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## NCERT Class 9 Political Science Chapter 2: What is Democracy? Why Democracy? YouTube Lecture Handouts

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### Differentiate Democratic vs Non-Democratic Government

- We saw democracy is expanding but what makes it better
- Examples of Chile, Poland & Ghana
- Only by using the word, we come to understand the meaning (so we used democracy first and then explained its meaning like rain, pen etc.)
- Need definition of rain only when we distinguish drizzle and cloudburst
- Democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people - Abraham Lincoln
- Greek word 'Demokratia.' In Greek 'demos' means people and 'kratia' means rule. So, democracy is rule by the people.
- Monarchy – king's rule (Nepal & Saudi Arabia)
- Differentiate democracy vs. government that pretends to be democracy
- In Democracy:
  - Who are the rulers?
  - What kind of elections?
  - Who are the people?
  - What kind of a form of government?
- Final decision-making power must rest with those elected by the people

### Pakistan

- General Musharraf in 1999
- Overthrew govt. & declared himself "Chief Executive"
- Changed designation to President & in 2002 held referendum for 5-year extension

- Media believed it was based on malpractices and fraud
- In August 2002, Legal Framework Order amended Constitution of Pakistan. Now, President can dismiss national and provincial assemblies.
- The work of the civilian cabinet is supervised by a National Security Council which is dominated by military officers
- Elected representatives had some power but most power rests with military officers and Musharraf himself.
- They formally have an elected parliament and government but the real power is with those who are not elected

## Free & Fair Electoral Competition

- China – elections held every 5 years for country's parliament Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (National People's Congress) with 3000 members (some elected by army) & power to appoint President.
- Till 2002 - 03: Only those who are members of the Chinese Communist Party or eight smaller parties allied to it were allowed to contest elections – govt. is formed by Communist party
- Mexico – hold selections every six years to elect President since 1930, never under military rule. Till 2000, all elections won by PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) – it was known to use many dirty tricks to win elections (teachers forced parents to vote for PRI) , it spent huge sum of money in campaigning
- In China the elections do not offer the people any serious choice.
- In Mexico, people seemed to really have a choice but in practice they had no choice (no fair elections)
- Therefore, elections must be fair and offer real choice b/w political alternatives. Also, those currently in power must have a fair chance of losing.

## One Person, One Vote and One Value

Democracy linked to demand for universal adult franchise

Principle of political equality - in a democracy, each adult citizen must have one vote and each vote must have one value

- In Saudi Arabia women do not have the right to vote.
- Estonia has made its citizenship rules in such a way that people belonging to Russian minority find it difficult to get the right to vote.
- In Fiji, the electoral system is such that the vote of an indigenous Fijian has more value than that of an Indian-Fijian.

## Rule of Law & Respect of Rights

- Democratic Party rules within the limits set by constitutional law and citizen's rights

- Zimbabwe attained independence from White Minority in 1980. Since then, it was under rule of ZANU-PF (party that led freedom struggle) under leader Robert Mugabe
- Known for use of unfair practices in elections – he changed constitution many times to increase power of President and make him less accountable
- Public protests government are declared illegal – law that limits the right to criticize president
- Newspaper and media can't go against the government
- Popular govt. can be autocratic and undemocratic – it's important to look at elections (also before and after elections)
- What govt. should respect – basic rights to think, have opinions, express in public, form associations, to protest & take political actions – all should be equal before law & protected by independent judiciary
- Democratic govt. must respect some guarantees to minorities, all major decisions through consultations, each office bearer has rights and responsibilities

## Summary

- 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 are 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

## Arguments Against Democracy

- Leaders keep changing & cause instability
- Its political competition and power play with no morality
- Many consultations lead to delays
- Elected leaders lead to bad decisions as they don't know best interests
- Leads to corruption and electoral competition
- Ordinary people shouldn't decide anything as they don't know what is good for them
- Not the only solution – as not ended poverty

## Arguments for Democracy

China famine – 1958 - 61 – where 3 crore people died (prevented if there was free press to criticize, multiparty election & good opposition)

India responded to food scarcity but China did not

- Democracy is better than any other form of government in responding to the needs of the people
- It is more accountable form of government

- Democracy is based on consultation and discussion – improves quality of decision making
- It provides method to deal with conflicts and differences – peaceful solution with no permanent winner or loser
- It enhances dignity of the citizens – political equality to rich and poor
- It allows us to correct our own mistakes
- Respect people's own wishes and allows different people to live together

## Broader Meaning

- Collective decisions are not possible as people can't sit together and take a common decision (huge population)
- Even if they could, citizens don't have time, desire, and skills to take part in decision
- Those who are not powerful have the same say in taking the decision as those who are powerful
- Distinguish b/w minimal & good democracy
- Require active involvement of all citizens

 Mayank