

BROADER MEANINGS OF DEMOCRACY

What is Democracy? Why Democracy?

A simple definition of Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people.

Summary definition of Democracy

1. In a democracy the final decision making power must rest with those elected by the people.
2. A democracy must be based on a free and fair election where those currently in power have a fair chance of losing.
3. In a democracy, each adult citizen must have one vote and each vote must have one value.
4. A democratic government rules within limits set by constitutional law and citizens' rights

Why Pakistan under General Musharraf should not be called a democracy?

1. In Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf led a military coup and overthrew a democratically elected government and declared himself the 'Chief Executive' of the country.
2. Later he conducted a referendum which was based on malpractices and fraud. He changed his designation as President in 2002.
3. In August 2002 he issued a 'Legal Framework Order' that amended the constitution of Pakistan. According to this Order, the President can dismiss the national or provincial assemblies.
4. The work of the civilian cabinet is supervised by a National Security Council which is dominated by military officers.
5. After passing this law, elected representatives have some powers but the final power rests with military officers and General Musharraf himself. Because of these reasons Pakistan under General Musharraf should not be called a democracy.

Should we consider the elections held in China and Mexico are democratic elections? Give reasons.

China

1. In China, single party system is practiced.
2. Before contesting elections, a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party.
3. Only those who are members of the Chinese Communist Party or eight smaller parties allied to it were allowed to contest elections.
4. The government is always formed by the Communist Party of China.

Mexico

1. Since its independence in 1930, every election was won by a PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). Opposition parties did contest elections, but the PRI uses many dirty tricks to win elections.
2. All those who were employed in government offices had to attend its party meetings.

3. Teachers of government schools used to force parents to vote for the PRI. Media largely ignored the activities of opposition political parties except to criticise them.
4. Sometimes the polling booths were shifted from one place to another in the last minute, which made it difficult for people to cast their votes. The PRI spent a large sum of money in the campaign for its candidates.

Which are the countries deny equal right to vote? How?

1. In Saudi Arabia women do not have the right to vote.
2. Estonia has made its citizenship rules in such a way that people belonging to Russian minority find it difficult to get the right to vote.
3. In Fiji, the electoral system is such that the vote of an indigenous Fiji has more value than that of an Indian-Fijian.

How is Zimbabwe government undemocratic and autocratic? Give reasons.

1. Zimbabwe has been ruled by ZANU-PF, the party that led the freedom struggle. Its leader, Robert Mugabe, is popular but also uses unfair practices in elections.
2. Over the years his government has changed the constitution several times to increase the powers of the President and make him less accountable.
3. Opposition party workers are harassed and their meeting disrupted. Public protests and demonstrations against the government are declared illegal. There is a law that limits the right to criticise the President.
4. Television and radio are controlled by the government and give only the ruling party's version. The government has ignored some court judgments that went against it and has pressurised judges.

What are the arguments put forward against democracy?

1. Leaders keep changing in a democracy. This leads to instability.
2. Democracy is all about political competition and power play. There is no scope for morality.
3. So many people have to be consulted in a democracy that it leads to delays.
4. Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people. It leads to bad decisions.
5. Democracy leads to corruption for it is based on electoral competition.
6. Ordinary people don't know what is good for them; they should not decide anything.

What are the arguments put forward for democracy?

1. A democratic government is a better government because it is a more accountable form of government.
2. Democracy improves the quality of decision making by consulting various people and institutions.
3. Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts. In any society where people belong to different regions, speak different languages, practice different religions and have different castes.
4. Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens by providing equality, fundamental rights and freedoms.

5. Democracy is better than other forms of government because it allows us to correct its own mistakes.

BROADER MEANINGS OF DEMOCRACY

Two types of Democracy

1. **Direct democracy**- In which all the citizens of the country assemble in a place and directly take part in decision making.
2. **Indirect democracy or Representative Democracy**-In which people elect their representatives and those elected representatives make major decision. The majority of people rule through their elected representatives.

Why is Representative Democracy become necessary in the present world?

1. Modern democracies involve such a large number of people that it is physically impossible for them to sit together and take a collective decision.
2. Even if they could, the citizen does not have the time, the desire or the skills to take part in all the decisions.

What is an ideal standard democracy?

1. True democracy will come to a country only when no one goes hungry to bed.
2. In a true democracy every citizen must be able to play equal role in decision making with equal right to vote, equal information, basic education, equal resources and a lot of commitment.

