**Definition of Democracy**

Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people. One chief factor common to all democracies is that the government is chosen by the people. It also helps students to demarcate between democratic and non-democratic governments. For the non-democratic government, take the example of Myanmar, where rulers were not elected by the people. Those who were in charge of the country’s army took over as rulers, and people had no say in this decision. Dictators like Pinochet (Chile) are not elected by the people. This also applies to monarchies.

Hence the Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people.

* Myanmar where the army rules, Dictator Pinochet’s rule in Chile, or President Nkrumah’s rule in • Ghana was not democratic. They were not chosen by the people.
* Hereditary kings, like the king of Nepal or Saudi Arabia, are also not democratic rulers. They rule because they were born into noble families.

**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?

In a democracy final, decision-making power must rest with those elected by the people.

* In Pakistan, President Musharraf had the power to dismiss national and state assemblies; so the final powers rest with the army and the General himself. We cannot call it a democracy. Now Pakistan has an elected government

**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 the passing of this ‘Legal Framework Order’, elections were held in 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 to elect 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 has held 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**

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 since then, the country has been ruled by the party that led the freedom struggle, ZANU-PF. Its leader,

Robert Mugabe has 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 people on an equal basis
* The exercise of this choice leads to a government limited by basic rules of the constitution and citizens’ rights

**Conclusion**

Democracy must be based on a free and fair election where those currently in power have a fair chance of losing.  
For example, in Mexico elections have been held every six years since 1980. But the same party, PRI, has won the elections. Obviously, there has been rigging and malpractices, with freedom denied to the opposition. This is not what a democracy should be.

In a democracy, people’s will is ascertained by each adult citizen having one vote and each vote has one value. Democracy is based on the fundamental principle of political equality.

A democratic government rules within the limits set by constitutional and citizens’ rights.

* A democratic government cannot do what it likes after winning the elections. It has to respect certain basic rules and is accountable not only to the people but also to other independent officials.

The Pillars of Democracy are The Sovereignty of the people, Government based upon the consent of the government, Majority rule, Minority rights, Guarantee of basic human rights, Free and Fair elections, Equality before the law, Constitutional limits on government, Values of tolerance, Pragmatism, Cooperation and Compromise.

**Why Democracy?**

**Cons of Democracy**

* Leaders keep changing in a democracy leading to instability.
* Democracy is all about political competition and power play, leaving no scope for morality.
* Many people have to be consulted in a democracy, which leads to delays.
* Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people, resulting in bad decisions.
* Democracy leads to corruption since it is based on electoral competition.
* Ordinary people don’t know what is good for them; they should not decide anything.

From these arguments, we can see that democracy of the kind we see may not be the ideal form of government. However, we will see if democracy is better than other forms of government that are there for us to choose from.

**Arguments in Favour of Democracy**

**A democratic government is a better government because it is a more accountable form of government:** Take the example of the famines of 1958-1961 in India and China. While China was hit badly, India did not fare as badly, despite its economic condition. The reason for this could be that India responded to the food scarcity in a way that the Chinese government did not. Here, we see that democracy is better than any other form of government in responding to the needs of the people.

**Democracy improves the quality of decision-making:** Democracy is based on consultation and discussion. A democratic decision always involves many people, discussions and meetings, and they are able to point out possible mistakes in any decision. This may take time. However, the advantage of taking time over important decisions is that it reduces the chances of rash or irresponsible decisions.

**Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts:** In any society, people are bound to have differences of opinions and interests. These differences are particularly more in a country like ours, with amazing social diversity. People belong to different regions, speak different languages, practise different religions and have different castes. The preferences of one group can clash with those of other groups. How do we resolve such a conflict? Democracy provides the only peaceful solution to this problem. In a democracy, no one is a permanent winner or loser. Different groups can live with one another peacefully.

**Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens:** Democracy is based on the principle of political equality. It recognises that the poorest and the least educated have the same status as the rich and the educated.

**Democracy is better than other forms of government because it allows us to correct our own mistakes:** Even if no government can guarantee that no mistakes will be made, in a democracy, one can be sure that it will not be hidden for too long. It makes space for public discussion on these mistakes. There is also room for correction. Rulers have to change their decisions, or they could themselves be changed.

