

CHAPTER 3

OUTCOMES OF DEMOCRACY

TEXTBOOK EXERCISES

Q.1. What are the conditions under which democracies accommodate social diversities ?

Or

'Democracies lead to peaceful and harmonious life among citizens.' Support this statement with examples.

Ans. It is correct to say that democracies can accommodate various social divisions. For example in Belgium, differences among ethnic populations have been successfully resolved. Their leaders recognised the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities. They amended the constitution to work out an arrangement that enabled everyone to live together within the same country. But the example of Sri Lanka tells that there are two conditions under which democracies can accommodate social diversities. These are as given below :

(i) Majority should always work with the minority in order to enable the government to function to represent the general view. Belgium is an example, where the differences among ethnic populations have been successfully negotiated. Majority and minority opinions are not permanent.

(ii) Rule by majority should not become rule by majority community in terms of religion or race or linguistic group. Every citizen should have a chance of being a part of majority in one case or the other. No one should be debarred from participating in a democracy on the basis of

caste, religion, community and other factors. Democracy remains democracy if every citizen has a chance of being in majority at some point of time or in one case or the other.

Q.2. Give arguments to support or oppose the following assertions :

(a) Industrialised countries can afford democracy but the poor need dictatorship to become rich.

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

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

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

Ans. (a) It is not correct. No doubt, a lot of expenditure is incurred on elections in a democracy but regular, fair and free elections make democracy a popular form of government. Again to say that poor need dictatorship to become rich is not correct. For example, in African countries, where military dictatorships, have been established, the poor have not become rich. In Pakistan and Bangladesh too, the condition of the poor is far from satisfactory. Thus, a poor country can be a democratic country such as India where democracy has been successful since its independence.

(b) It is correct to state that democracy cannot reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens. Democracy provides political equality *i.e.*, right to vote and other rights but ultra-rich people enjoy a highly disproportionate share of wealth and incomes. They dominate the politics of the country too. Political power and decision making process are influenced by them. Rich people are becoming more rich and the poor find it difficult to fulfil their basic needs *i.e.*, food, clothing and shelter.

(c) It is wrong. On the other hand, the government in poor countries should spend more on poverty reduction, health, education and spend less on industries and infrastructure because such expenditure will help the poor to raise their standard of living. The gap between the poor and the rich will be decreased. It is the poor section of people that lacks the basic needs of life such as food, clothing, house, education and health. The expenditure on industries and infrastructure may help the rich more than the poor.

(d) It is true. In democracy, there is universal adult franchise. All citizens have one vote and the numbers have great significance. A candidate who secures maximum votes, gets elected. Rich or poor who ever has voted for him does not matter. Thus, there is no domination of upper class voters over the lower class voters.

Q.3. Identify the challenges to democracy in the following descriptions. Also suggest policy/ institutional mechanism to deepen democracy in the given situations :

(a) Following a High Court directive a temple in Orissa that had separate entry doors for *dalits* and *non-dalits* allowed entry for all from the same door.

(b) A large number of farmers are committing suicide in different states of India.

(c) Following allegation of killing of three civilians in Gandwara in a fake encounter by Jammu and Kashmir police, an enquiry has been ordered.

Ans. (a) Generally, we find in a democracy various social divisions based on caste which lead to tensions. The present challenge relates to social diversity. The High Court has ordered entry for all from the same door instead of having separate doors for *dalits* and *non-dalits* earlier. To

deepen democracy there should be law banning discrimination on account of caste, religion or other factors.

(b) There is a challenge of poverty. A large number of farmers are committing suicide in different states of India due to the following factors :

(i) Unable to pay loan that has been taken by them due to bad harvest.

(ii) Bad harvest due to lack of rain or irrigation facilities.

(iii) Non-availability of government help at the time of necessity.

In such situation, the government should setup an organisation to look after the interests of the farmers. They should be given financial help or loans at nominal rate of interest. Irrigation and other facilities should be provided to them.

