

Outcomes of Democracy

Long Answer Questions

1. How does democracy produce an accountable, responsive and legitimate government?

Ans. Accountable:

- (i) A democracy makes sure that people will have the right to choose their rulers.
- (ii) Whenever possible, citizens should participate in the decision-making process.
- (iii) This is known as transparency.
- (iv) Therefore, the most basic outcome of democracy is that it produces a government that is accountable to citizens and is responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens.

Legitimate:

- (i) There is one aspect in which the democratic government is certainly better than its alternatives.
- (ii) That is, a democratic government is a legitimate government.
- (iii) It may be slow, less efficient but it is the people's own legitimate government.

Responsive:

- (i) People wish to be ruled by representatives elected by them.
- They also believe that democracy is suitable for their country and their problems would be attended to.
- (iii) Democracy's ability to generate its own support is itself an outcome that cannot be ignored.

2. Do democracies lead to peaceful and harmonious relations among citizens?

Ans. (i) Democracies usually 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.
- (iii) But we can certainly learn to respect these differences and we can also evolve mechanisms to negotiate the differences.
- (iv) Democracy is best suited to produce this outcome.

Non-democratic regimes often turn a blind eye to or suppress internal social differences. Ability to handle social differences, divisions and conflicts is thus, a definite plus point of democratic regimes.

3. Is economic growth in democracies accompanied by increased inequalities among the people?

Ans. (i) Democracies are based on political equality.

- (ii) All individuals have equal right in electing representatives.
- (iii) Parallel to the process of bringing individuals into the political arena on an equal footing, we find growing economic inequalities.
- (iv) A small number of ultra rich enjoy a highly disproportionate share of wealth and incomes. Not only that, their share in the total income of the country has been increasing.

(v) Those at the bottom of the society have very little to depend upon. Their incomes have been declining. Sometimes, they find it difficult to meet their basic needs of life such as food, clothing, housing, education and health.

4. How far are democracies able to handle differences between various ethnic groups?

Ans. (i) Democracies are able to accommodate various social divisions.
(ii) These usually develop a procedure to reduce the possibility of tension between ethnic groups as they become explosive or violent sometimes.
(iii) Democracy is best suited to reduce this outcome.
(iv) Non-democratic regimes often turn a blind eye to or suppress social differences.
(v) Ability to handle social differences, divisions and conflicts is thus a definite plus point of democratic regimes.

5. "What is most distinctive about democracy is that its examination never gets over." Comment.

Ans. (i) As democracy passes one test, it produces another test. As people get some benefits of democracy, they ask for more and want to make democracy even better.
(ii) That is why, when we ask people about the way democracy functions, they always come up with more expectations and many complaints.
(iii) The fact that people are complaining is itself a testimony to the success of democracy. It shows that people have developed awareness and the ability to expect, and to look critically at power holders and the high and the mighty.
(iv) A public expression of dissatisfaction with democracy shows the success of the democratic project; it transforms people from the status of a subject into that of a citizen.

6. "Democracies often frustrate the needs of the people." Support your answer with examples.

Ans. (i) A democratic government is for the people, by the people and should be attentive to the needs of the people. An ordinary citizen votes for a minister, but cannot meet him if needed.
(ii) There is the evil of corruption which has made the life difficult for the citizens and does not give much advice to them to choose their leaders.
(iii) If we see economic growth, it is also lower than those in non-democratic regimes.