Thus, we can correctly infer that while democracy may not be the solution to all problems, it is still clearly better than any other alternative.

**Broader Meanings of Democracy**

In this chapter, the meaning of democracy is discussed in a descriptive sense. Students get to learn about democracy as a form of government, thus helping them to identify a clear set of minimal features that democracy requires. The common form adopted by democracy is representative democracy. In democratic countries, all people do not rule. A majority is allowed to take decisions on behalf of all the people through their elected representatives. This has become necessary for the reasons given below:

* Modern democracies involve such a large number of people that it is physically impossible for them to sit together and take a collective decision.
* Even if they could, the citizen does not have the time, the desire or the skills to take part in all the decisions.

Democracy, as a principle, can go beyond the government and can be applied to any sphere of life. People use the word democracy not to describe any existing government but to set up an ideal standard that all democracies must aim to become. However, if the ideals of democracy are considered, then no country in the world is correctly democratic. Still, having an understanding of democracy as an ideal will explain why to value democracy. It enables people to judge an existing democracy and identify its weaknesses. It also helps to distinguish between a minimal democracy and a good democracy. The most common form of democracy in today’s world is being ruled by people’s elected representatives. However, for a small community, there can be other ways of making democratic decisions. All people can sit together and make decisions directly. This is how the Gram Sabha should work in a village.

**Points Against**

There has been a criticism of democracy by various people. The charges are that:

* It creates instability by changing its leaders frequently.
* Democracy is about power play and political competition. There is no scope for morality.
* So many people have to be consulted before any issue is resolved. It leads to delay.
* Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people.
* It leads to corruption for it is based on electoral corruption.
* Ordinary people do not know what is good for them, so decision-making should not be left to them.

**Alternative to Democracy**

To overcome political instability and legislative gridlock associated with democratic rule, expansions of executive power and limits on democratic freedoms are been looked for.

An exceptional example is that of Russia’s transition from unstable democracy in the 1990s to economic growth and political stability.

**Question** What does a candidate need before contesting elections in China?

**Answer** Approval of the Chinese Communist Party.

**Question** In a democracy, the final decision must rest with those leaders or representatives who are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Answer** Elected by the people

**Question** What is peculiar with ZANU-PF?

**Answer** It has always won elections

**Question** The one of the main features of a democratic government is that it rules within the limits set by the constitutional law above \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Answer** Citizen’s rights

**Question** Why does a democratic government is a better government?

**Answer** Because it is more accountable form of government

**Question** Democracy offers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Answer** Dignity of citizens and principle of political equality

**Question** Democracy cannot provide solution to all the problems, it is also a difficult form of government to implement. It is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Answer** One of the weaknesses of democracy

**Question** The major challenges to democracy are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Answer** Economic equality among people and abolition of casteism from society.

**Question** It is a system in which only those who are in power and their supporters are benefited, and excludes minorities and weaker sections.

**Answer** Dictatorship

**Question** It Is a system under which military chief enjoys all the powers and suppress all the protests against him by the people.

**Answer** Military

**Question** The strength of democracy is its ability to uphold the values for which it stands for. These values are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Answer** Freedom, Equality and Justice

**Question** Who led a military coup iirPakistan in 1999?

**Answer** Pervez Musharraf

**Question** When did Zimbabwe attain independence and from whom?

**Answer** In 1980 from white minority rule

**Question** In which period did China face one of the worst famines that have occurred in the world?

**Answer** China’s famine of 1958-1961 was the worst recorded famine in the world history.

**Question** Democracy improves the quality of decision-making because

**Answer** Decisions are taken by consultation and discussion.

**Question** What is the most common form of democracy in modern world?

**Answer** Representative Democracy

**Question** Which body in the Indian political system is an example of direct democracy?

**Answer** Gram Sabha

**Question** What is ZANU-PF?

**Answer** Political party of Zimbabwe

**Question** Name the Chinese Parliament.

**Answer** The National People’s Congress

**Question** Give a definition of democracy.

**Answer** Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people.

**Question** What was the ‘Legal Framework Order’ passed by Pervez Musharraf in I August 2002?

**Answer** In August 2002, Musharraf issued a ‘Legal Framework Order’ that amended the Constitution of Pakistan. According to this Order, the President can dismiss the national and provincial assemblies.

