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Class 9th Subject Political science
Chapters What is the Democracy and Why Democracy(Revision)

Read the following passage throughly and try to understand and give the answer of the given questions:

Features of Democracy

The simple definition of democracy gives rise to various questions, which are given below:

Who are the rulers in this definition?

What kind of election constitutes a democratic election?

Who are the people who can elect the rulers or get elected as rulers?

Finally, what form of government is a democracy?

Major decisions by elected leaders

Some countries like Pakistan do not follow this rule. In Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf led a military coup in October 1999. He overthrew the democratically elected government and went on to become the President of the country. In 2002, he also held a referendum in the country that granted him a five-year extension. Meanwhile, after passing of this 'Legal Framework Order' elections were held to the national and provincial assemblies and elected representatives were granted some powers. But the final power rested with military officers and General Musharraf himself. Hence, we can conclude it was not a democratic country. The same thing happens in many dictatorships and monarchies. Thus, we can conclude that in a democracy the final decision making power must rest with those elected by the people.

Free and Fair Electoral Competition

In China, elections are held after every five years for electing the country's parliament, called Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (National People's Congress). Before contesting elections, a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party. The government is always formed by the Communist Party. Alternatively, since its independence in 1930, Mexico holds elections after every six years to elect its President. But until 2000 every election was won by a party called PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). Should we consider the elections described above as examples of people electing their rulers? Reading these examples we get a sense that we cannot. Democracy must be based on a free and fair election where those currently in power have a fair chance of losing.

One person, one vote, one value one value

Democracy is based on a fundamental principle of political equality. However, there are many instances of denial of the equal right to vote. Until 2015, in Saudi Arabia, women did not have the right to vote. Estonia has made its citizenship rules in such a way that people belonging to the Russian minority found it difficult to get the right to vote. In Fiji, the electoral system is such that the vote of an indigenous Fiji has more value than that of an Indian-Fijian. Definitely not a democratic government. The feature of democracy this highlights is that in a democracy, each adult citizen must have one vote and in turn, each vote must have one value.

Rule of law and respect for rights

Zimbabwe attained independence from White minority rule in 1980 and from then the country has been ruled by the party that led the freedom struggle, ZANU-PF. Its leader,

Robert Mugabe ruled the country since independence. Even if elections were held regularly, it was always won by ZANU-PF. President Mugabe was popular but also used unfair practices

in elections. There was a law that limited the right to criticise the President. Television and radio were controlled by the government and gave only the ruling party's version. There were independent newspapers but the government harassed those journalists who went against it and so on. Not a democratic government. Democratic government rules within limits set by constitutional law and citizens' rights.

Hence, we can deduce that democracy is a form of government in which:

Rulers elected by the people take all the major decisions

Elections offer a choice and fair opportunity to the people to change the current rulers

This choice and opportunity is available to all the people on an equal basis

The exercise of this choice leads to a government limited by basic rules of the constitution and citizens' rights

Important Questions:

Q.1.What do you mean by Democratic election?

Q.2.Who take Major decisions in Democracy?

Q.3.What do you understand by Free and fair election?

Q.4.What do you mean by Rule of Law and respect for rights?

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