

Class IX

Ch 1

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? WHY DEMOCRACY?

READING MATERIAL

1. Democracy: -Democracy is a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.
“It is my principle that the will of the majority should always prevail”.
Thomas Jefferson
2. Referendum: - A general vote by the electorate on a single political question which has been referred to them for a direct decision.
3. Military coup: - A sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government by military.
4. Representative democracy: - It is a form of government where the majority of people rule through their elected representatives.
5. Direct democracy: - Direct democracy, also called pure democracy, forms of direct participation of citizens in democratic decision making in contrast of indirect democracy or representative democracy.
6. Rule of Law: - The rule of law implies that every person is subject to the law, including people who are lawmakers, law enforcement officials, and judges. In this sense, it stands in contrast to tyranny or oligarchy where the rulers are held above the law.
7. Qatar: -Qatar is one the few remained absolute monarchies in the world. Absolute Monarchy is one where one person has an unrestricted

political power over a state. Officials have been elected by the people since 1999, but there is quite less participation in these elections, hence making it insignificant and monarchic. The protagonist of the country is its Prime Minister, Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, who is a distant relative of the former Finance and Prime Minister, Hamad Bin Hassim Al Thani. Life in Qatar is mostly tax-free. But you do pay for things like there is a no-shoulder-no-knee rule for women. If you are scantily clad, you will be asked to leave the premises right away. Also, if you want to booze on the weekend, you can count your options on fingers as there are only a few places where alcohol is allowed and a person can only spend 10% of your monthly wage on it.

8. Saudi Arabia: -There is absolute monarchy in Saudi Arabia as the King of Saudi Arabia makes all the decisions for the state. The government is based on Islamic law and is dominated by the royal family. There is no legally bounded constitution in Saudi and Quran and Sunnah remain the guiding books. Torture and ill treatments are very common and the judicial punishments are unbelievably inhuman. If a person is charged with robbery, his hands and feet are amputated. Living conditions are not good as there is no freedom of expression and women's rights are non-existent.
9. North Korea: - North Korea was earlier a communist state, but all the communist references were removed from the constitution in 2009. On papers, it is a democratic republic today, and government is elected by a secret ballot. Sadly, the truth is far from this. What happens is that there are only single-candidate races and any person who wants to vote against that candidate has to go to another private booth to do so, which is very risky! So, North Korea is basically run under a dictatorship. Talking about human rights, there are a number of rape cases against high officials but such news is always covered up and sometimes even bragged. There is no freedom of expression and everything runs on the wishes of Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader of North Korea.
10. Vietnam: -Vietnam is a single-party communists state where President is the head of state and Prime Minister is the head of government. The Judiciary is independent of the executive. Vietnam actively suppresses any religious rights and the only party that rules the country has a complete monopoly on political power. Many activists are faultily convicted in the state for speaking against the government leaving very less freedom of expression, opinion and press.

11. Jordan: - Jordan is a constitutional monarchic nation that joins Europe, Asia and Africa. The Monarch is the head of state, the chief-executive and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The right to veto resides with the King who can override two-third of majority of government. The cabinet is responsible to the matters of general policy. Jordan restricts freedom of expression and speech as many individuals are prosecuted for 'insulting an official body' or speaking against the King.
12. Turkmenistan: - Turkmenistan is a democratic country on papers but the inside stories tell an entirely different tale. The government's representatives do not act in public interest. It is popularly known as an autocratic-democracy. Most of its population is impoverished. It is called one of the most repressive countries in the world by Human rights watch as the President and his family maintains an unlimited control over the citizens. The government denies any freedom to association, expression and even religion! The government often forces people do to something or attend an event and does not even permit them to leave for hours even for toilet. Journalists, non-government organisations constantly receive threats from the government. All print and electronic media is under the control of state, internet is heavily constrained and extremely expensive, which automatically makes it inaccessible.