

## Revision Notes Class 9

### Social Science - Civics

#### Chapter – 1 What is Democracy? Why Democracy?

##### Definition of Democracy

- It is defined as a form of government where rulers are elected by the choice of people.
- So, the difference between democratic and non-democratic governments is that the power of electing their representative is in people's hands.

##### Examples of non-democratic governments

- In Myanmar, the army controller becomes the ruler and people over there have no role to play in electing their representative.
- In Saudi Arabia, the representatives are from royal families, this is the base on which they qualify to become kings. Here also, people have no role to play in making decisions.

##### Features of Democracy

Here are few questions which is necessary to be answered for a true democracy:

- a) Which type of people are going to be elected as rulers and what kind of decisions need to be taken by non-elected officials?
- b) In which circumstances an election is to be considered democratic?
- c) What includes in the elector's population and whether they are equal or have some exceptions?
- d) What is the form of a democratic government? Also, state what are the limitations and freedoms of a decision making by the representative who is elected?
- e) How much is necessary for a democracy to respect the rights of a citizen?

##### Major Decision by the Elected Leaders

- Pakistani General Pervez Musharraf, in October 1999 led the military and overthrew a democratic government and declared himself the 'Chief Executive'.
- In the year 2002, he changed his designation to President and declared himself an additional 5 years.
- In the year August 2002, he passed the 'Legal Framework Order' which

stated that the President can dismiss the national and provincial assemblies.

- After elections, elected candidates vested some powers, the final power rested with military officers and General Musharraf. It shows that it is not a democratic country.
- In the USSR in communist Poland and the US in contemporary Iraq, power lied with external instead of elected locals. Whereas in democracy, the final power lies with those which are elected by the people.

### **Free and Fair Electoral Competition**

- In China, to elect members for the country's parliament which is called Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (National People's Congress), elections are held every 5 years.
- Candidate needs to be a member of the Chinese Communist Party or 8 of its allies to contest elections in 2002-03.
- The communist party used to form the government.
- Since independence, 1930, Mexico presidential elections have been held every 6 years. Until 2000 each and every election was won by PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party).
- A fair and free electoral competition where the existing ruling party has a fair chance to lose is an aspect of democracy.
- Examples of Democracy are – India and the United States etc.

### **One person, one vote, one value**

- Political equality is the basis of democracy.
- In a few instances where equal rights are denied have been observed.
- Women had no right to vote until 2015, in Saudi Arabia.
- In Estonia, citizen rules made it very much difficult for people from Russian minorities to gain the right to vote.
- Fiji's electoral system gave more value to indigenous Fiji than Indian Fijian.
- These are some examples which contradict the basis of democracy where an adult citizen must have one vote with equal value.

### **Rule of law and respect for rights**

- In the year 1980, Zimbabwe gained independence. The leader Robert Mugabe of the ZANU-PF party, which led for the freedom struggle ruled the country.
- President Mugabe used malpractices in elections so that ZANU-PF always won.
- Only the verdicts of the ruling party were presented by the television and radios since a law existed that restricted the right to criticize the President.
- Harassment was done to the independent journalist who talked against the government.
- Hence, in a democratic government:
  1. Major decisions were taken by the rulers elected by the people.
  2. Fair choice of people in changing rulers.
  3. Equal opportunity to all the citizens in choosing their representative.
  4. Government's power is limited by the basic rules of the constitution.

### **Arguments against Democracy**

Argument of instability may rise because the government is changed frequently:

- a) Political competition and power-play can take the dominance over morality.
- b) Delay in decision making because of multiple consultations.
- c) Lack of knowledge in the public interest can result in wrong decision making.
- d) Democracy is based on electoral competition, it brings corruption.
- e) People electing their representative may be unaware of their wellbeing.

### **Arguments in Favor of Democracy**

- A democratic government is always a better government since it is an accountable form of government.
- Democracy improves decision making quality.
- Democracy gives a method to deal with differences and conflicts.
- Democracy enhances citizens' dignity.
- Democracy is better compared to other forms of government since it allows us to correct our mistakes.

### Broader meaning of democracy

- Under representative democracy, everyone does not rule. The elected representative takes a decision on behalf of their people:
  - a) Modern democracies are characterized by huge populations; which makes it impossible for them to make the right decision.
  - b) If they could make the right decision, citizens would not have a greater amount of time, the skill to play a role in all the decisions.
- Understanding democracy can help people to identify the weakness of existing democracy and can differentiate between minimal and good 77democracy.

### Democracy in India

- India is seen as the largest democracy around the world.
- Since independence, citizens have been given the right to vote and have equal rights in voting without considering their caste, religion, gender or color.
- Democratic principles by which the Indian government functions are: sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic and republic.
- Elections are held after every 5 years.
- Government officials work under the Election Commission during election days.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### 1. Why is a democratic form of government most popular?

**Ans:** Some features of democracy make it most popular form of government:

- In democracy, the government is accountable for the public interests. Decision making is not completely dependent on the ruler.
- This form of government takes all decisions pertaining to the best of their people.
- A passive resolution to every predicament is provided in democracy.
- Democracy gives the best method for dealing with conflicts in ideology.
- Countries like India have a vast diversity of religion, language, castes and creeds, one solution leads to unity.
- Political equality is maintained in democracy by giving equal priority to the poor, educated and uneducated.

## 2. What is direct democracy and why can it not be implemented in modern times?

**Ans:** Direct democracy is a form of democracy where citizens share an equal role in the decision making process.

- Modern democracies consists of a large amount of people, which is not physically possible for them to sit together and make a decision.
- All citizens do not have time or skill to take part in entire decision making.

## 3. Why is the most common form of democratic government is representative democracy?

**Ans:** Representative democracy is the form of democracy in which the majority of people rule through their elected representative.

- This kind of democracy is realistic and huge democracies as all people do not have desired qualifications to rule.
- So, direct rule is not possible.
- Hence, the majority through their elected representative is allowed to take decisions on behalf of all the people.
- So, representative democracy is required where elected people can take collective decisions.

## 4. What are the basic differences between good and minimal democracy?

**Ans:** The differences between good and minimal democracy are:

S/N o.	Minimal democracy	Good democracy
1.	The rulers are elected by the people.	People elect their rulers, and also take part in all the decisions.
2.	Regular elections are held in a minimal democracy.	Regular free and fair elections are held in good democracy.
3.	Political equality is there in minimal democracy.	Political but also socio-economical unity is also an aspect of a good democracy.

**5. What are the common features of a non-democratic government?**

**Ans:** Ideologies of a non-democratic government are:

- In non-democratic countries, criticizing the government may lead to oppressive action such as harassment, imprisonment etc.
- No elections are held as it is ruled by the king or military.
- There is no place for the opposition party.
- Unions which abide by the government policies are welcome.
- Final words of the dictator or the military rulers are taken into consideration.
- Common people cannot think of high positions in government.

**6. Give a classic example of a better response of a democratic government over a non-democratic one.**

**Ans:** In China 1958-1961, word recorded famine. The casualties were around three crores of China's population.

- India was economically weaker compared to China, but it was not hit by famine as China.
- It was believed it was the government policies of the country that created such a scenario.
- Indian democratic responded well to food scarcity.
- Existence of multi-party elections, an opposition party and a press free to criticize the government might have saved China from huge famine casualties.