Assignment

1. Explain Summary definition of Democracy
2. Why Pakistan under General Musharraf should not be called a democracy?
3. Should we consider the elections held in China and Mexico are democratic elections? Give reasons.
4. Which are the countries deny equal right to vote? How?
5. How is Zimbabwe government undemocratic and autocratic? Give reasons.
6. What are the arguments put forward against democracy?
7. What are the arguments put forward for democracy?

Explain the broader meaning of democracy?

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6. What are the arguments put forward against democracy?
7. What are the arguments put forward for democracy?
8. Explain the broader meaning of democracy?

Question1 Here is some information about four countries. Based on this information, how would you classify each of these countries. Write 'democratic', 'undemocratic' or 'not sure' against each of these.

a. Country A: People who do not accept the country's official religion do not have a right to vote.

Answer (a) Undemocratic

b. Country B: The same party has been winning elections for the last twenty years.

Answer (b) Not sure

c. Country C: Ruling party has lost in the last three elections.

Answer (c) Democratic

d. Country D: There is no independent election commission.

Answer (d) Undemocratic

Question2 Here is some information about four countries. Based on this information, how would you classify each of these countries? Write 'democratic', 'undemocratic' or 'not sure' against each of these.

a. Country P: The parliament cannot pass a law about the army without the consent of the Chief of Army.

Answer (a) Undemocratic

b. Country Q: The parliament cannot pass a law reducing the powers of the judiciary.

Answer (b) Democratic

c. Country R: The country's leaders cannot sign any treaty with another country without taking permission from its neighbouring country.

Answer. : (c) Undemocratic

d. Country S: All the major economic decisions about the country are taken by officials of the central bank which the ministers cannot change.

Answer (d) Undemocratic

Question3 Which of these is **not** a good argument in favour of democracy? Why?

- a. People feel free and equal in a democracy.
- b. Democracies resolve conflict in a better way than others.
- c. Democratic government is more accountable to the people.
- d. Democracies are more prosperous than others.

Answer : Option 'D' Democracies are more prosperous than others is not a good argument in favour of democracy as there are many countries such as Sri Lanka, India which opted for democracy but not prosperous where other countries such as China or Saudi Arabia which have communist and monarchy rule respectively are more prosperous. The prosperity of any country depends on the correct policies of government. It also depends on the availability of natural resources not with the form of government. Democracy can't guarantee prosperity.

Question4 Each of these statements contains a democratic and an undemocratic element. Write out the two separately for each statement.

a. A minister said that some laws have to be passed by the parliament in order to conform to the regulations decided by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Answer : (a) A minister said that some laws have to be passed by the parliament – Democratic element

to the regulations decided by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). – Undemocratic element

b. The Election Commission ordered re-polling in a constituency where large-scale rigging was reported.

Answer : (b) The Election Commission ordered re-polling in a constituency – Democratic element large-scale rigging was reported – Undemocratic element

c. Women's representation in the parliament has barely reached 10 per cent. This led women's organisations to demand one-third seats for women.

Answer : (c) This led women's organisations to demand one-third seats for women. – Democratic element Women's representation in the parliament has barely reached 10 per cent. – Undemocratic element

Question5 Which of these is **not** a valid reason for arguing that there is a lesser possibility of famine in a democratic country?

- a. Opposition parties can draw attention to hunger and starvation.
- b. Free press can report suffering from famine in different parts of the country.
- c. Government fears its defeat in the next elections.
- d. People are free to believe in and practise any religion.

Answer : Option 'd' is not a valid reason for arguing that there is a lesser possibility of famine in a democratic country. This is because practising a religion has nothing to do with preventing famine.

Question6 There are 40 villages in a district where the government has made no provision for drinking water. These villagers met and considered many methods of forcing the government to respond to their need.

Which of these is **not** a democratic method?

- a. Filing a case in the courts claiming that water is part of right to life.
- b. Boycotting the next elections to give a message to all parties.
- c. Organising public meetings against government's policies.
- d. Paying money to government officials to get water.

Answer : Option 'd', which advocates paying the government officials money, is an undemocratic method.

Question7 Write a response to the following arguments against democracy:

a. Army is the most disciplined and corruption-free organisation in the country. Therefore army should rule the country.

bRule of the majority means the rule of ignorant people. What we need is the rule of the wise, even if they are in small numbers.

c. If we want religious leaders to guide us in spiritual matters, why not invite them to guide us in politics as well. The country should be ruled by religious leaders.

Answer :A democracy is the government elected by the people, from among the people themselves. The Army is integral in protecting the country, but it is not elected by the people; hence, it cannot form a democratic government. The second statement is not true as all people are intelligent to some extent. The third statement is dangerous because bringing religion into politics can cause serious conflict.

