

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? WHY DEMOCRACY? Extra Questions

Class 9 Political Science

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Class 9 Pol. Sc. Chapter 'What is democracy? Why democracy?' extra questions are given here. All questions are solved. Questions have been taken from Board exams and some other extra important questions are also given.

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See the video given below to understand the chapter 'What is democracy? Why democracy?' in Hindi. Click here for other video parts of this chapter.

What is Democracy? Why democracy? Extra Questions

Democracy and its Features

Q. What is democracy? Give some examples of non-democratic countries.

Answer:

Democracy: The word 'Democracy' has been derived from a Greek word '*Demokratia*'. 'Demos' means people and '*Kratia*' means rule. So, democracy is the rule by the people i.e. democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people.

Examples of non-democratic countries:

- Army rulers of Myanmar are not elected by people.
- Pinochet was a dictator in Chile and he was not elected by people
- Saudi Arabia is still ruled by a king i.e. there is monarchy the supreme ruler.

Q. Define democracy and elaborate any two common features of it. (Board 2014) OR. Examine the three common features of democratic countries. (Board 2014) OR. Explain any three salient features of democracy. (Board 2012)

Ans. Democracy is a form of government that allows people to choose their rulers.

Features:

- Rulers are elected by the people take all the major decisions.
- Regular, free and fair elections offer a choice and fair opportunity to people to change the current rulers. This choice and opportunity is available to all the people on equal basis (political equality)
- Freedom of speech, expression and thought is a feature of democracy.
- The dignity of an individual is recognised.
- Certain political freedom is enjoyed by the citizens. Government is limited by basic rules of the Constitution and citizens' rights.

Q. Democracy is based on the fundamental principle of political equality. Give two instances of denial of equal right to vote. [2016]

Ans. Examples to prove that political equality is denied or still missing in many countries are as follows:

- (i) Until 2015, in Saudi Arabia women did not have the right to vote.
- (ii) In Fiji, the electoral system is such that the vote of an indigenous Fiji has more value than that of an Indian-Fiji.
- (iii) In Estonia, Russian minority finds it difficult to get the right to vote.

Q. Explain the difficulties faced by the people in a non-democratic country. (2012)

Ans. Difficulties are:

- (i) The people do not choose or change their rulers or representatives.
- (ii) No freedom is in the hands of the people. They cannot nearly express their opinions.
- (iii) People cannot form political associations and organize protest and political actions.

Q. Enlist the rights/freedoms which people do not enjoy in non-democratic countries. (Board 2016)

Ans. The rights which the people of non-democratic countries cannot enjoy are:

- (i) People cannot choose/change rulers.
- (ii) No real freedom to express opinions.
- (iii) No freedom to form political associations. (iv) No freedom to organise protests/action.
- (v) No right to question authority.

Q. 'Popular governments can also be undemocratic.' Justify the statement by giving a suitable example. (Board 2016) OR. Highlight any five unfair practices used by the President of Zimbabwe to win the elections. (2015) OR. Why can't Zimbabwe be considered a truly democratic country under Robert Mugabe? State any five reasons. (2016, 2012) OR. How did Robert Mugabe's party

ZANU–PF violate the features of a democratically elected government? Mention any three methods adopted by the party. (2012)

Ans. The example of Zimbabwe shows that popular leaders can also be autocratic. He adopted unfair practices. Free and fair elections are necessary to install or change any regime in a democracy which was not done in Zimbabwe.

- (i) The leader ruling Zimbabwe since 1980 was Robert Mugabe who was democratically elected yet his rule was undemocratic.
- (ii) Unfair practices used in elections.
- (iii) Changes made in the Constitution to increase the powers of the President and reduce his accountability.
- (iv) Opposition party workers harassed the other party workers and disrupted their meetings.
- (v) Public protests against government were declared illegal.
- (vi) Media and press are controlled by the government.
- (vii) The government pressurizes the judges and has ignored several court judgements.
- (viii) There was a law that limits the right to criticize the President.

