

Ch 7 - Outcomes of Democracy

1. How does democracy produce an accountable, responsive and legitimate government?

A Accountable -

- a) Democracy makes sure that people will have the right to choose their rulers and if these representatives do not work according to the people, people have the right to remove them.
- b) Whenever possible, citizens should participate in the decision-making process. This is known as transparency. Therefore, the most basic outcome of democracy is that it produces a government that is accountable to citizens and is responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens.
- c) Democracy is based on the idea of free deliberation and negotiation. So some delay is bound to take place. The democratic government will take more time to follow procedures before arriving at a decision. But because it has followed procedures its decisions may be both, more acceptable to the people and more effective.
- d) Regular, free and fair elections; open public debate on major policies and legislations; and citizens' right to information about the government and its functioning.
- e) In substantive terms it may be reasonable to expect from democracy a government that is attentive to the needs and demands of the people and is largely free of corruption.

Responsive -

- a) People wish to be ruled by representatives elected by them.
- b) They also believe that democracy is suitable for their country and their problems would be attended to because the representatives

elected by them would definitely fulfil demands of the people who have elected them.

- c) Democracy's ability to generate its own support is itself an outcome that cannot be ignored.

legitimate -

- a) There is one aspect in which the democratic government is certainly better than its alternatives: democratic government is legitimate government.
- b) Regular elections are a key feature of the democratic government. That is, a democratic government is a legitimate government because it follows procedures and its decisions are more acceptable to the people and are more effective.
- c) It may be slow, less efficient but it is the people's own legitimate government.
- d) Democratic government is the people's own government. That is why there is overwhelming support for the idea of democracy all over the world.
- e) The evidence from South Asia shows that support exists in countries with democratic regimes as well as countries without democratic regimes. People wish to be ruled by representatives elected by them. They also believe that democracy is suitable for their country. Democracy's ability to generate its own support is itself an outcome that cannot be ignored.

2. What are the conditions under which democracies accommodate social diversities?

- a) Democracies accommodate social diversities when it is well understood that democracy is not just the rule of the majority and that the rule of the majority is not just the rule of a single religious or social community.
- b) The majority always needs to work with the minority so that governments function to represent the general view. Majority and Minority opinions are not permanent.

- c) In India, different caste groups, as well as weaker sections are given proper representation. They are given reservation in government jobs and education.
- d) Democracy also ensures that the government is not formed by the majority and has the representation of minorities as well. Every citizen should get a chance of being in majority at some point in time.
- e) In this way, democracy accommodates social diversity as it not only takes the interest of the majority but it also takes care of the interests of weaker sections. Ability to handle social differences, divisions and conflicts is thus a definite plus point of democratic regimes.

3. Give arguments to support or oppose the following assertions:

- (i) Industrialized countries can afford democracy but poor need dictatorship to become rich.

A This statement is incorrect as it can be seen from the examples of India and Zimbabwe. In 1947, India was included in the Third World nations but it is, now, one of the fast-growing economies in the world. On the other hand, Zimbabwe, which was a fairly prosperous nation has now, run into huge international debt with the progression of Robert Mugabe's Regime.

- (ii) Democracy can't reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens.

A This statement is correct. It is rightly said that democracy gives equal opportunity to all the sections of the society. That is why it is necessary that there should be less inequality in democracy. But the present day is quite different from reality. It is so because in a democracy, we cannot stop anyone from earning more money. Everyone gets equal opportunity that one is earning more and the other less. Hence, democracy can't reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens.

- (iii) The Government in poor countries should spend less on poverty reduction, health, education and spend more on industries and infrastructure.

A Government in poor countries should spent less on poverty reduction, health, education and spend more on industries and infrastructure. This is not a wise option as in poor countries, people cannot afford health and education services. Besides becoming an asset for the country, people will become a burden on their country.

(iv) In a democracy, all citizens have one vote, which means that there is the absence of any domination and conflict.

A This is not true as conflict can be eliminated only in an ideal situation.

In real democracies, though every person has one vote, there are divisions among the people. In a democracy, inequality, social injustice, social disparity, economic injustice prevail in society. Major groups of society will also try to dominate the minority of society. In this type of condition, conflicting situations will also prevail in society.

4. Identify the challenges to democracy in the following descriptions. Also suggest policy/institutional mechanism deepen democracy in the given situations:

(i) Following a High Court directive a temple in Orissa that had separate entry doors for Dalits and Non - Dalits allowed entry for all from the same door.

A The challenge to democracy in the first statement is to provide equal status to all its citizens in spite of their caste. For this, the central government assures that all the state governments should not allow any type of untouchability. Untouchability is no more a social practice but a serious offence. If anyone tries to do so then he should be given severe punishment under the law of Untouchability Offences Act of 1955.

(ii) A large number of farmers committing suicides in different states of India.

A The challenge to democracy in the second instance is providing farmers with subsidies which will help them to earn profits and have a satisfactory level of livelihood. Government has brought many schemes to provide the farmers with a minimum support price so that citizens are safeguarded against such incidents.

(iii) Following the allegation of killing three civilians in Jammu in a fake encounter by Jammu and Kashmir police, an inquiry has been ordered.

A The challenge to democracy is to preserve the people's trust in government arms like the police. Due to the delay in decisions and actions the government has lost its trust with the people, but to improve its position the government is being more cautious.

Short Answer Questions :

1 "There is overwhelming support for the idea of democracy all over the world." Support the statement.

