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NCERT Class 10 Political Science Chapter 8: Challenges to Democracy YouTube Lecture Handouts

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Democracy Does Have Challenger but We Face Challenges

Challenge is a difficulty that carries within it an opportunity for progress. Once we overcome a challenge, we go up to a higher level than before.

- Foundational challenge to a democratic setup for transition to democracy – bring down non-democratic rule, keep military away and establish sovereign state
- Challenge of expansion – apply it across region, social groups, or institutions. More power to local people, extend to units of federation & include women and minority. So, most decisions should be under democratic control. This challenge faced by India and USA
- Deepening the democracy – strengthen institutions and practices of democracy, people can realize expectations of democracy. Bring down the control and influence of rich and powerful.

Different challenges faced by South Africa, Myanmar, Chile, Poland etc. have been discussed in various chapters previously.

Types of Challenges

- Design of constitution
- Democratic rights
- Working of institutions
- Elections
- Decentralization
- Accommodation of diversity
- Political organizations

Political Reforms

- Proposals about overcoming various challenges to democracy are called 'democracy reform' or 'political reform'
- Everyone cannot have the same recipe for political reform (each model of car is different – so repair differs)
- Carefully devised changes in law can discourage wrong political practices and encourage good ones. But legal-constitutional changes by themselves cannot overcome challenges to democracy.
- (Example, Change in LBW tactics reduced negative batting tactics; so changing rules improved quality of cricket)
- Any legal change must look at the reforms it will have on politics. Sometimes it can be counter-productive (Example, ban on contesting elections for people with more than 2 children but leads to denial of opportunity for poor and women) – give political actors incentive to do good things; RTI – empower people for democratic reforms; control corruption and supplement existing laws and impose strict penalties
- Democratic reforms brought by political practice – increase and improve quality of political participation by ordinary citizens
- Look for a good solution and its implementation (who and how) – measure that rely on democratic movement, citizen organization and media

Redefining Democracy

- Rulers elected by the people must take all the major decisions
- Elections must offer a choice and fair opportunity to the people to change the current rulers
- This choice and opportunity should be available to all the people on an equal basis
- Exercise of this choice must lead to a government limited by basic rules of the constitution and citizens' rights
- Democratic rights are not limited to voting but expand to social and economic rights
- Power sharing as the spirit of democracy
- Democracy cannot be brute rule of majority & there should be respect for minority
- Elimination of discrimination based on caste, religion, and gender

Case Study - I

UP Survey – doctors in rural areas are not there in govt. hospitals and villagers must pay high cost to private doctors

Reform

- Termination if not on seat without notice
- Carry surprise raid to check attendance

- Panchayat should write the annual report of the doctors
- Splitting the state into further smaller states

Case Study – II

Candidate contesting elections hold ample property around 1 crore (only wealthy contest elections) . Role of money in politics will reduce voice of poor

Reforms

- Make financial account of every political party public
- Provide state funding of elections
- Encourage citizens to give more donations to parties and political workers; exempt donations from income tax

 Mayank