



JK PUBLIC SCHOOL
CLASS: 9TH
Subject: - Political Science
(Democratic Politics-I)
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Unit-1

Lesson No 1.

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? WHY DEMOCRACY?

Introduction

This chapter deals with democracy and its features. After reading this chapter the students will learn the following points.

- i. Meaning, definition and concept of democracy.***
- ii. The basic features of democracy.***
- iii. Arguments in favour and against democracy.***

Terminology

- 1. Democracy:** - Democracy is a form of government that allows people to choose their rulers. The word “Democracy” has been derived from two Greek Words “demos” and “kratia”. Demos means “The people” and kratia means “Power”.
- 2. Universal adult franchise:** - It stands for the right to vote to all the adults irrespective of sex, creed, caste, colour or property.
- 3. Colonialism:** - Colonialism is a practice by which a powerful country directly controls less powerful countries and uses their resources to increase its own power and wealth.
- 4. United Nations:** -The United Nations (UN) is a global organization of nations of the world. It was set up in 1945 to bring an end to wars, to establish permanent peace and to bring about an economic, social and cultural development of mankind.
- 5. Monarchy:** - Monarchy is a form of government led by a monarch (king, queen, emperor), who holds the position for life. It is hereditary government and the seat is passed on to a relative, usually a son or daughter.
- 6. Election:** - An Election is a formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office. It is used in democratic nations.

Textual Questions

Q.1) 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. (**Undemocratic**)

(b) Country B: The same party has been winning elections for the last twenty years. (**Not Sure**)

(c) Country C: Ruling party has lost in the last three elections. (**Democratic**)

(d) Country D: There is no independent election commission. (**Undemocratic**)

Q.2) 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.

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

Chief of Army. (**Undemocratic**)

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

(**Democratic**)

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

Country S: All the major economic decisions about the country are taken by officials of the central bank which the ministers cannot change (**Undemocratic**)

Q.3) 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.

Ans) (**Option 'D'**) Democracies are more prosperous than others are not a good argument in favour of democracy because economic prosperity depend on many factors like availability of natural resources, quality of human resources, policies of government and finance etc. So, Democracy can't guarantee prosperity.

Q.4) 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).**

Ans) Some laws have to be passed by the parliament is **Democratic**, while conformation to the WTO regulations is **Undemocratic**.

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

Ans) The Election Commission ordered re-polling in a constituency is **Democratic**, while large-scale rigging is **Undemocratic**

(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.**

Ans) Poor level of women's representation in parliament is **Undemocratic**, while the demand for one-third seats in parliament is **Democratic**.

Q.5) 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.

Ans) **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.

- Q.6) 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.

Ans) **Option 'D'**, which advocates paying the government officials money, is an undemocratic method.

Q.7) 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.

Ans) A democracy is the government elected by the people. Army officers are not elected by the people and hence an army rule would be undemocratic

b) Rule 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.

Ans) Democracy is based on the idea of Universal Adult Franchise. Restricting the rulers from a small section comprising of 'wise people' would defeat the purpose of representational democracy

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.

Ans) Religious leaders are not elected by people and hence a country should not be ruled by religious leaders. Also mixing religion with politics is seriously dangerous.

Q.8) 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.

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

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

Ans) This statement is not democratic. 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.

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

Q.9) 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.

Ans) Regular elections and universal adult franchise are the two important features of democracy and hence this is a democratic situation.

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.

Ans) 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. And also, an international agency should not interfere in the internal affairs of a country. Hence this is undemocratic.

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.

Ans) In democracy, education should be available in all languages as it is a basic right. Official language can be the language of majority of people and hence is undemocratic.

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.

Ans) In a democracy people have right to express their opinion and protest in peaceful manner. It is undemocratic to deny such a right to citizens.

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.

Ans) A country which imposes censorship of both print and electronic media is undemocratic because freedom of speech and expression is violated which is fundamental right of the people in a democracy.

Q.10) In 2004 a report published in USA pointed to the increasing inequalities in that country. Inequalities in income reflected in the participation of people in democracy. It also shaped their abilities to influence the decisions taken by the government. (Report is on the Book, Page No. 17)

Write an essay on 'Democracy and Poverty' using the information given in this report but using examples from India

Ans) Democracy and Poverty: -

There is no denying fact that poverty has a direct and deep impact on democracy. The rich control the media and use it for their own benefit. Influence of the rich over politics is clearly visible in the countries like England, USA and India. The poor people are bought and sold. They do not even think about the elections. The poor people remain worried about earning their livelihood and has no time to think about the problems facing the country. The poor people may even sell their votes at times. Every political party takes advantage of people's poverty. The poor are bluffed with the slogan such as there would be no poverty or everybody would be given a home, clothes and food etc. The people have lost faith in government. The government has used many welfare schemes like MGNREGA, IAY and SGSY etc. but their implementation

is far from satisfactory. Therefore, the economic conditions of the people should be improved to brighten the future of democracy in India.

Additional Questions

Q.1) What is Coup-de-tat?

Ans) Coup-de-tat (Coo-DE-TAA) is a French word, it means violent overthrow of elected government by military establishment.

Q.2) What is representative democracy?

Ans) Representative democracy is indirect form of democracy where all the people do not rule. The decisions are taken by the representative's elected by the majority of people.

Q.3) What is meant by consensus?

Ans) Consensus is a mutual understanding and cooperation between rulers and ruled.

Q.4) What is meant by "Rule of Law"?

Ans) It means that all the citizens of a country are equal before the law and no one is above the law. It protects the rights of citizens, maintains order, and limits the powers of government.

Q.5) What do you mean by free and fair periodic elections?

Ans) Free and fair periodic elections mean that after a specific period of time the elections are held in the democracy for choosing and replacing the representatives by the people, who actually run the government. People are free to choose their leaders without any fear and there is no fraud in such type of elections.

Q.6) What are the features of democracy?

Ans) Democracy is a term derived from two Greek words, 'Demos' and 'Kratia'. 'Demos' means people and 'Kratia' 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'. The main features of democracy are:

- A system of free and fair periodic elections for choosing and replacing the representatives.
- A democratic government is a better government because it is more accountable form of government.
- The active participation of the citizens in political and civic life.
- Protection of human rights of all the citizens.
- A rule of law, in which laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.
- Consensus and tolerance as the limits and requirements for democracy.

Q.7) List few arguments against or Demerits of 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. Plato dubbed democracy as the rule of

ignorance. Aristotle condemned democracy as a perverted form of government. Some of the arguments against democracy are as under:

- Leaders keep changing in a democracy which leads to instability.
- Democracy is all about political competition and power play. There is no scope for morality.
- Many people are consulted in a democracy which leads to delays in decision making.
- Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people. It leads to bad decisions.
- Democracy leads to corruption for it is based on electoral competition. The leaders are not interested in the welfare of the people instead they are self-interested.

Q.8) Give the broader meaning of democracy.

Ans) Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people through the process of elections. Democracy can be applied to any sphere of life. In its broader sense, democracy is the method of taking decisions, which involves consultation with and consent of all those who are affected by the decisions. 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 organization. For example, "If we are a very democratic family, then whenever the decision has to be taken, we sit and arrive at a consensus. My opinion matters as much as my father's".

Q.9) Abbreviations

ZANU-PF :- Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

LFO :- Legal Framework Order