

Short Answer Questions

Q. 1. What is democracy? What are its various characteristics?

Ans. In modern usage, democracy is a system of government, in which the citizens exercise power. It is formed by two Greek words 'demos' and 'Kratia'. 'Demos' means people and 'Kratia' means the government. Democracy, thus means 'rule by the people.' In a democratic set up, every citizen has a right to take a part in the decision making process. According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy is 'government of the people, government by the people and the government for the people' Citizens choose their representatives who would form the government.

Characteristics:

It promotes equality among citizens.

It looks after the interest of the people.

It allows room to correct mistakes.

Q. 2. What are the prudential reasons to support democracy?

Ans. Over a hundred countries of the world today claim and practise some kinds of democratic politics.

They have formal constitution, they hold elections, they have parties and they guarantee rights to citizens.

While these features are common to most of them, these democracies are very much different from one another in terms of their social situations, their economic achievements and their cultures.

Q. 3. Should we blame democracy for socio-economic and political problems?

Ans. If some of our expectations are not met, we start blaming the idea of democracy.

The first step towards thinking carefully about the outcomes of democracy is to recognise that democracy is just a form of government. It can only create conditions for achieving something.

The citizens have to take advantage of those conditions and achieve their goals.

Q. 4. What are our expectations from democracy?

Ans. In a democracy, we are most concerned with ensuring that people have the right to choose their rulers and people have control over the rulers.

Whenever possible and necessary, citizens should be able to participate in decision-making that affects them all.

Thus, the most basic outcome of democracy should be that the government is accountable to the citizens and responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens.

Q. 5. What is the normal procedure of a democratic government?

Ans. (i) It should hold regular, free and fair elections.

(ii) Open public debates on major policies and legislations.

(iii) Right to information about the government and its functioning should be provided to citizens.

Q. 6. On the basis of which values will it be a fair expectation that democracy should produce a harmonious social life? Explain. [CBSE (AI) 2017]

Ans. The values that are associated with democracy producing a harmonious social life are:

(i) Equality among all human beings.

(ii) Respect for individual freedom.

(iii) Democracies accommodate various social divisions.

(iv) Democracies reduce the possibility of tensions becoming explosive or violent.

(v) Ability to handle social differences, divisions and conflicts.

Q. 7. How does democracy promote the dignity and freedom of an individual?

Ans. (i) Every individual wants respect from fellow beings.

(ii) Often conflicts arise among individuals because some feel that they are not treated with due respect.

(iii) The passion for respect and freedom are the basis of democracy all over the world—in countries with democratic regimes as well as countries without democratic regimes.

For societies which have been built for long on the basis of subordination and domination, it is not a simple matter to recognise that all individuals are equal.

Q. 8. On what factors does the country's economic development depend?

Ans. A country's economic development depends on the following factors:

(i) Country's population, size

(ii) Its global situation

(iii) Cooperation from other countries

(iv) Economic priorities adopted by the country

However, the difference in the rates of economic development between less developed countries with dictatorship and democracies is negligible.

Q. 9. Is it true that democracies are not very successful in reducing economic inequalities?

Ans. It is true. The following points justify that:

(i) A small number of ultra-rich enjoy a disproportionate share of wealth and income. Not only that, their share in the total income of the country has been increasing.

(ii) Those at the bottom of the society have very little to depend upon. Their incomes have been declining.

(iii) Sometimes, they find it difficult to meet their basic needs of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and health.

In actual life, democracies do not appear to be very successful in reducing economic inequalities.

Q. 10. How can you say that democracy is better than dictatorship?

OR

Which values make democracy better than any other form of government?

Explain.

[CBSE (F) 2017]

OR

Analyse any three values that make democracy better. [CBSE Delhi 2017]

Ans. (i) Democracy promotes equality among citizens as it is people's own government.

(ii) It enhances the dignity of the individual

(iii) It also improves the quality of decision-making

(iv) It provides methods to resolve conflicts, if any

(v) Only democracy allows room to correct mistakes

(vi) It is a legitimate government

(vii) Gives equal status and respect to women and weaker sections.

(viii) It promotes transparency.

(ix) Values of social justice, equality, fraternity.

(x) It gives importance to public opinion.

(xi) It provides rights to people.

(xii) It gives the feeling of collective belonging.

(xiii) It encompasses the feeling of integrity secularism and tolerance.

(xiv) It inculcates the feeling of integrity feeling of integrity and dutifulness.

(xv) It may be slow, less efficient, not always very responsive or clean. A democratic government is the people's own government.

(xvi) There is an overwhelming support for the idea of democracy all over the world—in countries with democratic regimes as well as with non-democratic regimes.

Q. 11. How much time is taken in democracy to take decisions as compared to other governments?

Ans. (i) A government may take decisions very fast but it may take such decisions that are not accepted by the people and may, therefore, face problems.

(ii) In contrast, the democratic government will take more time to follow procedures before arriving at a decision.

(iii) But because it has followed procedures, its decisions may be both more acceptable to the people and more effective.

So, the cost of time that democracy pays is perhaps worth it.

Q. 12. How much transparency is there in democracy as compared to other governments?

Ans. (i) A citizen who wants to know if a decision was taken through the correct procedures can find that out. He/She has the right and the means to examine the process of decision-making. This is known as transparency.

(ii) This factor is often missing from a non-democratic government. Therefore, when we are trying to find out the outcomes of democracy, it is right to expect democracy to produce a government that follows procedures and is accountable to the people.

