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Ch: What is DEMOCRACY? and WHY DEMOCRACY?

FEATURES OF DEMOCRACY(NOTE)

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

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