

Q1. Give the broader meaning of Democracy.

Ans. Democracy is a term derived from two Greek words, 'demos' and 'cratia'. 'demos' means the people and 'cratia' means power. In short, democracy means the power of the people.

According to Abraham Lincoln, 'democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people, by all, for all'.

The most common form that democracy takes in our times is that of a representative democracy. A majority is allowed to take decisions on behalf of all the people. Even the majority does not rule directly.

In its broader meaning we use democracy for organisations or institutions other than the government that take decisions after discussions and arrive at some consensus. A democratic decision involves consultation with and consent of all those who are affected by that decision. Those who are not powerful have the same say in taking the decision as those who are powerful. This can apply to a government or a family or any other organisation.

Q2. What are the features of Indian democracy?

The key features of Indian democracy are:

Universal Adult Franchise Participation of the people
Conflict resolution Equality and Justice

1. A system of free and fair periodic elections for choosing and replacing the representatives who actually run the government.
2. The active participation of the citizens in political and civic life.
3. Protection of human rights of all the citizens
4. A rule of law, in which laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.
5. Consensus and tolerance as the limits and requirements for democracy.

Q3. List few arguments against Democracy?

Ans. Democracy is not a magical solution for all the problems. It has not ended poverty in our country and in other parts of the world. We enumerate below some short comings of democracy:

1. Rule of Ignorance:
Plato dubbed democracy as the rule of ignorance. Aristotle condemned democracy as a perverted form of government, as a sort of mob rule.
2. It favours the rich:
Most of the democracies are capitalistic. They favour the rich like business magnates or big financiers who purchase votes and exert influence over government.
3. The principle of equality is abused:
Equality is taken to an extreme in a democracy which is based on promise that every man, whatever his real worth or intelligence, is the equal of every other in his capacity to participate in government. Such an equality is detrimental to the interest of the society.
4. It is an expensive form of government:
Democracy is the most expensive form of government. A lot of expenditure is incurred on propaganda and electioneering.
5. Local interests obscure national interests:
In the scramble for power and patronage, the welfare of the nation as a whole suffers. Representatives compete with one another in securing maximum benefits for their own constituencies.

6. Democracy is sometimes unstable
Leaders keep changing in a democracy. This leads to instability. Sometimes this can set back big decisions and effect the government's efficiency.

SHORT TYPE

Q1. Why is democracy important?

Democracy is considered to be the best form of government because:

1. It is better than any form of govt. in responding to the needs of the people.
2. It is more accountable form of govt.
3. Democracy is based on consultation and discussion as it involves many persons, discussions and meetings. This reduces the chance of rash or irresponsible decisions. Thus, improves the quality of decision of decision making.
4. Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts.
5. Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens. It is based on the principle of political equality. In democracy the poorest and the least educated have the same status as the rich and the educated.
6. Although democracy is not a panacea for all ills of the modern world but it has still proved to be better than other forms of govt. because it allows us to correct our own mistakes. No other form of govt. can guarantee that. This is the reason that democracy is considered the best form of govt.

Q2. What do you mean by free and fair periodic elections?

Ans. Democracy is a means for the people to choose their leaders and to hold their leaders accountable for their policies and their conduct in office.

The people decide who will represent them in parliament and who will head the govt. at the national and local level.

The people are sovereign—they are the highest form of political authority.

For elections to be free and fair, they have to be administered by a neutral, fair and professional body that treats all political parties and candidates equally.

All parties and candidates must have the right to campaign freely, to present their proposals to the voters both directly and through mass media.

Independent observers must, be able to observe the voting and the vote counting to ensure that the process is free of corruption, intimidation and fraud.

Q3. What is the role of citizens in democracy?

Ans. The key role of citizens in a democracy is to participate in public life. Citizens have an obligation to become informed about public issues, to watch carefully how their political leaders and representatives use their powers, and to express their own opinions and interests. Voting in elections is another important civics duty of all citizens. But to vote wisely, each citizens should listen to the views of the different parties and candidates, and then make his or her own decision on whom to support. Participation can involve campaigning for a political party or candidate, standing as a candidate for political office, debating public issues, attending community meetings, petitioning the government, and even protesting.

In a democracy, citizens are free to choose which party to support. Democracy depends on citizen participation in all these ways. But participation must be peaceful, respectful of the law, and tolerant of the different views of other groups and individuals.

Q4. Representative Democracy?

Ans. Modern states are huge in size and population .direct democracy is, therefore, inconceivable. Instead, the people govern these states indirectly, through their elected representatives. The will of the states is formulated and expressed not through the people directly but through their representatives in whom they repose confidence. Hence, representatives govern the people as their trustees. The representatives are elected periodically and the people can oust them if do they not come up to their expectations.

Q5. What is meant by consensus?

Ans. Consensus is the community resolution when opposing parties set aside their differences and agree on a statement that is agreeable to all, even if only barely.

Consensus is a group discussion where everyone's opinions are heard and understood and a solution is created that respects those opinions. Consensus is not what everyone agrees to, nor is it the preference of the majority. Consensus is the best solution that the group can achieve, at that time 'consensus' is 'consent'. This means that even if parties disagree, there is still overall consent to move forward in order to settle the issue.

Q6. What is rule of law?

Ans. The rule of law primarily refers to the influence and authority of law within society, especially as a constraint upon behaviour, including the behaviour of the government officials. All citizens are equal under the law. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of their race, religion, ethnic group, gender. The law is fairly, impartially and consistently enforced by the courts that are independent of the other branches of the government.

GEOGRAPHY

Q. Answer the following questions briefly.

- i. Name the group of islands lying in the Arabian Sea. – Lakshadweep Island
- ii. Name the countries which are larger than India. – Russia , Canada , USA , China , Brazil and Australia
- iii. Name the largest geographical region of J&K. – Ladakh
- iv. Which island country is our southern neighbour? – Our southern neighbours across the sea consist of the two island countries, namely Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Q. The central location of India at the head of the Indian Ocean is considered of great significance. Why?

Ans. The central location of India at the head of the Indian Ocean is of great advantage. Countries of East Africa, West Asia, South and South-East Asia and East Asia could be reached through sea routes. Hence, India established close cultural and commercial contacts with these countries. India's eminent position in the Indian Ocean realm justifies naming an ocean after it.

India enjoys a favourable situation on the International Highway of trade and commerce even today. Unlike land-locked countries it has an easy access to outside world. The ocean routes from East and south-East Asia, and Australia to Africa and Europe pass through the Indian Ocean.

India is connected with Europe, North America and South America through both the routes- the Cape of Good Hope and the Suez Canal. India can reach Canada and the USA through the Strait of Malacca after crossing the Pacific Ocean.

India's contacts with the World have continued through the ages. The exchange of ideas and commodities dates back to the ancient times. The spices, muslin and other merchandise were taken from India to different countries.