

Ch-5 Outcomes Of Democracy (Civics)

How to Assess Democracy's Outcomes?

- Democracy is considered a better form of government than dictatorship because it:
 - Promotes equality among citizens
 - Enhances the dignity of the individual
 - Improves the quality of decision-making
 - Provides a method to resolve conflicts
 - Allows for correction of mistakes through regular feedback and elections.

Accountable, Responsive, and Legitimate Government

- Democracy produces an accountable, responsive, and legitimate government:
 - People have the right to choose and change their rulers through elections
 - Decision-making in democracy is transparent; citizens can question and challenge the process
 - Governments formed by elected representatives must follow constitutional rules
 - Democratic governments are considered legitimate because they are based on the consent of the governed.

Economic Outcomes: Growth and Equity

- A democracy does not guarantee the fastest economic growth compared to dictatorships, but:
 - Democracy provides a stable environment for economic activities and prioritizes the welfare of all.
 - Economic growth depends on the country's size, global situation, cooperation from other countries, and government policies
 - Democracies generally have negligible differences in economic development compared to less developed non-democratic countries
 - Economic inequalities tend to persist, but democracy strives through policies and programs to minimize the gap between rich and poor.

Social Outcomes: Accommodation and Harmony

- Democracy accommodates social diversity and maintains peace and harmony in society:
 - Provides the institutional mechanism to resolve differences among various social groups (e.g., religion, language, caste)
 - Respects and protects the interests of minorities, preventing dominance by any majority group
 - Manages social differences, divisions, and conflicts by peaceful discussion rather than violence.
 - Promotes dignity and freedom for individuals, allowing them to voice their opinions, organize, and protest peacefully.

Economic Growth and Development

- While democracies are expected to produce good governments, it's not always fair to assume they automatically guarantee economic development—a gap exists between the ideal and the reality.
 - Evidence shows that many democracies did not meet expectations for economic development compared to dictatorships.
 - From 1950 to 2000, dictatorships had a slightly higher average rate of economic growth than democracies.
 - The inability of democracy to consistently achieve higher economic development is a concern, but it should not be the sole reason to reject democracy.
 - Economic development depends on several factors beyond government type:
 - Population size
 - Global situation
 - International cooperation
 - Country-specific economic priorities

Comparing Democracies and Dictatorships

- The difference in economic growth rates between less developed countries with democratic governments and those with dictatorships is minimal, or negligible.
- Democracy does not guarantee the highest economic growth, but it generally manages not to fall behind dictatorships.

Main Arguments and Evidence

- Debates about democracy's economic outcomes are passionate and must be based on facts and evidence, not just opinions.
- Over the years, researchers have studied the relationship between democracy, economic growth, and economic inequalities using data.

Key Findings from Tables

Table 1: Economic Growth under Different Regimes (1950–2000)

- On average, dictatorial regimes had a slightly better record of economic growth than democratic ones:
- All democratic regimes: Growth rate = 3.95%
- All dictatorial regimes: Growth rate = 4.42%
- Poor countries under dictatorship: Growth rate = 4.34%
- Poor countries under democracy: Growth rate = 4.28%
- The difference in growth rate is slight and “virtually no difference” exists when comparing poor countries under both systems.

Table 2: Inequality of Income in Selected Countries

- Within democracies like South Africa and Brazil, the richest 20% of the population control more than 60% of the national income, leaving less than 3% for the poorest 20%.
- Countries such as Denmark and Hungary display more equitable income distribution, where the top 20% control about 34% and the bottom 20% get 9–10% of the income.

Reduction of Inequality and Poverty

- Although democracy is based on political equality (one person, one vote), economic inequalities still remain
- Democracies strive to improve the living standards of marginalized and weaker sections, but complete equality is still an ongoing challenge.

Challenges and Limitations

- Challenges within democracy include:
- Political instability in some regions

- Delay in decision-making as consensus is prioritized over speed
- Corruption and misuse of power if accountability mechanisms are weak
- Risk of majority domination over minority interests
- Democracy is always a “work in progress”—people constantly demand more, leading to ongoing efforts for better governance and outcomes.

Key Points to Remember

- Democracy's actual outcomes may not always match expected outcomes, especially regarding eradication of poverty and inequality. However, it is still preferred because it empowers citizens and enables continuous improvement of society.
 - Citizens play a vital role in holding governments accountable through elections, protests, and civil society actions.