ANALYTICAL STUDY ON SYSTEM AND PRACTICE OF LEGISLATION IN SOME COUNTRIES*

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Abstract

Legislation is the most important function of the sovereignty, which is divided into legislative, executive and judicial powers. It is very important and essential for every country to make rule of law, development, stability, peace and tranquility of the country. Legislation is made by the legislature which may be formed according to the Constitution of the state. Some parliaments are two houses, bicameral legislatures and some are single house, unicameral legislatures. The outcomes of good laws are important, but more importantly the enforcement and implementation of these laws are able to reach its goal and purpose. Therefore, pre-legislative scrutiny and post-legislative scrutiny are also important. Moreover, the type of government is also important in the legislative process. The legislatures and legislative processes of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Japan and Myanmar are comparatively analyzed in this paper.

Keywords: Legislation, legislature, parliament, parliamentary and presidential system, and constitution.

Introduction

Legislation is the most important power for an independent sovereign state. A state cannot achieve rule of law without good legislation and law. Legislation process of each state is not the same but the purpose and enforcement of legislation is not different.

According to the Constitution of a state the legislature may be unicameral or bi-cameral. The legislation process is different depending on the composition of legislature or legislative assembly. Moreover, legislation partly depends on the systems of government.

Generally, constitution do not expressly declare that they have adopted a presidential, parliamentary or mix system government. The key characteristic of the presidential system government is that the executive and legislature are separate agents of the electorate, and their origin and survival are thus separated (which creates the possibility of an impasse between the two without a constitutionally available device to break the impasse). The president is both the head of state and the head of government. ²

The key characteristics of a parliamentary system government is that the executive is hierarchically subordinated to the legislature, thus its origin and survival depend on the legislature. The head of government is accountable to parliament (through a vote of no confidence) and dependent on his or her party's support. Generally, the head of state (often a monarch or ceremonial president) is not the same person as the head of government.³

Under the 1947, Constitution of the Union of Myanmar the government was parliamentary system. President was elected by the parliament and the head of state. But, the

² The Design of the Legislature, Markus Bockenforde, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA),2011, page-3

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³ The Design of the Legislature, Markus Bockenforde, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA),2011, page-5

head of government was the prime minister. According to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 1974, the president was the head of state and also the head of government. The president was elected by the Pyithu Hluttaw (parliament). It cannot say presidential or parliamentary system exactly and it was a mix system or a semi- presidential system. Under the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008), the political and economic system, the state structure and other factors were changed. But, president was the head of state and the head of government, was elected by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (parliament). Therefore, the government system was semi-presidential system.

Legislative Authority or Legislature

"Legis" means law and "latum" means making. Legislation means law making. It also refers to the law made by the legislature. It may also be defined as the promulgation of legal rules by an authority which has the power to do so.¹

A legislature is the generic name for the national parliaments and congresses that act as a plenary general assembly of representatives and that have the power to legislate. ² The function of government begins by law making and is followed up by law-enforcement and adjudication functions. Therefore, the legislature is the first organ of the government.

Legislature means the branch of government responsible for making statutory laws. The federal government and most states have bicameral legislature, consisting of a house of representatives and a senate. Also termed legislative assembly.³

The Composition of Legislatures are two types, namely, bi-cameral legislature and unicameral legislature. Bi-cameral legislature has two houses, upper house and lower house. Unicameral legislature has only single house.

United Kingdom: In the United Kingdom the legislature composed of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It is bi-cameral legislature. Most bills can begin either in the House of Commons or in the House of Lords. However, certain bills must start in the House of Commons, such as a bill whose main aim is the imposition of taxation (the annual finance bill is an example of this). Bill of major constitutional importance also conventionally start in the House of Commons. Individual person cannot introduce a bill to the parliament.

United States: The main function of the Congress is the making of law. In the United States no individual person has the right to initiate a law to the congress. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.⁵ Only members of the House of Representatives or Senate may introduce legislation, though occasionally a member introduces legislation by request of the President.

Japan: In accordance with the Constitution of Japan, which came into effect in 1947, the principle of separation of powers are divided into legislative, judicial and executive organs. The

¹ https://www.legalbites.in/law-notes-administrative-law-legislation-types/

² http://www.fresherslive.com/current-affairs/article/legislatures-of-the-world---national-assembly-

³ Black's Law dictionary, eighth edition Bryan. A Garner, Editor in Chief. Page-2639

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legislative process taking a bill through parliament;

⁵ The Constitution of the United States of America, Article 1, Section 1

emperor is the symbol of the state and unity of the people. The Constitution of Japan proclaims a system of representative democracy in which the Diet is the highest organ of state power.¹

Japan's parliament is known as Diet which is a bicameral legislature, composed of the House of Representatives and House of Councilors. The Diet shall be the highest organs of state power, and shall be the sole law-making organ of the state.² All legislations must flow a process leading to final approval in the Diet.

