

Outcomes of Democracy

Exercises

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

Ans. Democracy Produces an Accountable Government Democracy produces an accountable governments, as the people has the right in choose their representatives through the electoral process. These elected representatives form the government and participate in the decision making process on behalf of the people. If these elected representatives (In not work in a proper way, people have a chance to not elect them in next election.

Democracy Produces Responsive Government Democratic governments are elected by the people and are responsible towards the people and Parliament. These governments promote the formation of public opinion and take care of the needs and expectations of the people.

Democracy Produces Legitimate Government Democratic government is a legitimate government because regular elections are its key feature. After five years, elections are held for the legislature and people elect then government on the basis of their right to vote (universal adult franchise). The party which secures the majority forms the government. In the next election, if it loses the majority, it has to resign from office. Beside elections, the decisions in a democratic government are taken in a transparent manner.

2. What are the conditions under which democracies accommodate social diversities?

Ans. Democracies accommodate social diversities when it is well understood that democracy is not just the rule of the majority, and that the rule of the majority is not just the rule of a single religious or a single community.

3. Give arguments to support or oppose the following assertions

(i) Industrialized countries can afford democracy but the poor need dictatorship to become rich.

(ii) "Democracy can't reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens.

(iii) Government in poor countries should spend less on poverty reduction, health, education and spend more on industries and infrastructure.

(iv) In democracy, all citizens have one vote, which means that there is absence of any domination and conflict.

Ans. (i) "Industrialized countries can afford democracy but the poor need dictatorship to become rich". The statement is incorrect as can be seen from the examples of India and Zimbabwe. In 1947, India was included in the Third World Nations, but now it is one of the fast-growing economies in the world. On the other hand, Zimbabwe which was a fairly prosperous nation has run into huge international debt with the progression of Robert Mugabe's regime.

(ii) "Democracy can't reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens." This statement is incorrect. The Minimum Wages Act enacted by the Indian Government and other policies which regulate the basic price at which agricultural producers and small industries sell their goods, have helped increase the per capita income of the country, thereby making its citizens more prosperous.

(iii) "Government in poor countries should spend less on poverty reduction, health, education and spend more on industries and infrastructure." This is not a wish option, as in poor countries the people cannot afford health and education services.

(iv) "In democracy, all citizens have one vote, which means that there is absence of any domination and conflict."

This is not true as conflict can be eliminated only in an ideal situation. In real democracies, though every persons has one vote, there are divisions among the people. These divisions lead to conflict.

4. Identify the challenges to democracy in the following descriptions. Also, suggest policy/institutional mechanism to deepen democracy in the given situations.
- (i) Following a High Court directive a temple in Odisha that had separate entry doors for dalits and non-dalits, allowed entry for all from of same door.
- (ii) A large number of farmers are committing suicide in different States of India.
- (iii) Following allegation of killing of three civilians in Gandwara in a fake encounter by Jammu and Kashmir police, an enquiry has been ordered.
- Ans.** (i) **Challenge Involved** Challenges of social inequality and untouchability.
Suggestion To check this challenge a law has been passed to declare untouchability a legal offence. Efforts have been made to promote social equality. Central Government has directed the State Governments not to practice untouchability in any form. If anyone tries to do so, he will be punished under the Law of Untouchability Offence Act, 1955.
- (ii) **Challenge Involved** Challenge of poverty and economic inequalities.
Suggestion To look into grievance of the poor farmer's loan should be provided to them at low rates of interest that could be easily returned. For this purpose, co-operative societies should come forward to help the poor farmers. Crop Insurance Policy should be implemented for any eventuality of crop failure.
- (iii) **Challenge Involved** Challenge to preserve the people's trust in government agencies like the police.
Suggestion To check such challenges in a democratic government, the law should be amended. So that the Police do not take law and order in their hands and should have a reasonable behavior towards the civilians.
5. In the context of democracies, which of the following ideas is correct? Democracies have successfully eliminated
- (a) conflicts among people
 (b) economic inequalities among people
 (c) differences of opinion about how marginalized sections are to be treated
 (d) the idea of political inequality
- Ans.** (d) the idea of political inequality
6. In the context of assessing democracy, which among the following is odd one out? Democracies need to ensure
- (a) free and fair elections
 (b) dignity of the individual
 (c) majority rule
 (d) equal treatment before law
- Ans.** (c) majority rule
7. Studies on political and. social inequalities in democracy show that
- (a) democracy and development go together (b) inequalities exist in democracies
 (c) inequalities do not exist under dictatorship (d) dictatorship is better than democracy
- Ans.** (b) inequalities exist in democracies

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8. Read the passage below.
- Nannu is a daily wage earner. He lives in Welcome Mazdoor Colony, a slum habitation in East Delhi. He lost his ration card and applied for a duplicate one in January, 2004. He made several rounds to the local Food and Civil Supplies office for the next three months. But, the clerks and officials would not even look at him, leave alone do his job or bother to tell him the status of his application. Ultimately, he filled an application under the Right to Information Act asking for the daily progress made on his application, names of the officials who were supposed to act on his application and what action would be taken

against these officials for their inaction. Within a week of filling application under the Right to Information Act, he was visited by an inspector from the Food Department, who informed him that the card had been made and he could collect it from the office. When Nannu went to collect his card next day, he was given a very warm treatment by the Food and Supply Officer (FSO), who is the head of a circle. The FSO offered him tea and requested him to withdraw his application under the Right to Information, since his work has already been done.

What does Nannu's example show? What impact did Nannu's action have on officials? Ask your parents their experiences when they approach government officials to attend to their problems.

Ans. Nannu's example shows the importance of the Right To Information Act.

Nannu's action affected the officials' working. The Department of Food and Civil Supply would not have kept his application pending. Within a week of filling an RTI Act application, an official from food and civil supply visited his house to inform that his card is ready and he could take it any working day from the office. On the next day, when he went to collect his application, he was received by the food and supply officer, who was the head of the circle. He was requested to withdraw his application under RTI, since he has received his ration card.