A There is an overwhelming support for the idea of democracy all over the world because -

- A democratic government is people's own government.
- The evidence from South Asia shows that the support exists in countries with democratic regimes.
- People wished to be ruled by representatives elected by them.

2. State any three merits of democracy.

A Merits of Democracy are -

- Democracy ensures equality in every spheres of life like political, social and economic.
- It upholds basic individual liberties like freedom of speech, etc
- Due obedience to laws.

3. When is democracy considered successful?

- The rulers elected by the people must take all the decisions and not the rich and powerful.
- The elections must offer a free choice and opportunity to people.
- The choice should be available all people based on political equality.

4. What outcomes can one reasonably expect from democracies?

- A The outcomes one can reasonably expect from democracies are -
- In the political sphere we can expect an accountable and legitimate government.
 - In the economic sphere we can expect minimised political economic inequality.
 - In the social sphere we can expect equal protection to oppressed classes & women.

5. Establish the relationship between democracy and development.

A Relationship between democracy and development are -

- Democracy lags behind dictatorship in terms of development. However, the difference rates of economic development in less developed countries with dictatorship and democracies are negligible.
 - Development depends upon many factors, i.e., size of population, global situation, cooperation from other countries, economic priorities adopted by the country, etc.
- Thus, democracy cannot guarantee economic development but it has several other positive outcomes.

6. Discuss any three factors that describe the successful working of democracy in India.

A Factors for the success of democracy -

- Transparency of democracy.
- It is accountable and responsible for ruling.
- It provides legitimacy.

1. What is Transparency?

A Democracy ensures that decision making will be based on norms and procedures. So, a citizen who wants to know if the decision was taken through the correct procedures and norms can find it out. She has the right and the means to examine the process of decision making. This is known as transparency.

Long Answer Questions

1. How are complaints treated as testimony to the success of democracy?

Explain.

A To certain extent complaints are treated as a testimony to the success of democracy. We can prove the statement by analysing certain facts like :-

- Some people complain that democracy is a less effective government and it is slow in functioning. There is no doubt that non-democratic governments can be more effective because they are fast in their decision-making. But it is not certain that the decisions are right and wrong.
- There is no denying the fact that democracies do not appear to have been successful in reducing economic inequality.
- But, it is only possible in a democracy that people can raise their voice against not only economic inequalities, but also against all types of inequalities. All these facts show that complaints are treated as testimony to the success of democracy.

2. Explain with examples, how the dignity and freedom of citizens are best guaranteed in a democracy.

- A Democracies throughout the world have recognized the fact that people should be treated with due respect. The passion for respect and freedom is the basis of democracy.

- Democracies recognize all individuals as equal. This equality is a big thing for societies which have been built for long on the basis of subordination to and domination.
- Most societies across the world are male-dominant but democracies have created sensitivity that equal treatment of women are necessary ingredients of a democratic society.
- Caste-based inequalities and atrocities are also not acceptable to democracies. All these combined together enhance the dignity and freedom of the individual.

3. "Dem has failed to reduce economic inequality and poverty." Do you agree? Give arguments in support of your answer.

- A In actual life, democracies do not appear to be reducing inequalities.
- The poor constitute a large proportion of our voters and no party likes to lose their votes, yet democratically elected governments have not addressed the question of poverty as one would have expected them to.
 - The people in several poor countries are now dependent on the rich countries even for food supplies.

Arguments in support:

- It enhances the dignity of the individuals.
- It improves the quality of decision-making.
- It provides a method to resolve conflicts.

4. "Democracy is seen to be good in principle but felt to be not so good in practice." Justify the statement.

- A
- If we look at some of the democratic ~~political~~ policies being implemented in more than one hundred countries of the world, democracy seems to be good.
 - For example, having a formal Constitution, holding regular elections, guaranteeing the citizens certain rights, working for the welfare of the people, etc. make us advocate that democracy is good.

- But if we look in terms of social situations, their economic achievements and varied cultures, we find a very big difference in most of the democracies.
- The vast economic disparities, social injustice based on discrimination, standard of life, sex determination, etc, create many doubts about the merits of democracy.
- Whenever some of our expectations are not met, we start blaming the idea of democracy. Since democracy is a form of government, it can only create conditions for achieving our goals if they are reasonable.

5. "Democracy has restored the dignity and freedom of the disadvantaged in India." Justify the statement.

A (a) Democracy in India has strengthened the claims of the disadvantaged and discriminated castes for equal status and equal opportunity.

(b) There are instances still of caste-based inequalities and atrocities, but these lack the moral and legal foundations.

(c) Perhaps it is the recognition that makes ordinary citizens value their democratic rights.

6. "Most destructive feature of democracy is that its examination never gets over." Support the statement with appropriate arguments.

A Expectations from a democracy functions as the criteria for judging any democratic system of governance.

a. The level of scrutiny and analysis does not stop in a democracy. Passing from one situation to another, problems that crop up are continuously dealt with.

b. As people acquire certain benefits of democratic governance, they ask for more and have the inner desire of making the situation better and better with passage of time.

- c. The manner in which people respond when asked about the functioning of democracy, coming up with more expectations and many complaints is in itself a testimony to the success of democracy.
- d. It shows that people have developed awareness and the ability to expect and look critically at the power holders and the high and the mighty.
- e. A public expression of dissatisfaction with democracy shows the success of the democratic project, transforming people from the status of a subject to that of a citizen. For example - Most people today believe that their vote makes a difference to the way the government is run and to their own self-interest.