A bill may be submitted to the Diet either by a Diet member or by the Cabinet. The Cabinet may submit a bill before either house. A bill may not be submitted personally.

Myanmar: After the independence on 4th January 1948, Myanmar was administered under the Constitution of the Union of Myanmar (the then Burma).

The legislative power of the Union shall be vested in the Parliament which shall consist of the President, a Chamber of Deputies and a Chamber of Nationalities and which is in the Constitution called "the Parliament" or "the Union Parliament." Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the sole and exclusive power of making laws in the Union shall be vested in the Parliament. It was bi-cameral legislature.

In 1974, the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Myanmar was adopted and Myanmar exercised the Myanmar ways to socialism. The composition of parliament and state structure was changed according to this constitution.

The Pyithu Hluttaw is the highest Organ of state power. It exercised the sovereign powers of the State on behalf of the people.⁴ The legislative power of the State is vested solely in the Pyithu Hluttaw.⁵ At that time it was unicameral legislature.

In 1988, Myanmar changed its policy into market oriented economic system and practiced multi-party democracy system. Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was promulgated by the Announcement No. 7/ 2008 of the State Peace and Development Council on 29th May, 2008.

After the enforcement of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shall have the right to enact laws for the entire or any part of the Union related to matters prescribed in Schedule One of the Union Legislative List. Schedule One of the Union Legislative List includes such as Union Defence and Security Sector, Foreign Affairs Sector, Finance and Planning Sector, Economic Sector, Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Sector, Energy, Electricity, Mining and Forestry Sector and so on. Schedule two, Region or State Legislative list includes Finance and Planning Sector, Economic Sector, Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Sector, Industrial Sector Social Sector and so on which are relating to the respective Region and State. According to section 8 of the 2008 Constitution, Union is constituted by the Union system and there are Region or State Hluttaw in every region and state which possess the legislative power in their areas.

¹ The Constitution of Japan (1947) Article .1 and 6

² The Constitution of Japan (1947) Article.41 and42

³ The Constitution of the Union of Burma. 1947 Section -65

⁴ The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma 1974, Section-41

⁵ The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma 1974, Section-44

⁶ The Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008), Section-96

The legislative power is vested in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw relating to other matters not enumerated in the legislative list of the Union, Region or State and Self-Administered Division Leading Body or Self-Administered Zone Leading Body.¹

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shall enact the required laws if the need arises to do so for the Union territories relating to matters for which legislative power are vested to the Region Hluttaw or the State Hluttaw, or Self-Administered Division Leading Body or Self-Administered Zone Leading Body.²

Most of the countries, a law is initiated and introduced in the parliament by the members of parliament or by the government. Individual person cannot directly submit a bill to the legislature. But a person can submit a bill through the member of parliament.

Legislative Process and Legislative Scrutiny

The outcome of a good law is very important in legislation. Therefore, pre-legislative scrutiny is important in the process of legislation. One of the main tasks of parliament in a democratic system of governance is to consider, debate, review and adopt legislation. No matter how or by whom a draft law is developed, parliament's job is to review the draft law prior to deciding whether or not to adopt it, with or without amendments. The exact process by which a parliament reviews or scrutinizes a draft law is varied and depends on a number of factors. However, there are a few principles that are recognized as best practices for forming the foundation of a review.

The first principle is called "Multiple Votes". It suggests that a parliament considers a draft law and votes upon it more than once before it is considered adopted.³

The second principle is called "Measured Consideration". It recommends that each stage of the review process is given enough time. Preferably, there is a period of several days, or more, between each stage of the review process. This enables concerned citizens and groups to consider the content and for MPs and parliamentary groups to conduct consultations before deciding how they will vote. Again, like the need for multiple votes, this ensures that the parliament and its MPs have thoroughly and thoughtfully considered the proposed law. In several parliaments, the possibility of fast-tracking of legislation has been established. While fast-tracking of legislation is sometimes considered necessary when there are time or constitutional constraints.⁴

The common stages of the institutional review process in parliament are as follows: ⁵

