

Ch 2-- What is Democracy? Why Democracy?

Q1) How did the word Democracy originate?

The word democracy is derived from a Greek word 'Demokratia'. In Greek "Demos" means people and 'kratia' means rule. So Democracy is rule by the people. It is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people.

Q2) What are the features of Democracy?

1. In a Democracy the final decision making power must rest with those elected by the people. By electing the representatives they transfer the power to the representatives.
2. A Democracy must be based on a free and fair election where those currently in power have a fair chance of losing. In true democracy those who are in power will not misuse the power or play foul tricks to win the election. They respect the judgment of the people.
3. In a Democracy, each adult citizen must have one vote and each vote must have one value. It is otherwise Universal Adult Franchise.
4. A democratic government rules within limits set by constitutional law and citizens' rights. In a democratic country everyone should be equal in the eyes of law. No one can do any thing against the laws of the country and against the rights of citizens.

Q3) How did the Legal Framework order passed by Pervez Musharraf amend the Constitution?

1. In August 2002 Musharraf issued a 'Legal Framework Order' that amended the constitution of Pakistan. According to this order , the President can dismiss the national or provincial Assemblies .
2. The work of the civilian is supervised by a National Security Council which is dominated by military officers.
3. After passing this law, elections were held to the national and state assemblies. So Pakistan had elections, elected representatives have some power. But the final power rest with military officers and with general Musharraf himself.

Q4) Why is Pakistan under Pervez Musharraf not considered a democratic country?

1. Perez Musharraf overthrew a democratically elected government in October 1999 through a military coup and declared himself the President of the country.
2. In August 2002 Musharraf issued a 'Legal Framework Order' that amended the constitution of Pakistan. After passing this law, elections were held to the national and state assemblies. So Pakistan had elections, elected representatives have some power. But the final power rest with military officers and with general Musharraf himself. They are not elected by the people.

Q5) Why do we consider China and Mexico as non- democratic countries?

1. In china , elections are regularly held after Five years for electing the country Parliament . It has nearly 3000 members elected from all over the china.
2. Before contesting elections, a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist party. Only those who are the members of the Chinese Communist Party or eight smaller parties allied to it were allowed to contest elections held in 2002-03. The government is formed by the Communist Party. Therefore it is not a

democratic country.

3. Since its independence in 1930 Mexico holds elections after every six years to elect its president. But until 2000 every election was won by a party called PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). Opposition parties did contest elections but never managed to win.

4. The PRI is known to use many dirty tricks to win elections. All those who were employed in government offices had to attend its party meeting. Teachers of government schools used to force parents to vote for the PRI.

5. Media largely ignored the activities of opposition political parties except to criticize them. 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.

Q 6) When did Zimbabwe gain independence? Which party ruled and who is leader? Why is Zimbabwe not considered as a democratic country?

Zimbabwe attained independence from white minority in 1980. Since its independence the country has been ruled by ZANU-PF, the party that led the freedom struggle. Its leader, Robert Mugabe, has been ruling the country since independence. Zimbabwe is not considered a Democratic country because of the following reasons:

President Mugabe is popular but also uses unfair practices to win elections. Over the years 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 and their meetings disrupted. Public protests and demonstrations against the government are declared illegal. There is a law that limits the right to criticize the President.

Television and radio are controlled by the government and give only the ruling party's version. There are independent newspapers but the government harasses those journalists who go against it. The government has ignored some court judgments that went against it and has pressurized judges.

Q7) What are the Arguments against Democracy? (De-merits of democracy)

The arguments against Democracy are:

- 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 in taking decisions.
- 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 do not know what is good for them; they should not decide anything.

Q8) What are the advantages of Democracy?(Merits of democracy)Or Why is democratic government a better form of government?

The advantages of democracy are:

A Democratic government is a better form of government because it is more accountable form of government.

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.

Q9) What is the most common form of government in today's world?

The most common form that Democracy takes is that of a representative Democracy. It is the rule through people's elected representatives. It is otherwise known as indirect democracy.

Q10) Why are modern democracies indirect democracies?

Modern democracies are indirect democracies in the following ways:

Modern Democracies involve such a large number of people that it is physically impossible for them to sit together and take collective decisions. More over countries are larger in size. Even if they could , the citizen does not have the time, the desire or the skills to take part in all the decisions.

Q11) How can the principles of Democracy be applied to all spheres of life?

A democratic decision involves consultation with and consent of all those who are affected by that decision as those who are powerful. This can apply to a government or a family or any other organization. Thus Democracy is also a principle that can be applied to any sphere of life.

Q12) What is the strength and weakness of Democracy?

We require a constant effort to save and strengthen democratic forms of decision making . What we can do as citizens can make a difference to making our country more or less democratic. This is the strength and weakness of Democracy.

Q13) Name the smallest administrative unit in India where decisions are taken Collectively.

Gram Sabha is the smallest administrative unit in India where decisions are taken Collectively

Q14) State any two ideal standards that all democracies must aim at?

Two ideal standards that democracy must aim at are:

- 1) Democracy should ensure that no person goes hungry to bed.
- 2) In a Democracy every citizen must be able to play a equal role in decision making. Every citizen needs to have basic information, equal resources and a lot of commitment

Q15) What are the different situations in the word 'Democracy' is used other than for the Government?

1. **Democratic family:** Whenever a decision has to be taken, all members in the family sit together and arrive at a decision.. A boys opinion matters as much as his father's.
2. **Democratic class:** Teachers allow students to speak and ask questions in the class. Students like to have teachers with democratic temperament.

16) Explain the broader meaning of democracy.

1. Democracy is a principle that can be applied to any sphere of life. There are different situations in which the word 'Democracy' is used other than for the Government
2. Democratic family: Whenever a decision has to be taken, all members in the family sit together and arrive at a decision.. A boy's opinion matters as much as his father's.
3. Democratic class: Teachers allow students to speak and ask questions in the class.
Students like to have teachers with democratic temperament.
4. Democracy should ensure that no person goes hungry to bed.
5. In a Democracy every citizen must be able to play a equal role in decision making. Every citizen needs to have basic information, equal resources and a lot of commitment.