**Question** Name the country where women do not have the right to vote till 2015.

**Answer** Saudi Arabia

**Question** Media is not independent in Zimbabwe. How?

**Answer** Television and radio are controlled by the government and give only the ruling party’s version. There are independent newspapers, but the government harasses those journalists who went against it.

**Question** How can you say that China is not a democratic country?

**Answer** In China, the elections do not offer the people any serious choice. They must choose the ruling party and the candidates approved by it. That is why, we cannot say that China is a democratic country.

**Question** What is the role of citizen in promoting democracy?

**Answer** In a democracy, every citizen should be able to play equal role in decision-making. For this the citizen not only needs an equal right to vote but also equal information, basic education, equal resources and a lot of commitment.

**Question** What are three features of democracy?

**Answer** Features of democracy are :

* 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. (Any three)

**Question** Explain any three major political changes that took place recently in India’s neighbourhood.

**Answer** Pakistan-General Musharaf led a military coup.

* Nepal-In 2005, the new king dismissed the elected government.
* Iraq-Saddam Hussein’s regime was overthrown.

**Question** How does democracy improve the quality of decision making?

**Answer** Democracy is based on consultation and discussion. A democratic decision always involves many persons, discussions and meetings. When a number of people put their heads together, they are able to point out possible mistakes in any decision. This takes time. But there is a big advantage in taking time over important decisions. This reduces the chances of rash or irresponsible decisions. Thus, democracy improves the quality of decision-making.

**Question** How does democracy enhances the dignity of citizens?

**Answer** Even if democracy does not bring about better decisions and accountable government, it is still better than other forms of government. Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens. Democracy is based on the principle of political equality, on recognising that the poorest and the least educated has the same status as the rich and the educated. People are not subjects of a ruler, they are the rulers themselves. Even when they make mistakes, they are responsible for their conduct.

**Question** How is democracy better than other forms of government?

**Answer** It is correct that democracy is better than other forms of government because it allows us to correct its own mistakes. There is no guarantee that mistakes cannot be made in democracy.

* No form of government can guarantee that. The advantage in a democracy is that such mistakes cannot be hidden for long.
* There is a space for public discussion on these mistakes. And there is a room for correction. Either the rulers have to change their decisions, or the rulers can be changed. This cannot happen in a non-democratic government.

**Question** Democracy cannot get us everything and is not the solution to all problems.  
Than why are we interested in democracy?

**Answer**

* It is clearly better than any other alternative form that we know. It offers better | chances of a good decision and it is likely to respect people’s own wishes and allows different kinds of people to live together.
* Even when it fails to do some of these things, it allows a way of correcting its mistakes and offers more dignity to all citizens. That is why, democracy is considered the best form of government.

**Question** What does ‘one person, one vote, one value’ mean? Name the countries who deny the equal right to vote.

**Answer** Democracy is based on a fundamental principle of political equality. In a democracy, each adult citizen must have one vote and each vote must have one value. Democracy is linked to the demand for Universal Adult Franchise. Yet, there are many instances of denial of 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 Russian minority find 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.

**Question** Is it correct that a democratic government cannot do whatever it likes? Explain.

**Answer** A democratic government cannot do whatever it likes because it has won an election. It has to respect some basic rules. In particular, it has to respect some guarantees to the minorities. Every major decision has to go through a series of consultations.

* Every office bearer has certain rights and responsibilities assigned by the constitution and the law. Each of these is accountable not only to the people but also to other independent officials.
* A democratic government rules within limits set by constitutional law and citizens’ rights.

**Question** Pakistan under the General Pervez Musharraf is not called a democracy. Why?

**Answer** Pakistan under the General Pervez Musharraf is not called a democracy because :

* The rulers are not elected by the people in Pakistan. People may have elected their representatives to the national and provincial assemblies but those elected representatives are not really the rulers.
* They cannot take the final decisions.
* The power to take final excision rests with army officials and with General Musharraf, and none of them are elected by the people.

