

Democracy

INTRODUCTION:

The most common form in which the people have the authority to choose their governing legislators and the original form in which the people have the authority to decide on legislation.

The notion of democracy has evolved over time considerably, and, generally, the two current types of democracy are direct and representative. In a direct democracy, the people directly deliberate (careful) and decide on legislation. In a representative democracy, the people elect representatives to deliberate and decide on legislation, such as in parliamentary or presidential democracy.

Democracy, which derives from the Greek word demos, or people, is defined, basically, as government in which the supreme power is vested (developed) in the people. In some forms, democracy can be exercised directly by the people; in large societies, it is by the people through their elected agents. Or, in the memorable phrase of President Abraham Lincoln, democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Definition:

According to Abraham Lincoln:

Democracy is the government of this people, for the people and by the people.

According to Dicey:

Democracy is a form of government in which the governing body is comparatively large fraction of the entire nation.

According to Prof. Seeley:

Democracy is that form of government in which the governing body is comparatively large fraction of the entire nation.

Kinds of Democracy:

Two types of democracy are mentioned in political literature direct and indirect democracy.

Direct democracy:

- Direct democracy refers to a form of government wherein citizens out rightly take part in the administration of the government.
- Government policies are decided by the people themselves.
- Whole community forms legislature.
- Countries whose population size is small

Indirect Democracy:

- Indirect democracy implies a democracy in which people vote for their representative, to represent them in the Parliament.
- People elect their representatives to take decisions on government policies.
- Representatives of the winning party forms government and are a part of legislature.
- Countries whose population size is large.

CHARACTERISTICS & FEATURES

• Power exercised:

Democracy is government in which power and civic responsibility are exercised by all adult citizens, directly, or through their freely elected representatives.

• Democratic Lies:

Democracy rests (lies) upon the principles of majority rule and individual rights. Democracies guard against all-powerful central governments and decentralize government to regional and local levels, understanding that all levels of government must be as accessible and responsive to the people as possible.

• Prime Function:

Democracies understand that one of their prime functions is to protect such basic human rights as freedom of speech and religion; the right to equal protection under law; and the opportunity to organize and participate fully in the political, economic, and cultural life of society.

• Democracy conduct elections:

Democracies conduct regular free and fair elections open to citizens of voting age.

• Citizens Role in democracy:

Citizens in a democracy have not only rights, but also the responsibility to participate in the political system that, in turn, protects their rights and freedoms.

• Role of Democratic societies:

Democratic societies are committed to the values of tolerance, cooperation, and compromise.

- **Resolve Conflicts:**

It provides a method to resolve conflicts.

- **Each Individual:**

Enhances (improves) dignity of each individual.

Why democracy is the best form of government

Democracy is the best form of government due to the following reasons

- The rulers of the nation are elected by the public.
- It is a government run by and for the people.
- Democracy improves the quality of decision-making.
- Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts.
- Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens.
- Democracy is better than other forms of government because it allows us to correct our own mistakes.

Democracy has proven to be the best form of government in providing freedom for the majority. This can potentially result in the exclusion of minorities, but many democratic countries adopt a consensual (involving) approach, allowing minorities to participate equally in government. Democracy is indeed chaotic (messy), but this too can be mitigated (reduced) if representatives have the bravery to exercise judgement, and the citizenry is well educated. On balance, if freedom and civil rights are considered a priority, it is difficult to argue any form of government is superior to democracy.

Advantages & Merits

- **Democracies give people a chance to become personally involved with their government:**

Because the government in a democracy is under the control of the people and their voice, then it is up to each individual to decide their fate. People can choose to vote in whatever way their morality dictates. Some even give voters the option to not vote if that is what they feel is the best way to express their opinion.

- **The structure of a democracy works to reduce issues with exploitation:**

All government formations are sensitive to exploitation because of the people who get elected into powerful positions. The contrast with democracy is that the authorities are

distributed more equally within it. The ruling documents in this structure create checks and balances to assure that no single person receives supreme power over the legislative process.

- **A democracy encourages equality in a positive way:**

The structure of a democracy gives every vote an equal amount of weight during an election. This option gives each person the chance to cast a ballot without judgment when they register for this process, providing an opinion that despite their social or economic status. Everything “yes” or “no” counts as one, whether you are rich or poor, own land or not, of express your gender in a specific way. “Democracy and socialism have nothing in common but one word: equality,”

- **Democracies usually grow faster economically than other forms of government:**

The freedom offered in the structures of democracy allows the general population to seek any result they want. Although legal barriers exist to prevent one person from hurting another, this governing structure grants the freedom to look for different employment opportunities, schools, or even places to live. The choice remains with your voice.

- **There is more consistency available in a democracy than in other government structures:**

There is more unity in the governing process with democracy because the general population holds the right to vote on resolutions. This arrangement can take different styles, but the result is generally the same. Each person gets the chance to express their view at their polling stations by casting a vote. That process allows each community to continue pursuing the specific results that they feel are helpful, or they can switch directions to try something new.

- **Countries that use democracy are less likely to enter into armed conflicts:**

As democracy has come through Europe once again, the levels of warfare between the major nations on the continent have decreased significantly. There have been fewer conflicts in the past 50 years than at any other time in history. Although the United States is an exception to this advantage because of the country’s status on the global stage, most nations who focus on a democracy avoid battles instead of chasing after them.

Disadvantages & Demerits

Democracy is ineffective unless voters educate themselves on governing decisions:

A democracy allows an individual to cast a vote either directly or through a preferred representative on the issues that the government must manage. There is no direction as to how voters approach this responsibility. Although some people will educate themselves on each issue to

offer an experienced opinion, there is no requirement to go through all of this work. Someone can turn in a ballot that is a straight-party ticket with no consideration of the individual views or needs.

The structure of democracy depends upon the will of the majority:

History has taught us that the will of the majority is not always the ethical or moral position that one should take. We have dealt with issues like slavery, discrimination, and gender inequality in the past because the perspective of those with the most votes says that society deserves to have those elements. If someone finds themselves outside of the will of the majority more often than not, then it will feel like their vote doesn't really count for something.

The cost of democracy is something that many people don't realize exists:

Democracy is one of the least cost-efficient forms of governing that exists today. The time and currency resources that are necessary to conduct an election can cost billions of dollars. Even a local election for city council, mayor, or a school board can cost six figures. The Presidential elections every four years in the United States are measured in the billions. Although it is useful to have the people have power in their voice, their taxes are what are used to create that opportunity. "Democracy is the worst form of government," warned Winston Churchill, "except for all of the others."

Democracy requires more time to implement changes:

Centralized government structures can make declarations on rules, regulations, or responses that are not always possible in a democratic structure. Voting requires time to review the information provided by each election. That means processes slow down to the point where it can take several years to create significant changes. There may only be 1-2 legislative bills that come through in an entire session that go beyond the typical budgets, committees, and nominations that officials manage.

The structure of a democracy is a person-first process:

Elections usually involve the opinions or thoughts of each person based on what individuals want for themselves. Instead of looking at what might be useful for the rest of society, most voters gauge what they put on their ballot based on what affects their checking account, taxes, or overall cost of living. It is a process that encourages everyone to put their needs before others.

Democratic governments follow the "a chicken in every pot" system:

Democracy does not require the same level of accountability if it is established in representative form. The goal of a politician is to receive the most votes. Once that person gets into office, there are fewer controls in place to recall that person if they do not accurately represent what their community wants. The only method to stop this in some countries is to vote for a different person during the next election.