places, or even in the private sphere. In all the three dimensions – structural, representational and interactional – the mass media falls behind internet in terms of structure related limitations by government or the surrounding environment, faces representational limitations by representing limited ‘accepted’ ideas, and is limited in interaction related dimension as mass media is not as effective as internet in terms of two way communication. In all these three dimensions, internet creates a far superior public sphere as its restriction chances are limited, it represents

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<sup>323</sup> Orr, A. (2010). *Blogging, Deliberation and Public Sphere*. New South Wales. University of New South Wales – School of Social Science and International Studies. 1 – 11.

almost all the opinions due to the virtue of its unlimited virtual space, and the interaction is two ways due to its variety of supplementary platforms like blogs, e-mail, social networking sites, individual centric domains etc. Thus, internet forms a relatively better public sphere than the public sphere constructed by the mass media<sup>324</sup>.

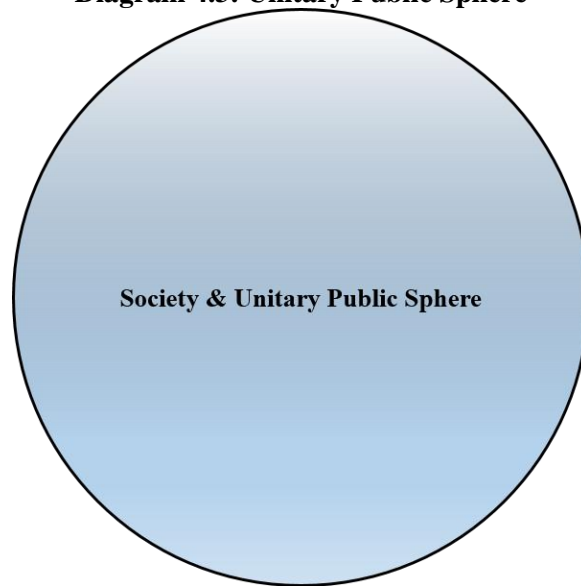
Political analysts reject the idea of internet forming into a single unitary public sphere on the grounds that such a public sphere may not allow difference or pluralism based ideas such as culture, language, ethnicity, gender, faith etc. to coexist. Even if it allows all the differences, existence of a unitary public sphere may wipe out the differences over a time by making all the differences adopt to a particular set of ideas, and the participants from the once diverse public spheres who are now under a unitary public sphere may think that they have mutually made the present public sphere and that there can be no alternative to this public sphere that can better represent them thus blocking the existence or birth of a new different public sphere that could potentially challenge and replace the unitary public sphere. Hence, it is argued that internet should not be allowed to ‘mainstream’ the public sphere that it is creating, and it should accommodate literally all public spheres, indifferent to their domain level, in order to resist itself from becoming a unitary public sphere<sup>325</sup>. Diagram 4.3 illustrates the nature of unitary public sphere.

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<sup>324</sup> Dahlgren, P. The Internet, Public Sphere, and Political Communications: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Journal of Political Communication*. Vo. 22 (2005): 147 – 162. See also, Baek, Y, M. Wojcieszak, M. and Carpini, M, X, D. Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what Effects? *New Media & Society*. Vo. 14. No. 3. (2011): 363 – 383.

<sup>325</sup> Dahlgren, P. The Internet, Public Sphere, and Political Communications: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Journal of Political Communication*. Vo. 22 (2005): 147 – 162.

**Diagram 4.3: Unitary Public Sphere**



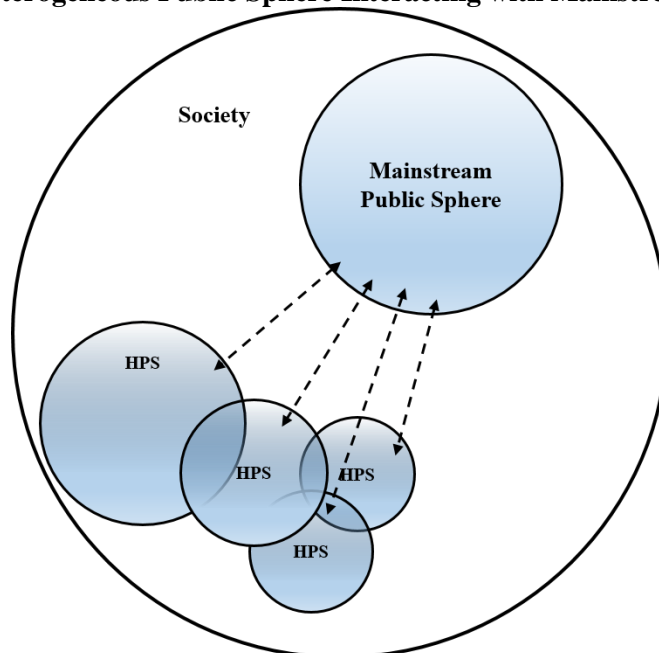
*Source: Researcher's illustration based on adaptation from Dahlgren (2005).*

The domain of public sphere depends on the societal structure it rests on and it decides the structural dimension of that public sphere; whether that particular public sphere is representative of all the people involved in it or not, whether the societal structure and its derived public sphere is a mainstream public sphere that can be considered as fit for all, or whether the societal structure allows existence of multiple public spheres with multiple identities and multiple sizes etc. Some analysts argue that there should be one 'normalized' mainstream public sphere into which all the subaltern or heterogeneous public spheres can be assimilated into. The supporters of this view point out at the 'fact' that all transformation, even allowing multiple entities to maintain their autonomy, is done with in a larger societal setup and the convergence (however minimal it might be) among these multiple identities in the form of being part of the larger society cannot be avoided, including the societal values to value the existence of multiple, identity centered, and heterogeneous public spheres, and that the ultimate destination of all these public spheres point to the direction of a society with more or less similar socio-economic, cultural, identity based political structure overshadowed by a newly formed mainstream public sphere. They seem to be right in saying so as it can be seen clearly

in the globalization of values, choices, issues, solutions, heterogeneities, difference, dissent etc. that are more or less coming under the same umbrella<sup>326</sup>.

But the critics of this argument think that such a public sphere is overtly shadowing the presence of other public spheres. They argue that the argument that all the cultures, societies, or identities leading to the same destination or reaching for same set of values that are followed in the umbrella public sphere is simply a construction of the mainstream public sphere to suppress dissent, difference and existence of the heterogeneous public spheres, and that, succumbing to such an idea itself is nothing short of subjugating oneself to the dominant public sphere that has been subjugating subaltern or heterogeneous public spheres. The fundamental argument of supporters of subaltern, alternative or identity based public sphere is to maintain one's own identity so as to make it an accepted and independent identity. But supporters of unitary public sphere feel that allowing multiple public spheres may lead to a situation where everyone will be in their own boroughs—up against other boroughs all the time<sup>327</sup>. Diagram 4.4 illustrates the interaction between mainstream public sphere and heterogeneous public spheres.

**Diagram 4.4: Heterogeneous Public Sphere Interacting with Mainstream Public Sphere**



*Source: Researcher's illustration based adaptation from Dallgren (1995).  
Notes: HPS – Heterogeneous Public Sphere, Arrows represent interaction*

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

Internet has the potential to create global public sphere. Internet can accommodate public spheres across different states and can create an environment where people from different countries can discuss about the issues that mutually affect them. Different platforms like international media, international organizations, international non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations etc. can act as a convergence point for the people to meet and engage in some activity. But normal interaction among the people of different states may not constitute public sphere as it is not made up of space for rational-critical discourse. This space is created when the public spheres of different states converge with similarities in socio-economic and political issues. In this regard EU can be considered of having a better public sphere than any other group of states. In EU, debate on a particular issue in one country can instigate debates in other EU countries as the socio-economic and political aspects of these countries are largely converged. This convergence of issues can be seen at global level also but relatively lower in frequency or intensity in interdependence when compared to the EU. Nonetheless, this leads to one basic question; can the world in general be said to be turning out to be a transnational public sphere due to the globalization and advancements in ICT? The transnational public sphere that is taking shape in EU is an example of how the states can create a public sphere that can extend beyond their boundaries<sup>328</sup>. Some analysts argue that the internet is neither a positive platform nor a negative platform, it is just a platform, its transformation depends on the ways people and institutions use it and the institutions that allow it. Hence, emergence of a transnational public sphere may depend on the states again<sup>329</sup>.

Internet eliminates the dominance of media controlled by powerful people, and provides a chance to the people to move from representative democracy to deliberative democracy<sup>330</sup>. Traditional institutions like states and MNCs have, to some extent, lost their capacity to control the internet, and this loss is creating extensive damage to their status quo.

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<sup>328</sup> Wessler, H. Perters, B. and Bruggemann, M., et. al. (2008). *Trans-nationalization of Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>329</sup> Ziyaad, L. The internet and the public sphere: evidence from civil society in developing countries. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*. Vo. 35. No. 3. (2008): 1 – 12.

<sup>330</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Different internet related activities like blogs, video sharing sites, individual centric online content sharing as journalism, lower maintenance costs involved in transferring, sharing, storing and distribution of the digital content etc. have enabled the internet to spread its tentacles and the state is no more 'completely' powerful enough to control or contain it. The tools of internet and internet related auxiliary technologies have intrinsic designs that could escape state monitoring or control, or at least they make it difficult for the state to effectively control it. Government's control over sensitive information on internet has been on decrease. Information related to military, security, surveillance, government's efforts to collect secret data from its citizens etc. have been on leak continuously with the advancement of internet related services. Government's efforts to control these leakages are becoming difficult day by day. Access to this type of sensitive information is revealing the repressive nature of state and it is becoming difficult for the governments to restrict the flow of such information to its citizens. Once accessed by citizens, this information is used by them to expose the political reasons behind maintenance of such activities behind the back of citizens and it obviously exposes how the state is building on the rights of the citizens i.e., how the state is becoming stronger day by day with secret agendas that are never thought to be part of democratic regimes. The true nature of the state, whether it is democratic, communist, dictatorial or totalitarian, is becoming more and more public thus cutting down its tentacles. Citizens are not accepting whatever the government presents to them or hides from them. Criticism or counter surveillance on the state by the citizens has been on increase. In fact, information against the state or its activities spread fast on the internet than the news that supports the state. State sponsored news is being interrogated by the citizens all the times. Access to different data, storage of data, getting access to various versions in a span of seconds, interpretation and circulation of anti-state related information has become easy in the internet derived public sphere. Steps by states to curtail or restrict these activities is usually perceived as a repressive measure which adds to the legitimacy or demand for the anti-state information<sup>331</sup>.

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<sup>331</sup> Denardis, L. (2014). *The Global War for Internet Governance*. New Haven and London. Yale University Press.

Constructivist approach by the internet users across the globe is making it difficult for the states to hush up the circulation of such news. Anti-state news becomes viral on internet by the time state comes to know about its circulation and the origins of such information is becoming untraceable most of the times. Citizens who host such information are able to find shelter in some part of the world which is giving them confidence that they can withstand different types of pressurizing tactics that the state uses to suppress the voices of its citizens. Nonetheless, the power of the state to put restriction on the ways that the internet is used also cannot be underestimated. States are using different tactics to restrict or manipulate the information on internet in their own way. Different tactics like word based filters, censoring the internet with privacy or security related legislations, bringing more and more of virtual ‘crime’ under punishable offences, steps to restrict internet and related tools to ‘legitimate’ or ‘identifiable’ individuals only, bringing copy rights related laws, different steps to verify the authenticity of the individuals in the form of linking the use of internet with physical identity of the individual, restricting certain sites or domains in the name of controlling or limiting damage to the peace and security of the nation etc. are different methods used by the state to control their citizens. Hence, the war between the citizens and their governments can be said to have been happening in the virtual sphere – and the virtual sphere is becoming more and more real day by day – shedding its virtual nature by replacing the hitherto public sphere that was more physical in its presence. Opposition to state from internet comes from across the world whereas a state – whatever its power and resources might be – is restricted to its geographical domain in terms of sovereignty, jurisdiction, and other functional structures. Thus internet has become an ‘uncontrollable’, and ‘identity less’, leviathan kind of non-linear structure with the potential to challenge the leviathan – the state – and its ideas, structures, power and its sustenance<sup>332</sup>.

Communication in the public sphere should disregard the social status of the persons involved, should be accessible to all without any structural limitations<sup>333</sup>. Public deliberation depends on the structure that is facilitating it as it can be a multi-layered public sphere or simply a mass media imposed public sphere filled with one dominant idea that resists alternative ideas.

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Aiello, L, M and McFarland, D (Eds.). (2014). *Social Informatics*. Heidelberg. Springer.

The activeness of the public sphere can be assessed by comparing it to the activeness of other public spheres, but it may not be possible to measure the impact of public sphere precisely. It is not guaranteed that all those who wish to speak will get equal attention or opportunity to do so in a mass media based public sphere. But internet based public sphere (though certain sections may be facing limitations in access to ICT related tools and technology) offers equal opportunities to those who wish to speak their mind. Hence, the public sphere that the internet provides is conducive for deliberative democratic practices<sup>334</sup>.

## Summary

This chapter discusses about the role of public sphere in transforming the socio-economic and political conditions of a society with special reference to how it transformed democracy. The chapter emphasizes the role of internet in transforming the public sphere and how the internet based public sphere may foster deliberative possibilities. In the process of discussing the role of public sphere in the democratic process emphasis is placed on the understanding of public sphere by Habermas and how his understanding of public sphere differs from mass media based public sphere and internet based public sphere. . Comparison between the Habermas's understanding of bourgeoisie public sphere and mass media based public sphere is also presented to look at the differences in their domains and the respective roles played by each type of public sphere in defining or practicing democracy. Different types of public sphere related arguments that emerged as alternatives to Habermas's public sphere like subaltern public spheres, heterogeneous public spheres, enclave public sphere, and unitary public sphere etc. are discussed critically.

Emphasis is place on the technological changes in the communication methods and how these technological changes have changed the nature of public sphere, especially mass media and internet, and how these changes in turn have transformed the public sphere etc. Special emphasis is placed in this chapter on the structural differences between mass media and internet as forms of communication. Internet's capacity to provide indefinite

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<sup>334</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

communicative space is highlighted and how this communicative space is different from the communicative space provided by mass media has been emphasized to track the enormous changes in the nature of the public spheres of these modes of communication. The chapter discusses about various types of advantages of internet in acting as a two way mode of communication and how this two way mode of communication creates a discursive space that creates deliberative possibilities. The discursive space created by internet fosters a deliberative public sphere. The deliberative public sphere offered by internet is inclusive in nature in terms of ideas that can be published, circulated, discussed or presented. This discursive space allows chances for critical-rational communication that could lay the platform for deliberative democracy.

## ICT Enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices: An Overview

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**Abstract:** *This chapter attempts to identify ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices around the world. Different aspects related to deliberative democratic practices like the necessity of deliberative polling, access to ICTs, conditions required for deliberative democratic practices etc. will be discussed briefly. In the process of creating a profile of deliberative democratic practices, the chapter also tries to present various aspects of deliberative democratic practices like whether deliberative polling is used or not, whether the deliberative practice is ongoing or not, whether deliberation is done at all levels (local, regional, national etc.) or whether it is done at some levels only etc.*

### 5. 1. Introduction

As discussed in the earlier chapter, advancements in internet is presentencing us with opportunities to transform representative and direct democratic practices to deliberative democratic practices where people themselves can come together and take their own decisions<sup>335</sup>. The central theme of all democratic arguments since ancient Athens is to give people as much power as possible. But the arguments in favor of democracy have been limited to arguments that prefer some form of limited democracy due to various functional limitations. Though all democratic theories accept the fact that people can take rational decisions and rule themselves given that the functional difficulties are not there, the same theories are also aware of the fact that we are nowhere near to design a possible functional structure that can accommodate or make it possible for all the people to come together, take decisions, and rule themselves. Hence the division between government and the governed has emerged, and the gap between the government and the governed has increased over time with the increasing size of the state. Different approaches to democratic understanding and its practices have been in

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<sup>335</sup> Ziyaad, L. The internet and the public sphere: evidence from civil society in developing countries. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*. Vo. 35. No. 3. (2008): 1 – 12.

use to explore possibilities of expanding the democratic practice. A particular method of democratic practice may represent the larger sections of the public but may miss to represent small sections, and another type of democratic practice may represent the small sections well but may end up demanding too much of concessions from the larger sections. The difficulty in practicing an inclusive democracy has been haunting all most all the forms of democracies that have been in practice around the world. Complexities are present in the form of electoral methods, decision making mechanism, difficulties in aggregation of interests of the people, feedback mechanism, and implementation process<sup>336</sup>. Choosing representation ‘may’ turn out to be un-representative as it is difficult to know how far an individual gets represented in a particular democratic practice, preferring direct participation in decision making process looks untenable in practice, and non-democratic alternatives sound bleak in including the people in the decision making process. The only way forward to address democratic deficit seems to be democracy itself, i.e., more democracy – and more democracy does not mean following the present democratic practices more intensely or more frequently but to strengthen the structures of the present democracy to make it more representational in a vertical manner. Attempts to increase the representation or participation in the democratic process have been there in all the varieties of democracies that we see around in the present world. Some democracies are relatively more representational, some democracies are more direct and some democracies are elitist in nature, but all the present democracies seem to have one thing in common – exclude the people as much as possible so as to avoid the stress on functional structures of the existing democratic practices and save them from collapsing. This approach – to (democratically) disengage people from democracy can be said to be attributed to two aspects; one – elites struggle to keep the privileges of power to themselves and, two – due to lack of functional structures that could help in realizing true democracy. Whatever the reasons might be the end result is people are democratically disengaged from the democratic process, and are continuously made to think that nothing more can be done to involve them in the democratic process<sup>337</sup>.