Question8 Are the following statements in keeping with democracy as a value? Why?

a. Father to daughter: I don't want to hear your opinion about your marriage. In our family children marry where the parents tell them to.

Answer:

a).This statement of father is undemocratic as every adult has right to choose their life partner. The father does not have right to impose their choice on daughter.

b. Teacher to student: Don't disturb my concentration by asking me questions in the classroom.

Answer:

b).This statement also is not under democratic setup. The student have right to ask question. This is undemocratic if his right is denied.

c. Employee to the officer: Our working hours must be reduced according to the law.

Answer:

c).The third statement is democratic as it calls for a rule of law which is beneficial for the employees.

Question9 Consider the following facts about a country and decide if you would call it a democracy. Give reasons to support your decision

a. All the citizens of the country have right to vote. Elections are held regularly.

Answer :(a) This is democracy as only democratic setup allow right to vote and also election at regular time period.

b. The country took loan from international agencies. One of the conditions for giving loan was that the government would reduce its expenses on education and health.

Answer :(b) A democratic country has to look after the welfare of its people. The condition of reducing of expenses on health and education is against the welfare of the people.

c. People speak more than seven languages but education is available only in one language, the language spoken by 52 percent people of that country.

Answer :(c) In democracy, education is available in all languages as it basic right. Official language can be the language of majority of people.

d. Several organisations have given a call for peaceful demonstrations and nation wide strikes in the country to oppose these policies. Government has arrested these leaders.

Answer : (d) In a democracy people have right to express their opinion in peaceful manner. It is undemocratic behaviour.

e. The government owns the radio and television in the country. All the newspapers have to get permission from the government to publish any news about government's policies and protests.

Answer : (e) This is undemocratic nature as in democracy freedom of press and media is must. If government own radio and television then freedom of press violated.

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? WHY DEMOCRACY?

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

” Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people” .In this type of government power is always in the hands of people. The word democracy comes from the Greek word ‘demokratia’.

DEMOS-It means people AND, KRATIA—means rule.

Forms of government---

(a)Democratic government (b) Non democratic governments

Myanmar where the army rules, Dictator Pinochet’s rule in Chile, or President Nkrumah’s rule in Ghana was not democratic. They were not chosen by the people. Hereditary kings, like the king of Nepal or Saudi Arabia, are also not democratic rulers. They rule because they were born into noble families

Several features of democracy.

1. In a democracy final decision making power must rest with those elected by the people.
2. In Pakistan, President Musharraf has the power to dismiss national and state assemblies; so the final powers rest with the army and the General himself. We cannot call it a democracy.
3. A democracy must be based on a free and fair election where those currently in power have a fair chance of losing.
For example, in Mexico elections have been held every six years since 1980. But the same party, PRI, has won the elections. Obviously there has been rigging and malpractices, with freedom denied to opposition. This is not what a democracy should be.
4. In a democracy people’s will is ascertained by each adult citizen having one vote and each vote has one value. Democracy is based on the fundamental principle of political equality.
5. A democratic government rules within limits set by constitutional and citizens’ rights.

6. A democratic government cannot do what it likes after winning the elections. It has to respect certain basic rules and is accountable not only to the people but also to other independent officials.

WHY DEMOCRACY?

Merits of democracy

- 1-Democracy is better than any other forms of government because it responds to needs of the people
- 2-Democracy improves the quality of decision making as it is based on consultation and discussion.
- 3-It provides peaceful solution to every problem.
- 4- In democracy no one is a permanent winner or a permanent loser.
- 5-It allows us to correct its own mistakes.
- 6- Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts.
- 7-It enhances the dignity of citizens.

De-merits of democracy

There has been **criticism** of democracy by various people. The charges are that:

1. It creates instability by changing its leaders frequently.
2. Democracy is about power play and political competition.
3. There is no scope for morality.
4. So many people have to be consulted before any issue is solved. It leads to delay.
5. Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people.
6. It leads to corruption for it is based on electoral corruption.
7. Ordinary people do not know what is good for them, so decision making should not be left to them.

Very short answer type Questions [1 MARK]

Q.1.The word 'Democracy' comes from the Greek word ...

Ans. Demokratia

Q.2. Who led a military coup in Pakistan in 1999?

Ans. Pervez Musharraf

Q.3. 'One person, one vote' means ...

Ans. One person has one vote and each vote has equal value

Q.4. How many members are elected to the National People's Congress from all over China?

Ans. 3000

Q5. Why can the Chinese government not be called a democratic government even though elections are held there?

