

Chapter 1 Democracy in the Contemporary World

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1. Which of the following does not lead to the spread of democracy?

- (a) Struggle by the people
- (b) Invasion by foreign countries
- (c) End of colonialism
- (d) People's desire for freedom

Answer: (b) Invasion by foreign countries

2. Which of the following statement is true about today's world?

- (a) Monarchy as a form of government has vanished.
- (b) The relationship between different countries has become more democratic than ever before.
- (c) In more and more countries rulers are being elected by the people.
- (d) There are no more military dictators in the world.

Answer: (c) In more and more countries rulers are being elected by the people.

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3. Use one of the following statements to complete the sentence:

Democracy in international organisations requires that ...

- (a) The rich countries should have a greater say.
- (b) Countries should have a say according to their military power.
- (c) Countries should be treated with respect in proportion to their population.
- (d) All countries in the world should be treated equally.

Answer: (c) All countries in the world should be treated equally.

4. Based on the information given in this chapter, match the following countries and the path democracy has taken in that country.

Country	Path to Democracy
(a) Chile	(i) Freedom from British colonial rule
(b) Nepal	(ii) End of military dictatorship
(c) Poland	(iii) End of one party rule
(d) Ghana	(iv) King agreed to give up his powers

Answer:

Country	Path to Democracy
(a) Chile	(ii) End of military dictatorship
(b) Nepal	(iv) King agreed to give up his powers

<i>(c) Poland</i>	<i>(iii) End of one party rule</i>
<i>(d) Ghana</i>	<i>(i) Freedom from British colonial rule</i>

5. What are the difficulties people face in a non-democratic country? Give answers drawing from the examples given in this chapter.

Answer:

The following are the difficulties people face in a non-democratic country.

- *No freedom for people to elect their leaders.*
- *No freedom of speech and expression.*
- *Censorship of press.*
- *Single-party rule.*
- *No say in government policies.*
- *No freedom to form unions.*
- *People suffer violence and oppression without any legal redress.*

For example, Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile tortured and killed several of those who wanted democracy to be restored. Another example is the communist government that ruled in several countries of East Europe in the 1980s. In these countries, people could not freely choose leaders. Those who spoke against the government were put in prison.

6. Which freedoms are usually taken away when a democracy is overthrown by the military?

Answer:

When democracy is overthrown by the military, the people of the country are deprived of many freedoms.

- *First of all, they lose the freedom of speech and expression and cannot say anything against the military government.*
- *Secondly, they are not allowed to form political parties and workers' unions.*
- *Thirdly, the people are deprived of their right to choose their own leader or change them.*

7. Which of the following positions can contribute to democracy at the global level? Give reasons for your answer in each case.

a. My country gives more money to international institutions. Therefore, I want to be treated with more respect and exercise more power.

b. My country may be small or poor, but my voice must be heard with equal respect because these decisions will affect my country.

c. Wealthy nations will have a greater say in international affairs. They cannot let their interests suffer just because they are outnumbered by poor nations.

d. Big countries like India must have a greater say in international organisations.

Answer:

a. No, it does not contribute towards democracy at a global level because every democracy's basic principle is equality. Every country or its people should enjoy equal status and rights

irrespective of it being poor or rich. Also, the amount of money the country contributes towards international institutions is not the yardstick that determines the power a country can have globally.

b. Yes, it does contribute towards democracy because it promotes a fundamental right-the right to freedom of speech and expression. When every person of the country utilises his/her right to express and be heard, he/she automatically supports democracy.

c. No, it does not lead the democracy at the global level because at a universal level, all the countries whether rich or poor are equal. There should be no distinctions between the countries and all should be treated at par. Also, wealthy nations are not entitled to special treatments.

d. No, it does not support democracy because geographical areas or the size of the country cannot be the criteria to determine the superiority of that country.

8. Here are three opinions expressed in a television debate on the struggle for democracy in Nepal. Which of these do you agree with and why?

Guest 1: India is a democracy. Therefore, the Indian government must support the people of Nepal who are struggling against the monarchy and democracy.

Guest 2: That is a dangerous argument. We would be in the same position as the US was in Iraq. Remember, no outside force can promote democracy.

Guest 3: But why should we bother about the internal affairs of another country? We should be worried about our business interests there, not about democracy.

Answer:

The opinion of Guest 1 can be easily agreed with.

Being a democracy, India has to support the democratic aspirations of the Nepali people. The Government of India is within its rights to declare support for those who are struggling for the establishment of a democratic government. However, there has to be recognition of the fact that no country can supplant democracy in another country. The push has to come from the people of that particular nation.

9. In an imaginary country called Happyland, the people overthrew the foreign ruler and brought back the old royal family. They said: “After all their ancestors were our kings before foreigners started ruling us. It is good that we have one strong ruler, who can help us become rich and powerful”.

When someone talked about democracy the wise men said it is a foreign idea. Their struggle was to throw the foreigners and their ideas out of the country. When someone demanded freedom for the media, the elders thought that too much criticism of the ruler would not help them improve their living standards. “After all, the king is so kind and interested in the welfare of all the subjects. Why create problems for him. Don’t we all want to be happy? “ After reading the above passage, Chaman, Champa and Chandru made the following observations:

Chaman: Happyland is a democratic country because people were able to throw out the foreign rulers and bring back the king.

Champa: Happyland is not a democratic country because people cannot criticise the ruler. The king may be nice and may provide economic prosperity, but a king cannot give a democratic rule.

Chandru: What people need is happiness. So they are willing to allow their new ruler to take decisions for them. If people are happy it must be a democracy.

What is your opinion about each of these statements? What do you think about the form of government in this country?

Answer:

Chaman: Even though people brought an end to the foreign rule in Happyland, it cannot be called a democratic country because the king ruled as a monarch. This form of government is known as a monarchy. It is only when people will enjoy the right to choose their leader, will it be called a democratic country.

Champa: A king cannot guarantee democracy because it will be a one-man rule. A government can be called a democracy only when there is a rule of the people. In other words, people should have the right to elect the nominal head of the state and their representatives.

Chandru: Happiness of the people cannot be the factor to form a democracy. The masses might be happy with the king, but he cannot establish a democracy because he is not an elected representative. For example: In the olden days, people lived happily under various monarchs, but it cannot be called a democratic government, as they were chosen by the people.