

UNIT

1

Forms of Government and Democracy

Learning Objectives

- Know the forms of government
- Understand the meaning of democracy
- Know the merits and demerits of democracy
- Know the challenges to Indian democracy



Introduction

We are going to learn from this lesson how various forms of government have developed globally. Today, many countries of the world follow different types of governments, but the modern world prefers democracy.

1.1 Forms of Government

The governance of nations differs significantly based on who has power. There are different forms of government: aristocracy, monarchy, autocracy, oligarchy, theocracy, democracy and republic.

1.1.1 Aristocracy

A form of government in which power is in the hands of a small privileged ruling class (nobels).

Example: United Kingdom, Spain

1.1.2 Monarchy

A system of government in which one person reigns supreme, usually a king or queen (constitutional monarchy).

Example: Bhutan, Oman, Qatar

1.1.3 Autocracy

A system of government by one person with absolute power.

Example: North Korea, Saudi Arabia

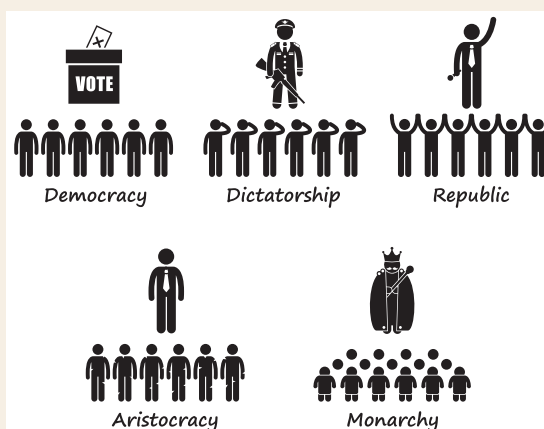
1.1.4 Oligarchy

A small group of people having control of a country or organisation.

Example: Former Soviet Union, China, Venezuela, North Korea.

1.1.5 Theocracy

A system of government in which religious doctrines form the basis of



Forms of Government

government headed by a priest who rules in the name of God or proclaims himself as a God.

Example: Vatican.

1.1.6 Democracy

A system of government in which eligible members in the population vote to elect their elected representatives, and the party or individual who obtains the majority votes forms the government.

Example: India, USA, France

1.1.7 Republic

A state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives and which has an elected or nominated President rather than a monarch.

Example: India, Australia

DO YOU KNOW? The term 'republic' was first coined in 500 BCE in Rome. It is derived from *res publica*, a Latin word meaning public matter.

India became a Republic on 26 January 1950. It is governed in accordance with the Constitution adopted on 26 November 1949, which came into force on 26 January 1950.

1.2 What is Democracy?

- Democracy is a form of government that allows people to choose their rulers.
- Only leaders elected by people should rule the country.
- People have the freedom to express views, freedom to organise and freedom to protest.

1.2.1 Meaning of Democracy

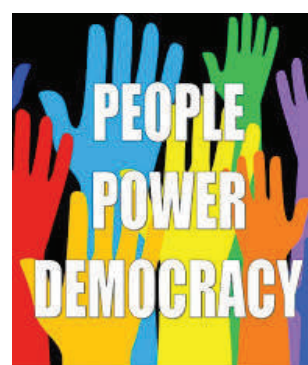
Democracy is a system of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people of a country and people elect their

representatives either directly or indirectly through fair and free elections, which are usually held periodically.

DO YOU KNOW? The term 'democracy' is derived from two Greek words: *DEMOS* meaning people and *cratia* meaning power. Thus, literally democracy means "the power of the people".

1.2.2 Definition

According to Mahatma Gandhi, "True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village."



1.2.3 Salient Features of Democracy

1. Elected representatives of people and final decision-making power to the representatives.
2. Free and fair elections.

Abraham Lincoln, one of the Presidents of USA, defines democracy as a government of the people, by the people and for the people.