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<sup>336</sup> Fossum, J. E. & Schlesinger, P. (Eds.). (2007). *The European Union and the Public Sphere: A Communicative Space in the Making?* New York. Routledge.

<sup>337</sup> Barber, B. R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press. See also, Rogers, K. (2008). *Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology: An Exploration in the Philosophy of Science*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan; Fishkin, J,

This orientation and approach to democratic understanding and practice has been on change in the last two-three decades due to the radical changes in the information and communication technologies. Mass media has nurtured its own version and range of democracy in the last couple of centuries as it defined everything surrounding the concept of democracy, and has placed democracy in an almost deterministic and inflexible mode that real changes to expand it sounded almost impossible a couple of decades ago. But the environment seems to have changed in the last couple of decades—thanks to internet. The capacity of internet to transform the public sphere, and its effortless ability to create well networked alternative public spheres has given scope to the expansion of democracy beyond what we could have imagined a couple of decades ago<sup>338</sup>. The internet derived public sphere is seen as capable of laying foundations for a deliberative democracy. It promises changes in all the aspects of democracy like voting, involved decision making, delegation of certain decision making powers to the people, frequent online referendums, real bottom-up-approach in terms of policy making, two way communication between the government and the governed, its capacity to act as a resisting force against big governments by virtue of its capacity to connect people etc. These capacities of the internet based ICT inspires us to dream big about the possibilities of expanding the democratic practices of present representative and direct democracies. The possibilities for deliberation by people in varying degrees at various levels are becoming more and more possible by using internet<sup>339</sup>.

In a non-deliberative democratic practice the government takes the decision to take a decision on particular issue and comes out with a policy proposal that is enforced on the people. In the process of decision making, the government may or may not consult the stakeholders, and the policy making process is top down with minimal mechanisms for feedback. This form of democratic practice excludes people from the decision making mechanism. The decision to

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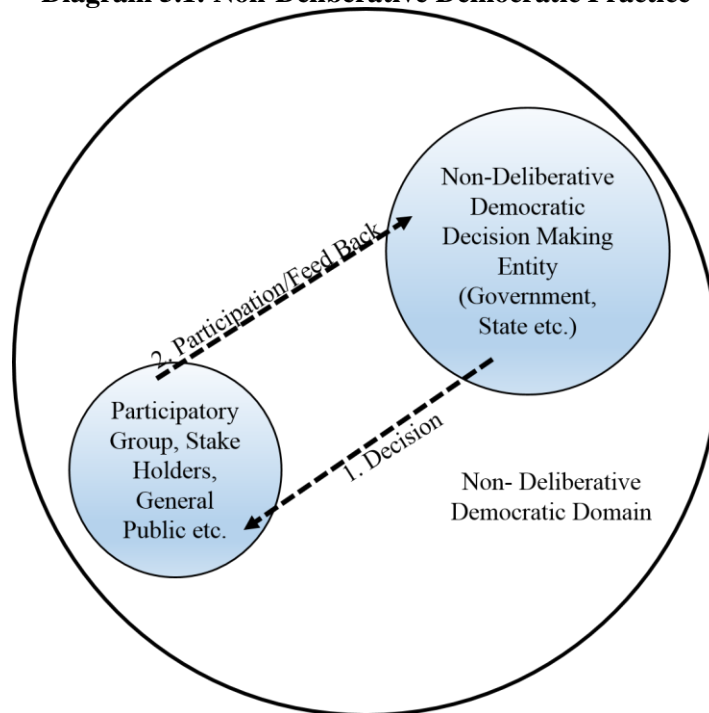
S. (2009). *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. New York. Oxford University Press; Dahlberg, L. The Internet, deliberative democracy, and power: Radicalizing the public sphere. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*. Vo. 3. No. 1. (2007): 47 – 64; Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>338</sup> Baek, Y, M. Wojcieszak, M. and Carpini, M, X, D. Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what Effects? *New Media & Society*. Vo. 14. No. 3. (2011): 363 – 383.

<sup>339</sup> Volkmer, I. (2014). *The Global Public Sphere; Public Communication in the Age of Reflective Interdependence*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

take a decision on a given issue is not arising from the public but is taken by the government and is usually imposed downwards. The decision making power or the authority to use the democratic power rests with the government. So, making or not making a policy rests with the government. Hence, the government and the governed can be said to be of two separate entities with the government *dominating* the governed. This relationship between the government and the governed changes to some extent in non-deliberative participatory democratic practice, but the decision making power still rests with the government in this format of democratic practice also. Emphasis is placed on broader participation in non-deliberative democratic practices. Participation can be in the form of monitoring a particular policy of the government, critically evaluating the outcomes of the government policies, demanding for more information and transparency in conducting the government business, involving different sections of the society like private sector, community involvement, stakeholder involvement etc. in the democratic practice<sup>340</sup>. The functioning style of non-deliberative democracy is illustrated in diagram 5.1.

**Diagram 5.1: Non-Deliberative Democratic Practice**



*Source: Researcher's illustration based on adaptation from (Fishkin, 2009; Dryzek 2000)*

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

As shown in diagram 5.1, in non-deliberative democratic practices, decisions are usually taken by the government with/without the involvement of the participatory group. Stakeholders are involved in a particular decision of the government from a particular stage only. People or stakeholders usually play the role of feedback or monitoring entities. Occasionally, the stakeholders may play the role of policy input entities also. But this role is limited to particular decisions of the government where it may feel that the involvement of the stakeholders is important to arrive at a decision or the government may feel that the involvement of the stakeholders in the decision making process adds more legitimacy and strength to the decision of the government. In non-deliberative democratic practices the government decides the policy and asks the public or stakeholders to participate in the policy implementation in a particular manner. All non-deliberative democratic practices have adopted certain participatory practices that basically rely on the idea of decision making from the above and participation from below. These participatory practices, though non-deliberative in nature, facilitate citizens' participation in the implementation of the decisions taken by the governments. Non-deliberative participatory practices, practiced basically to thicken the 'democratic' practice, include various methods to include the stakeholders in the decision making process in a 'reasonable' manner. The stakeholders or participatory groups add 'significant' inputs to the government's version of a policy or outcome in a non-deliberative participatory democratic practice. Certain practices like voting, electing a representative, participating in a referendum or plebiscite, participatory implementation of a government policy, community involvement in the implementation process of a program, participatory budgeting, establishing transparency and accountability structures, community or civil society monitoring of the program etc. are practiced to thicken the non-deliberative democratic practices in a participatory manner.

Non-deliberative participatory democratic practices engage the public and other stakeholders in the implementation process. But it has limitations – severe limitations indeed as the proposals for a policy do not raise from the public but from the government instead. Participation is allowed in limited aspects, and to limited extent only. The decision to take a decision on a particular issue arises from the government, and the public and the stakeholders are included later from the implementation stage in most of the cases. Participation is actively

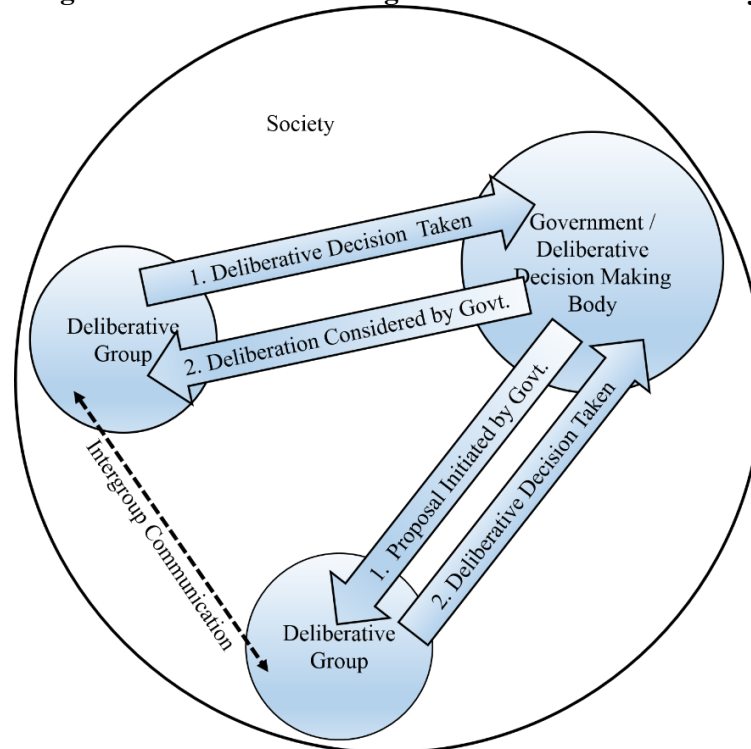
limited to different ways of implementation and on occasions extended to active feedback. On the face, the methods followed in non-deliberative participatory democratic practices sounds inclusive but the inclusion is very limited, and is not extended to decision making power.

People cannot be said to have exercised their power unless they actually deliberate. Deliberation, when done by the people, may lead to rise of wider choices on a given issue or may lead to wider questions on a given issue which may change, question or alter the existing approaches altogether. In non-deliberative participatory democratic practices, the questions or solutions are limited to what the government asks the people to do i.e., limited to a set of issues in which the government wants to include the public and other stakeholders. The government may allow the public, stakeholders, civil society etc. groups here and there in the participation process or sometimes these groups may be allowed to come up with their proposals to address a particular issue, but these occasions are rare and are limited to aspects that do not threaten the existing order or the government's power to exercise decision making power. Contrary to this, deliberation initiated by the people may include broader changes that may question superstructures like state, sovereignty, international relations, property rights, privatization, defense system, national level budget allocations, natural resource allocation or tapping, political systems or government mechanisms, economic structure of the country etc. All these things that have survived for centuries have been the products of governments and have been implemented in a top down mode. The decision making mechanisms that have decided these things did not include people in the decision making process. Whatever mechanisms these governments have used to generate legitimacy were thin indeed and most sections of the people were excluded from representation itself.

The politics of democratic disengagement, how to make democracy democratic by adopting deliberative democracy, and how internet generated deliberative public sphere can foster deliberative democracy etc. have been the main focus of this study so far. The essence of the argument is how deliberative democracy is promising the people to come together to deliberately take a decision. In non-deliberative democratic practices the government usually takes the decisions but in deliberative democracy the government cannot take its own decision

but has to depend on the deliberative groups for the final call. Below diagram presents the way decisions are made in a deliberative democratic practice.

**Diagram 5.2: Decision Making in a Deliberative Democracy**



*Source: Researcher's Illustration based on adaptation from (Fishkin, 1992 and 2009)*

## 5. 2. Identified ICT Enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices

As shown in digram 5. 2, people take part in the decision making process in deliberative democratic practice. These practices have started taking roots since 1980s, and have been on rise with the advancements in ICT. To clearly distinguish between deliberative democratic practice and non-deliberative democratic practice, and to clearly identify the number of deliberative democratic practices that have been in practice in the world so far, this study has attempted to identify the deliberative democratic practices around the world. Based on the secondary sources of data on deliberative democratic practices, the study has identified 103 practices so far. This includes practices that have been going on, practices that were carried on temporary basis (issue based deliberation), and experiments in deliberative democratic practices based on deliberative polling. The below table shows the list of identified deliberative

democratic practices around the world (See annexure I for a full list of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices).

**Table 5.1: Number of Identified ICT enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices**

<b>Country</b>	<b>No. of Identified ICT enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>
Argentina	1
Australia	21
Brazil	3
Bulgaria	1
Canada	16
Chile	2
China	3
Colombia	2
Dominican Republic	1
Finland	1
France	1
Germany	2
Ghana	1
Indonesia	1
Ireland	1
Italy	4
Japan	2
Mongolia	1
New Zealand	1
Romania	1
South Korea	2
Spain	2
Sweden	1
Transnational	5
Tunisia	2
Turkey	4
Uganda	2
UK	2
US	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>

Deliberative democratic practice, like non-deliberative democratic practices, depend on certain conditions that must be present for its practice. The idea of lay people taking decisions for themselves, after thorough deliberation, is the crux of deliberative democracy. But, such an idea cannot function without the presence of certain conditions—and certain limitations. A look at few conditions that are required for deliberative democratic practices can help us understand the environment in which these practices can be practiced.

### 5. 3. Sampling based Deliberative Polling

The first limitation that deliberative democracy faces is, how can all the people come forward to take decisions? As discussed in chapter 3, all the people do not get involved in the decision making process in a deliberative democracy—only a microcosm of selected people through sampling method represent the entire people. Deliberative polling, the sampling method used to select the deliberators randomly, plays a prominent role in deliberative democratic practice. Sampling based selection method is free from money power and number based bargaining power that is predominant in representative democratic practices. Sampling methods give a random possibility for the people to get included in the decision making process. The probability for the normal public to exercise democratic-power stands equal to every individual. Hence, deliberative democratic practices rely on sampling methods to draw the pool of deliberators from the general public. Contrary to this, deliberative democratic practices without deliberative polling can end up selecting deliberators in a biased manner. Selection of deliberators without deliberative polling may lead to arbitrary inclusion or exclusion of certain sections from the deliberation process. Such an exclusion makes deliberative democratic practice not so different from non-deliberative democratic practices. Deliberative democratic practices without deliberative polling may lead to decision making by a group of handpicked deliberators. And such a practice leads to re-imposition of deficiencies that are experienced in non-deliberative democratic practices. Hence, to avoid the repetition of representative deficiencies, deliberative democratic practice has to be based on deliberative polling. A well-structured sampling based deliberative polling that is representative of all the sections becomes a compulsory criteria for the deliberative democratic practice to make it inclusive. Out of 103 identified deliberative democratic practices only some of the practices are based on deliberative polling. The following table shows the number of deliberative polling based deliberative democratic practices.

**Table 5.2: Whether Deliberative Democratic Practice is based on Deliberative Polling or Not?**

Deliberative Democratic Practices with Deliberative Polling	56
Deliberative Democratic Practices without Deliberative Polling	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>

As shown in the above table, out of the identified 103 ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices, only 56 practices are based on deliberative polling. The remaining 47 practices are practices without deliberative polling. Deliberators in these 47 practices are selected not based on the deliberative polling, but selection is based on the convenience, requirement, and discretion of the entity that is conducting the deliberative practice. While the selection method cannot be said to be wrong altogether, this kind of selection allows the existing power structures to select the deliberators in a manner to protect the status quo, or to influence the deliberative outcome in a manner that is suitable to those in power. Hence, a deliberative practice without deliberative polling may lead to re-imposition of the old choices and hierarchy. Therefore, it can be argued that only deliberative practices with deliberative polling can give a fair chance to all the people in the deliberation process. Hence, deliberative polling is taken as a criteria for the selection of modalities for this study.

Identified deliberative practices are again divided into local level practices, regional level practices, national level practices and transnational level practices. Deliberative democratic practices may differ based on the geographical area. Deliberation at local level may sound more pragmatic whereas deliberation at regional, national or transnational level may become difficult because of the number of issues, and the complexity of issues that need to be deliberated. The following table shows the number of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices practiced at local, regional, national and transnational levels.

**Table 5.3: Deliberative Democratic Practice Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)**

<b>Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)</b>	<b>Number of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>	<b>Percent of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>
Local	56	54.4
Regional	10	9.7
National	32	31.1
Transnational	5	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown in the above table, around 54 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are at local level followed by around 31 percent of practices at national level. As discussed earlier, deliberative democratic practices at local level is relatively easier when compared to deliberative democratic practices at regional, national and transnational

levels. But the identified deliberative democratic practices at national level is of no insignificance as around 31 percent of practices are at national level. Significant number of practices at local and national levels points to the clear possibility that deliberative democratic practices can be practiced at regional and national levels also.

Identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are also divided into three broad categories; deliberative polling based deliberative democratic experiments, issue based deliberative practices, and ongoing deliberative democratic practices i.e., deliberative practices that are still in continuation. The below table shows the details of present status of the identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices.

**Table 5.4: Status of Deliberative Democratic Practice (Experiment / Issue based Deliberation / Ongoing)**

<b>Status of Deliberative Practice</b>	<b>No. of Deliberative democratic Practices</b>	<b>Percent of Deliberative democratic Practices</b>
Deliberative Polling based Deliberative Democratic Experiments	3	2.9
Issue based Deliberation	83	80.6
Ongoing	17	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown in the above table, around 80 percent of identified deliberative democratic practices are issue based deliberations. These deliberative practices do not continue as soon as the particular issue on which deliberation is sought is solved. Nearly 17 percent of deliberative practices are still ongoing which signifies that some of the deliberative practices have taken roots permanently.