Committee Stage: A smaller group of MPs representing a cross-section of the parliament considers bills in detail and sometimes conducts public consultations. The objective is to look at each clause of the draft law and to propose any amendments to improve it. Where more than one committee reviews the draft law, it is generally accepted that one committee should report back to the plenary the agreed upon amendments. Some parliaments have "standing committees" to

¹ The Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008), -Section 98

² ibid, Section-99

³ Legislative Scrutiny, Overview of Legislative Scrutiny Practices in the UK, India, Indonesia and France, London, November 2018 (Westminster Foundation for Democracy) page- 6

⁴ Legislative Scrutiny, Overview of Legislative Scrutiny Practices in the UK, India, Indonesia and France, London, November 2018 (Westminster Foundation for Democracy) page- 6

⁵ ibid

review Bills. The UK House of Commons has ad-hoc Bills Committees and the House of Lords has Grand Committees.

Review in Principle: This stage can occur before or after the committee stage and is the first vote in the plenary session of the parliament on a draft law. The details are not to be debated but MPs are to decide if the general concepts and principles of the law are appropriate and if the law should continue forward for a more detailed review.

Clause-by-Clause Review: Once the draft has been approved in principle and reviewed in detail by one or more committees, it is presented to the plenary for debate on the individual clauses of the draft law. The recommendations of the committee(s) are considered along with the original wording of the draft.

United Kingdom: The United Kingdom, Westminster parliament is the most experienced and the oldest one in the world. Most of the British colony countries' parliaments are the same types of the United Kingdom.

Most Bills will need to go through the following stages in each House before becoming law.

First reading: This is purely a formal stage, and there is no debate on the Bill.¹ Every bill must be published when it is read the first time.

Second reading: This is a debate on the main principles of the Bill, held in the chamber. A government minister will open the debate by setting out the case for the Bill and explaining its provisions. The opposition will respond and then other members are free to discuss it.²

Committee stage: This is a line by line consideration of the details of the Bill. In the House of Commons this process may be carried out by a specially convened committee of Members of Parliament (a Public Bill Committee) that reflects the strength of the parties in the House as a whole.³

Report stage: In both Houses this stage takes place in the chamber. Only amendments are discussed, so if none are tabled this will be a purely formal stage.⁴

Third reading: After the report stage third reading will be taking place. In the House of Commons this is another general discussion of the Bill which invariably takes place immediately after report. No amendments are possible in the House of Lords. Third Reading will take place on a later day, and tidying up amendments can be tabled.⁵ Both Houses must agree on the text of a Bill before it can become an Act.

In the United Kingdom most of the bills are started by the government. A bill must start in the House of Commons or the House of Lords. But finance bill, taxation and of major importance also conventionally are started in the House of Commons. The important fact of a bill to become a law is both houses must agree on this bill. If there is no agreement between the both houses, the bill cannot become a law and it will be dead.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legislative process taking a bill through parliament

² https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legislative process taking a bill through parliament

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ ibid

United States: The legislative process is a series of steps that a legislative body takes to evaluate, amend and vote on a proposed legislation. The US Congress, state legislatures, county boards and city councils are machineries engaged in the legislative process. Most legislation in the United States is enacted by the Congress and state legislatures.¹

The following is a step by step description of how a proposed legislation or a bill is passed into law. All bills and resolutions that are officially introduced in the House of Representatives or Senate are then "referred" to one or more House or Senate standing committees. Major legislation is usually referred to more than one committee.²

A bill can be referred to a subcommittee or considered by the committee as a whole. If the bill must go through more than one committee, the first committee must refer it to the second committee. The subsequent committee can then only act on the bill. If the committee does not act on a bill, it is equivalent to killing the bill. If the committee approves the bill, it moves on in the legislative process.³

Usually, the committee sends bill to a subcommittee for further study and public hearings. Hearings based on the bill provide the executive branch, experts, other public officials, supporters and opponents of the bill, an opportunity to put on record their views regarding the bill.⁴

Once the bill has been reported with a favorable report and published, it will be placed in chronological order on the legislative calendar of the House of Representatives or Senate and scheduled for "floor action" or debate before the full membership.

