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Right to recall is need of the hour

IDO not agree with the view that the right to recall in the case of members of legislatures may introduce an element of instability in the system ("Why recall? Elect carefully" by V Eshwar Anand, May 22). At the outset, we have to understand what recall stands for.

Recall is a term used to describe a process whereby the electorate can petition to trigger a vote on the suitability of an existing elected representative to continue in office. In essence, it gives the voters an opportunity to remove representatives whom they feel are not doing a good job. Recall procedures vary around the globe. Here is a look at the finer nuances of the procedure.

At present, there is no provision in the Indian Constitution or in the Representation of People's Act-1951 for the recall of a duly elected member. In India, provision for recall exists at the level of local bodies in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Through this decision the power is given directly to the electorate --- if two-thirds of the registered voters of a particular constituency sign a petition, the government can take steps for removal of the corporator. Besides, many countries like the Philippines, Venezuela, some states of the USA, Switzerland, etc, have already made provisions in varying

forms in their respective constitutions.

Presently those who are elected once for five years, barring exceptions, do not turn to their respective constituencies and lose the confidence of the electorates. Many of them do not dare to stand for the same constituency. It has been observed that some of the elected representatives remained silent spectators in their respective Houses throughout five years. Under this extenuating position, electorates are helpless and wait for up to five years to make a change. Thus, this is sheer wastage of time and money, besides hampering the development in their respective constituencies. The exact process and form of a recall election varies in different countries.

To cleanse the Indian political system, workload of Election Commission does

not matter. But after the hard work done by the Election Commission, if we get a representative having impeccable character this is not a bad bargaining in the existing system. It provides the electorate the power to remove the elected representatives who fail to perform their role in a satisfactory manner and who grossly neglect their duties.

These are the landmark reforms in our electoral system and if introduced at the state and national levels, these would go a long way in strengthening one of the features of our democracy which is in peril today.

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