#### **5. 4. Conditions Required for Deliberative Democratic Practices**

Apart from deliberative polling, deliberative democratic practice also need certain other conditions for its practice as deliberation is supposed to take place in a free and unrestrained environment, without any political restrictions, and without any restrictions on opinion. As discussed in the earlier chapter, communication technology and the public sphere also plays a major role in shaping the practice of democracy, particularly deliberative democracy. Keeping

in view all the above factors, the study tried to study the modalities of deliberative democratic practices based on certain indicators like level of freedom, condition of democracy, freedom on internet, and access to internet in the country of deliberative democratic practice. All the above said factors contribute to a vibrant public sphere that is necessary for deliberative democratic practice. To measure all the above said factors, the study relied on reports of *Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2015* report to know the freedom levels in the country in which the deliberative democratic practice is practiced. Similarly, *Freedom House's Freedom of the Press 2015* and *Freedom on the Net 2015* reports have been taken to know whether the country in which the deliberative democratic practice is practiced is free or not in terms of freedom of press and freedom on internet. *The Economist-Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015* report has been used to assess the democratic nature of the countries in which the deliberative democratic practices are in practice. And to assess the access to ICT in the countries of deliberative democratic practices, *International Telecommunications Union's Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index 2015* has been taken as a parameter to assess access to ICT. A detailed look at the backdrops in which deliberative democratic practices are practiced may give us a clear picture about the required conditions for the promotion of deliberative democratic practices.

#### **5. 4. 1. Democracy as a Basic Condition for Deliberative Democratic Practice**

Deliberative democratic practices depend heavily on the democratic structures. In fact, deliberative democracy is presumed to work in a better manner when it is synthesized with representative democracy or direct democracy. Hence, it is important to see the nature of the democracy in which deliberative democratic practice is practiced. Based on *The Economist-Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015*, countries of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are classified into four broad categories—full democracies, flawed-democracies, hybrid-regimes, and authoritarian-regimes. The below table presents the number of deliberative democratic practices in the above said four categories of democracies.

**Table 5.5: Number of Deliberative Democratic Practices in Countries based on the regime type**

<b>Nature of Democracy in the Country of Deliberative Democratic Practice</b>	<b>No. of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>	<b>Percent of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>
Full Democracy	64	62.1
Flawed Democracy	23	22.3
Hybrid Regime	8	7.8
Authoritarian Regime	3	2.9
Not Available	5	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are grouped based on *The Economist-Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015*<sup>341</sup>.

As shown in the above table, a majority (62 percent) of identified deliberative democratic practices are practiced in full-democracies followed by 22 percent of practices practiced in flawed-democracies. Deliberative democratic practices are fewer in number in hybrid-regimes and authoritarian-regimes. This clearly shows that democracy is a precondition for deliberative democratic practices to take root.

#### **5. 4. 2. Freedom as a Basic Condition for Deliberative Democratic Practice**

Freedom is a necessary condition for the deliberative democratic practice to take roots. Without freedom, it is hard to expect the deliberators to critically evaluate their requirements, and it is hard for them to push their opinions on the existing governments. Hence, a look at the level of freedom available in the country of deliberative democratic practice becomes necessary for us to understand the relation between freedom and deliberative democratic practice. The following table, prepared based on the *Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2015* report, gives us a clear picture about the relation between freedom and deliberative democratic practice.

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<sup>341</sup> The Economist & Intelligence Unit. (2016). *Democracy Index 2015: Democracy in the age of anxiety*. London. The Economist & Intelligence Unit Publishing.

**Table 5.6: Number of Deliberative Democratic Practices in Countries based on the Freedom of the Country**

<b>Freedom Level in the Country of Deliberative Democratic Practice</b>	<b>Number of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>	<b>Percentage of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>
Free Countries	86	83.4
Partially Free Countries	7	6.8
Not Free Countries	5	4.9
Not Available	5	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are grouped based on *The Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2015*.<sup>342</sup>

As shown in the above table, a majority of the identified deliberative democratic practices, 86 out of 103 practices are practiced in countries that are *free*. This constitutes above 83 percent of the total identified practices. A mere 7 practices are from *partially free* countries and 5 practices are from *not free* countries. The fact that a majority of identified deliberative democratic practices are practiced in countries that are rated as free in their freedom levels indicate that freedom is a necessary condition for deliberative democratic practice.

#### **5. 4. 3. Freedom of Press as a Basic Condition for Deliberative Democratic Practice**

Freedom of the press is a necessary condition for the sustenance and promotion of democracy. Press, usually termed as the fourth estate, acts as a representative entity between the public and the representatives. Deliberative democratic practices depends on the communicative rationality of the public, and their capacities to express their opinions to others. Wider critical-rational communication depends on how free the press is from various forms of interventions. Hence, it is necessary to understand the status of freedom of the press in countries of deliberative democratic practices. Therefore, the study has used *Freedom House's Freedom of the Press 2015* reports as an indicator to categorize countries based on the freedom of the press. Countries are categorized as *free countries*, *partially free* countries, and *not free* countries based on the freedom of the press. The below table shows the relationship between

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<sup>342</sup> Puddington, A. (2015). *Discarding Democracy: Return to the Iron Fist—Freedom in the World 2015*. Washington, DC. Freedom House Publishing.

identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices and the freedom of the press in countries of these practices.

**Table 5.7: Deliberative Democratic Practices in Countries based on Freedom of the Press**

<b>Freedom of the Press in Countries of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>	<b>Number of Deliberative democratic Practices</b>	<b>Percentage of Deliberative democratic Practices</b>
Free Countries	68	66.0
Partially Free Countries	23	22.3
Not Free Countries	7	6.8
Not Available	5	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are grouped based on *The Freedom House's Freedom of the Press 2015*.<sup>343</sup>

As shown in the above table, 66 percent of deliberative democratic practices are in countries that are *free* in terms of freedom of the press followed by just above 22 percent of practices in countries that are *partially free* when it comes to the freedom of press.

#### **5. 4. 4. Freedom on Net as a Basic Condition for Deliberative Democratic Practice**

Similar to freedom of the press, freedom on internet is one of the basic conditions required for deliberative democratic practice. Since the study is about ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices, it is important to see whether internet is free from government interference and censorship. As discussed in the earlier chapter, internet revolutionizes the public sphere. It acts as a two way mode of communication. Internet acts as a platform where individuals can express their views without worrying about the space unlike in mass media. Individuals can express ‘unconventional’ thoughts on internet as it is difficult for the state to monitor internet thoroughly. Such a communicative network must be free from government intervention if people were to use it to express their opinions freely. Besides acting as a networking platform for the deliberators, internet provides access to diverse sources of opinions on a given issue which helps the deliberators to pick up multiple choices. Hence, freedom on internet becomes a basic condition for the deliberative democratic practices to

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<sup>343</sup> Dunham, J., Nelson, B and Aghekyan, E. (2015). *Harsh Laws and Violence Drive Global Decline—Freedom of the Press 2015*. Washington, DC. Freedom House Publishing.

succeed. The following table, prepared based on *Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2015* report tries to see the relationship between deliberative democratic practices and freedom on internet in the country of its practices.

**Table 5.8: Deliberative democratic Practices in Countries based on Freedom on Internet**

<b>Freedom Level on Internet of the Countries</b>	<b>Number of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>	<b>Percentage of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>
Free Countries	70	68.0
Partially Free Countries	13	12.6
Not Free Countries	3	2.9
Not Available	17	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are grouped based on *The Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2015*.<sup>344</sup>

As shown in the above table, 68 percent of deliberative democratic practices are from countries that are considered as *free* in terms of freedom on the internet. Above 12 percent of practices are from countries that are *partially free* in terms of freedom on the internet. This proves that deliberative democratic practices are more in countries where internet is free from state censorship.

#### **5. 4. 5. Access to ICTs as a Basic Condition for ICT enabled Deliberative Democratic Practice**

As the study is about ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices, it becomes a prerequisite to know the access to ICT in the countries of deliberative democratic practices. Different ICT related tools like mobile phones, fixed landlines, computers, laptops, access to internet etc. contribute to the free flow of communication. And access to these communication related tools is a prerequisite for an individual to take part actively in the deliberative democratic practice. Deliberative democratic practices also depend heavily on ICT for deliberation, selection of deliberators, dissemination of information related to the issue in deliberation etc. Hence, access to ICT heavily influences the promotion of deliberative democratic practices. The following table, prepared based on *International*

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<sup>344</sup> Kelly, S., Earp, M. and Reed, L. et., al. (2015). *Privatizing Censorship, Eroding Privacy—Freedom on the Net 2015*. London. Freedom House Publishing.

*Telecommunication Union's Measuring the Information Society-ICT Development Index 2015* gives a brief idea about the role of ICT in promoting deliberative democratic practices.

**Table 5.9: Deliberative Democratic Practices in Countries based on the access to ICTs**

<b>Access to ICTs in the Country of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>	<b>Number of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>	<b>Percentage of Deliberative Democratic Practices</b>
High Access Countries	73	70.9
Medium Access Countries	18	17.5
Low Access Countries	7	6.8
Not Available	5	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Identified ICT enabled deliberative practices are grouped based on *International Telecommunication Union's Measuring the Information Society - ICT Development Index 2015*.<sup>345</sup> The group labels are generated by the researcher by adopting the scores that the index mentions. The actual index measures the access to ICTs in a country on a ten point scale. The labels high access countries, medium access countries, and low access countries are created to divide the countries into broad groups. Countries with a score of above 7 are classified as high access countries, countries with a score of 4 to 7 are classified as medium access countries, and countries with a score of less than 4 are accessed as low access countries.

As shown in the above table, around 71 percent of deliberative democratic practices are from countries that have high access to ICTs, followed by 17.5 percent of practices that are from countries that have medium access to ICTs. Less than 7 percent of deliberative democratic practices are from countries that have low access to ICTs. This shows that access to ICTs enables promotion of deliberative democratic practices.

The following table presents different technical details of identified deliberative democratic practices like level of deliberation, whether deliberative polling is used or not, whether the deliberative practice is presently ongoing or not etc.

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<sup>345</sup> International Telecommunication Union. (2015). *Measuring the Information Society ICT Development Index 2015*. Geneva. International Telecommunication Union.

**Table 5.10: Country wise details of ICT enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices**

Country or Area of Deliberative Democratic Practice	Number of Deliberative Democratic Practices	Practices with or without Deliberative Polling		Level of Deliberation				Status of Deliberative Democratic Practice		
		With Deliberative Polling	Without Deliberative Polling	Local	Regional	National	Transnational	Experiment	Issue based Deliberation	Ongoing
Argentina	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Australia	21	18	3	15 (12)	3 (3)	3 (3)	0	0	21 (18)	0
Brazil	3	1	2	2 (1)	0	1	0	0	1	2 (1)
Bulgaria	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Canada	16	10	6	4 (2)	3 (3)	9 (5)	0	0	15 (10)	1
Chile	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
China	3	1	2	3 (1)	0	0	0	1 (1)	2	0
Colombia	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Dominican Republic	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Finland	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
France	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Germany	2	1	1	1	0	1 (1)	0	0	1 (1)	1
Ghana	1	1	0	1 (1)	0	0	0	1 (1)	0	0
Indonesia	1	1	0	1 (1)	0	0	0	0	1 (1)	0
Ireland	1	1	0	0	0	1 (1)	0	0	1 (1)	0
Italy	4	1	3	3 (1)	1	0	0	0	4 (1)	0
Japan	2	2	0	0	0	2 (2)	0	0	2 (2)	0
Mongolia	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
New Zealand	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Romania	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
South Korea	2	2	0	1 (1)	0	1 (1)	0	0	1 (1)	1 (1)
Spain	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
Sweden	1	1	0	1 (1)	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1)
Transnational	5	4	1	0	0	0	5 (4)	0	4 (4)	1
Tunisia	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
Turkey	4	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	3	1
Uganda	2	1	1	1 (1)	0	1	0	1 (1)	0	1
UK	2	2	0	0	0	2 (2)	0	0	2 (2)	0
US	17	8	9	9 (2)	2 (2)	6 (4)	0	0	15 (8)	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>17</b>

Note: Figures in brackets represent deliberative democratic practices with deliberative polling

## Summary

The chapter discussed about the identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices that have been in practices around the world so far. A majority of deliberative democratic practices (62%) are practiced in the countries that are considered as full-democracies suggesting that democratic environment is a necessary condition for promotion of deliberative democratic practices. A majority of identified deliberative democratic practices (54%) are practiced at local level making us to infer that the domain of its practice must be limited in order to make it successful. The percentage of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices (31%) at national level is also high suggesting that it can be practiced at national level also. A majority of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices (81%) are issue based deliberations suggesting that it is practiced to know the position of citizens on important issues. A small percentage of identified ICT enabled deliberative practices (17%) have been ongoing suggesting that its practice may become much more common in the long run. Deliberative polling experiments conducted in different countries like China and South Korea have led to promotion of its practices in their respective countries though similar experiments in countries like Ghana and Uganda have not led to promotion of its practices. Wider promotion of deliberative democratic experiments in China, which is categorized as an authoritarian-regime, suggests that its practice can be expected in non-democracies also—in a limited manner though. A majority of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices (84%) are from countries that are categorized as free in terms of freedom. Similarly, majority of practices (66%) are from countries that are categorized as free in terms of freedom of press. And, majority of identified practices (68%) are from countries that are categorized as free in terms of freedom on internet. Access to ICTs also play an important role in the promotion of deliberative democratic practices as the majority of practices (71%) are from countries that have high access to ICTs.

## Modalities of ICT Enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices

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**Abstract:** *This chapter is an attempt to present different modalities of deliberative democratic practices based on the practices that the study has identified. The chapter also tries to present the role of state, civil society, and private parties in deliberative democratic practices. The chapter also presents hypothetical models of deliberative democratic practices that the researcher has presented based on the selected modalities for the study.*

### Introduction

The previous chapter has concentrated on presenting the identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices around the world. Different details of identified deliberative democratic practices like the country of deliberative democratic practice, the type of democracy where deliberative democratic practice is practiced, level of deliberation; whether local, national, transnational etc., whether deliberative polling is used or not, access to ICT in the country of deliberative democratic practice etc. have been discussed thoroughly. For further understanding of how deliberative democratic practices are practiced, it is necessary to study a few modalities of deliberative democratic practice. Hence, this chapter tries to explore selected modalities of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices. The modalities for the study were selected from the list of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices that are discussed in chapter five (see annexure I for a full list of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices). Out of the 103 identified practices, 56 practices are with deliberative polling, and modalities for the study are selected from these 56 practices with deliberative polling. A total of 10 modalities of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices were selected for the study. Identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices were stratified into groups based on *The Economist—Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015*. Based on the Index's nature of the democracy in countries, identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices were divided into four categories; (1) ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices in countries that are categorized as full-democracies, (2) ICT enabled

deliberative democracies in countries that are categorized as flawed-democracies, (3) ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices in countries that are categorized as hybrid-regimes, and (4) ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices in countries that are categorized as authoritarian-regimes. Simple random sampling was followed to select modalities from these categories. Apart from *The Economist-Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015*, other indexes like *International Telecommunication Union's-Measuring the Information Society ICT Development Index 2015* to categorize countries based on access to ICT was also used. The practices were also categorized based on *Freedom House's Freedom Index 2015*, *Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index 2015*, and *Freedom House's Freedom on Net Index 2015* to understand the levels of freedom in the countries of deliberative democratic practices. Based on these indexes the following set of rules were applied to select the modalities for the study.

1. Selected modalities for the study are from deliberative democratic practices with deliberative polling.
2. Selected modalities for the study must be a representative of deliberative democratic practices at different levels; local, regional, national, and transnational.
3. Selected modalities for the study must be a representative of different categories of the democracies of countries of deliberative democratic practice like; full-democracies, flawed-democracies, hybrid-regimes, and authoritarian-regimes.
4. Selected modalities for the study must be a representative of different categories of countries of deliberative democratic practices based on access to ICTs like; countries with high access to ICT, countries with medium access to ICT, and countries with low access to ICT.
5. Finally, selected modalities for the study must be a representative of different countries based on freedom levels in terms of overall freedoms, freedom of the press, and freedom on the net. Hence, the countries of deliberative democratic practices were categorized into countries that are free, countries that are partially free, and countries that are not free, and modalities were selected from all these categories.

The modalities for the study were selected by keeping in view all the above criteria. The following table shows the list of case studies selected for the study.