**Question** How popular governments can be undemocratic? Explain with an example.

**Answer** In Zimbabwe, since it attained independence in 1980, elections have been held regularly and always won by ZANU-Ph the party that led the freedom struggle. Its leader, President Robert Mugabe, is popular but also uses unfair practices in elections. His government has changed the constitution several times to increase the powers of the President and make him less accountable. Opposition party workers are harassed. Public protests and demonstrations against the government are declared illegal. There is a law that limits the right to criticise the President. Television and radio are controlled by the government and give only the ruling party’s version.

**Question** Till 2000, Mexico was not a democratic country. Explain.

**Answer** In Maxico, people seemed to really have a choice but in practice they had no choice. There was no way the ruling party could be defeated, even if people were against it. These are not fair elections. But until 2000 every election was won by a party called PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). ‘Opposition parties did contest elections, but never managed to win. The PRI was known to use many dirty tricks to win elections.

**Question** What is the significance of the rule of law and respect for rights in democratic country?

**Answer** A democratic government cannot do whatever it likes, simply because it has won an election. It must respect some basic rules. It must respect some guarantees to the minorities. Every major decision has to go through a series of consultations.

Every office bearer has certain rights and responsibilities assigned by the constitution and the law. Each of these is accountable not only to the people but also to other independent officials.

**Question** Explain any three differences between democratic country and non-democratic country.

**Answer In a Democratic Country :**

* Each adult citizen has a right to vote.
* Each vote has one value.
* Free and fair elections are held.

**In a Non-democratic Country :**

* Elections do not offer a choice and fair opportunity.
* Rulers are not elected by the people.
* The rulers have unlimited power.

**Question** “Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts”. Discuss.

**Answer** Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts. In any society, people are bound to have differences of opinions and interests. These differences are particularly sharp in a country like ours which has an amazing social diversity. People belong to different regions, and have different languages, practise different religions and have different castes. They look at the world very differently and have different preferences. The preferences of one group can clash with those of other groups. Democracy provides the only peaceful solution to this problem. In democracy, no one is a permanent winner. No one is a permanent loser. Different groups can live with one another peacefully. In a diverse country like India, democracy keeps our country together.

**Question** What are the various aspects of democracy?

**Answer** We may refer to three aspects of democracy—political, social and economic.

* Political Aspect: Political democracy requires “government by consent and political equality.” Democracy, as a form of government, implies that elections must be held with reasonable frequency. Moreover, there should be more than one political party competing for political power.
* Social Aspect: A democratic society is one in which an atmosphere of equality prevails. There should be no discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex. Every one should have equal access to shops, restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment. Our Constitution guarantees equality to every person before law.
* Economic Aspect: Political democracy will be a reality only when it is supported by economic democracy. The most stable democracies of the world are those which have extensive welfare schemes for the poor people.

**Question** What are the merits of a democratic government?

**Answer** The merits of a democratic government are :

* A democratic government is a better government because it is a more accountable form of government.
* Democracy improves the quality of decision-making.
* Democracy provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts.
* Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens.
* It is better than other forms of government because it allows us to correct its own mistakes.

**Question** Why has India not experiences a famine as severe as that of China in 1958-61?

**Answer** China’s famine of 1958-1961 was the worst recorded famine in the world history.

Nearly three crore people died in this famine. During those days, India’s economic condition was not much better than China. Yet India did not have a famine of the kind China had. Economists think that this was a result of different government policies in the two countries.

The existence of democracy in India made the Indian government respond to food scarcity in a way that the Chinese government did not. They point out that no large-scale famine has ever taken place in an independent and democratic country. If China too had multiparty elections, an opposition party and a press free to criticise the government, then so many people may not have died in the famine.

**Question** What are the drawbacks of a democracy.

**Answer** The following are the draw backs of a democracy :

* Leaders keep changing in a democracy. This leads to instability.
* Democracy is all about political competition and power play. There is no scope for morality.
* So many people have to be consulted in a democracy that it leads to delays.
* Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people. It leads to bad decisions.
* Democracy leads to corruption for it is based on electoral competition.
* Ordinary people don’t know what is good for them; they should not decide anything.

