

# Outcomes of Democracy

## Short Answer Questions

**1.** What are the prudential reasons to support democracy?

Ans. (i) Over a hundred countries of the world today claim and practise some kinds of democratic politics.  
(ii) They have formal constitution, they hold elections, they have parties and they guarantee rights to citizens.  
(iii) 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.

**2.** Should we blame democracy for socio-economic and political problems?

Ans. (i) If some of our expectations are not met, we start blaming the idea of democracy.  
(ii) 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.  
(iii) The citizens have to take advantage of those conditions and achieve their goals.

**3.** What are our expectations from democracy?

Ans. (i) 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.  
(ii) Whenever possible and necessary, citizens should be able to participate in decision-making that affects them all.  
(iii) 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.

**4.** 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.

**5.** Is democracy attentive to the needs of people? Is it free from corruption?

Ans. The record of democracies is not impressive on these two counts.  
(i) Democracies often frustrate the needs of people and ignore the demands of a majority of its population.  
(ii) The routine tales of corruption are enough to convince us that democracy is not free from this evil.  
(iii) At the same time, there is nothing to show that non-democracies are less corrupt or more sensitive to the people.

**6.** In what respect is the democratic government better than its alternatives?

Ans. (i) Democratic government is a legitimate government.  
(ii) It may be slow, less efficient, not always very responsive or clean. But a democratic government is the people's own government.  
(iii) There is overwhelming support for the idea of democracy all over the world—in countries with democratic regimes as well as with non-democratic regimes.

**7.** What are the conditions under which democracies accommodate social activities?

Ans. Democracy must fulfil these conditions in order to achieve this outcome.  
(i) It is necessary to understand that democracy is not simply ruled by majority opinion. The majority always needs to work with the minority so that governments may function to represent the general view.

- (ii) It is also necessary that rule by majority does not become rule by majority community in terms of religion, or race or linguistic groups. Rule by majority means that in case of every decision or in case of every election, different persons or groups may and can form a majority.
- (iii) Democracy remains a democracy only as long as every citizen has a chance of being in majority, at some point of time.

**8.** 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.

**9.** In what way is transparency ensured by a democratic system?

- Ans. (i) Democracy ensures that the decision-making process will be based on norms and procedures.
- (ii) Citizens have the right and the means to examine the process of decision-making.
- (iii) Democracy produces a government that follows procedures and is accountable to the people.

**10.** 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.

**11.** 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.

**12.** How can you say that democracy is better than dictatorship?

- Ans. (i) Democracy promotes equality among citizens.
- (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.

**13.** 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.

**14.** How much transparency is there in democracy, compared to other governments?

(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.

**15.** Explain briefly the outcome of democracy.

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

(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.

**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.

**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.