



LESSON 2

DEMOCRACY

1. Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people.

2. In a democracy final decision making power must rest with those elected by the people.

- In Pakistan, President Musharraf has the power to dismiss national and state assemblies; so the final powers rest with the army and the General himself. We cannot call it a democracy.

3. A democracy must be based on a free and fair election where those currently in power have a fair chance of losing.

- In China elections are held for its Parliament.. But all the candidates are either members of Chinese communist Party or eight smaller allies of the party.
- In Mexico elections have been held every six years since 1980. But the same party, PRI, has won the elections. Obviously there has been rigging and mal-practices, with freedom denied to opposition.
- In both the examples elections are held but one cannot claim that they are free and fair.

4. In a democracy people's will is ascertained by each adult citizen having one vote and each vote has one value. Democracy is based on the fundamental principle of political equality.

- Countries like Saudi Arabia, Estonia and Fiji in some or other way deny voting rights to certain sections of its population.

5. A democratic government rules within limits set by constitutional and citizens' rights.

- A democratic government cannot do what it likes after winning the elections. It has to respect certain basic rules and is accountable not only to the people but also to other independent officials.

- Robert Mugabe is President of Zimbabwe. He is ruling there for last 38 years. But in many incidences he has behaved in an undemocratic way and even above the law.

WHY DEMOCRACY?

Points Against

There has been criticism of democracy by various people. The charges are that :

- It creates instability by changing its leaders frequently.
- Democracy is about power play and political competition. There is no scope for morality.
- So many people have to be consulted before any issue is solved. It leads to delay.
- Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people.
- It leads to corruption for it is based on electoral corruption.
- Ordinary people do not know what is good for them, so decision making should not be left to them.

Arguments for Democracy:

- Democratic government is a 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.
- It allows us to correct its own mistakes.

Broader meaning of Democracy :

Democratic ideas can be practiced in various decision making processes. In broader sense no country can be completely democratic, The features of democracy are only minimum conditions. A lot can be done towards achieving real democracy.

Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who said these words, “Democracy is the rule of people, for the people and by the people”?

Ans. Abraham Lincoln.

2. Democracy comes from which Greek word?

Ans. Greek word, "Demokrati".

3. Name the ruling party of Syria?

Ans. The Baath Party.

4. Which two countries of the world have allowed the ruling parties to contest elections?

Ans. China and Mexico.

5. Name the country where women are not allowed to take part in the election.

Ans. Saudi Arabia.

6. Name the any one country of the world where there is no democracy.

Ans. Zimbabwe.

7. What type of government would you like to have in your country?

Ans. Democracy.

8. Name the ruler who had established dictatorship in Germany?

Ans. Adolf Hitler.

9. When did Zimbabwe achieve independence?

Ans. 1980.

10. Write a drawback of the electoral system of Fiji?

Ans. In Fiji, the value of the vote of the indigenous Fiji is more as comparison to an Indian Fijian.

11. What is PRI?

Ans. PRI is the political party of Mexico- Institutional Revolutionary Party.

12. What does referendum means?

Ans. Referendum is the direct vote in which an entire electorate is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal.

13. When did Parvez Musharraf come to power in Pakistan?

Ans. October 1999.

14. Why are quality decisions always possible in a democracy?

Ans. Because democratic decisions always involves many persons, discussions and meetings.

15. After how many years does Mexico hold elections for electing its president?

Ans. After every six year.

16. By whom the President of China appointed?

Ans. Members of the national People's Congress.

17. Name a country which has multi-party system.

Ans. India.

Short Answer Type Questions

Q1 Pakistan under General Pervez Musharaff was a democratic country or non-democratic. Give reasons.

Ans. Pakistan under General Pervez Musharaff was a non-democratic country.

He amended constitution according to his own will and for his personal benefits.

He dismissed the national and provincial assemblies.

Final power was rests with military officers.

Q2 'Some countries are not ready to give voting rights to its citizens'. Explain.

Ans. In Saudi Arabia women do not have the right to vote.
Estonia had made its citizenship rules in such a way that people belonging to Russian minority find it difficult to get the right to vote.
In Fiji the electoral system was is such that the vote of an indigenous Fiji has more value than that of an Indian Fijian.

Q3 How is the dignity of citizens enhanced in democracy?

Ans. Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens.
Democracy is based on the principle of political equality, on recognizing that the poorest and the least educated have the same status as the rich and the educated.
People are not subjected of a ruler, they are the rulers themselves. All the citizens are equal before law.

Q4 Why is democracy considered the best form of government?

Ans. Democracy provides the method to deal with differences and conflict.
Democracy allows us to correct its own mistakes.
Democracy improves the quality of decision making.
Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens.

Q5. How does democracy allow us to correct its own mistakes?

Ans. There is no guarantee that mistakes cannot be made in democracy.
No form of government can guarantee that. The advantage in a democracy that such mistakes cannot be hidden for long.
There is a space for public discussion on these mistakes. And there is a room for correction. Either the rulers have to change their decisions, or the rulers can be changed.

3 Marks Questions

Q1 “Rulers and the rules, both are responsible for making of an ideal democracy”. Explain.

Ans. It depends upon on the citizens that what type of representative they are elected.
It depends on the awareness and participation of people.
In a democracy every citizen must be able to play equal role in decision making.

Both the rulers and the ruled should try to realize the ideals of democratic decisions.

Q2 What is responsible government?

Ans. Democratic government is a responsible government. The representatives elected by the people so it remains responsible towards people. In case they do not remain responsible before the people can change them during the next elections.

Q3 . What do understand by political equality?

Ans. Democracy is based on political equality which ensures equal rights. Both the rich and poor the educated and uneducated get equal rights. Democracy enhances the dignity of the people.

Q4 Explain the difficulties faced by the people in a non democratic country.

Ans. People cannot change their rulers according to their own wish. People cannot choose their rulers also. People cannot question the authority of the dictator. People cannot criticize the government.

Long Questions

1. Write any five features of Democratic government.

Ans. People have political rights. They take part in an election process on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise. Democratic government is accountable and responsive to the needs of people. There are free and fair elections. People participate in them without any restriction. People also participate in the functioning of decision making. Representatives are elected for the fixed tenure of time. People are not subjects of the ruler, they are rulers themselves.

2. Write any five features of Non Democratic government.

- Ans.** (i) People do not enjoy political rights or they have every limited right.
(ii) Elections are not held in a free and fair manner. People face many restrictions.
(iii) People are not allowed to participate in the functioning of decision making.
(iv) Government is not accountable and responsive to the needs of people.
(v) People are never considered rulers or dignified citizens. They are treated as subjects.

Q3 “Elections in china do not offer people a real choice.” Explain.

Ans. In China elections are held regularly after every five years for electing the country’s parliament, called Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahu (National People’s Congress).

The national People’s Congress has the power to appoint the President of country.

Before contesting elections, candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party.

Only those who are members of the Chinese Communist Party or eight smaller parties allied to it were allowed to contest elections held in 2001-03.

The government is always formed by communist party.