**Table 6.1: Modalities of ICT enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices selected for the study**

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
1	Participatory City Budgeting in Porto Alegre (1988)	Brazil	Yes	Local	Ongoing	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
2	Wenling City Deliberative Poll (2005)	China	Yes	Local	Experiment	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Authoritarian Regime	Medium Access
3	Tamale Deliberative Poll (2015)	Ghana	Yes	Local	Experiment	Free	Free	NA	Flawed Democracy	Low Access
4	Participatory Budgeting System in Seoul (2012)	South Korea	Yes	Local	Ongoing	Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access
5	Deliberative Polling in the Bududa and Butalejja Districts of Uganda (2014)	Uganda	Yes	Local	Experiment	Not Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Low Access
6	The Australian Citizens' Parliament (2009)	Australia	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
7	Belfast Citizens' Jury (1998)	UK	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
8	The Electronic Dialogue Project, and the Health Care Dialogue Project, US (2000)	US	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
9	European Citizens	Transnational	Yes	Transnational	Issue based Deliberation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
	Consultation Initiative by European Commission (2009)									
10	Europolis (2009)	Transnational	Yes	Transnational	Issue based Deliberation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

## 1. Modalities of ICT Enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices

### 6. 1. 1. Participatory City Budgeting in Porto Alegre (1988), Brazil<sup>346</sup>

**Background:** Participatory city budgeting in Porto Alegre emerged in the backdrop of severe corruption that was plaguing the city. Earlier to 1988, the budgets in Porto Alegre were used as tools to divert funds to the sections that supported or were close to governments. Around 64 percent of the budgets were planned in a manner to accommodate the vested interests of those in power. In 1988 the left parties won the municipal elections in the city of Porto Alegre and have won the successive elections that were held in 1992 and 1996. Their successive wins were attributed to their initiative “participatory budgeting” in the municipalities.

**Methodology and Deliberative Decision Making:** Participatory budget, which basically relies on the ‘bottom-up-approach’ to the budgets were planned to include the citizens of the city of Porto Alegre in a deliberative manner. The experiment was multi-layered in nature i.e., it involves citizens in the decision making and monitoring process at various levels. Sixteen administrative regions were established in the city of Porto Alegre and within each administrative unit a regional plenary assembly was planned that meets twice in a year to discuss the budget related proposal and the issues that the administrative units have faced in the whole year. The citizens of the locality can vote for the budget proposals which was attended by administrators, members from civil society, youth clubs etc. Apart from the budgets the participants discuss a wide range of issues that include transportation in the city, sanitation, environment, health centers, day care centers and any other issues that fall under the domain of the local administration. After thorough discussion, the proposals are put to vote and successful proposals take the implementation stage. The city level budget that covers the

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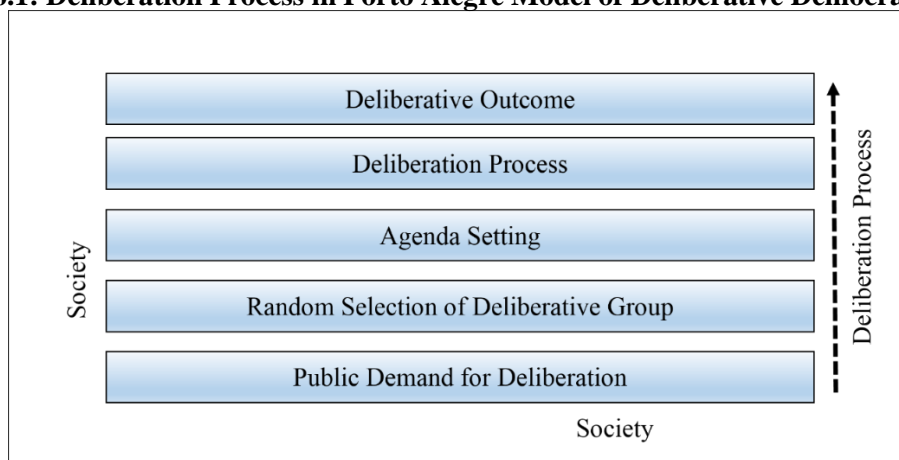
<sup>346</sup> Abers, R. (2006). *Porto Alegre and the Participatory Budget: Civic Education, Politics and the Possibilities for Replication*. Carold Institute Project. See also, Souza, C. Participatory budgeting in Brazilian Cities: Limits and Possibilities in Building Democratic Institutions. *Environment and Urbanization*. Vol. 13. No. 1. (2001): 159 – 184; Wood, T and Murray, W. E. Participatory Democracy in Brazil and Local Geographies: Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte Compared. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*. Vo. 83. (2007). Pp. 19-41.

whole Porto Alegre city is composed of two elected delegates from each of the sixteen administrative divisions and meets once a year to decide the overall budget of the city.

**Achievements and Drawbacks:** According to the city council’s estimate a hundred thousand people or 8 percent of the city population have taken part in the participatory budgeting process leading to the complete elimination of corruption in the Porto Alegre city administration and budget allocations.

### 6. 1. 1. 1. Deliberation Process in Porto Alegre Model of Deliberative Democracy

**Diagram 6.1: Deliberation Process in Porto Alegre Model of Deliberative Democratic Practice**



*Source: Researcher’s Illustration based on adaptation from Porto Algre Model of Deliberative Democratic Practice.*

As shown in diagram 6.1, in deliberative democracy the demand for deliberation i.e., the demand to take a decision on a particular issue raises from the public contrary to the way decisions are made in non-deliberative democratic practices. Once the demand for deliberation rises, a deliberative group is formed by applying different sampling methods like simple random sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, or selecting an expert group in case of deliberation on medical or technical aspects etc. The methods used to deliberate can vary based on the context and can include any of the above methods or a combination of the above sampling methods. Sometimes, altogether different methods can be employed to select the deliberative group based on the issue in question. Once the deliberation group is formed by employing appropriate sampling method, the deliberative group sets the agenda for the deliberation i.e., the deliberation group identifies the set of issues that need to be deliberated

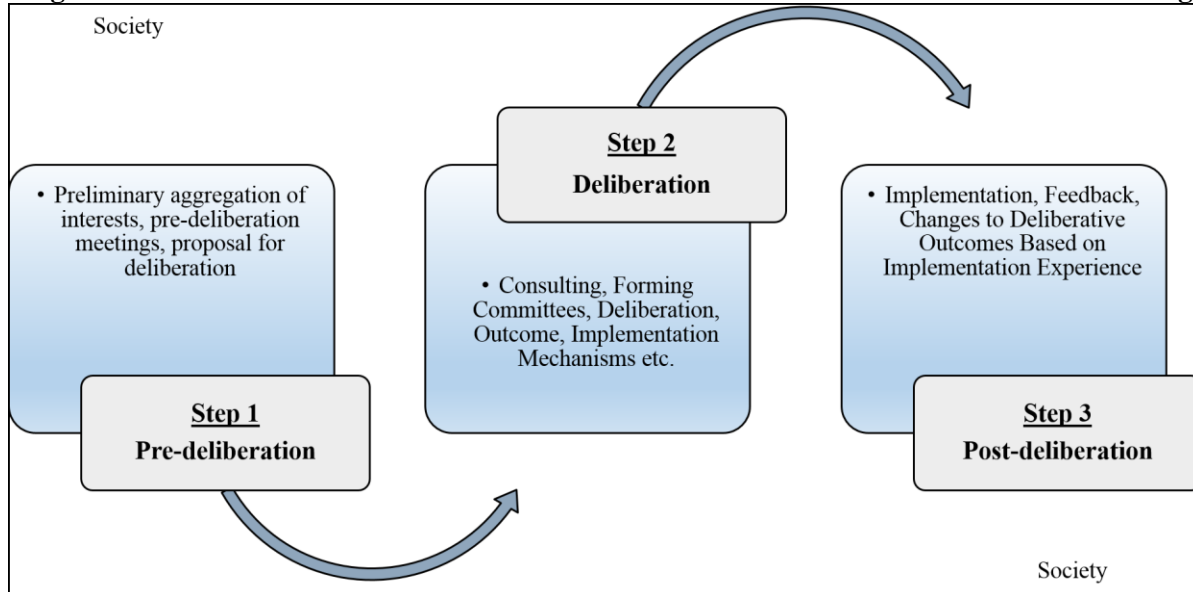
to address the demands of the public. Different deliberation related technical aspects like formation of committees, delegation of tasks to technical committees, consultation, decision making or voting mechanism, criteria for acceptance or rejection of proposals, face-to-face or online discussions to be used at different stages of deliberation etc. are deliberated and the issue is deliberated in accordance with the deliberation rules that the deliberators agree to follow. At the end of the deliberation process the deliberative outcome is delivered. In the post-deliberation stage the deliberative outcome is implemented by the implementing mechanism that the deliberators decide to follow. Different representative or direct democracy tools like referendums, putting the deliberated outcome to vote in the representative legislature etc. may be followed in the post-deliberation process to give the wider public a chance to accept or reject the deliberative outcome.

#### **6. 1. 1. 2. Deliberative Democratic Practice from Pre-deliberation to Post-deliberation Stage in Porto Alegre Model**

Deliberation process takes place in three important stages; pre-deliberation stage, deliberation stage, and post-deliberation stage. In the pre-deliberation stage different preliminary aspects like aggregation of interests, pre-deliberation meetings, identifying issues for deliberation, raising proposals for deliberation and taking steps to select a deliberative group etc. takes place. In the pre-deliberation stage itself the platform is set for deliberation with selection of broader issues that needs to be deliberated and steps are also taken to form or select a deliberative group. As soon as the required background work is done in the pre-deliberation stage the deliberation process enters the second stage of deliberation i.e., the actual deliberation stage. In the second stage i.e., in the deliberation stage, different requirements for deliberation such as rules and regulations for the deliberation, raising new proposals to address the broader issue, forming committees, voting rules, consulting technical committees etc. are carried out and deliberation is done according to these agreed procedures. The deliberation process results in some outcome and sometimes some implementation mechanisms may also be suggested or framed by the deliberators. The next stage is the post-deliberation stage where the implementation of the deliberative outcome takes place. During the implementation process different participatory methods like engaging the stakeholders in the implementation process, establishing or adopting different transparency and accountability mechanisms,

monitoring and feedback mechanisms etc. are taken care off<sup>347</sup>. Diagram 6.2 illustrates the deliberative democratic process from pre-deliberation stage to post-deliberation stage.

**Diagram 6.2: Deliberative Democratic Practice from Pre-deliberation to Post-deliberation Stage**



*Source: Researcher's illustration based on adaptation from Porto Alegre Model of Deliberative Democratic Practice*

As shown in diagram 6.2, in a deliberative democracy, policy proposals arise from the public, and public deliberate on the issues that they wanted to deliberate, and send their deliberative outcomes to the representative/direct democratic governments that is governing them. The government accepts the proposals, sometimes after few modifications in consultation with the deliberators i.e., the public. The public are the ones who deliberate and take a final decision, not the government. Even if the government decides to decide on a policy it does not take its own decision just like in a non-deliberative democratic practice, instead, it sends the intended policy proposal to the concerned deliberative group for deliberation and the deliberative group may deliberate on the proposal sent by the government if it thinks that such a necessity is there. The deliberative group may deliberate on the proposal sent by the government, or it may make significant changes to the proposal, and sometimes the deliberative group may come up with altogether different policy proposal to the issue that the

<sup>347</sup> Dembinska, M and Montambeault, F. Deliberation for Reconciliation in Divided Societies. *Journal of Public Deliberation*. Vol. 11. No. 1. (2015): 1 – 35.

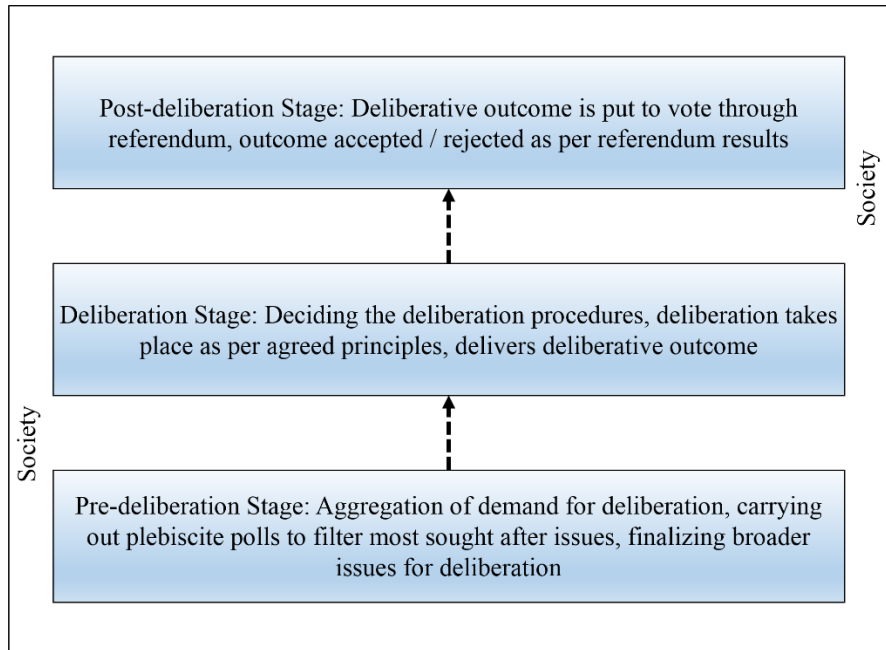
government wanted them to deliberate on. Selection of the issue, policy choice for that issue, and the final outcome depends on the deliberative groups deliberation, not on the government's authority to use its decision making power. In fact, the government's authority is limited to facilitating deliberation.

### **6. 1. 1. 3. Role of Representative and Direct Democratic Structures in Deliberative Democratic Practice (based on Porto Alegre & Seoul Model)**

The deliberative examples that we have discussed were initiated by some voluntary organization, university or government body. As these deliberations were done in an experiment mode, someone had to interfere in the initial stages of the deliberation process and had to set the stage for deliberation. This is basically because of the structural mechanisms that are necessary for the deliberative democracy to take its own course i.e., to empower the people to take the deliberative democracy into their hands. The structural mechanisms that are required for deliberative democracy are not sufficiently present in the present form of representative/direct democracy but the general presumption is that deliberative democracy is compatible with both models of democracy; representative and direct. Deliberative democracy can be practiced in convergence with representative and direct democracies where the representatives can act as facilitators of deliberation on important issues. Different representative and direct democratic tools like referendums, plebiscites etc. are useful in the deliberative democracy as well. Plebiscites/referendums can be used to put the demand-for-deliberation to online voting so as to take a decision to allow the case for deliberation or not. This process acts as an important step in the pre-deliberation process because there has to be some mechanism to decide the weight of the case for deliberation. It is apparent that important issues automatically gain ground and weak arguments perish to gain ground in the pre-deliberation stage itself, but there should be some mechanism to check the strength of the demand for deliberation. ICT based plebiscites/referendums can play a helping role in deliberative democracy to identify or filter out the cases for deliberation during the pre-deliberation stage. Similarly, plebiscites/referendums can be used in the post-deliberation stage to put the deliberative outcomes in front of the public for acceptance or rejection. These representative or direct democratic mechanisms play an important role in providing a platform

for the deliberative democracy to take a shape. Diagram 6.3 shows how the representative or direct democratic mechanisms can help in practicing deliberative democracy.

**Diagram 6.3: Role of Representative and Direct Democratic Structures in Deliberative Democracy**



Source: Researcher's adopted illustration based on the modalities Participatory City Budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil and Participatory Budgeting System in Seoul, South Korea.

### 6. 1. 2. Wenling City Deliberative Poll (2005), China<sup>348</sup>

**Background:** In 2005, a deliberative democratic experiment with deliberative polling was conducted in Wenling city, China. The city administration was struggling to identify preferred policies of the public, and was unable to allot the scarce financial resources to address important issues as the number of issues that needed funding were piling up. In this situation, the city administration came up with the idea of asking the public to give their opinion on the issues that need to be addressed with the scarce resources. The city budget which got reduced

<sup>348</sup> Leib, E, J and He, B. (2006). The search for deliberative democracy in China. New York. Palgrave Macmillan. See also, Fishkin, J., He, B. and Luskin, R, C, et., al. (2010). *Deliberative Democracy in an unlikely place: Deliberative polling in China*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. He, B and Thogersen, S. Giving the people a voice? Experiments with consultative authoritarian institutions in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*. Vol. 19. No. 66. (2010): 675-692.

to USD 5 million from USD 17 million was to be allotted to address the most important issues that the city was facing. To do this, a deliberative opinion poll was considered as a best option to address the issue as it gives a chance to the public to decide for themselves the issues that need to be addressed with the scarce resources.

**Methodology and Deliberative Decision Making:** The experiment was done based on the James Fishkin's model of deliberative polling. In the city population of 250000, a microcosm of 275 people were selected by using random sampling method. Care was taken to include representation from all sections of the people from the city. These 275 selected deliberators were trained for a day by the neighboring school teachers who acted as moderators for the experiment. The experiment was overviewed by Prof. James Fishkin, the proponent of deliberative polling, and Prof. BaoHe, the proponent of deliberative democratic practice in China. Of the 275 randomly selected deliberators, 269 deliberators responded for the questionnaires that were sent to them, and 235 of them attended the deliberative experiment. The questionnaire that was sent to the 275 deliberators contained 30 policies that the deliberators were supposed to rate using the ranking from 0 to 10 on a 10 point scale where 0 means unimportant and 10 means most important. The initial response of the 269 deliberators acted as a baseline of their preferences. These preferences were later compared with the choices that these deliberators made after the completion of the deliberation process.