Q. How did General Pervez Musharraf become the President of Pakistan? (Board 2016, 2015)

Ans. General Pervez Musharraf became the President of Pakistan in the following manner:

- (i) In Pakistan, General Musharraf led a military coup in October 1999.
- (ii) He overthrew a democratically elected government and declared himself the 'Chief Executive' of the country.
- (iii) Later he changed his designation to the President, and in 2002 he held a referendum in the country that granted him a five-year extension

Q. Why Pakistan under General Musharraf cannot be called a democracy? State any five reasons. (Board 2014)

Ans. Pakistan under General Musharraf cannot be called a democracy because:

- (i) People in Pakistan have elected representatives to the National and Provincial Assemblies, but those elected representatives are not the real leaders.
- (ii) The power to take final decisions vests with army officials and General Musharraf.
- (iii) They formally have an elected Parliament and government. The work of the civilian cabinet is supervised by the National Security Council which is dominated by military officials.
- (iv) The real power in Pakistan is in the hands of military officers and not with locally elected representatives.

(v) This cannot be called 'people's rule'. General Musharraf was responsible for the coup.

We can say that Pakistan under General Musharraf cannot be called democracy and the main reason was that final decisions for the country lies with General Musharraf (not a people's elected leader).

Q. "Legal Framework Order of August 2002 in Pakistan was non-democratic in nature." Justify by giving five reasons. (Board 2013)

Ans. Reasons are:

- (i) President can dismiss the National/Provincial Assemblies.
- (ii) Work of civilian cabinet was supervised by military officers.
- (iii) National Security Council was dominated by military officers.
- (iv) In spite of having elected representatives, final power vests with military officers.
- (v) Final decisions were taken by those not elected by people.

Q. Why can't the democratic set-up in China be called a true democracy? Explain. (Board Term I, 2012)

Ans. Democracy in China cannot be called a true democracy because:

- (i) In China, elections do not offer a serious choice.
- (ii) They have to choose the ruling party and the candidates approved by it.
- (iii) There is no way ruling party could be defeated, even if people were against it. These are not fair elections and the characteristics of a true democracy.

Q. Why are elections in China not free and fair? Explain any three reasons. (Board Term I, 2012)

Ans. Reasons are:

- (i) Elections are held after every five years for the Parliament called the National People's Congress.
- (ii) It has the power to appoint the President. It has 3000 members, but some are elected by the army.
- (iii) Only members of the Communist Party are allowed to contest elections.
- (iv) The government is always formed by Communist Party which makes it undemocratic.

Q. Why was every election won by the party called PRI in Mexico? Explain any three reasons. (2014)

OR. "Till 2000, Mexican people seem to have a choice to elect their leader but practically they had no choice." Support this statement with three suitable reasons. (Board 2012)

Ans. Every election was won by PRI because:

- (i) Opposition did not contest and never managed to win.

- (ii) All those who were employed in the government office had to attend party meetings.
- (iii) Teachers of government schools used to force parents to vote for PRI.
- (iv) Media did not support the opposition.
- (v) Polling booths were shifted in the last minute.

Broader Meanings of Democracy

Q. Explain the meaning of representative democracy. How is it significant in contemporary world? (Board 2012)

Ans. Representative democracy means where majority is allowed to take decisions on behalf of all the people.
Significance:

- (i) Modern democracies involve such a large number of people that it is physically impossible for all of them to sit together and take a collective decision.
- (ii) All the citizens do not have the time, the desire or the skills to take part in all the decisions.
- (iv) Direct democracy is thought to be better than the representative democracy but representative democracy is far better suited to dealing with a large electorate.

Q. "Democracy is considered the best form of government and is clearly better than any other alternative." (Board 2016) OR. Q. Why do we prefer democracy than any other form of government? (2013) OR. Why is democracy better than any other form of government? Write five arguments to support your answer. (Board Term I, 2012) OR. Write any five arguments for democracy. (2011).

Ans. Democracy cannot give us everything but it is clearly better than another alternative as it is responsive to the needs of the people who can change the government if their problems are not solved by the elected government.

- (i) Democratic form of government is more accountable and responsive to people's demand.
- (ii) It improves the quality of decision making.
- (iii) It provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts.
- (iv) It enhances the dignity of citizens through inalienable human rights.
- (vi) It is likely to respect people's wishes and allow different kinds of people to live together.
- (vii) It allows us to correct our mistakes.

Q. State any five arguments against democracy. (Board 2014) OR. Give any five arguments against democracy. (Board 2013) OR. What shortcomings do you see in the democratic system of India? List any five. (Board 2012) OR. 'Democracy is the most popular form of government in the modern times.' Justify the statement by assessing five features of democracy. (Board 2011)

Ans. Arguments against democracy:

- (i) Leaders keep changing, leads to instability.
- (ii) Consulting more people leads to delays.
- (iii) Leads to corruption as democracy is based on electoral competition.
- (iv) It involves only power play and political competition with no scope for morality.
- (v) Elected leaders may not know the best interest of the people leading to bad decisions.
- (vi) Ordinary people don't know that what is good for them.