(c) Dignity and freedom of the citizens has been challenged in the present case. Generally, cases of fake encounters are reported in the newspapers. In a democracy such incidents should not take place because the passion for respect and freedom are the basis of a democracy. All individuals are equal.

To avoid such fake encounters there should be transparency in the working of the government departments including police department. The culprits should be punished even if they occupy a higher post in any government department.

Q.4. 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 marginalised sections are to be treated

D. the idea of political inequality.

Ans. (D) the idea of political inequality.

Q.5. 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. (D) equal treatment before law.

Q.6. 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.

Q.7. 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 filed 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 filing 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 had 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. (a) Nannu's example shows that ordinary people should be aware of their rights. They should exercise those rights without any fear as has been done by Nannu.

(b) Nannu's action has a significant effect on the officials who not only made his ration card but also offered him a cup of tea at the office of the Food and Supply Officer. He was given proper respect. However, the Food and Supply Officer requested him to withdraw his application because his ration card had been prepared.

(c) Generally, the government officials do not bother about the requests of the poor and disadvantaged people. Such people as Nannu go on visiting government offices without any success. Their problems are not solved. But now with the introduction of Right to Information, things would change. There will be more efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the government departments.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Q.1. Which of the following arguments does not support the view that democracy is a better government than others?

- (a) Promotes equality among citizens.
- (b) Enhances the dignity of the individuals.
- (c) Reduces the quality of decision making.
- (d) Provides a method to resolve conflicts.

Ans. (c) Reduces the quality of decision making.

Q.2. Which of the following statements is not true about democracy?

- (a) There is no transparency.
- (b) It follows procedures.
- (c) It is accountable to the people.
- (d) It develops mechanisms for citizens to take part in decision making process.

Ans. (a) There is no transparency.

Q.3. In which of the following countries of south Asia, democracy is not preferred over dictatorship?

- (a) India
- (b) Sri Lanka
- (c) Pakistan
- (d) Bangladesh

Ans. (c) Pakistan.

Q.4. In which of the following spheres democracy stands much superior to any other form of government ?

- (a) Dignity and freedom of the individual.
- (b) Removal of poverty.
- (c) Reduction in unemployment.
- (d) Reduction in gap between the rich and the poor.

Ans. (a) Dignity and freedom of the individual.

Q.5. Which of the following is not a feature of democracy ?

- (a) Elected government
- (b) People's own government
- (c) It generates its own support
- (d) Illegitimate government

Ans. (d) Illegitimate government.

QUESTIONS OF 3/5 MARKS

Answers should be in about 80/120 words :

Q.1. Why is democracy considered a better form of government than dictatorship or any other government ?

Ans. Democracy is considered a better form of government than dictatorship or any other government due to following reasons :

- (i) It promotes equality among citizens.
- (ii) It enhances the dignity of the individuals.
- (iii) It improves the quality of decision making because it is based on deliberations and negotiations.
- (iv) It provides a method to resolve conflicts. It tries to reduce tensions. The majority work with the minority.
- (v) In a democracy, it is possible to correct mistakes. The deliberation and discussion in the legislatures may lead to change a law or make an amendment in public interest on the demands of the people.

Q.2. Why is democracy considered to be accountable, responsive and legitimate government ?

Ans. Democracy is considered to be accountable, responsive and legitimate government due to the following reasons :

- (i) Rulers are elected by the people who have control over them.
- (ii) People participate in the decision making process at various levels.
- (iii) Decisions are taken after deliberations in the legislatures or assemblies which are elected by the people on the basis of universal adult franchise.
- (iv) Procedures are followed in the decision making process.
- (v) There is transparency in the working of the government. Citizens have the right to information and the right ~~to~~ means to examine the process of decision making.
- (vi) 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.
- (vii) In democracy, the practices such as regular, free and fair elections, open public debates on major policies and legislations and citizens' right to information about the government and its functioning are followed.

(viii) Democracy attends to the needs and demands of the people.

(ix) It is people's own government. People elect their representatives who form and run the government.

The above features of democratic government make it accountable, responsive and legitimate government.