The deliberative experiment took place in a stepwise manner. First, the deliberators were informed about the experiment, and later they were trained about the deliberation process. These deliberators were supplied with information about the issues that the city was facing, and the scarce resources available to address these issues. The deliberators were supposed to go through the issues carefully and come up with solutions keeping in view the resources that are available to address these issues. On the first day of deliberation, the deliberators discussed about the issues in a broader manner, and summarized their opinions at the end of the day. On day two, the deliberators were divided into small groups of 6 to 8 people by using simple random sampling. These groups discussed in detail the merits and demerits of the 30 proposals presented to them. At the end of the day, these groups presented their opinions on the proposals to all the deliberators. On day three, the 30 proposals were put for voting. The 235 deliberators

who participated in the deliberation process voted for the proposals listing them on a scale of 0 to 10.

**Achievements and Drawbacks:** The deliberative democratic experiment led to selection of 12 important proposals of the 30 proposals that the city administration has presented to them. The city administration has adopted all the proposals for implementation in the manner that the deliberators wanted these proposals to be implemented. The final choices of the deliberators varied significantly from the choices that they have indicated in the questionnaire before the start of the deliberation process. This indicates that the deliberation process changed the choices of the deliberators in a significant manner after thorough deliberation.

Though the deliberative experiment was considered as a success in its attempt to include the public in the decision making process, it was not completely free from drawbacks. The most important drawback of the experiment was the cost involved for the project. The experiment cost the administration USD 12000. The cost involved for the experiment was considered as unaffordable for many city administrations in China thus making it difficult for its replication at different levels. This indicates that deliberative democratic practices should be limited to important issues only, and should be practiced less frequently.

### **6. 1. 3. Tamale Deliberative Poll (2015), Ghana<sup>349</sup>**

**Background:** The city of Tamale in Ghana was experiencing water and sanitation problem due to the fast urbanization. And efforts by the government to address the issues remained mostly unsuccessful due to lack of cooperation from the citizens. Hence, the city administration of Tamale has decided to go for a deliberative poll in 2015 to look for solutions for water and sanitation issues. The city administration, with the help of Resilient Africa Network, a civil society organization, has collaborated with Center for Deliberative Poll, Stanford University, to conduct the poll. The deliberative experiment was funded by USAID.

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<sup>349</sup> University of Development Studies & West Africa Resilience Innovation Lab. (2015). *What people say when they truly speak: Results from Ghana's first deliberative poll*. Tamale. University of Development Studies.

**Methodology and Deliberative Decision Making:** The deliberators were selected by using simple random sampling. The sampling method was designed in a scientific manner to represent the demographic composition of the city of Tamale. A total of 243 deliberators were selected through the sampling method. Care was taken to include the illiterate masses of the Tamale city. The illiteracy in the city was around 40 percent when the deliberative experiment took place, and translation arrangements were made to make the illiterate deliberators understand the material supplied to them. The male-female representation was almost equal as the representation of male and female in the final selection stood at 48 and 52 respectively.

The selected deliberators were supposed to deliberate on water crisis and sanitation issues that the city was facing. The deliberation was planned to be a two day exercise – day one to deliberate on water issues, and day two to deliberate on sanitation related issues that the city was facing. The briefing material was distributed to the deliberators, and to the moderators. Volunteers from academics, civil society organizations, and government schools etc. acted as moderators for the deliberative experiment. The deliberators have come up with 39 policy proposals to address the water and sanitation issues that the city was facing. The deliberators have ranked these 39 proposals by giving scores of 0 to 10 on a 10 point scale, and selected 10 proposals that have received most number of votes. These 10 proposals were finalized for deliberation. The 243 deliberators were then randomly separated into 15 groups. These groups started deliberating about the 10 proposals that were shortlisted. By the end of day one, the deliberators came up with solutions for water crisis that the city was facing, and by the end of day two they came up with solutions for sanitation problems that the city was facing. The recommendations of the deliberative outcome were submitted to the Tamale city administration for consideration.

**Achievements and Drawbacks:** The deliberative poll experiment was considered as a success considering that it was carried out in an environment which was not fit for democratic practices. The poll was considered as an educative experience as the percent of illiterate deliberators was around 40 percent. A majority of the deliberators also seem to have expressed satisfaction over the way deliberative experiment was conducted. However, the deliberative experiment was not free from drawbacks. The first drawback of the deliberative experiment was that the decisions made by the deliberators were not implemented by the city

administration, and there was no proper follow up mechanism to make sure that the city administration accepts and implements the proposals deliberated by the deliberators. There was methodological issues as well in the selection of the deliberators. The experiment ended up selecting 33 percent of deliberators from business field as against their representation of 2 percent.

#### **6. 1. 4. Participatory Budget in Seoul (2012), South Korea<sup>350</sup>**

**Background:** In 2002, minor political parties in South Korea started demanding for introduction of participatory budgeting based on the success of deliberative experiments in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Though these parties have included the demands for participatory budget making to gain electorally, their demand led to the wider discussion about the positives of participatory budgeting, and how people can be included in the budget allocation process. By 2004, certain districts started practicing participatory budgeting on the lines of deliberative democratic practices. These practices slowly started percolating to other districts. By 2010 demands were high to introduce participatory budget decision making in the city of Seoul. And by 2012, the city administration of Seoul has started to experiment with participatory budgeting on lines with deliberative polling based deliberative democracy. Seoul, with a population of more than 10 million, was the first city to introduce participatory budgeting with a population of huge size.

**Methodology and Deliberative Decision Making:** The deliberative experiment used a combination of purposive sampling and simple random sampling to select the deliberators. 60 percent of the deliberators were selected by using simple random sampling, and 40 percent of the deliberators constituted government officials, civil society activists, experts, representatives from private sector etc. It was made sure that the sampling method was a microcosm of the Seoul city. The 40 percent of the deliberators selected by applying purposive sampling was done to include experts from administration, civil society and private sector so

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<sup>350</sup> Holzer, M., Kong, D and Bromberg, D (Eds.) (2011). *Citizen Participation, Participation and Alternative Modes of Engaging Citizens: Cases from United States and South Korea*. Newark. American Society for Public Administration. See also, Jeongeun, H and Deahan, S. (2013). *Participatory Budgeting in Korea*. Seoul. International Strategy Center.

as to converge the ideas of the civic deliberators from the public and the deliberators from expert background. Overall, 250 deliberators were selected by using both purposive sampling and random sampling. The selected deliberators were asked to come up with proposals on how to utilize the Seoul city budget that stood approximately at USD 20 billion. Apart from the selected deliberators, normal citizens were also allowed to present proposals through emails. The 250 selected deliberators were from 25 districts of the Seoul city, 10 each from each district.

The participatory budgeting experiment was allotted a budget of USD 43 million, approximately 2.2 percent of the city budget. In the first phase, public opinion was gathered through emails and web portals specially designed for this purpose. Gathered opinions were divided into broad categories, and deliberators were asked to keep these opinions as a reference point so as to ground the deliberators' opinions in sync with the opinions of the general public as much as possible. The 25 districts were allowed to send proposals to the central committee of 250 deliberators. These 250 deliberators discussed on the received proposal, and these deliberators were also allowed to come up with their own proposals. A total of 1533 proposal were received by the central committee. On day one, these deliberators briefly discussed all the proposals that they have received. On day two, these deliberators were divided into 25 small groups, each group constituting 10 deliberators. Each group consisted of 6 deliberators selected through random sampling and 4 deliberators selected through purposive sampling. These 4 members are from bureaucracy, civil society organizations, and private sector. These small groups briefly deliberated on all the proposals and ranked the proposals from 0 to 10 on a 10 point scale. At the end of the day, the proposals were listed in a descending order based on the number of votes that each proposal has received. On day three, the deliberators have endorsed 352 proposals for implementation.

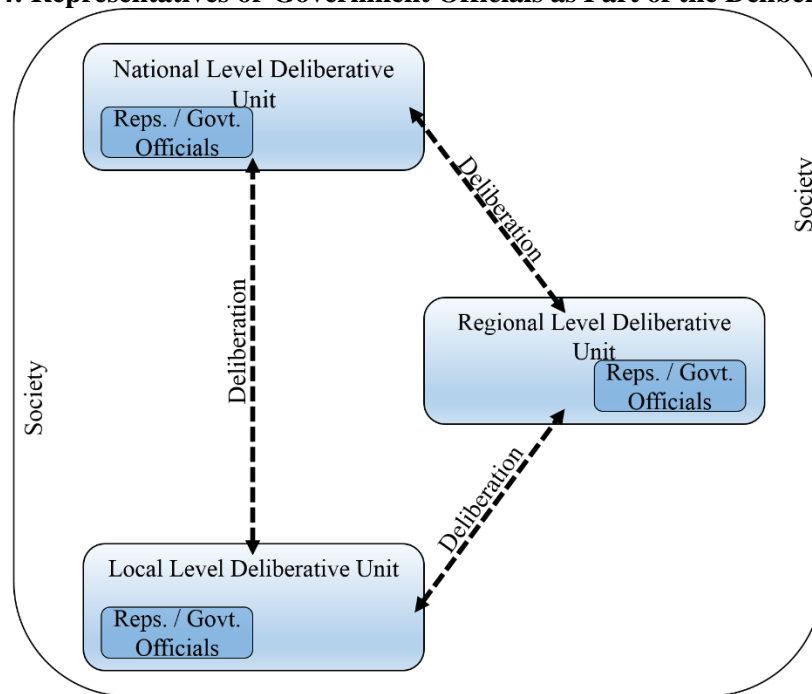
**Achievements and Drawbacks:** The major achievement of the deliberative experiment is that the practice has been ongoing, and every year the people of the Seoul city are taking decisions in a deliberative manner. But the practice is not free from drawbacks. One significant drawback of the deliberative experiment in Seoul city was the expenses incurred on the deliberative practice. Expenses of the deliberative experiment in 2012 stood at USD 43 million. This is a significant drawback as many cities in South Korea cannot afford to spend

such a huge amount. The number of proposals received by the central deliberative committee were also high (1533). The central committee was supposed to discuss, review and recommend some of these proposal in a time span of three days. This made the central deliberative committee to rush through the proposals. Another major drawback of the experiment was the role of the deliberators selected by using purposive sampling. These deliberators were from city administration, civil society organizations and private sector. Because of the shortage of time, the central deliberative committee had to depend on the deliberators selected through purposive sampling. These deliberators have more knowledge about the issues in the city, and the 'possible' measures to overcome these issues. This helped them to dominate the deliberative process, depreciating the role of deliberators selected through random sampling. Nonetheless, the deliberative practice has been ongoing, allowing the citizens of Seoul city to decide its fiscal spending.

#### **6. 1. 4. 1. Interaction of Deliberation Groups and Government Bodies at Different Levels based on the Seoul Model of Deliberative Democratic Practice**

Government and its related institutions or members like legislatures, representatives (elected or selected), and government's official mechanism act as facilitators of deliberation at various level. The deliberative units at local, regional and national levels play the role of deliberators. Regular government mechanism limits itself to the role of facilitator of deliberations. Regular interaction between the deliberative groups and the government at various levels happen in a continuous manner. Based on the issue in question and the applicability of that issue, deliberation takes place at various levels; local, regional, national, and sometimes at international level also. Sometimes the representatives, government, government institutions and officials may become part of the deliberative group. This type of deliberative process usually happens in the initial stages of deliberation i.e., when non-deliberative democratic practices or decision making mechanisms are replaced with deliberative democratic mechanisms for the first time. This process may continue till a deliberative atmosphere emerges among the public and till they start taking the deliberative mechanisms into their hands. Diagram 6.4 shows the deliberative groups that include government representatives/officials as part of them.

**Diagram 6.4: Representatives or Government Officials as Part of the Deliberation Groups**



*Source: Researcher's illustration based on adaptation from Seoul Model of Deliberative Democratic Practice*

*Notes: Reps – Representatives*

### **6. 1. 5. Deliberative Polling in Bududa and Butalejja Districts (2014), Uganda<sup>351</sup>**

**Background:** By 2014, Bududa and Butaleja districts of Uganda were facing issues of land management and population pressure. The efforts of the government to address these issues was a failure due to the differences between the government's approach and citizens' perception on how to solve these issues. Due to legitimacy crisis that the government was facing, people from these districts were not heeding to government's attempts to solve the population pressure that these districts had been facing. To address the issues in a democratic manner by involving the citizens in the decision making process, the civil society organizations in these districts decided to conduct a deliberative poll. Resilient Africa Network, a civil society organization, collaborated with Prof. James Fishkin of Center for Deliberative

<sup>351</sup> Cooke, J. G. (2015). *The State of African Resilience: Understanding dimensions of vulnerability and adaptation*. London. Rowman & Littlefield. See also, Fishkin, J. S and Kim, S. (2015). *Connecting Democratic Deliberation Theory to Practice (Transcript)*. Philadelphia.

Democracy, Stanford University, to conduct the deliberative poll in 2014. The funding for the project was done by the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID).

**Methodology and Deliberative Decision Making:** The deliberative experiment followed the James Fishkin model of deliberative polling. The deliberators were selected by using a random sampling of the people from both these districts. A questionnaire was sent to the selected deliberators, and 427 deliberators responded to the initial questionnaire. These 427 deliberators were finalized for the deliberative experiment. The initial response of these deliberators was taken as a baseline response for comparison of shift in the opinions of the deliberators before and after the deliberation process. As part of the training, the deliberators were shown a video about the issues that these two districts were facing. Questions from the deliberators on the contents of the video were clarified by the volunteers selected for the purpose. These volunteers were from the schools and civil society organizations in these two districts, and had a minimum qualification of under-graduation. After the video session, the deliberators were asked to pick up proposals that they wanted to deliberate on. This pre-deliberation session played an important role in educating the deliberators about the deliberation process.

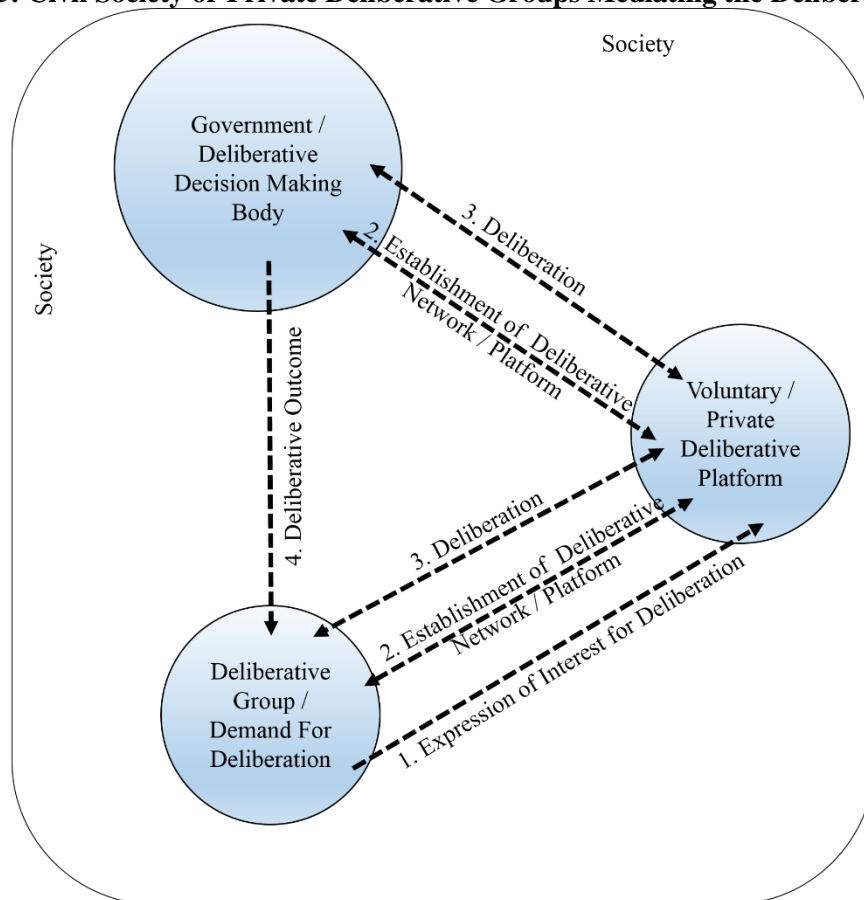
The deliberative experiment lasted for two days. On day one, the deliberators broadly discussed on the selected proposals, and their pros and cons. On day two the deliberators were divided into small teams in a random manner, and were asked to thoroughly deliberate on the proposals that they have shortlisted. After that, the groups were asked to present their opinions on the proposals. By the end of the day, the groups were de-grouped, and the deliberators were asked about whether they have arrived at any consensus about the proposals that they would endorse. As the deliberators failed to arrive at a consensus, voting was conducted to know the proposals that the majority deliberators would endorse. Though the deliberative outcome was not adopted by the government, it showed why the government's attempt to solve the population pressure in Bududa and Butaleja districts was a failure.

**Achievements and Drawbacks:** The deliberative experiment, a result of efforts from civil society organizations, showed that the people from crisis ridden countries can be allowed to deliberate. But the experiment was not free from failures as the decisions that the deliberators have made were not adopted by the government.