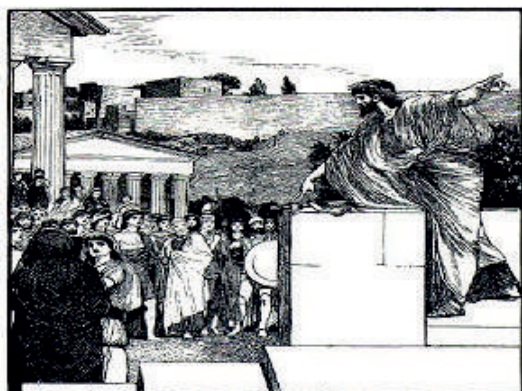
Abraham Lincoln

3. voting right is with equal value to those who have attained the age of 18
4. Fundamental rights and protection of individual freedom.

1.2.4 Evolution of Democracy

Democracy began 2,500 years ago in some of the city-states of ancient Greece. It is important to know that democratic institutions existed in India as early as the Vedic period. Chanakya's *Arthashastra* tells us that in ancient India, an autonomous village community was the basic unit of the local government. during the later chola preiod ancient Tamil Nadu, Kudavolai system was a

DEMOCRACY IN ANCIENT ATHENS.
Vth CENTURY BCE



very notable and unique feature of the village administration of the Cholas. The evolution towards a democracy is represented by the following values: freedom, equality, fraternity, accountability, transparency and trust.

1.2.6 Types of Democracy

There are two types of democracies:

1. Direct democracy
2. Indirect (representative) democracy

The types of democracy refers to the kind of government or social structures which allow people to participate equally.

Direct Democracy

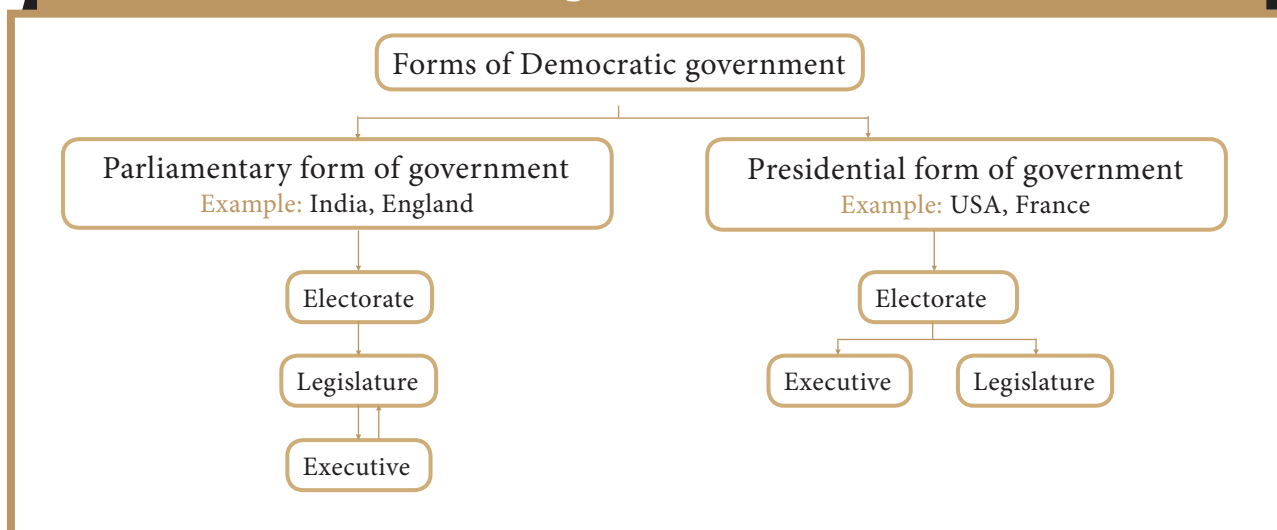
When the people themselves directly express their will on public affairs, the type of government is called pure or direct democracy.

Example: Ancient Greek city-states, Switzerland

Indirect Democracy / Representative Democracy

When the people express their will on public affairs, through their elected representatives, the type of government is called indirect or representative democracy.

1.2.5 Forms of Democratic government



Example: The prevailing system of democracy in India, USA and UK

1.2.7 Merits and Demerits of Democracy

Merits

1. Responsible and accountable government
2. Equality and fraternity
3. Sense of responsibility among common people
4. Local self-government
5. Development and prosperity for all
6. Popular sovereignty
7. Sense of cooperation and fraternal feeling

Demerits

1. Indirect or representative nature of democracy
2. Lack of interest in democratic process and hence lower turnout in elections
3. Instability in governance due to fractured mandate
4. Delay in decision-making process.