Q.3. What are the differences between democratic and non-democratic governments in the decision making process ?

Ans. The differences between democratic and non-democratic governments are as given below :

<i>Democratic governments</i>	<i>Non-democratic governments</i>
(i) Democracy is based on the idea of deliberations and negotiations. Deliberations are held in the legislatures.	(i) No such deliberations and negotiations are held.
(ii) Democratic governments take into account the public opinion before reaching a decision.	(ii) Non-democratic governments do not care for public opinion.
(iii) There is some delay in taking a decision due to deliberations and negotiations but these decisions are effective.	(iii) Non-democratic governments can take quick decisions but these decisions are sometimes less effective and are forced on the people.
(iv) There is transparency in democratic governments. For example, there is right to information.	(iv) There is no transparency under non-democratic governments.
(v) It is accountable to the people.	(v) Generally, it is not accountable to the people because these are dictatorial governments.
(vi) Democratic governments are legitimate. These are people's own governments.	(vi) Non-democratic governments are forced on the people.

Q.4. Is the democratic government efficient and effective ?

Ans. Some people argue that a democratic government is less efficient and effective because it is based on deliberations and negotiations. Discussions are held in legislatures and cabinet which cause delays in taking decisions. On the other hand, in non-democratic governments no such deliberations or discussions take place in legislatures. The rulers or those people who are in power take quick decisions. But delay in decision making process does not mean that democracy is inefficient and ineffective government. As the prescribed procedures are followed, the decisions are generally acceptable to the people and are more effective. Delay is caused due to various procedures and decision makers are not responsible for that. Democracy ensures that norms and procedures must be followed.

Q.5. Describe the economic growth and development in a democracy.

Ans. Generally, the democratic governments are considered to be good governments and are, therefore, preferred over dictatorship. Thus, there should be more economic growth and development in democratic countries. In practice, it is not the position. During the years

between 1950 and 2000, dictatorships have slightly higher rate of economic growth. It may, however, be mentioned that economic development of a country depends on various factors such as population, global situation, cooperation from other countries, economic priorities adopted by the country. Not only this, the difference between dictatorships and democracies is negligible. However, democracy is not a guarantee for economic development but at the same time we hope that democratic governments may not lag behind other governments. Lastly, a democratic government has other benefits as well.

Q.6. Why is democracy considered much superior to any other form of government in promoting dignity and freedom of the individuals ?

Ans. The passion for respect and freedom are the basis of democracy. All the democracies in world accept this as a principle and this is a great achievement for it. For example in male dominated societies in the world, the status of women was not satisfactory. They were discriminated at home and at work place. In democracies, equal treatment and respect to women has been accepted. It has become easier for women to struggle against discrimination and injustice. Similarly in India disadvantaged and discriminated castes have been granted equal status and equal opportunities. Discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, sex has been banned. Thus, it is a fact that democracy promotes dignity and freedom of the individual more than any other form of government.

VALUE BASED QUESTIONS

Read the passages given below and answer the questions that follow :

1. "Democracy ensures that decision-making will be based on norms and procedures."

(i) How a citizen can find out whether the correct procedures have been followed in the decision-making process ?

(ii) What is the value of the decision-making process in a democracy ?

Ans. (i) A citizen can find out the correctness of the procedure from the provisions of the constitution or laws which are available in the market.

(ii) The value of the decision-making process in a democracy is that there is transparency in it. This factor is generally missing in a non-democratic government. The transparency makes a democratic government more popular than a dictatorship.

2. "Democracy stands much superior to any other form of government in promoting dignity and freedom of the individual."

(i) Do you agree with the above statement ? Why ?

(ii) Describe how the values of dignity and freedom of individual are maintained in a democracy.

Ans. (i) Yes. Democracy promotes dignity and freedom of the individual. The passion for respect and freedom are the basis of democracy. Democracies throughout the world have recognised this.

(ii) The values of dignity and freedom of individual are maintained in a democracy. Respect to and equal treatment of women are necessary ingredients of democratic government.