### **6. 1. 5. 1. Role of Civil Society Groups and Private Parties in the Deliberation Process based on Deliberative Polling in Bududa and Butalejja Districts**

Apart from government, other organizations like civil society groups, voluntary groups, NGOs, and private corporations etc. may also play mediating role or can act as facilitators of deliberation between the public and the government or legislative mechanism. Examples like *AmericaSpeaks*, Jefferson Center etc. can be taken as cases where voluntary organizations have played the role of mediating the deliberation process between the public and the government. Voluntary or private organizations or groups act as deliberative platforms between the public and the government, especially when the societal environment needs a push i.e., when the situation demands an external stimuli to initiate and help in the deliberation process. Most of the deliberations may take this route when introduced for the first time. The voluntary groups establish the required network – both online and offline – for the deliberation process to happen, train the deliberators, get consultants to explain difficult aspects to the deliberators, and provide all the logistics that is necessary for the deliberation to take place. Diagram 6.5 illustrates how civil society groups or private parties can act as facilitators of deliberation.

**Diagram 6.5: Civil Society or Private Deliberative Groups Mediating the Deliberation Process**



Source: Researcher's adopted illustration based on modalities Tamale Deliberative Poll (2015) and Deliberative polling in Bududa and Butalejia Districts of Uganda (2014).

### 6. 1. 6. The Australian Citizens' Parliament (2009), Australia<sup>352</sup>

**Background:** In Australia, experiments like *Western Australia's Road Train Summit (2001)*, *Dialogue with the city in Perth (2003)*, *Queensland's Youth Jury (2006)*, and the *New South Wales Climate Summit (2009)* were carried out following the principles of deliberation.

<sup>352</sup> Dryzek, J. The Australian Citizen's Parliament: A World's First. *Journal of Public Deliberation*. Vo. 5. No. 1. (2009): 1 – 7. See also, *Citizens' Parliament Final Report*. Canberra. 2009; Hartz-Karp, J. and Lyn, C. Putting the People into Politics: The Australian Citizens' Parliament. *The International Journal of Public Participation*. Vo. 3. No. 1. (July 2009): 9 – 31; New Democracy Foundation. (2009). *Australia's first citizens' parliament*. New South Wales. New Democracy Foundation Publications.

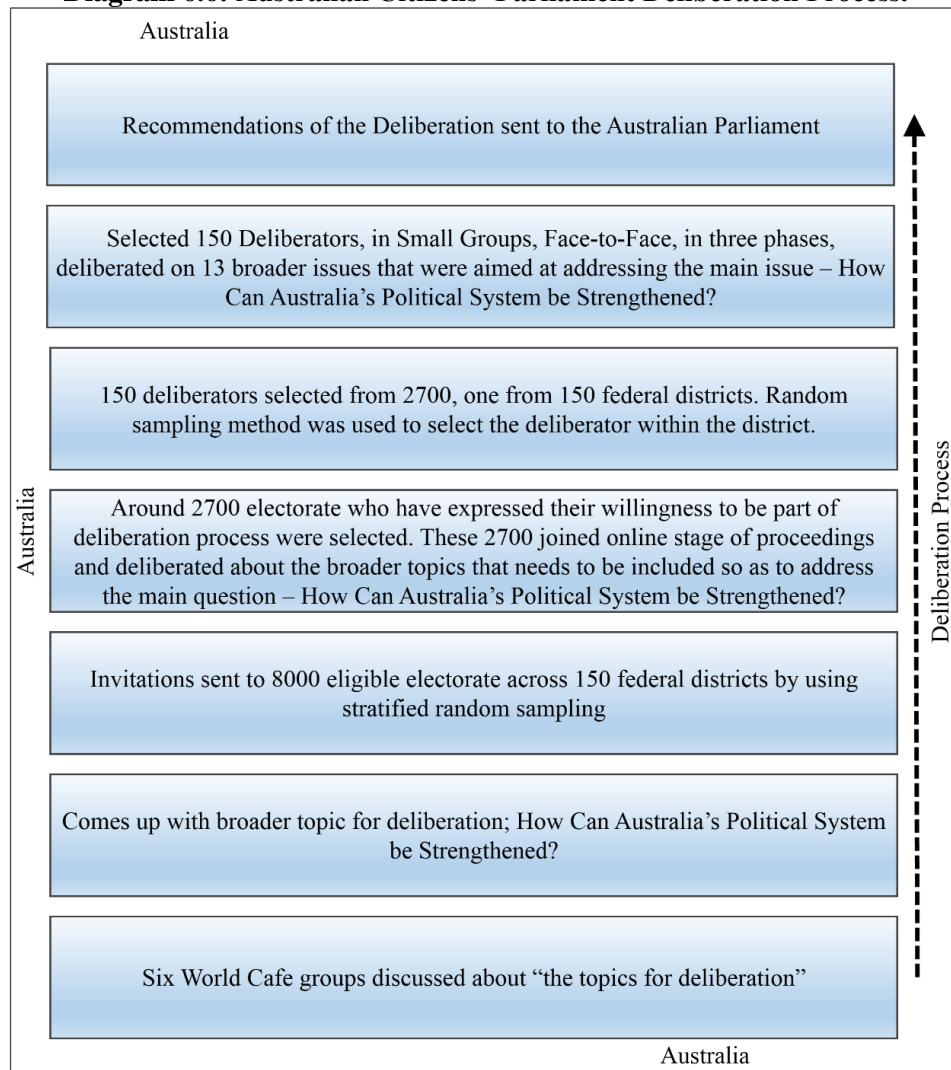
This gave scope to the possibility of a deliberative experiment at national level, and the Australian Citizens' Parliament (2009) was the outcome of these deliberative experiments.

**Methodology and Deliberative Decision Making:** The deliberators were supposed to deliberate on the different aspects that could possibly strengthen the Australian political system. The experiment started with the preliminary phase of deliberation held in six World Cafes in 2008 which were conducted in Melbourne and Sydney by the *New-Democracy Foundation*. All the participants in the deliberation process in the World Cafes were volunteers. The participants in these six World Cafés decided the broader issues that needs to be deliberated on. At the end of the World Café rounds the deliberators decided the broader topic, *“How can Australia’s political system be strengthened to serve us better?”*

The event was carried out by three organizing universities; Australian National University, the University of Sydney, and Curtin University of Technology with New-Democracy Foundation. At the beginning of the project, invitations were sent to 9653 citizens in a random manner out of which around 8000 were successfully delivered to the selected citizens. Nearly 2700 of the selected citizens have expressed interest in the deliberation process. Out of these 2700 or something citizens who have expressed their willingness to participate in the deliberation process, the organizers have selected 150 people, one each from each electoral district of Australia. A simple random sampling-cum-quota sampling was followed to ensure that these 150 deliberators were selected in a random manner without missing any electoral district. Once the final 150 deliberators were selected, the organizers have planned face-to-face deliberation which lasted for 4 days. These 150 deliberators were divided into 25 groups each group consisting of 6 members. Many proposals regarding how to strengthen the Australian political system were raised in the face-to-face deliberation stage. All the proposals that come from different groups were presented to all the deliberators in the hall and the deliberators have voted to the proposals using a 100 points method by giving different points to the proposals. By repeating this process the deliberators have shortlisted 13 proposals for the final deliberation. The deliberators deliberated thoroughly on these 13 proposals that were aimed at addressing the broader deliberative question; *how can Australia’s political system be strengthened* and submitted the recommendations to the prime minister’s office.

**Achievements and Drawbacks:** A comparative analysis of transcripts of the citizens’ parliament and regular parliamentary debates reveal that the quality of deliberation in the citizens’ parliament is much more qualitative in nature. Unlike in normal parliamentary debates where parties or representatives take a premeditated stand, the deliberators in the citizens’ parliament kept on changing their position based on the reasonableness of the proposal. There was a big difference in where the deliberators have started and where they have ended. This shows that deliberators, without any party tags or compulsions are bound to deliberate in a reason based manner rather than getting stuck to their party or ideological positions etc. Diagram 6.6 illustrates the deliberation process of Australian Citizen’s Parliament.

**Diagram 6.6: Australian Citizens’ Parliament Deliberation Process.**



Source: Researcher’s illustration based on adaptation from (Dryzek, 2009; Hartz-Karp & Lyn, 2009; New-Democracy Foundation, 2009).

### 6. 1. 7. Belfast Citizens' Jury (1998), UK<sup>353</sup>

**Background:** Belfast Citizens' Jury was commissioned in 1998 to carry out planning and implementation of health services in Belfast, UK. The origin of this deliberative experiments dates back to early 1970s.

**Methodology and Deliberative Decision Making:** Belfast Citizens' Jury is designed to fit deliberative democracy. The participating citizens in the deliberation process discuss about various issues that the city is facing and the issues that need to be addressed, and deliberate on the possible solutions that can be arrived at in a deliberative manner.

The selection of the jury members is done by using both simple random sampling and quota sampling. Quota sampling was used to draw significant components of all the social groups into the deliberation process and then simple random sampling was used to select a specific number of people from the members shortlisted through quota sampling. The jury usually consists of members ranging from twelve to twenty four and quota sampling is followed to accommodate all the sections by taking into consideration gender, race, ethnicity, and any other criteria that may need to be looked into based on the set of issues that the jury is going to deliberate. The deliberation process is managed by professional facilitators. The jury was formed for the first time in 1998 to deliberate on an issue related to the National Health Service. Out of the many issues or questions presented to the deliberators, the deliberators choose one issue; "what are the advantages and disadvantages of a move to primary care groups, how our concerns can be met?" The jury deliberated on the issue and acted as a platform for the National Health Service (NHS) deliberative poll that was in practice at the time.

**Achievements and Drawbacks:** The Belfast Citizens' Jury deliberated and submitted its recommendations to NHS. The Belfast Citizens' Jury acted as an example to many deliberations that followed subsequently. According to estimations, around 200 juries based on the model of Belfast Citizens' Jury were conducted in UK by 2001.

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<sup>353</sup> Parkinson, J. (2006). *Deliberating in the Real World: Problems of Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy*. New York. Oxford University Press.

## 6. 1. 8. The Electronic Dialogue Project, and the Healthcare Dialogue Project (2000), US<sup>354</sup>

**Background:** The Electronic Dialogue Project was conducted in US in 2000 for a period of nearly one year to cover various issues the country was facing. The fact that it was conducted during the peak moments of presidential elections added weight to the debates.

**Deliberative Decision Making:** Both the electronic dialogue project and the healthcare dialogue project tried to explore the possibilities of electronic group discussions replacing normal face to face interactions among the citizens. The success or failure of this project was considered as a big boost or drawback to the possibilities of deliberative discussion using internet as a platform. These projects tried to address certain internet deliberation related questions like who attends the deliberative discussions on internet. Who talks? How can the discussions on internet be assessed vis-à-vis normal offline discussions? Is there any difference? How do the internet based discussions influence the real life choices or positions of the citizens? What is the transformation potential of the internet based discussion into real time actions in terms of its capacity to put pressure on the policy makers, in terms of its capacity to influence the public sphere, and its capacity to act as an alternative to the traditional forms of opinion aggregation, referendums, or voting methods.

**Methodology for Electronic Dialogue Project:** The Deliberators were selected using simple random sampling drawn from the national representative sample maintained by *Knowledge Networks*. Two base line surveys were conducted in early 2000 on the selected sampling (N = 1684). The deliberators who took part in the baseline survey i.e., the 1684 deliberators were divided into three groups; one – *discussion group*, two – *survey control group* and, three – *project pre/post only group*. The division of the sampling into three groups served a larger purpose of finding the differences in their orientations, response, and outcomes of the deliberation process. The discussion group was the actual group of deliberators who deliberated for almost eight months, taking part in one round of deliberation roughly once in a month. The control group was the group that did not take part in the deliberation process but

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<sup>354</sup> Davies, T and Gangadharan, S, P. (Eds.) (2009). *Online Deliberation: Design, Research, and Practice*. Stanford. Center for the Study of Language and Information Publications.

was asked to complete the survey questionnaires at each deliberative stage. The pre-post-only-group was provided with pre-survey questionnaires and post deliberation process questionnaires only. The idea to divide the sample into three groups was apparently done to compare the outcomes of different groups after the whole deliberation process. After dividing the sample into three groups, the discussion group was divided into small groups of 20 each to facilitate easy deliberation. These discussion groups met online. Symmetrical time tables based on the composition of the participants were fixed based on the deliberators' geographical location. Deliberators were given login IDs and passwords to login into the site that is facilitating deliberation. Deliberators login into their respective accounts according to their pre-fixed time tables. As soon as the deliberators login into the site, certain tools that are necessary like web camera, audio headsets, and infra-red keyboards to vote are enabled automatically to facilitate smooth deliberation. The deliberators discussed many of the topics that were featured in the presidential candidate manifestos like education, health, crime, taxes, safety, social security, foreign affairs etc. The deliberation process was carried out in eight rounds, each round approximately conducted in one month's gap. At the end of the deliberation process the pre/post-group-only was provided with end-of-project survey.

**Methodology for Healthcare Dialogue Project:** The health care project which was also carried in 2000 shared many of the features that the Electronic Dialogue Project had used, but the healthcare dialogue project was dealing with a more complex issue where deliberators needed technical expertise in the area of medicine to deliberate on it. Though the issue involved technical aspects of medicine that can only be deliberated by deliberators with technical background, it also involves the social aspects of its provision to different sections of the peoples, costs involved in the health, insurance coverage, country's capability/incapability to afford health to all the sections of the people etc. Hence, it was felt necessary to include both the normal public and the medical experts in the deliberation process. The deliberation process was also anticipated to address certain deliberation related questions like can the normal citizens understand and deliberate on issues that require high technical expertise? Can the normal citizens and experts be called on to a same platform to deliberate? And how qualitative such a deliberation would be?

Similar to the Electronic Dialogue Project, the Healthcare Dialogue project also drew its sample from the national representative sample maintained by *Knowledge Networks*. Stratified sampling method was used to draw the sample citizens from Knowledge Networks database and a purposive sampling was used to select the experts from medical field who have knowledge over medical related aspects, medical policy, and state of economy etc. The selected samples, including both normal citizens and experts were again divided into baseline panels to record their preliminary positions on the issues that they are going to deliberate. After the baseline survey, deliberators were again divided into homogeneous groups i.e., health experts in similar groups and normal citizens in normal groups. These groups were provided with short briefings about the issue in question and the deliberation process. Arrangements were made to record each comment made by the deliberators online by using methods like time stamping, origin of the comment's author etc. The issues that were selected for the deliberation were based on the general agreement that was reached by the deliberators in the baseline survey. The identified issues in the baseline survey reflected concerns related to health in a broader sense such as rising costs of the health, coverage of health insurance, pricing of drugs etc. Since the baseline survey has made the broader issues that need to be deliberated the deliberators were asked to deliberate on these broader aspects only. The deliberators were divided into 80 groups (8 expert groups, 32 normal citizen groups, and 40 mixed groups of both experts and normal citizens). Two rounds of online deliberations were carried out based on the above said group divisions. A second round of deliberation was carried out in 2005 by re-dividing the groups into 50 groups out of which half of them remained same i.e., remained in the same homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. This switching of groups and retaining a set of groups to remain constant was done to compare the outcome of the second round of deliberation with first set of two-rounds of deliberations that were carried out earlier. The end-of-project survey was completed in 2005.