Ans. Government is always formed by the Communist Party

Q6. Which party always won elections in Mexico since its independence in 1930 until 2000?

Ans. Institutional Revolutionary Party

Q.7. Democracy must be based on ...

Ans. Free and fair election

Q.8. What is Constitutional Law?

Ans. Law to set up Constituent Assembly

Q9. In which period did China face one of the worst famines that have occurred in the world?

Ans. 1958-61

Q10. A democratic government is better than a non-democratic government because

Ans. It is a more accountable form of government

Q.12. Democracy improves the quality of decision-making because ...

Ans. Decisions are taken by consultation and discussion

Q.13. How does democracy allow us to correct its own mistakes?

Ans. The rulers can be changed

Q.14. Which body in Indian political system is an example of direct democracy?

Ans. Gram Sabha

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS [3 MARKS]

Q.1. How can you say that every government that holds an election is not a democracy? Give an example to prove your point.

Ans. 1. It is true that every government that holds an election is not a democracy.

2. In many dictatorships and monarchies, there are formally elected parliaments and governments but the real power is with those who are not elected.

3. Pakistan under General Musharraf could not be called a democracy because people there elected their representatives to the national and provincial assemblies but the power to take final decision rested with army officials and with General Musharraf.

Q.2. In China, elections are held after every five years. In spite of this, China does not have a democratic government. Why?

Ans. 1. In China, elections are regularly held after every five years for electing the country's Parliament.

2. The Parliament has the power to appoint the President of the country. It has nearly 3,000 members elected from all over China.
3. Some members are elected by the Army. Before contesting elections, a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party.
4. The government is always formed by the Communist Party.

Q.3. In which way is the right to vote denied in Saudi Arabia and Fiji?

Ans. 1. In Saudi Arabia women do not have the right to vote.

2. In Fiji, the electoral system is such that the vote of an indigenous Fijian has more value than that of an Indian Fijian.

3. In both the countries, the right to vote is denied as there is no political equality. In a democracy, each adult citizen must have one vote and each vote must have one value.

Q.4. 'Democracy is based on consultation and discussion.' Explain.

Ans. 1. Consultation and discussion help democracy prosper.

2. A democratic decision always involves many persons, discussions and meetings. When a number of people put their heads together, they are able to point out possible mistakes in any decision.

3. This reduces the chances of rash or irresponsible decisions. Thus democracy improves the quality of decision-making.

Q.5 Is it possible for any country to become a perfect democracy? Give reasons.

Ans. 1. No country is a perfect democracy as every democracy has to realise the ideals of democratic decision-making. This cannot be achieved once and for all.

2. This requires a constant effort to save and strengthen democratic forms of decision-making.

3. What we do as citizens can make a difference to making our country more or less democratic.

Q.6. Why is Democracy considered the best form of government? Give three reasons.

Ans. Democracy is a more accountable form of government.

- (i) It improves the quality of decision-making
- (ii) It enhances the dignity of citizens.
- (iii) It allows us to correct its own mistakes.

Q.7 What is the role of citizen in promoting democracy?

Ans .Every citizen should be able to play equal role in decision-making. For this a citizen not only needs an equal right to vote but also needs to have equal information, basic education and equal resources.

Q.8. Explain any three differences between democratic country and non-democratic country?

Ans. In a Democratic country—

(i) Each adult citizen has a vote; (ii) Each vote has one value; and (iii) Free and fair elections are held.

In a non-democratic country — (i) Election do not offer a choice and fair opportunity; (ii) Rulers are not elected by the people; and (iii) the rulers have unlimited power.

Q.9. Explain any three features of democracy.

Ans. According to Democracy— (i) Rulers elected by the people take all the major decisions

(ii) Elections offer a choice and fair opportunity to the people to change the current rulers; and

(iii) This choice and opportunity is available to all the people on an equal basis.

Q.10. Why is Zimbabwe not considered a democratic country?

Ans 1. It is ruled by ZANU-PF, the party that led the freedom struggle.

2. Its leader, Robert Mugabe has been ruling the country since independence.

3. Elections are held regularly but always won by the ZANU-PF.

4. President Mugabe uses unfair means in the elections.

5. He has changed the constitution several times to increase the power of the president. 6. Radio and TV are controlled by the government.

Q.11. “Democracy allows people to correct their own mistakes”. Support the given statement with three points.

Ans.1. The advantage in democracy is that mistakes made by a government cannot be hidden for long.

2. There is a space for public discussion on these mistakes and there is room for correction.

3. Either the rulers have to change their decisions or they can be changed.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS [5 MARKS]

Q.1. What were the steps taken by Musharraf in Pakistan to empower himself?

