

Question 1:

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.

- (a) Country A: People who do not accept the country's official religion do not have a right to vote
- (b) Country B: The same party has been winning elections for the last twenty years.
- (c) Country C: Ruling party has lost in the last three elections
- (d) Country D: There is no independent election commission

Answer:

- (a) undemocratic
- (b) not sure
- (c) democratic
- (d) undemocratic

Question 2:

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.

- (a) Country P: The parliament cannot pass a law about the army without the consent of the Chief of Army
- (b) Country Q: The parliament cannot pass a law reducing the powers of the judiciary
- (c) Country R: The country's leaders cannot sign any treaty with another country without taking permission from its neighbouring country.
- (d) Country S: All the major economic decisions about the country are taken by officials of the central bank which the ministers cannot change.

Answer:

- (a) undemocratic
- (b) democratic
- (c) undemocratic

(d) undemocratic

Question 3:

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

- (a) People feel free and equal in a democracy
- (b) Democracies resolve conflict in a better way than others
- (c) Democratic government is more accountable to the people
- (d) Democracies are more prosperous than others

Answer:

The argument 'd', which states that "Democracies are more prosperous than others", is not a good argument in favour of democracy. This is because some democracies like India are still developing economically, while monarchies like the states of UAE are economically strong.

Question 4:

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

- (a) 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.
- (b) The Election Commission ordered re-polling in a constituency where large scale rigging was reported.
- (c) Women's representation in the parliament has never reached 10 per cent. This led women's organisations to demand one-third seats for women.

Answer:

- (a) **Democratic element** – some laws have to be passed by the parliament
Undemocratic element – conform to the regulations decided by the World Trade Organisation
- (b) **Democratic element** – the Election Commission ordered re-polling
Undemocratic element – large scale rigging was reported
- (c) **Democratic element** – this led to women's organisations to demand one third seats for women

Undemocratic element – women’s representation in the parliament has never reached 10 per cent

Question 5:

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

- (a) Opposition parties can draw attention to hunger and starvation.
- (b) Free press can report suffering from famine in different parts of the country.
- (c) Government fears its defeat in the next elections.
- (d) People are free to believe in and practise any religion.

Answer:

Option ‘d’ is not a valid reason for arguing that there is a lesser possibility of famine in a democratic country. This is because practising a religion has nothing to do with preventing famine.

Question 6:

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 need. Which of these is not a democratic method?

- (a) Filing a case in the courts claiming that water is part of right to life.
- (b) Boycotting the next elections to give a message to all parties.
- (c) Organising public meetings against government’s policies.
- (d) Paying money to government officials to get water.

Answer:

Option ‘d’, which advocates paying the government officials money, is an undemocratic method.

Question 7:

Write a response to the following arguments against democracy.

- (a) Army is the most disciplined and corruption-free organisation in the country. Therefore army should rule the country.
- (b) 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.

(c) 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:

A democracy is the government elected by the people, from among the people themselves. The Army is integral in protecting the country, but it is not elected by the people; hence, it cannot form a democratic government. The second statement is not true as all people are intelligent to some extent. The third statement is dangerous because bringing religion into politics can cause serious conflict.

Question 8:

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

(a) 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.

(b) Teacher to student: Don't disturb my concentration by asking me questions in the classroom.

(c) Employee to the officer: Our working hours must be reduced according to the law.

Answer:

The first two statements are undemocratic as the girl is denied any opportunity to voice her opinion about her own marriage and the student is denied the right to clear his doubts by asking questions. The third statement is democratic as it calls for a rule of law which is beneficial for the employees.

Question 9:

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

(a) All the citizens of the country have right to vote Elections are held regularly.

(b) The country took loan from international agencies. One of the conditions for given loan was that the government would reduce its expenses on education and health.

(c) People speak more than seven languages but education is available only in one language, the language spoken by 52 percent people of the country.

(d) Several organisations have given a call for peaceful demonstrations and nation wide strikes in the country to oppose these policies. Government has arrested these leaders.

(e) 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 government's policies and protests.

Answer:

The country is not a democracy. The people have the right to vote but they do not have the right to free speech and demonstrations. The country is also under economic sanctions, which means that the people cannot take their own economic decisions. The government's censorship of the media prevents the public from voicing its opinion.

Question 10:

In 2004 a report published in USA pointed to the increasing inequalities in that country. Inequalities in income reflected in the participation of people in democracy. It also shaped their abilities to influence the decisions taken by the government. The report highlighted that:

- If an average Black family earns \$ 100 then the income of average White family is \$ 162. A White family has twelve times more wealth than the average Black family.
- In a President's election 'nearly 9 out of 10 individuals in families with income over \$ 75,000 have voted. These people are the top 20% of the population in terms of their income. On the other hand only 5 people out of 10 from families with income less than \$ 15,000 have voted. They are the bottom 20% of the population in terms of their income.
- About 95% contribution to the political parties comes from the rich. This gives them opportunity to express their opinions and concerns, which is not available to most citizens.
- As poor sections participate less in politics, the government does not listen to their concerns – coming out of poverty, getting job, education, health, car

and housing for them. Politicians hear most regularly about the concerns of business persons and the rich.

Write an essay on 'Democracy and Poverty' using the information given in this report but using examples from India.

Answer:

Attempt this question on your own.