Both of the House of Representatives and Senate must approve the conference report. If not approved, it the bill will be sent back to the conference committee for further work.⁵

Japan: Drafting of a Legislative bill: Drafting and introducing a bill of Japan is partially different from the United Kingdom and the United States. A legislative bill that is to be introduced by the Cabinet is drafted by the ministry having the jurisdiction. A ministry draws up the first draft of a legislative bill, once it decides either to enact a new law or to amend or abolish an existing law in order to achieve a policy goal set in the performance of its administrative duties. On the basis of this first draft, consultations take place with other ministries concerned. In addition, where necessary, procedures are followed for its referral to advisory councils or to public hearings. Once all of the above has been completed and the legislative bill is considered ready, the ministry in charge puts the draft into a proper statutory form. The final draft of the legislative bill has now been prepared.⁶

Examination by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau: All legislative bills that are to be introduced by the Cabinet are examined by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau before being brought before Cabinet meetings. In principle the examination of a bill by the Bureau should begin only after the request addressed to the Prime Minister for a Cabinet meeting relating to the bill is sent by the ministry in charge.

¹ https://system. uslegal.com/congress/legislative. process/

² ibid

³ https://system. uslegal.com/congress/legislative. process/

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibio

⁶ http://www.clb.go.jp/english/process/

Cabinet decision to submit the bill to the Diet: As to the legislative bill for which a Cabinet meeting has been requested, if the Cabinet decides in favor without objection, the Prime Minister submits the bill to the Diet (either to the administrative work related to the submission to the Diet of a bill introduced by the House of Representatives or to the House of Councilors). Cabinet is conducted by the Cabinet Secretariat.¹

Examination by the Diet: When a legislative bill is submitted to either the House of Representatives or the House of Councilors, the leader of the House (the Speaker in the case of the House of Representatives, the President in the case of the House of Councilors), in principle, refers the bill to an appropriate committee. The committee then conducts an examination, starting with an explanation by the state minister in charge regarding the reason for proposing the bill.²

When the legislative bill passes both the committee and the plenary of the House to which it was first submitted, it is sent on to the other House (i.e. it is sent from the House of Representatives to the House of Councilors or vice versa). The same procedure involving deliberation and decisions both by a committee and a plenary is then followed by the second House.

Myanmar: In 1988, Myanmar changed its policy into market oriented economic system and practiced multi-party democracy system. Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was promulgated by the Announcement No. 7/ 2008 of the State Peace and Development Council on 29th May, 2008.

After the enforcement of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shall have the right to enact laws for the entire or any part of the Union related to matters prescribed in Schedule One of the Union Legislative List.³

Submission of Bill: The Union level organization formed under the Constitution shall have the right to submit the Bills relating to matters they administered among the matters included in the Union Legislative List to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in accordance with the prescribed procedures.⁴

Bills relating to national plans, annual budgets and taxation, which are to be submitted exclusively by the Union Government shall be discussed and resolved at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in accord with the prescribed procedures.⁵

The Bills submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw by the Union level organizations formed under the Constitution, except the Bills that are prescribed in the Constitution to be discussed and resolved exclusively at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, are entitled to initiate and discuss at either the Pyithu Hluttaw or the Amyotha Hluttaw in accord with the prescribed procedures.⁶

The Bills, which are to be discussed and resolved exclusively at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw need to be vetted before being discussed at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, those Bills shall be vetted jointly by the Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee and the Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee, and

¹ http://www.clb.go.jp/english/process/

² ibid

³ The Constitution of the Republic of the Union Myanmar (2008), Section-96

⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of the Union Myanmar (2008), section 100 (a)

⁵ Ibid section 100 (b)

⁶ ibid section -101

the findings and remarks of the Joint Committee together with the Bill may be submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session in accord with the prescribed procedures.

Promulgation as Law

The parliament(legislature) has been passed the bill; the bill is presented to the Head of State for signature. After the president signs the bill, it becomes into law. Once adopted, the law is presented to the Head of State for signature. Depending on the political system, there is some flexibility in whether the Head of State must agree to the proposed law, or has the possibility to return it to parliament for reconsideration.

A law enters into force once published in the official gazette, or a few days after its publication allowing time for citizens to know about it. This depends on the political system. It is important to note that the date the law enter into force is different from the date it is adopted.

United Kingdom: A bill that has been passed by both Houses becomes law once it has been given Royal Assent and this has been signified to parliament. It will then become an Act. Even then the Act may not have any practical effect until later on. Most provisions in an Act will either come to operation within a set period after Royal Assent (commonly two months later) or at a time fixed by the government.¹

In the United Kingdom most of the bills are started by the government. A bill must start in the House of Commons or the House of Lords. But finance bill, taxation and of major importance also conventionally are started in the House of Commons. The important fact of a bill to become a law is both Houses must agree on this bill. If there is no agreement between the both Houses, the bill cannot become a law and it will be dead.

