



Mains Practice Question

Q. Examine the following quotation: "It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried".- Winston Churchill (250 words)

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Approach

- Briefly define democracy in the introduction.
- Highlight challenges, lacunas in its working with example.
- Illustrate with example how democracy is better than other forms of government in upholding basic rights and freedom
- In conclusion, give some steps to improve lacunas in democracy.

Introduction: Democracy is a form of government in which rulers are elected by the people in a free and fair elections, on universal adult franchise and governed on the basis of certain fundamental rules like a constitution.

Main Body

Challenges to Democracy

- Frequent elections and incongruent political ideologies lead to unstable and weak governments e.g. 1990s phase of coalition politics in India lead to short term governments.
- Competitive politics and power play leads to low moral values e.g. crony capitalism: the case of 2G spectrum scandal, bureaucracy-politics-crime nexus.
- Democratic processes lead to delay in decision making e.g. long-drawn process at arriving on consensus on Climate Agenda in UNFCCC despite the pressing nature of the issue.
- Elected rulers may not take decision in the best interest of people, rather cater to their immediate political needs and advantages e.g. inequalities based on caste, class, gender etc.

Democracy as best alternative than other tried forms

- Democracy is more accountable than other governments to its people, responding to their needs, sensitivities e.g. Post-Independence India did not face any famine due to focus on food security while Communist China faced it in the late 1950s
- Rigorous consultation and discussions in a democracy help in better quality of decision making e.g. special status given to scheduled areas and North-East in Constitution of India reflecting their culture, while China trying to curtail freedoms in Hong-Kong and military-dictators doing same in African nations.
- Democracy allows for methods to deal with differences and conflicts e.g. protection to minorities and depressed classes in India, secular nature of Indian state, while in regimes like Nazi Germany propounding Fascist ideas followed racial segregation policy, similar was the case in Apartheid regime in South Africa.
- Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens. Freedom Rights allow one to develop to their fullest potential and be responsible for their own actions. This removes the potential of any violent fallout in case citizens are disaffected by the ruling government. For instances, the absence of any tool of

protest in dictatorship regimes in Middle east led to Arab Spring and downfall of such regimes.

- Democracy allows for course corrections by allowing to rectify mistakes e.g. Indian PM apologizing to Sikh community for atrocities in the mid-1980s, Japanese PM doing same for atrocities in Manchuria and South Korea during world war. On the other hand, China continues to repress Tibetan, Uighur ethnicity.

Way Forward

Thus, democracy may not be the best form of government but definitely better than others, as W. Churchill illustrated in the face of Nazi aggression and need to fight such an ideology. Need is for continuously improving upon lacunas and make it more inclusive e.g. Right to Education, Forest Rights Act, Electoral Reforms etc. in India.

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