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## WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? WHY DEMOCRACY?

### Chapter at a Glance

#### What Is Democracy

Democracy is a form of government where rulers are elected by the people

#### Why Democracy

##### Arguments Against

- Leaders keep changing, leads to instability.
- It is all about competition and powerplay. No scope for morality.
- Many people have to be consulted, delays decisions.
- Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people. Leads to bad decisions.
- Democracy leads to corruption as it is based on electoral corruption.

##### Arguments In favour

- Democratic government more accountable and better.
- It improves quality of decision-making.
- It provides methods to deal with differences and conflicts.
- It enhances the dignity of citizens.
- Democracy allows us to correct our mistakes.

#### Deeper Meaning of Democracy

The most common form of democracy in modern times is Representative Democracy

Leaders are elected by the adult citizens

Majority is allowed to take decisions on behalf of the people

#### Representative Democracy is necessary because

Modern democracies have such large number of citizens that it is not possible for all to sit together and take decisions collectively

Even if possible, the citizens do not have the time, the desire or the skills to take part in all the decisions

## Difference between Democracy and Non-Democracies

### Democracy

- Government elected by the adult citizens
- Citizens have fundamental rights
- Leaders rule within the constitutional laws and citizens' rights
- Accountability is present e.g. in India

### Non-Democratic

- Government is not elected, it is either a dictatorship or monarchy
- No rights to the citizens
- Leaders rule as they feel like
- No accountability e.g. Saudi Arabia.

## When democracy is used for organisations other than government

E.g. A democratic family: Everyone's opinion matters, all the members of the family sit together to arrive at a consensus.

E.g. Democratic classroom: Where all the students get a chance to put questions to the teachers and they have a democratic temperament

# CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

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## Chapter at a Glance

### Democratic Constitution in South Africa

Nelson Mandela spent twenty-eight years in prison for raising his voice against apartheid

- Apartheid → Policy of racial discrimination
- Imposed by the Whites who settled in South Africa and later became local rulers
- Skin colour was made the basis of discrimination, Blacks → 3/4th of the population, Whites → very small in number, Coloured → Migrated people from India
- Blacks and coloured had no voting rights, had separate schools, hotels, beaches, etc
- No rights to form associations or to protest
- African National Congress led the struggle against segregation
- Apartheid declared unjust by many countries
- Whites continued their racist regime by detaining, torturing and killing 'blacks' and 'coloureds'

- Struggles and protests made the White regime unstable
- Policies changed, laws repealed, restrictions on media lifted
- Mandela freed from prison
- New flag of South Africa unfurled, Apartheid ended
- Blacks appealed to their fellows to forgive Whites
- Pledged to build a new South Africa based on democratic values
- Both Blacks and Whites worked together for a common constitution
- South Africa became a model of democracy

### Constitution

A set of written rules that are accepted by people of a country

### do we need a constitution?

It generates trust and coordination

It specifies how government is to be constituted, who will have power to take which decisions

It lays limits on powers of government and contains rights of citizens

It expresses the aspirations of people for creating a good society

## Making of the Indian Constitution

India got independence with a traumatic experience of Partition. Princely states made the situation worse. They were given the choice free to join India, Pakistan or remain free. The constitution makers were anxious about the future of India

### Path to Constitution

- The constitution drafted by Motilal Nehru and Congress leaders in 1928 and the Resolution of 1931 formed the basis of Indian Constitution
- Familiarity with colonial political institutions helped a lot, like the Government of India Act 1935
- The French Revolution, The Bill of Rights in USA, The Socialist Revolution in Russia also inspired the constitution framers

## The Constituent Assembly

Constituent Assembly formed in 1946 had 389 members in total

After Partition, Indian Constituent Assembly had 299 members that drafted the document

- 26th November 1949 → Constitution adopted
- 26th January 1950 → Constitution came into effect

### Reasons for success of constitution made by Constituent Assembly

- It reflected broad consensus of the People of India as a whole
- No questioning on the legitimacy of constitution
- Constituent Assembly ensured fair representation of all regions of India
- Constituent Assembly worked in a systematic, open and consensual manner
- Broad discussion and debates before preparing a draft of rules
- Every document and word spoken were recorded and preserved for future reference called 'Constituent Assembly Debates'.

## Values of the Indian Constitution

Mahatma Gandhi, though not in Constituent Assembly, still members followed his vision—social, economic, political, cultural equality

In his Tryst with Destiny speech, Jawaharlal Nehru pledged, among others for dedication, humanity, responsibility.

### Philosophy of constitution

- The preamble contains the philosophy of the constitution
- Preamble is a preface or introductory document of the constitution that reflects the basic idea of the constitution

- Description of institutional arrangement in legal language
- Procedure for electing people to govern country
- Who has power to make what laws
- Fundamental Rights and Duties
- Need for amendments to keep the constitution updated

# ELECTORAL POLITICS

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## Chapter at a Glance

### Why do we need elections?

To choose who will make laws for the country

Who will form the government and take major decisions?

To choose the party who will guide the government and law-making

### What makes an election Democratic?

Everyone should have one vote and each vote should have one value

Parties and Candidates should be free to contest elections.

Elections should be free and fair.

Candidates preferred by the people should be elected.

Election should be held at regular intervals.

### Good to have Political Competition

#### Electoral Competition

##### Merits

Political leaders are rewarded for serving people and punished for not doing so

Provides incentives to parties & leaders

Important Issues are raised

Forces parties and leaders to serve people

##### Demerits

Creates sense of disunity and factionalism

Allegations against each other

Use of dirty tricks to win

Does not allow to formulate sensible long term policies

### Our Election System

Country is divided into electoral constituencies.

Reserved constituencies

Seats reserved for women and OBC in local bodies

