



Outcomes of democracy

Notes 😊

Overview

1. We begin by thinking about how to access the outcomes of democracy.
2. After some clarity on how to think on this subject, we proceed to look at the expected and actual outcomes of democracy in various respects.
3. Our final verdict – positive but qualified.

How do we access democracy's outcomes?

1. Democracy is the better form of government when compared with dictatorship or any other alternative.
2. We felt that democracy was better because of it:
 - I) Promotes equality among citizens;
 - II) Enhances the dignity of the individual;
 - III) Improves the quality of decision – making;
 - IV) Provides a method to resolve conflicts; and
 - V) Allows room to correct mistakes.
3. We face a dilemma: democracy is seen to be good in principle but felt to be not so good in its practice.
4. This dilemma invites us to think hard about the outcomes of the democracy.
5. Our interest in and fascination for democracy often push us into taking a position that democracy can address all socio-economic and political problem.

6. The first step towards thinking carefully about the outcomes of democracy is to recognise that democracy is just a form of government.

Accountable, responsive and legitimate government:

1. The most basic outcome of democracy should be that it produces a government that is accountable to the citizens, and responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens.
2. Democracy is based on the idea of deliberation and negotiation.
3. Democracy ensures that decision-making will be based on norms and procedures.
4. The right and the means to examine the process of decision-making known as transparency.
5. Democratic governments do not have a very good record when it comes to sharing information with citizens.
6. 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 to corruption.

7. The record of democracies is not impressive on these two counts.

8. There is one respect in which democratic government is certainly better than its

alternatives: the democratic government is the legitimate government.

9. People wish to be ruled by representatives elected by them. They also believe that

democracy is suitable for their country.

Economic growth and development:

1. The inability of democracy to achieve higher economic development worries us. But this

alone cannot be the reason to reject democracy.

2. The difference in the rates of economic development between less developed countries

with dictatorships and democracies is negligible.

3. We cannot say that democracy is a guarantee of economic development.

4. But we can expect democracy not to lag behind dictatorships in this respect.

Reduction of inequality and poverty:

1. Perhaps more than development, it is reasonable to expect democracies to reduce economic disparities.

2. A small number of ultra-rich enjoy a highly disproportionate share of wealth and incomes.

3. Not only that, their share in the total income of the country has been increasing.

4. In actual life, democracies do not appear to be very successful in reducing economic inequalities.

Accommodation of social diversity:

1. It will be fair expectation that democracy should produce a harmonious social life.

2. Ability to handle social differences, divisions, and conflicts is thus a definite plus point of democratic regimes.

3. Two conditions in order to achieve the outcome:

1) It is necessary to understand that democracy is not simply rule by majority opinion.

II) It is also necessary that rule by the majority does not become rule by majority community

in terms of religion or race or linguistic groups.

Dignity and freedom of the citizens:

1. Democracy stands much superior to any other form of government in promoting dignity and freedom of the individual.
2. The passion for respect and freedom are the basis of democracy.
3. This has been achieved in various degrees in various democracies.
4. Most societies across the world were historically male dominated societies.
5. Long struggles by women have created some sensitivity today that respect to and equal treatment of women are necessary ingredients of a democratic society.
6. Democracy in India has strengthened the claims of the disadvantaged and discriminated castes for equal status and equal opportunity.

7. Expectations from democracy also function as the criteria for judging and democratic country.

8. As people get some benefits of democracy, they ask for more and want to make democracy even better.

9. Most individuals today believe that their vote makes a difference to the way the government is run and to their own self-interest.

N.C.E.R.T QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1:

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

Answer 1:

Democracy produces an accountable, responsive and legitimate government by giving the

citizen the right to examine the process by which decisions are made. These decisions are made according to norms and procedures which make the decisions more acceptable to the people. Added to this is the basic fact that in a democracy, the people have a right to elect their own government, and the candidate which is elected is thought to be capable enough to fulfil the demands of the people.

Question 2:

What are the conditions under which democracies accommodate social diversities?

Answer 2:

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.

Question 3:

Give arguments to support or oppose the following assertions:

- Industrialised countries can afford democracy but the poor need dictatorship to become rich.
- Democracy can't reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens.
- Government in poor countries should spend less on poverty reduction, health, education and spend more on industries and infrastructure.
- In democracy all citizens have one vote, which means that there is absence of any domination and conflict.

Answer 3:

Industrialised countries can afford democracy but the poor need dictatorship to become rich.

This statement is incorrect as can be seen from the examples of India and Zimbabwe. In

1947, India was included in the Third World nations, but now, it is one of the fast-growing economies in the world. On the other hand, Zimbabwe, which was a fairly prosperous nation,

has run into huge international debt with the progression of Robert Mugabe's regime.

Democracy can't reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens. This statement is

incorrect. The Minimum Wages Act enacted by the government and other policies which

regulate the basic price at which agricultural producers and small industries sell their goods,

have helped increase the per capita income of the country, thereby making its citizens more

prosperous.

Government in poor countries should spend less on poverty reduction, health, education and

spend more on industries and infrastructure. This is not a wise option as in poor countries,

the people cannot afford health and education services.

In democracy all citizens have one vote, which means that there is absence of any

domination and conflict. 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. These divisions lead to conflict

Question 4:

Identify the challenges to democracy in the following descriptions. Also suggest

policy/institutional mechanism to deepen democracy in the given situations:

- **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 large number of farmers are committing suicide in different states of India.**
- **Following allegation of killing of three civilians in Gandwara in a fake encounter by Jammu and Kashmir police, an enquiry has been ordered.**

Answer 4:

The challenge to democracy in the first statement is to provide equal status to all its citizens

in spite of their caste.

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.

The challenge to democracy is to preserve the people's trust in government arms like the police.



Thank you ☺ All the best...

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