

18. Expansion of Democracy

Improve your learning

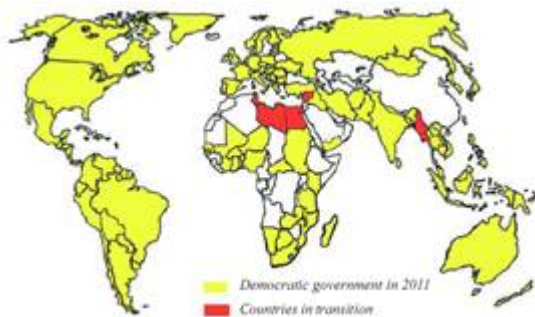
1. Question

(a). On the basis of these maps identify up to three countries (in some cases you won't find three countries) that were democratic in these continents for the given years and make a table as given in the next page.

Map 1: Democratic Governments in 1900-1950



Map 2: Democratic Governments in 2011



Year	Africa	Asia	Europe	South America
1900				
2011				

b) Identify some African countries with democracy in 2011

c) Make a list of big countries that were not democratic in 2011.

Answer

(a).

Year	Africa	Asia	Europe	South America
1900	none	none	Norway United kingdom France	Chile Peru Argentina
2011	South Africa Botswana Zimbabwe	India Mongolia Afghanistan	Sweden Finland Poland	Brazil Bolivia Ecuador

b) South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe.

c) China, Angola, Algeria, Saudi Arabia.

2. Question

Most countries often claim themselves to be democratic by conducting elections.

How did this occur in the context of Myanmar and Libya?

Answer

Libya was poor country of North Africa which had been colonised by Italy and became free after a long struggle in 1951. When it became independent Italy transferred power to King Idris who ruled the country with the help of a few rich and powerful families. In the year 1969 Muammar Gaddafi and a group of 70 young army officers took over the control of Kingdom of Libya.

This group of officers called themselves Free Officers Movement. King Idris I fled the country, monarchy was abolished and the country was declared as the 'Socialist Libyan Arab Republic'. The army completely supported this take over. The movement was under the leadership of a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) consisting of 12 members from the military. The new Libyan leadership tried to encourage participation of common people in public affairs through creating people's councils and elected People's Assembly in the centre. It created a parallel system of leadership of 'Revolutionary Councils', which were appointed and closely controlled by Gaddafi and the RCC. The democratic bodies had to implement the decisions of these non-elected leaders. As a result, people lost interest in these bodies, but the government kept trying to force their participation. In the latter half of 2010 there were movements to establish democratic governments across the Arab world. It began with a small country Tunisia and spread to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria amongst others. This revolutionary wave of demonstrations, protests, and wars occurring in the Arab world that began in December 2010 is now famous as the 'Arab Spring'

Aung San Suu Kyi began to fight for reforms in Burma. Suu Kyi has since been a central figure in the protests and the struggle for establishment of democracy in Burma. The rulers declared elections in 1990. In this election a new political party National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Suu Kyi won majority (80%) of the seats even though Suu Kyi was in prison. But the military refused to hand over power or even release Suu Kyi. She was kept under house arrest. She remained a prisoner in her house without permission to move around and interact with people. There was also international pressure created through economic sanctions. This disallowed the trade between Burma and those countries. As a result, Burma was not able to export its products or get necessary imports. This put great pressure on the economy. Even though this ultimately harms the common people of that country, 'economic sanctions' are used to bring pressure on the rulers. Over the years there has been a worldwide pressure on the military government to extend civil liberty and usher in a democratic government.

3. Question

Why do you think rulers try to control the media? Do you know how is media controlled in your area?

Answer

We have come across several examples where the media has not come forward to report the incidents that had actually happened. This can be clearly inferred from these lines as follows. In cities like Benghazi the civic amenities were deplorable. A large number of its citizens were unemployed, and many families did not have a stable income. People from across the country began to interact through internet and mobile phones to share their misery. However, state owned media refused to report them. Since the media was state owned, it did not properly cover the topics that criticised the state government. In this way, the media was partial. they also established state control over media and did not allow people to freely form associations that opposed government policies. In short they did not allow open criticism of the government policies or attempts to change the government. Rulers tend

to control the media so that the media do not publish anything against them and the people do not come across the bad things that the state government is doing.