1.2.8 Democracy in India


India has a parliamentary form of democracy. The Indian Parliament comprises the elected representatives of people and makes the laws for the country. The participation of people in the decision making and the consent of citizens are the two important elements of the parliamentary form of government in India.



Parliament of India

India is the largest democratic country in the world. Democracy in India works on five basic principles. These are sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic.

Every person who is a citizen of India and who is not less than 18 years of age can exercise their right to vote in India, based on universal adult suffrage. There is no discrimination based on a person's caste, creed, religion, region, gender and education when it comes to providing the right to vote.



The Parliament House in India was designed by the British architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker in 1912-13 and construction began in 1921 and ended in 1927

1.2.9 Elections in India

India has a quasi-federal government, with elected representatives at the federal, state and local levels. The general elections are conducted by the Election Commission of India. At the national level, the President of India, appoints the Prime Minister, who enjoys majority in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament of India.

		Two Houses of Parliament	
Lok Sabha / Lower House / House of People		Rajya Sabha / Upper House / Council of States	

All members of the Lok Sabha are directly elected through general elections, which take place once in every five years, in normal circumstances. Two Anglo Indian members can be nominated by the President of India to the Lok Sabha.

Members of the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Indian Parliament, are elected by an electoral college consisting of elected members of the legislative assemblies of the states and the Union Territories of India. The President of India nominates 12 members for their contributions to art, literature, science and social services.

1.2.10 The First Elections in Democratic India

General elections to the first Lok Sabha since independence were held in India between 25 October 1951 and 21 February 1952. The Indian National Congress



Elections in India

emerged victorious by winning 364 of the 489 seats. Jawaharlal Nehru became the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the country.



British India –General elections, 1920

General elections were held in British India in 1920 to elect members to the Imperial Legislative Council and the Provincial Councils. They were the first elections in the country's history.

1.2.11 Major challenges to Indian Democracy

Democracy is the dominant form of government in the contemporary world. It

has not faced a serious challenge or a rival so far. In the last hundred years, there has been an expansion of democracy all over the world. The various aspects of democracy and its challenges are:

1. Illiteracy
2. Poverty
3. Gender discrimination
4. Regionalism
5. Casteism, communalism and religious fundamentalism
6. Corruption
7. Criminalisation of politics
8. Political violence

1.2.12 Conditions for the Success of Democracy in India

- Empowerment of the poor and illiterates to enjoy the goodness of democracy.
- Willingness among the elected people not to misuse their powerful position and public wealth.
- Eradication of social evils and dangers from which democracy suffers.
- An impartial and efficient press to form public opinion.
- Presence of strong public opinion.
- Feeling of tolerance and communal harmony among the people.
- Awareness among the people of the fundamental rights that they are entitled to enjoy.
- Conscious check and vigilance on the working of the elected representatives.
- Powerful and responsible opposition.

Indian democracy can be successful and vibrant only when its citizens imbibe and reflect in their behavior the basic democratic values like equality, freedom, social justice, accountability and respect for all. Their mindset, thinking and behavior are expected to be in tune with the essential conditions of democracy. They have to appreciate the opportunities for their desired roles like participation, making the system accountable,

fulfilling obligations, and playing proactive roles to actualize the goals of democracy.

Recap

- Government is a group of people who govern a community or unit.
- Monarchy is a system of government in which one person reigns supreme, usually a king or queen.
- Types of democracy refer to kind of government or social structures which allow people to participate equally, either directly or indirectly.
- When the people themselves directly express their will on public affairs, the type of government is called pure or direct democracy.
- Based on universal adult suffrage, every Indian citizen, above 18 years of age, can exercise the right to vote in India.