Ans:- 1. In Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf led a military coup in October 1999. He overthrew a democratically elected government and declared himself the 'Chief Executive' of the country.

2. Later he changed his designation to President and in 2002 held a referendum in the country that granted him a five-year extension. This referendum was based on fraud and malpractices.

3. In 2002, he issued a 'Legal Framework Order' that amended the Constitution of Pakistan.

4. According to this order, the President could dismiss the national or provincial assemblies.

Q.2. On the basis of the various examples given in the chapter, state what should be the four features of a democracy?

Ans. Four features of a democracy are –

1. Representatives elected by the people take all the major decisions.

2. Elections offer a choice and fair opportunity to the people to change the current rulers.

3. This choice and opportunity is available to all the people on an equal basis.

4. The exercise of this choice leads to a government limited by basic rules of the constitution and citizens' rights.

Q.3 Enumerate the arguments given against democracy.

Ans. Some of the arguments against democracy are as follows:

1. Leaders keep changing in a democracy.

2. This leads to instability.

3. Democracy is all about political competition and power play, with no scope for morality.

4. Since so many people are to be consulted in a democracy, it leads to delays.

5. Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people; so it leads to bad decisions.

6. Democracy leads to corruption as it is based on electoral competition.

Q.4 How does democracy provide a method to deal with differences and conflicts?

Ans. 1. In any society people are bound to have differences of opinions and interests.

2. These differences are particularly sharp in a country like India which has lot of social diversity.
3. The preference of one group may clash with those of the other groups. Democracy provides the only peaceful solution to this problem.
4. In democracy, no one is a permanent winner or a permanent loser.
5. Different groups can live with one another peacefully. In a diverse country like ours, democracy keeps our country together.

Q.5. Write any four demerits of democracy.

Ans. (1) Leaders keep changing in a democracy. This leads to instability. (2) Democracy is all about political competition and power play. There is no scope for morality. (3) So many people have to be consulted in a Democracy that it leads to delays. (4) Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people. It leads to bad decisions.

Q.6. What is the significance of the rule of law and respect for rights in democratic country?

Ans. 1. A democratic government cannot do whatever it likes simply because it has won an election.

2. It has to respect some basic rules.

3. In particular it has to respect some guarantees to the minorities. Every major decision has gone through a series of consultation.

4. Every office bearer has certain rights and responsibilities assigned by the constitution and the law.

5. Each is accountable not but only to law to other independent officials.

Q.7. Why does a democratic country always need a constitution?

Ans. All countries that are democratic will have constitutions. After the war of independence against Great Britain the Americans gave themselves a constitution. After the revolution the French people approved a democratic constitution. Since then it has become a practice in all democracies to have a written constitution.

Q.8 “Democracy enhances the dignity of citizen.” Justify this statement.

Ans. Democracy is based on the principle of political equality on recognising that the poorest and the least educated have the same status as the rich and the educated. People are not subjects of a ruler. They are the rulers themselves. Even when they make mistakes they are responsible for their conduct.

Q.9. Give reasons why democracies resolve conflict in a better way than other forms of governments.

Ans. Democracies resolve conflict in a better way.

- (i) it improves the quality of decision making.
- (ii) It has scope for consultation and discussion.
- (iii) In a Democracy conflicts are no solved by brutal force but by peaceful solutions.
- (iv) Even when people/associations/ government make mistakes for a democracy allows them to correct their mistakes; and
- (v) Democracy provides a forum for consultations and discussions to resolve conflicts.

Q.10. Despite its demerits why is democracy the most preferred form of government? Explain.

Ans. Despite its demerits democracy is still the most preferred form of government as it is—

A more accountable form of government. It responds to the needs of the people because the constitution requires it; and (ii) Better decision came for when many heads together strive to do so, this reduces the chance of rash decisions or irresponsible decisions plus a democracy enhances the dignity of citizens. It is clearly better than any other form of government.

Q.11. Why is democratic government a better government? Mention four reasons.

Ans. A democratic government is a better government as— (i) it offers better changes of a good decision; (ii) it is always likely to respect people wishes and allows; (iii) different kinds of people to live together; and (iv) even when it fails to do something for the people it allows a way of correcting its mistakes and offers more dignity to all citizens. That is why a democracy is considered the best form of government.

XXXTRA AMMUNITION

Q.1. Why has India never had a famine of the level which occurred in China in 1958-61?