**Question** How far is it correct that no country has a perfect democracy?

**Answer** No country has a perfect democracy because :

* Every democracy has to try to realise the ideals of a democratic decision-making. This cannot be achieved once and for all. This requires a constant effort to save and strengthen democratic forms of decision-making. What we do as citizens can make a difference to making our country more or less democratic. This is the strength and the weakness of democracy: the fate of the country depends not just on what the rulers do, but mainly on what we, as citizens, do.
* This is what distinguished democracy from other governments. Other forms of government like monarchy, dictatorship or one party rule do not require all citizens to take part in politics.
* In fact, most non-democratic governments would like citizens not to take part in politics. But democracy depends on active political participation by all the citizens. That is why, a study of democracy must focus on democratic politics.

**Question** Why did the Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico never lose any election till 2000?

**Answer** The Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico was very strong till 2000. There are many reasons behind it:

* Until 2000, every election was won by Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico. Opposition parties did contest elections, but never managed to win.
* All those who were employed in government offices had to attend its party meetings. Teachers of government schools used to force parents to vote for the PRI.
* Media largely ignored the activities of opposition political parties except to criticise them.
* Sometimes, the polling booths were shifted from one place to another in the last minute, which made it difficult for people to cast their votes.
* The PRI spent a large sum of money in the campaign for its candidates.

**Question w**hat were the steps taken by Musharraf in Pakistan to empower himself?

**Answer** The following steps were taken by Musharraf in Pakistan to empower himself:

* In Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf led a military coup in October 1999. He overthrew a democratically elected government and declared himself the ‘Chief Executive’ of the country.
* Later, he changed his designation to President and in 2002, held a referendum in the country that granted him a five-year extension.
* In 2002, he issued a ‘Legal Framework Order’ that amended the Constitution of Pakistan. According to this Order, the President can dismiss the national or provincial assemblies.
* The power to take final decision rested with army officials and with General Musharraf.
* The work of the civilian cabinet was supervised by a National Security Council which was dominated by military officers.

**Question** Here is some information about the four countries. Based on this information, how would you classify each of these countries? Write ‘democratic’, ‘undemocratic’ or ‘not sure’ against each of these.

1. Country A: People who do not accept the country’s official religion do not have a right to vote.
2. Country B: The same party has been winning elections for the last twenty years.
3. Country C: The Ruling party has lost in the last three elections.
4. Country D: There is no independent election commission.

**Answer**

1. Country A: Undemocratic
2. Country B: Not sure
3. Country C: Democratic
4. Country D: Undemocratic

**Question** Here is some information about four countries. Based on this information, how would you classify each of these countries? Write ‘democratic’, ‘undemocratic’ or ‘not sure’ against each of these.

1. Country P: The parliament cannot pass a law about the army without the consent of the Chief of the Army.
2. Country Q: The parliament cannot pass a law reducing the powers of the judiciary.
3. Country R: The country’s leaders cannot sign any treaty with another country without taking permission from its neighbouring country.
4. Country S: All the major economic decisions about the country are taken by officials of the central bank, which the ministers cannot change.

**Answer**

1. Country P: Undemocratic
2. Country Q: Democratic
3. Country R: Undemocratic
4. Country S: Undemocratic

**Question** Which of these is not a good argument in favour of democracy? Why?

1. People feel free and equal in a democracy.
2. Democracies resolve conflict in a better way than others.
3. Democratic government is more accountable to the people.
4. Democracies are more prosperous than others.

**Answer**

d. Democracies are more prosperous than others is not a good argument in favour of democracy. There are examples of countries being democratic but not as prosperous as other countries which are not democratic. Democracy means that the citizen of the country is involved in the decision-making process and electing the leaders. It does not necessarily guarantee prosperity, as there are other factors like geography, economic capacity, government policies, human resources, mineral resources, etc.

**Question** Each of these statements contains a democratic and undemocratic element. Write out the two separately for each statement.