EXERCISE



I. Choose the correct answer

1. A system of government in which one person reigns supreme, usually a king or queen, is called _____.
 - (a) autocracy
 - (b) monarchy
 - (c) democracy
 - (d) republic
2. A system of government with absolute power.
 - (a) Aristocracy
 - (b) Theocracy
 - (c) Democracy
 - (d) Autocracy
3. Former Soviet Union is an example for _____.
 - (a) aristocracy
 - (b) theocracy
 - (c) oligarchy
 - (d) republic
4. Select the odd one
 - (a) India
 - (b) USA
 - (c) France
 - (d) Vatican
5. Abraham Lincoln was the President of the _____.
 - (a) USA
 - (b) UK
 - (c) USSR
 - (d) India
6. Kudavolai system was followed by
 - (a) Cheras
 - (b) Pandyas
 - (c) Cholas
 - (d) Kalabhras
7. Direct Democracy in olden times existed
 - (a) In the republics of ancient India
 - (b) Among the USA
 - (c) In the city-state of ancient Greece
 - (d) Among the UK
8. From which language was the term "Democracy" derived?
 - (a) Greek
 - (b) Latin
 - (c) Persian
 - (d) Arabic
9. In democracy the final authority rests with
 - (a) The Parliament
 - (b) The People
 - (c) The council of Ministers
 - (d) The President
10. Which one of the country has Presidential form of government
 - (a) India
 - (b) Britain
 - (c) Canada
 - (d) USA
11. The largest democratic country in the world is
 - (a) Canada
 - (b) India
 - (c) USA
 - (d) China
12. **Assertion (A):** Direct democracy is practised in Switzerland.
Reason (R): People directly participates in decision making.
 - (a) Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) explains (A)
 - (b) Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) does not explain (A)
 - (c) (A) is correct and (R) is false
 - (d) (A) is false and (R) is true



13. Assertion (A): India has parliamentary form of democracy.

Reason (R): Indian parliament comprises two houses.

- (a) Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) explains (A)
- (b) Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) does not explain (A)
- (c) (A) is correct and (R) is false
- (d) (A) is false and (R) is true

14. The meaning of Franchise is

- (a) Right to elect
- (b) Right to vote for the poor
- (c) Right to vote
- (d) Right to vote for the rich

15. The grant of universal franchise creates

- (a) Social equality
- (b) Economic equality
- (c) Political equality
- (d) Legal equality

16. Prime Minister of India is appointed by

- (a) Lok Sabha (b) Rajya Sabha
- (c) Speaker (d) President

17. The President of India can nominate

- (a) 12 members to Lok Sabha
- (b) 2 members of Rajya Sabha
- (c) 12 members to Rajya Sabha
- (d) 14 members of Rajya Sabha

18. The First general elections after independence in India were held in

- (a) 1948-49 (b) 1951-52
- (c) 1957-58 (d) 1947-48

II. Fill in the blanks

- 1. The Constitution of India was finally adopted on _____.
- 2. The two types of democracy are _____ and _____.
- 3. An example for direct democracy is _____.
- 4. India has a _____ form of democracy.

5. _____ was the first Prime Minister of independent India.

6. The first general elections were held in British India in the year _____.

7. The Parliament House in India was designed by _____ and _____.

III. Match the following

- 1. Autocracy - 18
- 2. Right to vote - Arthashastra
- 3. Chanakya - Vatican
- 4. Theocracy - North Korea

IV. Give short answers

- 1. Give Abraham Lincoln's definition for democracy.
- 2. Mention the forms of democracy.
- 3. Distinguish between direct and indirect democracy.

V. Answer in detail

- 1. What are the challenges to Indian democracy? explain.
- 2. Explain the conditions necessary for the success of democracy in India.
- 3. What is your opinion about democracy in India?

VI. Project and Activity

- 1. Discuss in the class what is universal adult franchise? Why is it important?
- 2. "Democracy is the power of majority which respects minority." Discuss.
- 3. Conduct a mock election in your class.
- 4. A group discussion on the merits and demerits of democracy of India in the classroom.

VII. HOTS

- 1. Will you have the right to equality under dictatorship? What would be the attitude regarding public opinion in such a country?
- 2. How does democracy lead to a peaceful and a harmonious life among the citizens? Explain.

VIII. Life Skills

Select a group of countries. Research each country and tell what type of government it has: Aristocracy, Monarchy, Autocracy, Oligarchy, Theocracy, Democracy, Republic. Then, provide characteristics of this country that helped you determine the type of government.

Country name	Type of government	Characteristics of the country's government



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