Ans. In China's famine of 1958-61, nearly three crore people died. In those days India's economic condition was not much better than China. Yet India did not have a famine of the kind China had. The reason was the difference in the economic policies of the two countries. Democratic government in India responded to the food shortage in a way that Chinese government did not. If China too had had multi-party elections, an opposition party and a press free to criticise the government, so many people would not have died in the famine.

Q.2 Why is it not possible for the people to rule directly but through elected representatives?

Ans. The people cannot rule directly but only through their elected representatives because, firstly, modern democracies involve such a large number of people that it is physically impossible for them to sit together and take a collective decision. Secondly, even if they could, the citizens do not have the time, the desire or the skill to take part in all the decisions.

Q.3 Is China a democratic country or not? Give two arguments in favour of your answer.

Ans. China is not a democratic country. (i) Only those who are members of the Chinese Communist Party or eight smaller parties allied to it are allowed to contest elections;

before contesting elections a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party.

Q.4. How does democracy in a country enhance the dignity of an individual? State three points

Ans. (i) Democracy is based on the principle of political equality on recognising that the poorest and the least educated have the same status as the rich and the educated.

(ii) People are not subjects of a ruler they are the rulers themselves.

(iii) Even when they make mistakes, they are responsible for their conduct.

Q.5. Why is democracy called a “government by discussion”?

Ans. 1. It is called a “government by discussion” because a democracy is based on consultation and discussion. A democratic decision always involves many people’s discussions and meetings.

2. When a member of people together thinks over a certain matter they are able to point out possible mistakes. This takes time. But there is big advantage in taking time. This reduces rash decisions, problems are not resolved by brutal force but by peaceful discussions. It offers best alternative that we know.

Q.6 “Democracy improve the quality of decision making.” Explain.

Ans. Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts. In any society people are bound to have difference of opinions and interests. These differences are particularly sharp a country like ours which has an amazing social diversity. People belong to different regions speak different languages, practise different religions and have different castes. Preferences of a group can clash with

those of other groups. Democracy provides the only peaceful solution to this problem. In democracy no one is a permanent winner. No one is a permanent loser. In a diverse country like India, democracy keeps our country together.

WHAT DEMOCRACY? WHY DEMOCRACY?

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q.1. How can you say that every government that holds an election is not a democracy? Give an example to prove your point.

Ans. It is true that every government that holds an election is not a democracy. In many dictatorships and monarchies, there are formally elected parliaments and governments but the real power is with those who are not elected. Pakistan under General Musharraf could not be called a democracy because people there elected their representatives to the national and provincial assemblies but the power to take final decision rested with army officials and with General Musharraf.

Q.2. In China, elections are held after every five years. In spite of this, China does not have a democratic government. Why?

Ans. In China, elections are regularly held after every five years for electing the country's Parliament. The Parliament has the power to appoint the President of the country. It has nearly 3,000 members elected from all over China. Some members are elected by the Army. Before contesting elections, a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party. The government is always formed by the Communist Party.

Q.3. In which way is the right to vote denied in Saudi Arabia and Fiji?

Ans. In Saudi Arabia women do not have the right to vote.

Advertisement

In Fiji, the electoral system is such that the vote of an indigenous Fiji has more value than that of an Indian Fijian. In both the countries, the right to vote is denied as there is no political equality. In a democracy, each adult citizen must have one vote and each vote must have one value.

Q.4. Why has India never had a famine of the level which occurred in China in 1958-61?

Ans. In China's famine of 1958-61, nearly three crore people died. In those days India's economic condition was not much better than China. Yet India did not have a famine of the kind China had. The reason was the difference in the economic policies of the two countries. Democratic government in India responded to the food shortage in a way that Chinese government did not.

If China too had had multi-party elections, an opposition party and a press free to criticise the government, so many people would not have died in the famine.

Q.5. 'Democracy is based on consultation and discussion.' Explain.

Ans. Consultation and discussion help democracy prosper. A democratic decision always involves many persons, discussions and meetings. When a number of people put their heads together, they are able to point out possible mistakes in any decision.

This reduces the chances of rash or irresponsible decisions. Thus democracy improves the quality of decision-making.

Q.6. Why is it not possible for the people to rule directly but through elected representatives?

Ans. The people cannot rule directly but only through their elected representatives because, firstly, modern democracies involve such a large number of people that it is physically impossible for them to sit together and take a collective decision. Secondly, even if they could, the citizens do not have the time, the desire or the skill to take part in all the decisions.

Q.7. Is it possible for any country to become a perfect democracy? Give reasons.

