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OUTCOMES OF DEMOCRACY

How do we assess democracy's outcomes?

»» Democracy is a better form of govt. when compared with other forms.

↓ Why?

IMP

- Promotes equality of citizens/individual
- Enhances dignity
- Improves decision-making quality
- Provides method to resolve conflicts
- Allows room to correct mistakes

»» Most people support democracy, but many of them are dissatisfied

»» Democracy is good in principle, but not in practice

»» Over 100 countries follow democratic politics with

- formal constitutions
- elections
- parties
- rights of citizens

These features are common, but democracies in real are different.

(citizens)

(to needs)

Accountable, Responsive and Legitimate Government → Basic outcome of democracy

1. Democracy is concerned with people's choice
2. In democracy, citizens must participate in decision-making

- Date: / /
- »» To some people, democracy is less effective
 - »» In a non-democracy, decision-making is quick and effective because rulers don't need public opinion.
 - »» Democracy's idea - deliberation, negotiation

Accountable

- »» Decisions made by following proper norms and procedure, making them acceptable and effective.
- »» Citizens should know if a decision was taken through correct procedures.



Transparency

- »» Govt. must provide complete and accurate information about activities and governance. It should be available in timely way.
- »» Right to examine the decision-making process
- »» Transparency enables accountability
- »» Example - Right to Information Act, 2005
 - Empowers citizens to get timely response from govt.
 - Promotes transparency & accountability

- »» Democracy develops mechanisms to:
 - hold govt. accountable
 - participate in decision-making

- »» Measure democracy:
 - Regular, free and fair elections
 - Open Public Debates

• Right to Information

»»» Democracy disappoints citizens in furnishing information

Actual Performance of Democracy

- »»» Shows mixed record
- Success - elections, public opinion
 - Failure - fair chance in elections X
 - Subjecting^{all} decisions to public debates X
 - Sharing information X
- (not very accountable and transparent)

Responsive

- »»» Govt. should be attentive to needs and demands of people.
- »»» It should be corruption-free.



- Record on these → not very good
- »»» Democracy frustrates the needs and ignores the demands
- »»» Tales of corruption are enough to justify that democracies are not free of it.

»»» Democracy is not always accountable, transparent or responsive. It is slow and less efficient perhaps.

»»» But it is good (even better) in ONE Thing:

»»» It is

»»»

Legitimate

»» Democracy is people's govt. → Explains the overwhelming support for it worldwide.

»» Evidence - South Asian countries
(both democratic and non-democratic)

- People wish to be ruled by representatives elected by them
- They believe democracy is suitable for their country



»» Best outcome - Ability to generate its own support

Economic Growth and Development

»» Expectation from democracy → DEVELOPMENT

»» Evidence proves → expectation not fulfilled.



Democracy vs Dictatorship (1950-2000)

↓	↓
lower economic growth (a concern)	higher economic growth

↓ But we can't reject democracy because of it

Development depends on →

- population
- size
- global situation
- cooperation (global)
- economic priorities, etc.

»»» Development in less developed dictatorships vs Development in democracies
 negligible difference

»»» Democracy can't guarantee development, but it doesn't lag behind dictatorships.

Democracy has many other positive outcomes.

Reduction of inequality and poverty

»»» Democracies reduce economic disparities.

»»» They are based on political equality

»»» But inequalities are observed.

RICH

VS

POOR

»»» Small in no.
 ↓

»»» Large in no.
 ↓

»»» High wealth and incomes; High share in country's income

»»» Lower incomes; Low/negligible share in country's income

»»» Live a lavish life

»»» Unable to meet basic needs

So, in practice, democracy is unsuccessful in reducing inequalities.

The Failure

Poor people are majority, but democracy is not the rule of the majority (the poor), which contradicts the principle

- Most voters are poor, yet, govts don't address poverty
- Bangladesh - 50% population lives in poverty.
- Poor countries - depend on rich countries for food supplies and other needs.

Accommodation of social diversity

- »» Democracy should produce a harmonious social life.
 - »» It should accommodate various social divisions. (like Belgium)
 - »» Democracies develop procedures to reduce tensions.
 - »» Permanently resolving conflicts is not possible.
 - »» All we can do with the differences is:
 - respecting them
 - evolving mechanisms to negotiate them
 - »» Democracy is BEST suited for it, due to:
 - its ability to handle social differences, divisions and conflicts.
- ↓
- »» Non-democratic regimes, on other hand ignore or suppress internal differences.

Learning from Sri Lanka example,

Two conditions to be fulfilled to achieve this outcome:

1. Understanding that democracy is not the rule of majority.
 - Majority and minority must work together for govt. to represent general views.
 - Majority and minority opinions are not permanent.

2. "Rule by majority" \neq Rule by majority 'community' (in terms of religion, race, language, etc.)

- Majority only works in elections and decision-making where people with same thoughts and ideas form a group to ~~dis~~ understand national opinion.
- Anyone cannot be excluded from this majority just because of social status by birth.
(it's against democracy)

Dignity and freedom of the citizens

- » Every individual wants respect from others.
- » Conflicts arise if they are not treated with respect.
- » Respect and Freedom are basis of DEMOCRACY; principle; achievements vary
 - Dignity of women
 - » Most societies in the world were historically male-dominant.
 - » Long struggles by women: have recognised equality and respect for women as a necessary part of democracy.
- » This doesn't mean that women are always treated with respect.
- » But it makes it easy for women to struggle legally & morally, because of the

~~the~~ recognition of principle.

»» This legal and moral force is not present in non-democracy. (of freedom, dignity)
Same applies for caste inequalities as well.

»» Democracy in India gives equal status and opportunities to all castes.



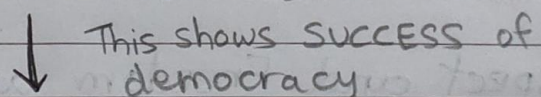
»» Inequalities are still present, but the **RECOGNITION** makes citizens value their rights.



»» Expectations from democracy never get over. (democracy is always examined)

»» As people get more benefits from democracy they ask for more.

»» Expectations and complaints never end.



»» It shows that people have developed:

- awareness
- ability to look critically at the power holders.

»» It transforms people's **STATUS** from **SUBJECT** to **CITIZEN**:
(under someone's control) (having rights, freedoms)

»» Most individuals today, believe that their **VOTE** makes a **DIFFERENCE**.