THE BETTER ALTERNATIVE

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Sir, - This refers to "Presidential system: Short cut to despotism" by Prof. Madhu Dandavate. According to him, the most serious consequence of the presidential system is that in almost all developing countries it has culminated in some form of dictatorship. He has therefore sounded a word of caution that "In search of more stability, India cannot afford to pave the way for such a dispensation."

I think the crucial question to consider is whether the country concerned has adopted the presidential system with the necessary checks and balances, or whether it has introduced the system without such a restraining device, as is the case with many Latin American countries. In countries where this basic precaution has been taken, as in the USA and France, there is no possibility of the system degenerating into a dictatorship.

The presidential system not only provides the much needed stability of government because of the separation of the executive from the legislature, but it also ensures efficient governance of the country by empowering the President to select his team of ministers from amongst top-ranking professionals and talented persons from outside the legislature.

Prof. Dandavate has approvingly referred to the German electoral system and the provisions of state funding and related matters. I would also like to cite the German law on political parties which is worth considering in India, even under the existing system. This law regulates the conduct of political parties. It is mandatory for the parties to hold elections of the office bearers and members of the Executive Committee and also get the accounts audited.

There is indeed a strong case for taking a second look at our Constitution in order to explore a better democratic alternative system than the existing inefficient and corrupt set-up, keeping in view the political systems prevalent in developed countries like the USA, Germany and France.