United States: Once both the House of Representatives and Senate have approved the bill in identical form, it becomes "Enrolled" and sent to the President of the United States. The President may sign the bill into law. If the President is opposed to the bill, he can "veto" it.²

In the United States, although the congress approved a bill and sent it to the president to sign this bill, the president has the power to oppose or to sign it. According to the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008) the President had the same power. But, there is a little difference between Myanmar and the United States. According to the Myanmar Constitution, President may refuse to sign the law. But if the President did not sign the law the day after the completion of the limitation period the law will be enforced as it was signed by the President.

Japan: Enactment of a new law: Except otherwise provided by the Constitution, a legislative bill becomes a law when it passes both the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors. The leader of the House that examined the bill second (the Speaker in the case of the House of Representatives, the President in the case of the House of Councilors) then submits the new law to the Emperor via the Cabinet (the Emperor's approval is a formality).³

Japan is a constitutional monarchy system and emperor is the head of state and symbol of the country. Legislative authority is in the diet which is composed of the representatives elected by the people. Sovereignty, including legislative power comes from the people. It is bi-

¹ http://www.gov.uk/guidance/legislative process taking a bill through parliament

² https://system.uslegal.com/congress/legislative-process/

³ http://www.clb.go.jp/english/process/

cameral parliament and most of the legislative process are same to the other bi-cameral parliaments in the world.

Myanmar: Under the 2008 Constitution, promulgation of law is made under the Section 105 of the Constitution.

- (a) The President shall sign the bills approved or the bills deemed to be approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, within 14 days after the day of receipt, and shall promulgate it as law.
- (b) The President within the prescribed period, may send the bill back to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw together with his comments.
- (c) If the President does not send the bill back to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw together with his signature and comments within the prescribed period, or if the President does not sign to promulgate, on the day after the completion of that period, the Bill shall become a law as if he had signed it.¹

If the President sends the Bill back to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw together with his comments within the prescribed period, the Pyidaungsu hluttaw, after discussion of the President's comments, may accept his comment and resolve to amend the Bill or may resolve to approve the Bill as it is without accepting the President's comment.

When the Bill which is amended in accord with the President's comment or the Bill which is approved as it is without accepting the President's comment is sent back to him by the resolution of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the President shall sign the Bill and promulgate it as law within seven days after receiving the Bill back.

If the Bill sent back by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is not signed by the President within the prescribed period, it shall become law as if he had signed it on the last day of the prescribed period.²

The Laws signed by the President or the laws deemed to have been signed by him shall be promulgated by publication in the official gazette. The Law shall come into operation on the day of such promulgation unless the contrary intention is expressed.³

Conclusion

Legislation is essential to make rule of law in the society. Legislative process and system are important to come out good laws. The constitutional systems and political systems are not same in the world. Some states are republics and some are constitutional monarchy. Moreover, some countries' parliaments are two houses, bi-cameral chambers and some are single house, unicameral chambers.

In some countries, the constitution was changed from time to time. The state structure, political system and legislature are changed in accordance with the state constitution. In Myanmar, there were many constitutions, such as 1947, Constitution of the Union of Burma, 1974, the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 2008. Legislation practice and system also changed,

¹ The Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008), section 105

² ibid, section 106

³ Ibid section 107

depending on the constitution. If legislative process is not a stable and strong format, it will be changed depending on current situation. Political system and constitution may change from time to time, but legislative process and procedures should be the same. Myanmar has no legislative council, no cabinet legislation bureau like the United Kingdom and Japan. Before a bill is submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, there should be a strong and reliable team or organization to vet or scrutinize the bill for the best one.

The United Kingdom and Japan are constitutional monarchy states. The United States is a federal democracy country. Their political systems, state structures, composition of parliaments, legislatures and legislative practices are not same and partially different. The United Kingdom and Japan are constitutional monarchy systems. But election of Members of parliament, submission of a bill is not the same. In the United States the president has veto power to reject a law. But it was not in the United Kingdom and Japan. Every country has their own system which is suitable and appropriate for their situations.

In the modern legislative process, legislative scrutiny which includes pre and post is also important to make the effective laws. Myanmar is not familiar with legislative scrutiny and it needs to learn and implement it in the legislative process. Myanmar needs to find the ways and means and to create the pre- legislative scrutiny system to enact the good laws. Moreover, how to make the enforcement and implementation to reach the goals of law by means of post legislative scrutiny should be applied in Myanmar Hluttaws. Development of legislation will make prosperity, stability, peace, tranquility and rule of law of a country. The members of parliaments and legal draftsmen need to try hard to make better laws for the nation and the people.

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