Q. What do you understand by the "broader meaning of democracy"? Explain in three points. (Board 2016)

Ans. The broader meaning of democracy signifies that:

- (i) Democracy is a principle that can be applied to any sphere of life.
- (ii) The most common form of democracy in today's world is rule through people's elected representatives.
- (iii) Every democracy has to try to realise the ideals of a democratic decision making. This cannot be achieved once and for all. It requires a constant effort to save and strengthen democratic forms of decision making.
- (iv) Democracy depends on active political participation by all the citizens. That is why a study of democracy must focus on democratic politics.

Q. How does democracy provide a method to deal with differences and conflicts? (Board 2015) OR. 'Democracy keeps a diverse country like India together.' How? (Board 2014) Ans.

Ans. Democracy provides method to deal with differences and conflicts:

- (i) No one is a permanent winner or loser in a democracy as the government keeps on changing every 5 years. If people are not satisfied, they can change the government.
- (ii) Different groups can live together peacefully as India is democratic and has diversity.
- (iii) Democracy keeps us together — all equal in eyes of laws. There is no discrimination in democracy.

Q. Democracy leads to better decisions in comparison to non-democratic form of government. Give three reasons. (Board 2014) OR. 'Democracy improves the quality of decision making.' Explain.

(Board 2012) OR. Q. "Democracy is based on consultation and discussion." Explain this statement.

(Board 2011)

Ans. Democracy provides chances of better and sustainable decisions as its decision-making process based on consultations and discussions:

- (i) A democratic decision involves many persons, discussion, debates, etc.
- (ii) A number of people together can point out the possible mistakes in any decision.
- (iii) This takes time, but reduces the chances of a rash/ irresponsible decision.

Q. "Democratic government is a more accountable form of government." Justify the statement with suitable arguments. (Board 2012)

Ans. Democratic government is a more accountable form of government due to the following reasons:

- (i) It responds to the needs of the people.
- (ii) It provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts.
- (iii) It enhances the dignity of the citizens.
- (iv) It allows us to correct its mistakes

Q. Rulers and the ruled both are responsible for making an ideal democracy. Justify by giving suitable examples. (Board 2016)

Ans. The citizens of the country can turn a simple democracy into a good democracy by the following ways:

- (i) What we do as citizens can make a difference in making our country more or less democratic.
- (ii) This is the strength and weakness of democracy.
- (iii) The fate of our country depends on not only what rulers do, but also on what we as citizens do.
- (iv) Citizens can take part in politics.
- (v) Democracy depends on active political participation of all citizens.

Q. With the help of an example, prove that a democratic government is a more accountable form of government. (Board 2014, 2013)

Ans. We can take the example of India. In India, the government is accountable to the citizens.

- (i) The Government policies in India are based on the democratic values.
- (ii) It is able to respond to the needs of the people.
- (iii) It holds multiparty elections.
- (iv) It has opposition parties to criticize the government.

- (v) Democracy ensures that decision making will be based on norms and procedures.
- (vi) A democratic government rules within limits set by constitutional law and citizen's right.
- (vii) Democracy provides a method to deal with difference and conflicts.
- (viii) It is better than other forms of government because it allows us to correct our own mistakes.
- (ix) Democracy also increases the dignity of the citizens, because it is based on the principle of political equality.

Q. What weaknesses of democracy do you observe in India? U (DDE–2014) OR. Explain the main challenges to democracy.

Ans. Although democracy has been accepted as the best form of government in the modern world, yet it has its own problems. They are:

- (i) *Growing economic and social inequalities among the people:* Although all the citizens have the right to vote and fight elections, yet only rich people have a chance to win the election.
 - (ii) *Role of anti-social elements:* Voters are forced to vote for a particular candidate or party. Rigging also takes place during the elections.
 - (iii) *Corruption and inefficiency:* In many democratic countries of the world, political leaders and government officials are corrupt, dishonest and inefficient. This affects the working of democracy very badly.
 - (iv) *Casteism and communalism:* There are other big challenges in many democratic countries like India. During election, a large number of voters give vote to the caste and religion of the candidate.
 - (v) *Vote bank politics:* Political parties also keep in mind the caste or religion of a person while distributing the tickets of the election.
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