Not only in my society, in all most all parts of the world, the media is under the control of the powerful state government. The media owners and chairpersons are paid by the government officials huge sum of money so that they do not publish anything that is against the state government. So, these media publish only those stories where the state government is shown in a positive manner.

4. Question

Write an imaginary dialogue between a person from Libya and Myanmar comparing the events and struggle for democracy in their respective countries.

Answer

Libyan person: Looks like we have come a long way after the death of Gaddafi, but the new-found freedom doesn't seem to lead us anywhere. It's hard to come out of the shadow of being in a dictatorial regime of 3-4 decades.

Myanmar person: At least you know who your president is. In Myanmar, although, everyone considers Aung San Suu Kyi as their leader, but officially someone else is the President of the country. I am sorry I don't know his name.

Myanmar person: We are currently living in a bad phase. Our parents and grandparent's generation had fought a lot for democracy. Still the life is not good.

Libya person: It goes the same with our place too, even we struggled a lot to reach where we are, still there is no contentment

5. Question

How do literacy and mass education help for the functioning of democracy?

Answer

As we know democracy is about

Participation of all the citizens in decision making.

By being literate, the people in a democracy have the following advantages:

One does not have to depend on hearsay to understand information.

One can be better informed and take better decisions in democratic election process.

One can read and understand any legal documents without depending on others and avoid scope of being cheated.

Yes, being literate doesn't mean one will be rational in their thinking, but being literate will take care personal informed decision by the person, be it rational or irrational.

It is just not for democracy, it applies universally. To understand any system properly, one needs to be properly educated.

Hence education and literacy play a very important role in democracy.

6. Question

What is the difference between democracy and dictatorship?

Answer

The differences between democracy and dictatorship are as follows:

Democracy is the system where the general public is given the majority of the power, that's why it is called the rule of the majority. Whereas the Dictatorship government is totally opposite, where one person or the elected party get the utmost power.

In the democratic government the rights of speech or vote is given to the general public and the public can protest or say no to any decision that is made by the democratic government, but the dictatorship government system is totally different in this state affair, here the right to vote is not given to the general public, the general public cannot protest or say no to any decision made by the dictator.

Democracy is like and followed by the modern world on the other hand dictatorship has no popularity as a government system.

The accountability to the state is also a major fact. In a democracy, the government is obviously liable and accountable to the public and the state, whereas in dictatorship the government or the ruling party is not liable or accountable to the country or its citizen.

7. Question

What is the role played by Aung San Suu Kyi in fighting for democracy in Myanmar?

Answer

Aung San Suu Kyi began to fight for reforms in Burma. Suu Kyi has since been a central figure in the protests and the struggle for establishment of democracy in Burma. The rulers declared elections in 1990. In this election a new political party National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Suu Kyi won majority (80%) of the seats even though Suu Kyi was in prison. But the military refused to hand over power or even release Suu Kyi. She was kept under house arrest. She remained a prisoner in her house without permission to move around and interact with people. She wasn't even able to attend the funeral of her husband or meet her two sons. There is also international pressure created through economic sanctions. This disallows the trade

between Burma and those countries. As a result, Burma is not able to export its products or get necessary imports. This puts great pressure on the economy. Even though this ultimately harms the common people of that country, 'economic sanctions' are used to bring pressure on the rulers. Over the years there has been a worldwide pressure on the military government to extend civil liberty and usher in a democratic government.

8. Question

Read the last paragraph of this chapter and answer the question. What is a new kind of democracy?

Answer

The new kind of democracy that is mentioned in the last paragraph of the chapter tell that' the new democracy should be such that even the poorest and the most vulnerable people will have a voice and will be able to influence policies and ensure justice and peace for all.