
Chapter 1

What is Democracy? Why Democracy?

❖ Democracy

It is a government where the rulers are directly elected by the people.

❖ Features of a Democratic Government

- The rulers are elected by the people.
- Free and fair elections.
- Opposition parties function freely.
- People enjoy certain fundamental rights and have the freedom of expression.
- Based on the principles of political equality.
- Principle of universal adult franchise is followed. Every adult citizen is entitled to vote and each vote has one value.
- Every citizen, irrespective of their caste, religion or educational background, can contest elections and hold any public office.
- The constitutional law and citizen's rights set limitations on the functioning of a democratic government.

❖ Need of Democracy

- Represents people's needs.
- Democracy is for the people and is answerable to the people.
- Helps in making correct and ideal decisions as it is based on consultations and deliberations.
- Promotes unity in diversity.
- Guarantees equal rights for the rich and the poor; the educated and the uneducated.

❖ Arguments Against Democracy

- Leads to instability as leaders keep changing.
- Morality is compromised because democracy is all about power games and political competitions.
- Causes delays owing to lengthy discussions and debates.
- Often bad decisions affect people as the leaders may not know what is best for the people.
- Political competitions and struggles for gaining power leads to corruption.