(iii) We can also expect that the democratic government develops mechanisms for citizens to hold the government accountable and mechanisms for citizens to take part in decision-making whenever they think fit.

Q. 13. "Democracy is accountable and responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens." Evaluate the statement. [CBSE (Comptt) 2017]

OR

"Democratic government is known as responsive government." Assess the statement.

[CBSE (Comptt) 2017]

Ans. Democracy is accountable and responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens:

(i) The most basic outcome of democracy is that it produces a government that is accountable to the citizens, and responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens. Economic growth and development –level of economic development is slow because of delay in decision making. Accommodation of social diversity – majority should work with minority. Dignity and freedom of citizens-every individual wants to receive respect from fellow beings. Equality of women.

Q. 14. How does democracy stand better to any other form of government in promoting the dignity and freedom of the citizens? Explain with examples. [CBSE (Comptt) 2017]

Ans. Democracy stands better to any other form of government in promoting the dignity and freedom of citizens:

(i) The passion for respect and freedom are the basis of democracy which is recognized throughout the world in principle.

(ii) Dignity of women : Democracy provides dignity to women by giving them the freedom to fight for their rights.

(iii) Right to equality: equal status and equal opportunity has a legal sanction in democracy.

(iv) Individual freedom : In democracy every individual has the freedom to pursue his goal.

Q. 15. Explain briefly the outcome of democracy.

Ans. (i) The first step towards evaluating outcome of democracy is to recognise that democracy is just a form of government. It means democracy provides an opportunity and it is the citizens who can take advantage of it.

(ii) The most basic outcome of democracy is that it is accountable to citizens and responsive to their needs and expectations.

(iii) Another outcome of democracy is that it is a legitimate government. It means all decisions are taken as per the constitution only.

Q. 16. Why is there a sound support for the idea of democracy all over the world?

Ans. (i) It is so because a democratic government is people-run government duly elected by them.

(ii) It is a legitimate government since it follows all the laws provided in the constitution.

(iii) People wish to be ruled by the representatives elected by them. The voters enjoy to form political parties and elect the government of their choice.

Q. 17. “The economic growth rate in dictatorship is better than that in democratic rule.” Why is it so?

Ans. (i) The economic growth rate in all dictatorial regimes was 4.42 per cent as compared to all democratic regimes’ 3.95 per cent during the period 1995–2000.

(ii) In dictatorial regimes, the rules and regulations are rigid and compulsory. The citizens who disobey are severely punished.

(iii) In democratic regimes, as the leaders and bureaucrats think about their profits only, the government is not much keen to remove poverty and develop the country economically.

Q. 18. Suggest some broad guidelines that can be kept in mind while devising ways and means for political reforms in India. [CBSE Sample Paper 2016]

Ans. Guidelines for political reform:

(i) Any legal change must carefully look at what results it will have on politics. Sometimes, the results may be counter-productive.

(ii) The main focus of political reforms should be on ways to strengthen democratic practice.

(iii) Any proposal for political reforms should think not only about what is a good solution but also about who will implement it and how?

Q. 19. “Democratic government is legitimate government”? Support the statement with arguments. [CBSE Delhi 2016]

OR

How is ‘democratic government’ a ‘legitimate government’? Explain with examples. [CBSE Delhi 2017]

Ans. Democratic government is a legitimate government: It may be slow, less efficient, not always very responsive or clean. But a democratic government is peoples’ own government. That is why there is an overwhelming support for the idea of democracy all over the world. People wished to be ruled by representatives elected by them. They also believe that democracy is suitable for their country. Democracy’s ability to generate its own support is itself an outcome that cannot be ignored.

Democratic Government known as legitimate government:

(i) Democracy produce a government that follows and is accountable to the people.

(ii) It provides mechanism for citizens to hold the government accountable and allows citizens to take part in decision making whenever they think fit.

(iii) If you wanted to measure democracies on the basis of this expected outcome you

would look for the following practices and institutions regular free and fair election, open public debate on major policies.

Q. 20. Democracy accommodates social diversities. Support the statement with examples. [CBSE (AI) 2016]

OR

How is social diversity accommodated in democracy? Explain with examples. [CBSE (AI) 2017]

Ans. “Democracy accommodates social diversities”.

Democracy develops a mechanism which successfully negotiates difference among ethnic population.

(i) Democracies develop a procedure to conduct their competition. This reduces the possibility of these tensions becoming explosive or violent.

(ii) No society can fully and permanently resolve conflicts among different groups. But we can certainly learn to respect these differences and can evolve mechanism to negotiate these differences.

(iii) Ability to handle social differences, divisions and conflicts is thus a definite plus point of democratic regimes.

(iv) For example: Belgium has successfully negotiated differences among ethnic population. This reduces the possibility of tensions.

Q. 21. “Democratic governments in practice are known as accountable.” Support the statement with arguments. [CBSE (F) 2016]

Ans. Democratic governments in practice are accountable:

(i) It is right to expect democracy to produce a government that follows procedures and is accountable to the people.

(ii) It is also expected that the democratic government develops mechanisms for citizens to take part in decision making whenever they think it is fit.

(iii) The democratic government is accountable to the people. If it ignores the will of the people, they will not elect their ruler in the next general election.

(iv) The procedures and decision making process should be transparent for democratic government to be accountable to the people.