Ans. No country is a perfect democracy as every democracy has to realise the ideals of democratic decision-making. This cannot be achieved once and for all. This requires a constant effort to save and strengthen democratic forms of decision-making. What we do as citizens can make a difference to making our country more or less democratic.

Q.9. Why is Democracy considered the best form of government? Give three reasons.

Ans. Democracy is a more accountable form of government.

(i) It improves the quality of decision-making

(ii) It enhances the dignity of citizens.

(iii) It allows us to correct its own mistakes

Q.10. What is the role of citizen in promoting democracy?

Ans. Every citizen should be able to play equal role in decision-making. For this a citizen not only needs an equal right to vote but also needs to have equal information, basic education, equal resources.

Q.11. Explain any three differences between democratic country and non-democratic country?

Ans. In a Democratic country—

(i) Each adult citizen has a vote; (ii) Each vote has one value; and (iii) Free and fair elections are held.

In a non-democratic country — (i) Election do not offer a choice and fair opportunity; (ii) Rulers are not elected by the people; and (ii) The rulers have unlimited power.

Q.12. Is China a democratic country or not? Give two arguments in favour of your answer.

Ans. China is not a democratic country. (i) Only those who are members of the Chinese Communist Party or eight smaller parties allied to it are allowed to contest elections; (ii) Before contesting elections a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party.

Q.13. Explain any three features of democracy.

Ans. According to a Democracy— (i) Rulers elected by the people take all the major decisions.

(ii) Elections offer a choice and fair opportunity to the people to change the current rulers; and (ii) This choice and opportunity is available to all the people on an equal basis.

Q.14. Why is Zimbabwe not considered a democratic country?

Ans. It is ruled by ZANU-PF, the party that led the freedom struggle. Its leader, Robert Mugabe has been ruling the country since independence. Elections are held regularly but always won by the ZANU-PF. President Mugabe uses unfair means in the elections. He has changed the constitution several times to increase the power of the president. Radio and TV are controlled by the government.

Q.15. How does democracy in a country enhance the dignity of an individual? State three points.

Ans. (i) Democracy is based on the principal of political equality on recognising that the poorest and the least educated has the same status as the rich and the educated.

(ii) People are not subjects of a ruler they are the rulers themselves.

(iii) Even when they make mistakes, they are responsible for their conduct.

Q.16. “Elections in China do not represent people verdict.” Explain.

Ans. In China the elections do not offer the people any serious choice. They have to choose the ruling party and the candidates approved by it. Can it be called a choice? There is only one political party and people have to vote for its candidates.

Q.17. “Democracy allows people to correct their own mistakes”. Support the given statement with three points. [2010 (T-1)]

Ans. The advantage in a democracy is that mistakes made by a government cannot be hidden for long. There is a space for public discussion on these mistakes and there is room for correction.

Either the rulers have to change their decisions or they can be changed

Q.18. Explain any three major political changes that took place recently in India’s neighborhood? [2010 (T-1)]

Ans. (i) Pakistan—General Musharaff led a military coup.

(ii) Nepal—In 2005 the new king dismissed the elected government.

(iii) Iraq—Sadaam Hussain’s regime was overthrown.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q.1. What were the steps taken by Musharraf in Pakistan to empower himself?

Ans. In Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf led a military coup in October 1999. He overthrew a democratically elected government and declared himself the ‘Chief Executive’ of the country. Later he changed his designation to President and in 2002 held a referendum in the country that granted him a five year extension. This referendum was based on fraud and malpractices. In 2002, he issued a ‘Legal

Framework Order' that amended the Constitution of Pakistan. According to this order, the President could dismiss the national or provincial assemblies.

Q.2. With reference to Zimbabwe, describe how the popular approval of rulers is necessary in a democracy but not sufficient.

Ans. In Zimbabwe, since Independence in 1980, elections have been held regularly and always won by ZANU-PF, the party that led the freedom struggle. Its leader, President Robert Mugabe, is popular but also uses unfair practices in elections. His government has changed the Constitution several times to increase the powers of the President and make him less accountable. Opposition party workers are harassed. Public protests and demonstrations against the government are declared illegal. There is a law that limits the right to criticise the President.

Q.3. On the basis of the various examples given in the chapter, state what should be the four features of a democracy.

Ans. Four features of a democracy are –

- (i) Representatives elected by the people take all the major decisions.
- (ii) Elections offer a choice and fair opportunity to the people to change the current rulers.
- (iii) This choice and opportunity is available to all the people on an equal basis.
- (iv) The exercise of this choice leads to a government limited by basic rules of the constitution and citizens' rights.

Q.4. Enumerate the arguments given against democracy.