1. A minister said that some laws have to be passed by the parliament in order to conform to the regulations decided by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
2. The Election Commission ordered re-polling in a constituency where large-scale rigging was reported.
3. Women’s representation in parliament has barely reached 10 per cent. This led women’s organisations to demand one-third of seats for women.

**Answer**

1. Democratic element – A minister said that some laws have to be passed by the parliament. Undemocratic element – Conform to the regulations decided by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
2. Democratic element – The Election Commission ordered re-polling in a constituency. Undemocratic element – Large-scale rigging was reported.
3. Democratic element – Women’s organisations to demand one-third of seats for women. Undemocratic element – Women’s representation in parliament has barely reached 10 per cent.

**Question** Which of these is not a valid reason for arguing that there is a lesser possibility of famine in a democratic country?

1. Opposition parties can draw attention to hunger and starvation.
2. A free press can report suffering from famine in different parts of the country.
3. The government fears its defeat in the next elections.
4. People are free to believe in and practise any religion.

**Answer**

d. The statement, ‘People are free to believe in and practice any religion’, is not a valid reason for arguing that there is a lesser possibility of famine in a democratic country.

**Question** There are 40 villages in a district where the government has made no provision for drinking water. These villagers met and considered many methods of forcing the government to respond to their needs. Which of these is not a democratic method?

1. Filing a case in the courts claiming that water is part of the right to life.
2. Boycotting the next elections to give a message to all parties.
3. Organising public meetings against the government’s policies.
4. Paying money to government officials to get water.

**Answer**

d. Paying money to government officials to get water is not a democratic method.

**Question** Write a response to the following arguments against democracy:

1. The army is the most disciplined and corruption-free organisation in the country. Therefore, the army should rule the country.
2. The rule of the majority means the rule of ignorant people. What we need is the rule of the wise, even if they are in small numbers.
3. If we want religious leaders to guide us in spiritual matters, why not invite them to guide us in politics as well? The country should be ruled by religious leaders.

**Answer**

1. The army is a disciplined organisation. However, it is unfair if an army rules, as the army was not chosen by the citizens, and hence, it will be an undemocratic practice.
2. The rule of the majority is not the rule of ignorant people. Wisdom is subjective, and the government is run by people who know law and order.
3. Religion and politics are two different things. While religion can guide someone towards religious affairs, it cannot guide anyone towards politics, which is an important segment of a nation.

**Question** Are the following statements in keeping with democracy as a value? Why?

1. Father to daughter: I don’t want to hear your opinion about your marriage. In our family, children marry where the parents tell them to.
2. Teacher to student: Don’t disturb my concentration by asking me questions in the classroom.
3. Employee to the officer: Our working hours must be reduced according to the law.

**Answer**

1. The statement does not keep with democracy as a value, as the daughter is not allowed to express her opinion.
2. The statement does not keep with democracy as a value, as students are not allowed to ask questions, which is their right.
3. The statement keeps with democracy as law, as the employee voices their opinion for their right under the law.

**Question** Consider the following facts about a country and decide if you would call it a democracy. Give reasons to support your decision.

1. All the citizens of the country have the right to vote. Elections are held regularly.
2. The country took loans from international agencies. One of the conditions for giving loans was that the government would reduce its expenses on education and health.
3. People speak more than seven languages, but education is available only in one language, the language spoken by 52 per cent of people in that country.
4. Several organisations have given a call for peaceful demonstrations and nationwide strikes in the country to oppose these policies. The government has arrested these leaders.
5. The government owns the radio and television in the country. All the newspapers have to get permission from the government to publish any news about the government’s policies and protests.

**Answer**

1. From this statement, we can understand that it is a democratic country where citizens are allowed to vote and choose their government.
2. While taking a loan from international agencies, the country is compromising on the welfare of the people by reducing their expenditure on education and health, which is totally undemocratic.
3. The provision of making education accessible in only one language is undemocratic. It is the fundamental right for people to have an education, and it is the government’s duty to provide them with the language they know.
4. The right to assemble and peacefully demonstrate is a basic right of an individual. Hence, arresting the protestors is undemocratic.
5. When the government owns the radio and television, it is debarring people from availing their right to a free press. It is undemocratic.