

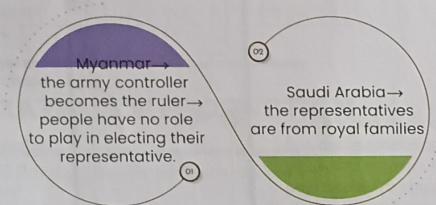


What is Democracy Why Democracy

1. WHAT IS DEMOCRACY

Definition of Democracy → A form of government → where rulers are elected by the choice of people

Examples of non-democratic governments



2. FEATURES OF DEMOCRACY

Few questions for democracy

Who are going to be elected as rulers and what kind of decisions need to be taken by non-elected officials?

What kind of election constitutes a democratic election?

Who are the people who can elect the rulers or get elected as rulers? Should this include every citizen on an equal basis? Can a democracy deny some citizens this right?

What is the form of a democratic government? What are the limitations and freedoms of a decision making by the representative who is elected?

Is it necessary for a democracy to respect some rights of the citizens?

Major Decision by the Elected Leaders

In October 1999 → Pakistani General Pervez Musharraf led the military and overthrew a democratic government → declared he the 'Chief Executive'.

In 2002 → changed his designation to President

In August 2002 → passed the 'Legal Framework Order' → stated that the President can dismiss the national and provincial assemblies.

After elections, elected candidates vested some powers, the final power rested with military officers and General Musharraf. It shows that it is not a democratic country.

Free and Fair Electoral Competition

China → to elect members for the country's parliament called Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (National People's Congress) → election is held every 5 years.

Candidate needs to be a member of the Chinese Communist Party or 8 of its allies to contest elections in 2002-03.

The communist party used to form the government.

Since its independence in 1930 → Mexico holds elections after every six years to elect its President → the country has never been under a military or dictator's rule → But until 2000 every election was won by a party called PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party).

Examples of Democracy – India and the United States etc.

One person, one vote, one value

- Political equality – the basis of democracy.
- Few instances where equal rights are denied have been observed

Until 2015, in Saudi Arabia women did not have the right to vote.

In Estonia, citizen rules made it very much difficult for people from Russian minorities to gain the right to vote.

Fiji's electoral system gave more value to indigenous Fiji than Indian-Fijian.

• These are some examples which contradict the basis of democracy where an adult citizen must have one vote with equal value.

Rule of Law and Respect for Rights

In 1980, Zimbabwe gained independence. The leader Robert Mugabe of the ZANU-PF party, which led for the freedom struggle, ruled the country.

President Mugabe used malpractices in elections so that ZANU-PF always won.

Only the verdicts of the ruling party were presented by TV and Radios since a law existed that restricted the right to criticize the President.

Harassment was done to the independent journalist who talked against the government.

Hence, in a democratic government

Major decisions were taken by the rulers elected by the people.

Fair choice of people in changing rulers.

Equal opportunity to all the citizens in choosing their representative

Government's power is limited by the basic rules of the constitution.

3. WHY DEMOCRACY?

Arguments against Democracy

A
Political competition and power-play can take the dominance over morality.

B
Delay in decision making because of multiple consultations

C
Lack of knowledge in the public interest can result in wrong decision making.

D
Democracy is based on electoral competition, it brings corruption

E
People electing their representative may be unaware of their wellbeing

- 01 A democratic government is always a better government since it is an accountable form of government.
- 02 Improves decision making quality
- 03 Gives a method to deal with differences and conflicts.
- 04 Enhances citizens' dignity
- 05 Better compared to other forms of government since it allows us to correct its own mistakes.

4. Broader Meaning of Democracy

Under representative democracy→ everyone does not rule → The elected representative takes a decision on behalf of their people:

- Modern democracies are characterized by huge populations→makes it impossible for them to make the right decision
- The citizen does not have the time, the desire or the skills to take part in all the decisions

Understanding democracy can help people to identify the weakness of existing democracy and can differentiate between minimal and good democracy.