Ans. Some of the arguments against democracy are as follows :

- (i) Leaders keep changing in a democracy. This leads to instability.
- (ii) Democracy is all about political competition and power play, with no scope for morality.
- (iii) Since so many people are to be consulted in a democracy, it leads to delays.
- (iv) Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people; so it leads to bad decisions.
- (v) Democracy leads to corruption as it is based on electoral competition.

Q.5. How does democracy provide a method to deal with differences and conflicts?

Ans. In any society people are bound to have differences of opinions and interests. These differences are particularly sharp in a country like India which has lot of social diversity. The preference of one group may clash with those of the other groups. Democracy provides the only peaceful solution to this problem. In democracy, no one is a permanent winner or a permanent loser.

Different groups can live with one another peacefully. In a diverse country like ours, democracy keeps our country together.

Q.6. Write any four disadvantages of democracy.

Ans. (1) Leaders keep changing in a democracy. This leads to instability. (2) Democracy is all about political competition and power play. There is no scope for morality. (3) So many people have to be consulted in a Democracy that it leads to delays. (4) Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people. It leads to bad decisions.

Q.7. How does a democratic government rule within limits set by Constitutional Law? Give three reasons.

Ans. A democratic government cannot do whatever it likes simply because it has won an election.

Every major decision has to go through a series of consultations. Every office bearer has certain rights and responsibilities assigned by the constitution and the law. A democratic government rules within limits set by constitutional law and citizens rights.

Q.8. What is the significance of the rule of law and respect for rights in democratic country? State four points.

Ans. A democratic government cannot do whatever it likes simply because it has won an election.

It has to respect some basic rules. In particular, it has to respect some guarantees to the minorities. Every major decision has go through a series of consultation. Every office bearer has certain rights and responsibilities assigned by the constitution and the law. Each is accountable not but only to law to other independent officials.

Q.9. Why is democracy called a “government by discussion”?

Ans. It is called a “government by discussion” because a democracy is based on consultation and discussion. A democratic decision always involves many person’s discussions and meetings.

When a member of people together thinks over a certain matter they are able to point out possible mistakes. This takes time. But there is big advantage in taking time. This reduces rush decisions; problems are not resolved by brutal force but by peaceful discussions. It offers best alternative that we know.

Q.10. Why does a democratic country always need a constitution?

Ans. All countries that are democratic will have constitutions. After the war of independence against Great Britain the Americans gave themselves a constitution. After the revolution the French people approved a democratic constitution. Since then it has become a practice in all democracies to have a written constitution.

Q.11. “Democracy enhances the dignity of citizen.” Justify this statement.

Ans. Democracy is based on the principle of political equality on recognising that the poorest and the least educated has the same status as the rich and the educated. People are not subjects of a ruler. They are the rulers themselves. Even when they make mistakes they are responsible for their conduct

Q.12. “Democracy improve the quality of decision making.” Explain.

Ans. Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts. In any society people are bound to have difference of opinions and interests. These differences are particularly sharp a country like ours which has an amazing social diversity. People belong to different regions speak different languages, practise different religions and have different castes. Preferences of a groups can clash with those of other groups. Democracy provides the only peaceful solution to this problem. In democracy no one is a permanent winner. No one a permanent loser. In a diverse country like India, democracy keeps our country together.

Q.13. Give any four reasons why democracies resolve conflict in a better way than other forms of governments.

Ans. Democracies resolve conflict in a better way. Reasons — (i) It improves the quality of decision making. It has scope for consultation and discussion. (ii) In a Democracy conflicts are not solved by brutal force but by peaceful solutions. (iii) Even when people/associations/ government make mistakes for a democracy allows them to correct their mistakes; and (iv) Democracy provides a forum for consultations and discussions to resolve conflicts.

Q.14. Despite its demerits why is democracy the most preferred form of government? Explain.

Ans. Despite its demerits democracy is still the most preferred form of government as it is— (i) a more accountable form of government. It responds to the needs of the people because the constitution requires it; and (ii) Better decision came for when many heads together strive to do so, this reduces the chance of rash decisions or irresponsible decisions plus a democracy enhances the dignity of citizens. It is clearly better than any other form of government.

Q.15. Why is democracy government a better government? Mention four reasons.

Ans. A democratic government is a better government as— (i) it offers better changes of a good decision; (ii) it is always likely to respect people wishes and allows; (iii) different kinds of people to live together; and (iv) even when it fails to do something for the people it allows a way of correcting its mistakes and offers more dignity to all citizens. That is why a democracy is considered the best form of government.