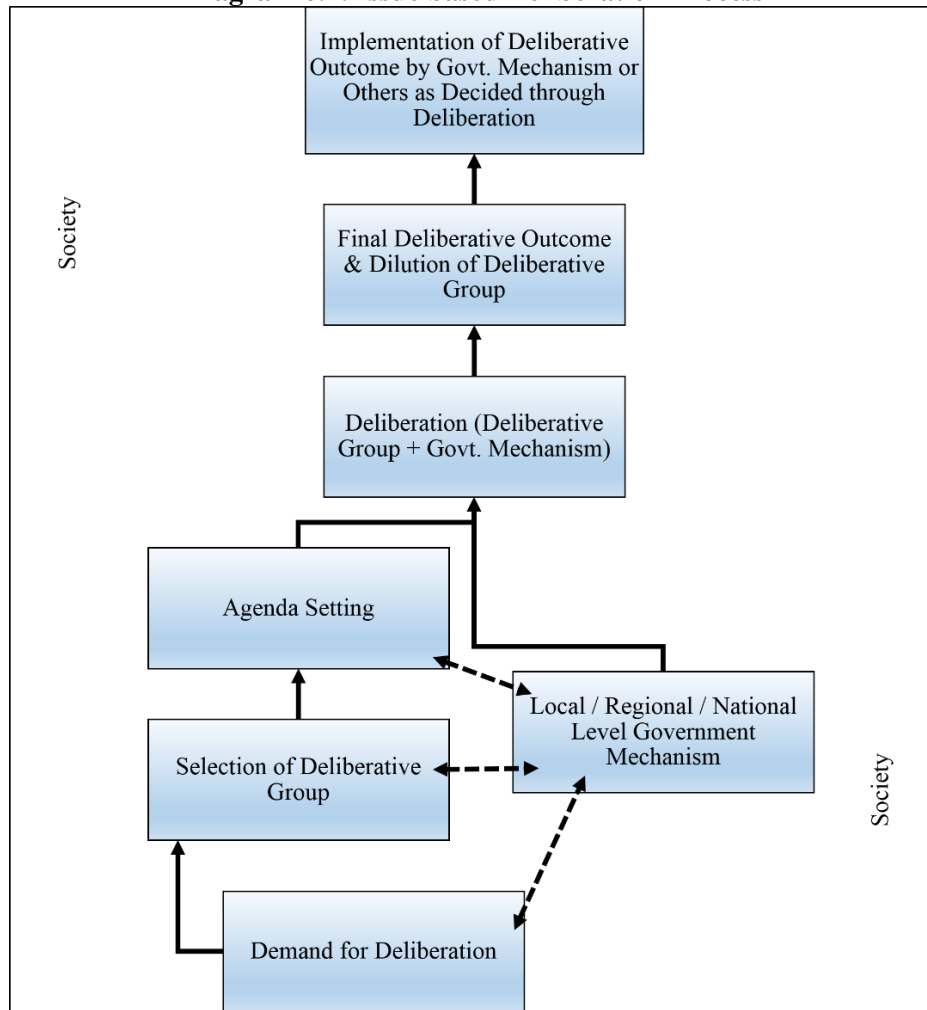
**Achievements and Drawbacks:** With extensive empirical data related to online deliberation (total 19 online deliberations) like transcripts, comments, survey conclusions, electronic voting results, and comparative data comparing the performance or outcomes of discussion of normal groups and expert groups etc., these deliberations offered wider scope for wider interpretation of deliberative experiments. The rate of participation was around 40 percent of the citizens invited for the deliberation process. The demographic difference

between the participants and the non-participants was not significant which tells us that the deliberation was not dominated by any particular section of people. The citizens who are in touch with the issues in deliberation seem to participate more in the deliberation process than those who do not have any idea about the issues that are deliberated on. When looked at the facts regarding who talked, the older the deliberators the lesser or fewer words they talked. Certain technical aspects like typing skills, terminology required to communicate precisely etc. clearly played a major role in the deliberation process. This finding is important as it points out to the fact that future online deliberations are expected to be technically much more challenging for the deliberators, especially if the scope of deliberation is expanded to the normal citizens in an extensive manner by including all range of issues. Deliberators continuously shifted their position from the baseline survey as they progressed from one stage of deliberation to another stage. The deliberative process itself seems to have played a major role in changing the position of the deliberators.

#### **6. 1. 8. 1. Issue Based Deliberative Groups**

Formation of and dissolving of deliberative forums is a continuous process in the deliberative democracy. Deliberative forums are formed based on the demand for deliberation on a particular issue, and these forums get dissolved as soon as the issue in demand for deliberation is solved. Some deliberative forums may stay for a long term if they are formed with a motive to deliberate on multiple issues, and sometimes a part of the deliberation team may engage themselves in the implementation and feedback stages of the deliberative outcomes. Diagram 6.7 shows how issue based deliberative forums are formed in deliberative democracy.

**Diagram 6.7: Issue based Deliberation Process**



*Source: Researcher's adopted illustration based on the modalities The Australian Citizens' Parliament, Belfast Citizens' Jury, and The Electronic Dialogue Project and the Healthcare Dialogue Project.*

As shown in the diagram 6.7, a deliberative forum is formed as soon as demand for deliberation raises. The formed deliberative group sets the agenda for the deliberation. Local/regional/national level government mechanism engages actively in the deliberation process from the pre-deliberation stage itself. The deliberative group deliberates and the government mechanism coordinates or guides the deliberative group in the deliberation process and gives required information to the deliberative groups regarding the issue in deliberation and also presents the government's position so far on the issue in question. Once deliberation is done the temporary group that is formed to deliberate on a given issue dissolves. The deliberative outcome is implemented by the existing government mechanism, or, on occasions

the deliberative outcome may be implemented by using new implementation mechanism if the deliberative group suggests an alternative.

### **6. 1. 9. European Citizens' Consultation Initiative (2009), EU<sup>355</sup>**

**Background:** The European Citizens Consultation was initiated by European Commission in 2009 to generate recommendations to the European Union related institutions on different socio-economic and political aspects.

**Deliberative Decision Making:** The multi-stage deliberative process was carried out over a span of nine months starting in December 2008 and ending in August 2009. The deliberative process included different approaches in different stages like online discussion forums in preliminary stages, and face-to-face deliberative discussions in the later stages implemented in EU member states followed by a European Union level direct face-to-face deliberative conference that included all the deliberators from the member states. The initial level online deliberation process was aimed at creating agenda for the European Citizens Consultation Initiative i.e., the selected deliberators discuss about the issues that need to be deliberated. And the face-to-face deliberations in the final stages was aimed at arriving at a deliberative outcome.

**Methodology and Stages of Deliberation:** In the first stage, separate online deliberative platforms were established in each of the EU member countries. Each of these online deliberative platforms was asked to produce a list of ten recommendations that could act as a starting point for the deliberation. Potential deliberators were asked to register their interest on their respective national websites. All the registered users could vote online for the proposals that the others have presented. At the end of this round, the top ten proposals that have gained most number of votes in each EU member country were selected as focus issues for the next round of deliberation. The deliberators were allowed to do three functions; one –

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<sup>355</sup> Leyenaar, M and Niemoller, K (Eds.) (2010). *European Citizens' Consultations 2009: Evaluation Report*. Brussels. King Baudouin Foundation Publications. See also, European Institute for Public Participation. (2009). *Public Participation in Europe: An International Perspective*; Website: [http://europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/index_en.htm)

presenting discussion related posts, two – writing proposals and, three – to vote to the proposals of others. The deliberators can do either one of these three activities or can do a combination of all the three activities.

All the online forums from the member countries were designed in a similar fashion to avoid confusion while analyzing the results. The online forums from different countries received different levels of response. The highest response came from the French forum with around 26000 members showing interest to deliberate and the least response was received from the Malta with 327 members expressing their willingness to take part in the deliberation. The huge variation in the number of participants from different countries makes it difficult to generalize the results and the intensity of participation. But this variation offers us an opportunity to address many questions like why the deliberation percentage varied in different countries? Why people from certain countries have expressed more interest in the deliberation process whereas people from other countries have expressed less interest etc.

In the second phase of the deliberation process the proposals that were deliberatively decided in the first phase were put to face-to-face deliberations taking place in all the 27 countries at a time. The deliberators discussed the proposals face-to-face with their fellow deliberators from their country. In the third round all the deliberators from all the countries were asked to vote on all the proposals from all the countries and were asked to select 15 proposals in order of their preferences. In the fourth and final phase 150 deliberators were randomly selected from the deliberators who participated in the first, second and third rounds, by using simple random sampling and quota sampling to represent all the member countries. These 150 members travelled to Brussels to attend the European Citizens Summit to discuss the recommendations with the EU policy makers.

**Achievements and Drawbacks:** The European Citizens Consultation Initiative offered an empirical replica about the possibilities of interstate deliberation or possibilities for a global level deliberation. Traces of social constructivist approach to international relations or international level deliberation can be seen in this type of interstate deliberation process. Significant drawbacks were also observed in the European Citizens Consultation Initiative as the participation was more among those who know English which indicates that language can be a barrier to the deliberation process, especially in interstate deliberations where factors like

language, culture etc. play a crucial role. Enthusiasm to participate was also high among those who were in favor of the integrated EU as most of the members who took part in the deliberation process were also active visitors or members of pro EU websites.

#### **6. 1. 10. Europolis (2009), EU<sup>356</sup>**

**Background:** Europolis, conducted in 2009, was a transnational deliberative project aimed to influence the EU policy makers on different matters. Special emphasis was placed on issues of immigration and climate change. The deliberative opinion generation was conducted ahead of the EU policy makers meeting in 2009. The project was conducted by using deliberative polls that depends on random selection of deliberators.

**Methodology and Deliberative Decision Making:** Around 4300 participants from EU member states were selected in the first round by using stratified random sampling. The participants stratified random sampling was designed in a manner to include participants from all EU member states. The 4300 participants were asked through telephone to answer a questionnaire that contained questions related to the EU level policies, immigration and climate change issues. Around 3000 participants were selected from the 4300 selected participants based on their answers to the questionnaire. Finally a sub-sample of 348 participants were selected using stratified random sampling from the 3000 participants, and these 348 participants were asked to attend the Brussels conference from May 29<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009. These 348 participants engaged in the face-to-face deliberation on many issues EU level issues

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<sup>356</sup> Boucher, S. *If citizens have a voice, who's listening? Lessons from recent citizen consultation experiments for the European Union*. European Policy Institutes Network. Working Paper No. 24. 2009. See also, Von, V. Gerber, M and Bern, V, L, E. (2013). *Examining the 'Gold Standard': Deliberative Quality in Transnational Deliberative Poll Europolis*. Bern. Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivative Works 2.5; Olsen, E, D, H and Trenz, H. From Citizens' Deliberation to Popular Will Formation? Generating Democratic Legitimacy in Transnational Deliberative Polling. *Political Studies*. Vol. 61. No. 1. (2014): 117 – 133; Olsen, E, D, H and Trenz, H. The Micro-Macro Link in Deliberative Polling: Deliberative Experiments and Democratic Legitimacy. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. (2015): 1 – 18; Gerber, M. Equal Partners in Dialogue? Participation Equality in a Transnational Deliberative Poll (Europolis). *Political Studies*. Vol. 63. No. 1. (2015): 110 – 130.

including immigration and climate change problems. The participants who were not selected for the final round of deliberation (3000 minus 348) i.e., 2652 acted as control group. The views of these participants on the issues that were deliberated in Brussels were taken in the initial round—and after the last round of deliberation so as to compare their stand with that of the stand taken by the final round of deliberators.

The deliberators of the final round (348 participants) were provided with material briefing the issues that the EU was facing. These 348 participants were divided into small groups of 25 members, and these groups were asked to deliberate on different issues that were shortlisted based on the initial survey. And in the final stage, all the deliberators were asked to participate in a final session. By then, the deliberators were in a position to express their stand on different issues that the EU institutions were facing.

**Achievements and Drawbacks:** The deliberators' views on different issues, especially their stand on climate change coincided significantly with the stand of the green parties across the EU member states. Their stand was later proved right in the June 2009 EU parliamentary elections in which the green parties have gained a vote share of around 10% compared to their performance in the earlier EU parliamentary elections conducted in 2004.

## **6. 2. Essence of Modalities of Deliberative democratic Practices**

Different deliberative democratic modalities that we have taken present us with different types of possibilities for different types of deliberation on different issues at different level; local, regional, national and international levels. The examples point out to the fact that the normal citizens can come together and deliberate on all types of issues at all levels. The deliberators have deliberated on different issues at different levels like health services conducted by Belfast Jury in Belfast, strengthening European Union which was conducted by European Commission, Europolis by European Commission and other public-private and civil society organizations and deliberation to improve Australian political system conducted by New-Democracy Foundation in collaboration with three Australian universities. The seriousness of the issues ranged from local level budgeting to national level policies and the geographical domain of the deliberation also ranged from local municipalities to international

level deliberation like in the case of European Union. Different deliberative examples adopted different innovative approaches to the deliberation process and used different methodologies to select the deliberative groups. The deliberations also varied in flexibility allowing new proposals. Some deliberations were restricted to a particular issue only while some deliberations were done on broader issues like the deliberation to improve the Australian political system, and some deliberations were open to new proposals like in the case of European Commission's deliberation to strengthen European Union. In most of the deliberations both online and offline methods were used; online deliberations were used in the early stages of the deliberation and offline deliberative techniques like face-to-face discussions in small groups were used in the final stages of the deliberation.

These deliberative examples offer us a glimpse of how different and dynamic the deliberative democratic practices are vis-à-vis non-deliberative democratic practices. In representative/direct democracies, the governments are elected by using various voting methods that are conducted once in a while in a periodical manner. These methods end favoring a few classes, and over a period, the voters, representatives, interest groups and political parties end up taking premeditated positions or positions that win the required numerical strengths. Political process itself is limited to acquiring power to address the sectional interests of the dominant sections, and the rest of the society is forced to contain itself to survival level policies or methods. Though the present representative democracies offer political opportunities in an equal manner, in practice it is limited to theory only. Real opportunities are intertwined with a combination of different factors like economic power of the candidates, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, ideological position, political prospectus etc. All these aspects do not come into the picture in the deliberative democracy.

## **Summary**

The chapter briefly presented the selected modalities of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices, their strengths and weaknesses, and the methodology followed by each deliberative democratic practice. Overall, five local level deliberative democratic practices, three national level practices and two transnational level practices were presented in this chapter. The selected modalities that the chapter has presented also represent different regime

types under which these practices are practiced. By looking at the modalities, deliberative democratic practices in full-democracies can be said to be taking firm roots. Deliberative democratic practices in flawed-democracies and authoritarian-regimes are also successful as presented in the modalities from Brazil and China. While the deliberative polling experiment conducted in China has led to the wider practices of deliberative democratic practices within an authoritarian regime, the experiments conducted in countries like Ghana and Uganda did not ignite the spread of deliberative democratic practices in their respective countries. Deliberative democratic practices in Seoul and Porto Alegre, which are ongoing, are exemplary modalities that prove that deliberative democratic practices allow people to decide for themselves. Modalities like the Australian Citizens' Parliament, Belfast Citizens' Jury and The Electronic Dialogue Project and Healthcare Project prove that deliberative democratic practices can be allowed at national level also, and that people can be allowed to take decisions on broader issues also. And finally, modalities like European Citizens' Consultation Initiative and Europolis present us the possibilities of deliberative democratic practices at international level. The chapter also presents the role of state, civil society organizations, private parties, and the role of existing institutional structures in practicing deliberative democratic practices.

## Conclusion

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### 7. 1. Deliberative Democratic Practices Lead to Inclusion of People in the Decision Making Process

The spread of internet as a medium of communication and its emergence as an alternative public sphere with deliberative features has been changing the socio-economic and political constructions significantly<sup>357</sup>. Different socio-economic and political constructions that influence the political structure or political process that we are engaging in, or disengaging from, have been products of different social constructions made at different points of time with or without the consent of the people. Different social constructions like religion, cultural values, political structures, economic institutions, and the ‘fundamental’ concepts like state, sovereignty, representation, and ‘authoritative’ allocation of resources etc. have been done based on the social norms constructed by a small ruling minority ‘on behalf’ of the people. The advancements in ICT cannot be called as a solution to all these social facts, but the public sphere it offers by virtue of its indefinite communicative space, and its two way communication methods in a sustained manner, offers a chance for the people to use it as a platform to reform and reconstruct these norms in a deliberative manner<sup>358</sup>.

Deliberative democratic practices reduce the democratic deficit by increasing participation of the people in the decision making process. Non-deliberative democratic practices concentrate more on engaging the people in the implementation process only and do not involve people in the decision making process. Though these variants use different types of democratic tools allowing political parties to aggregate the pulse of the people and to come up with ‘manifestos’ that are supposed to be representative of the peoples’ choices, there is no guarantee that the manifestos offered by the competing political parties represent peoples’

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<sup>357</sup> Butsch, R. (Ed). (2007). *Media and Public Spheres*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>358</sup> Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the Public Sphere; Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London. Sage Publications.

strong choices<sup>359</sup>. Choices that the people choose are created by these political competitors, and if the parties do not offer strong choices then the people have to end up choosing whatever is presented as best to them. Hence, these democratic models can be said to be restricting the choices that the people would possibly choose. Different methods like feedback mechanism, peoples' right to choose their governments, peoples' right to recall a representative or a government etc. are based on top-down-approach mechanisms. Referendums and plebiscites are used once in a while to decide 'important' issues that are important according to the government<sup>360</sup>. Though people are allowed to use plebiscite as a way to demand a certain type of action from the government, the option is limited to 'important' issues only thus giving the governments a free go on 'unimportant' issues<sup>361</sup>. The electoral methods used to elect governments are also of deficit in nature. People are treated equal and are free to use their political rights to participate in the political process in a technical sense, but in reality, participation is restricted by different social, economic, ideological and cultural factors which favor only a few sections. These favored sections decide the 'requirements' of the society and the people are free to choose among the ideas presented to them by these favored sections. The ideas or choices that these favored sections succeed in getting the 'acceptance' of the public becomes the law of the land<sup>362</sup>. Hence, non-deliberative democratic practices like representative democracy, direct democracy, participatory democracy and strong democracy etc. are models that 'engage' people in a severely limited manner and keep them away from the decision making process. This scenario has changed with the advancements in ICT as its spread is carrying demands for including people in the decision making process in a deliberative manner.

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<sup>359</sup> Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>360</sup> Margolis, M. & Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Surrey. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>361</sup> Vieira, M, B., and Runciman, D. (2008). *Representation*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

<sup>362</sup> Barber, B, R. (2003). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

## **7. 2. Deliberative Democratic Practices through ICTs**

The discursive public sphere that the ICT is offering is infusing deliberative democratic practices. The examples that we have discussed in the previous chapter clearly gives us an indication that it is possible to include people in the in the decision making process. Different approaches can be used to include the public in the decision making process. The most important aspect in the democracy – decision to take decision – can be passed onto the people in the deliberative democracy<sup>363</sup>. The examples that we have discussed include a wide variety of deliberative methods that are based on different contexts, issue type and domain. Though the methods are loosely constructed and vary from each other in their approach to deliberative democratic practices, these methods offers us a blueprint of how different deliberative democratic models can be drawn based on the requirement. A discussion on the possibilities of using these methods at various levels may help us understand how deliberative democracy can be practiced at different level; local, national and international levels.

### **7. 2. 1. Deliberative Democratic Practice at Local Level**

The potential to practice deliberative democracy at local level is immense. Around 54 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are at local level. The domain of local government is usually restricted to a small geographical area, and the small population size, usually in few thousands, makes it possible to take decisions in a deliberative manner. The deliberative structures at local level can be designed to include the people in the decision making process. Different online platforms can be used to raise policy related proposals, and different voting mechanisms can be used to filter the issues that need to be deliberated on. Both online and offline voting methods can be used to take a decision regarding the policy proposals. Apart from the decision making, the public can also be included in the implementation and monitoring mechanism of the policies that are deliberated at the local level. The possibility of crosschecking the outcomes in a face-to-face manner through deliberative discussion is immense at local level. Issues of confusion that arises as a result of

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<sup>363</sup> Manoharan, A & Holzer, M. (2012). *E-Governance and Civic Engagement: Factors and Determinants of E-Democracy*. Hershey. Information Science Reference.

deliberation can be solved by conducting direct public meetings. The prospects of evaluating the success and failure of the outcomes from time to time are easy in deliberative democratic practices at local level. Local governments may be given broader guidelines regarding the deliberation process, the type of issues that they can deliberate, and budget limits etc. Intervention of regional or national governments, or intervention of civil society or voluntary groups may become necessary in the initial stages, but in the long run deliberative practices can be left to the people to decide for themselves in a deliberative manner—with minimal restrictions from above like the way it is being practiced in Porto Alegre and Seoul.

### **7. 2. 2. Deliberative Democratic Practices at Regional/National Level**

The difficulty level in practicing deliberative democracy increases as we go from local to regional or national level. It becomes difficult to include *all* the people in the decision making process in *all* the issues *all* the time at regional or national level. And restricting the people from decision making process takes us back to non-deliberative democratic practices. Hence, choices have to be made within the deliberative democratic setup to decide about which aspects need to be deliberated, who deliberates, and the implementation mechanism to implement the deliberated outcome. The examples we have discussed in the previous chapter like the Australian Citizens' Parliament, Belfast Citizens' Jury in UK and the Electronic Dialogue Project and Healthcare Project in US offer us blueprints for deliberative democratic practices at regional or national level. These practices are deliberative in nature but they did not include all the people in the decision making process. Different sampling techniques were used to select the deliberators in a scientific manner. The selected deliberators deliberated on the broader issues that were decided by using online voting and proposals were raised from the public. Deliberations took place in multiple stages that included both online and offline methods. Face-to-face deliberation methods were used in the final stages of deliberation. Around 31 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are at national level. This indicates that deliberative democratic practices can be replicated at national level as well.

### 7. 2. 3. Deliberative Democracy at International Level

The thought itself sounds unimaginable – deliberative democracy at international level! Yes, deliberative democracy at international level where non-deliberative democratic (and non-democratic) practice itself is understood to be anarchical. The attempt to think about its possibilities itself is becoming unimaginable, but we seem to have supporters who think that international structures can be changed – the social constructivists<sup>364</sup>. Certain experiments in European Union like the European Citizens’ Consultation Initiative by European Commission and Europolis suggest us that transnational deliberative practices are possible. Nevertheless, these examples are not sufficient to substantiate our support to deliberative democratic practices at international level as these examples are peculiar in nature as the European Union is more or less an established kind of structure as a confederation in international relations. Generalizing and applying these examples to deliberative democratic practice at global level may sound premature.

### 7. 3. Key Findings

- Around 54 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are at local level suggesting that it can be practiced at local level. The model of practices in Porto Alegre (Brazil) and Seoul (South Korea) are examples of successful ongoing models of ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices at local level.
- Around 41 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are at regional and national levels suggesting that its practice can be replicated to deliberate on national level issues.
- Around 81 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are issue based deliberations i.e., the deliberative practice is used to decide the fate of a particular issue. This model of deliberative democratic practice is useful in helping the representative and direct democratic governments to take decisions on issues of significant importance like amendments to the constitution, national level policies etc.

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<sup>364</sup> Griffin, M. Developing Deliberative Minds – Piaget, Vygotsky and the Deliberative democratic Citizen. *Journal of Public Deliberation*. Vol. 7. No. 1. (2011): 1 – 28.

- Identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices at transnational level are few (around 5 percent), and are limited to European Union only.
- Around 62 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are practiced in full-democracies suggesting that deepened democratic roots are necessary for deliberative democratic practices. However, the practice of deliberative democracy at local level in China, within an authoritarian-regime, suggests that its practice can be introduced in non-democratic environments also to include the people in the decision making process.
- Around 84 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are from countries that are categorized as free-countries in terms of freedoms suggesting that freedom is an essential element for deliberative democratic practice. However, limited deliberative democratic practices at local level in China, which is not considered as a free country, suggest that it can also be promoted in countries that are not free. And, deliberative democratic experiments in Uganda, which is not considered as a free-country in terms of freedom, have failed to take roots because of the disinterest that the government has shown to the deliberative polling experiment.
- Around 68 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are from countries that are considered as free in terms of freedom of press, and around 70 percent of identified practices are from countries that are considered as free in terms of freedom on net (internet) suggesting that the level of press and internet freedom plays a major role in the promotion of deliberative democratic practices.
- Around 71 percent of identified ICT enabled deliberative democratic practices are from countries that have high access to ICTs suggesting that ICTs create the required convergence platforms for deliberative democratic practices.
- Deliberative polling experiments in Seoul (South Korea) and Wenling (China) have led to wider promotion of deliberative democratic practices at local level in these countries suggesting that deliberative polling experiments lead to promotion of deliberative democratic practices.

## **7. 4. Conclusion**

Different conditions presented in the study prove that deliberative democratic practices through ICT can lead to inclusion of people in the decision making process. Power to take decisions can be transferred to the public in a stepwise manner. Different functional limitations of representative democracy has kept the people away from the decision making power and the governments have been taking decisions on behalf of the people. This approach to democracy can be changed by introducing deliberative democracy in a stepwise manner. Initial experimentations can be done at local level by limiting the deliberative democratic practices to development related programs. Similarly, deliberative democratic practices can also be extended to regional or national level by involving deliberative groups that could act as policy advisors to the present representative or direct democratic governments. These groups can be slowly empowered to play different roles like acting as a cross checking mechanism to the representative/direct democratic governments. These groups can be fully allowed to deliberate on different issues in the long run and can be allowed to converge with the representative direct democratic mechanisms once the environment becomes suitable for deliberative democratic practice. Introducing deliberative democratic practices may bring more legitimacy to the deficit representative systems that are in practice in the developing countries. Deliberative polling and deliberative opinion formation can force the representative entities in the developing countries to arrange their priorities in accordance with the deliberative opinion.

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(Note: The year of publication of the books reflect the English version, not the original versions in non-English language. The year of publication also indicates the edition that I have used, not the first edition of the concerned book).

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## Annexures

**Annexure I: List of Identified ICT enabled Deliberative Democratic Practices**

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
1	Albany Administration Centre Site Citizens' Jury (2002)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
2	Bassendean Train Station – Enquiry-by-design (2001)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
3	City of Canada Bay Council Citizen's Panel (2012)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
4	City of Canada Bay Policy Panel (2014)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
5	City of Greater Geraldton Deliberative Participatory Budget (2013)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
6	City of Melbourne Peoples' Panel (2014)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
7	City of Sydney – Safe and Vibrant Nightlife (2014)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
8	Creating a Safe and Vibrant Nightlife Adelaide (2013)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
9	Darebin Participatory Budgeting Citizens' Jury (2014)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
10	Dialogue with the City (2003)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
11	Dialogue with the Pilbara: Newman Tomorrow (2004)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
12	Victoria's Citizens' Jury on Obesity (2015)	Australia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
13	Australian consensus conference on gene technology in the food chain (1999)	Australia	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
14	Commonwealth Department of Defense's Defense Review (2000)	Australia	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
15	The Australian Citizens' Parliament (2009)	Australia	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
16	Corporate Concurrent Citizens' Juries (2003)	Australia	Yes	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
17	Review of agricultural Lime Route (2002)	Australia	Yes	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
18	Sharing the roads safely: a South Australian citizens' jury (2014)	Australia	Yes	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
19	Participatory City Budgeting in Porto Alegre (1988)	Brazil	Yes	Local	Ongoing	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
20	Edmonton Citizen Panel (2009)	Canada	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
21	Grandview Woodland Citizens' Assembly (2014)	Canada	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
22	Citizens' Dialogue on Sharing Funds for a Better Canada (2005)	Canada	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
23	Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Health Care in Canada (2002)	Canada	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
24	Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future: A 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Social Contract (2002)	Canada	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
25	Citizens' Dialogue on Public Health Goals in Canada (2004)	Canada	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
26	Citizens' Dialogue on the Long-term Management of Used Nuclear Fuel (2005)	Canada	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
27	Bio-banking in British Columbia (2007)	Canada	Yes	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
28	British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reforms (2004)	Canada	Yes	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
29	Citizens' Reference Panel on Health Technologies (2006)	Canada	Yes	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
30	Wenling City Deliberative Poll (2005)	China	Yes	Local	Experiment	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Authoritarian Regime	Medium Access
31	Citizens' Forum Europe (2008)	Germany	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
32	Tamale Deliberative Poll (2015)	Ghana	Yes	Local	Experiment	Free	Free	NA	Flawed Democracy	Low Access
33	Direct Democracy Experiment (2005-06)	Indonesia	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Partially Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Flawed Democracy	Low Access
34	Deliberative poll on Education Policy (2007)	Ireland	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
35	Together We Design Acque Chiare Park (2004)	Italy	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access
36	Deliberative Poll on Japan's Energy and Environmental Policy Options (2012)	Japan	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access
37	Japanese Consensus Conference on	Japan	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
	Genetically Modified Crops (2000)									
38	Participatory Budgeting System in Seoul (2012)	South Korea	Yes	Local	Ongoing	Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access
39	Deliberative Poll on Korean Reunification (2011)	South Korea	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access
40	Eco-city, Trinitat Nova (1999)	Spain	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	NA	Full Democracy	High Access
41	Normalm District Council's Deliberative Electronic Dialogue (2001)	Sweden	Yes	Local	Ongoing	Free	Free	NA	Full Democracy	High Access
42	Citizen Participation in Science and Technology Project (2005)	Transnational	Yes	Transnational	Issue based Deliberation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
43	1 <sup>st</sup> Inuit Youth Symposium on the Inuit Language (1977), Canada [Transnational – Participating Counties; Canada, Alaska (US), Greenland (Denmark), and Russia]	Transnational	Yes	Transnational	Issue based Deliberation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
44	European Citizens Consultation Initiative by European Commission (2009)	Transnational	Yes	Transnational	Issue based Deliberation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
45	Europolis (2009)	Transnational	Yes	Transnational	Issue based Deliberation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
46	Deliberative Polling in the Bududa and Butalejja Districts of Uganda (2014)	Uganda	Yes	Local	Experiment	Not Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Low Access
47	NHS Citizen (2013)	UK	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
48	Belfast Citizens' Jury (1998)	UK	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
49	New Mexico Citizen Conferences (2007-08)	US	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
50	Deliberative Poll on Vermont's Energy Future (2007), US	US	Yes	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
51	National Issues Convention Deliberative Poll (1996)	US	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
52	The 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Town Meetings (2004-05)	US	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
53	The Electronic Dialogue Project, and the Health Care Dialogue Project, US (2000)	US	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
54	Citizens' Jury on Physician Assisted Suicide (1998)	US	Yes	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
55	California Speaks (2007)	US	Yes	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
56	Common Ground: The First Five Years: A Dialogue on Early Childhood in New Mexico (2009)	US	Yes	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
57	DEMOS: Buenos Aires Legislature (2014)	Argentina	No	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
58	Hepburn Shire Council's City Plan (2013)	Australia	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
59	Bayside Child Care Future Options Community Panel (2013)	Australia	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
60	Campaspe: Our Future (2014)	Australia	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
61	Belo Horizonte Participatory Budgeting (1994)	Brazil	No	Local	Ongoing	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
62	June Journeys (2013)	Brazil	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
63	Modern Bulgaria for Fair Elections (2014)	Bulgaria	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	NA	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
64	Alternative University Project (2001)	Canada	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
65	Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges (2013)	Canada	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
66	Aboriginal Participation in National Health Consultation (2001)	Canada	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
67	Canadian House of Commons Sub-Committee on Persons with Disabilities Public Consultations (2002)	Canada	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
68	Canadian Senate Public Consultation on Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services (2007)	Canada	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
69	Developing a National Strategy for Rural Canada (2011)	Canada	No	National	Ongoing	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
70	Citizen Participation in Housing Policy (2002)	Chile	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	NA	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
71	Citizen Participation in the Revision of the Regulatory Communal Plan of Estacion Central (2010)	Chile	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	NA	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
72	Participatory Budgeting in Mayan Village (2009)	China	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Authoritarian Regime	Medium Access
73	Participatory Budgeting in Yanjian County (2012)	China	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Authoritarian Regime	Medium Access
74	Pasto Municipality Open House (2012)	Colombia	No	Local	Ongoing	Partially Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Medium Access
75	Indigenous Guard (1995)	Colombia	No	National	Ongoing	Partially Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Medium Access
76	Participatory Budgeting with SMS (2011)	Dominican Republic	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	NA	Flawed Democracy	Low Access
77	Crowdsourcing in policy and lawmaking (2013)	Finland	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	NA	Full Democracy	High Access
78	Citizen Councils of Grenoble (2002)	France	No	Local	Ongoing	Free	Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
79	Dresdner-Debate (2010)	Germany	No	Local	Ongoing	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
80	Budget with your ideas (2007)	Italy	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access
81	Sustainable Lifestyles (2009)	Italy	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access
82	Local Agenda 21 (2003)	Italy	No	Regional	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	Free	Flawed Democracy	High Access
83	Citizens' Hall (2009)	Mongolia	No	Local	Ongoing	Free	Partially Free	NA	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
84	Participatory Urban Planning, Auckland (2011)	New Zealand	No	Local	Ongoing	Free	Free	NA	Full Democracy	High Access
85	National Citizen Initiative on Labour Code (2011-12)	Romania	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	NA	Flawed Democracy	Medium Access
86	Cordoba Participatory Budget (2001)	Spain	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	NA	Full Democracy	High Access
87	CIVICUS World Assembly (2011)	Transnational	No	Transnational	Ongoing	NA	NA	Free	NA	NA
88	Participatory Budgeting in La Marsa (2014)	Tunisia	No	Local	Ongoing	Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Flawed Democracy	Low Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
89	Civic Engagement in Tunisia's Constitutional Drafting (2012)	Tunisia	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Flawed Democracy	Low Access
90	Managing the Process together with dialogue and interaction (2014)	Turkey	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Partially Free	Not Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Medium Access
91	Citizens Participation in the 2015 - 2019 Strategic Plan (2014)	Turkey	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Partially Free	Not Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Medium Access
92	Designing Kadikoy's Bicycle Transport (2015)	Turkey	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Partially Free	Not Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Medium Access
93	Womens Forum and Workshop for the Development (2015)	Turkey	No	Local	Ongoing	Partially Free	Not Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Medium Access
94	Enabling youth participation through technology (2011)	Uganda	No	National	Ongoing	Not Free	Partially Free	Partially Free	Hybrid Regime	Low Access
95	Associated Students of University of Washington (ASUW) Student Senate (2005)	US	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
96	Building Community: The Uniontown Story (1999)	US	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
97	California Proposition (2012)	US	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access

S No	Deliberative Democratic Practice	Country	Deliberative Polling	Deliberation Level (Local / Regional / National / Transnational)	Status of DD Practice (Ongoing / Issue based Deliberation/ Experiment)	Freedom House Index			The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2015	Measuring the Information Society's ICT Development Index (IDI) 2015
						Freedom Index 2015	Freedom of Press 2015	Freedom on Net 2015		
98	Countrywide Community Forums (2007)	US	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
99	Daly City Community Budget Forums (2009)	US	No	Local	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
100	Brea City Budgeting (2008)	US	No	Local	Ongoing	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
101	Chicago Participatory Budgeting Project (2010)	US	No	Local	Ongoing	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
102	Advancing the Future for Adults with Autism: National Town Hall Meeting (2009)	US	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access
103	Defective by Design (2006)	US	No	National	Issue based Deliberation	Free	Free	Free	Full Democracy	High Access

