

# Challenges to Democracy

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## Check Point 01

**Q. 1. Name two main factors which pose serious challenges democracy.**

**Answer:** The two main factors are:

**(i) Illiteracy:** Illiteracy poses serious problems because many people are uneducated and ignorant about their basic rights and the constitution of India.

**(ii) Poverty:** Poverty hampers the principles of democracy where every man, woman, and child must be treated equally because there is an unequal distribution of income and unemployment. These are the major causes of poverty.

**Q. 2. Name the countries which face challenges of expansion.**

**Answer:** The countries which face the challenges of expansion are USA and India because they have a large population and several states and social groups. India has managed to tackle the problem of expansion by providing seats in jobs and educational institutions for Scheduled Castes(SC) and Scheduled Tribes(ST), reserving seats for women in the Parliament by passing a bill in the Rajya Sabha, adopting principles of federalism in democracy, protection of rights of minority groups through Fundamental Rights etc.

**Q. 3. Why there is no unique list of desirable reforms?**

**Answer:** The laws of a country play an important role in bringing about reforms. But, laws alone cannot resolve challenges, democratic reforms are to be carried out mainly by political activists, parties, movements and politically conscious citizens.

The greatest challenge that India faces is of corruption. Corruption is rampant in all government departments and the few clean politicians are lost in the multitude of corrupt politicians.

Part from that, people are divided on the basis of caste and religion. You cannot have reforms implemented unless people and politicians overcome the barriers of caste and religion.

**Q. 4. State one guideline which can be kept in mind while devising ways for political reforms in India.**

**Answer:** One guideline which can be kept in mind while devising ways for political reforms in India is that any proposal for political reform must include the process of implementation to ensure its success. Only a process of implementation can ensure the success of the political reform. For example, getting the right people to carry out the

reforms, like, political activists, movements and politically conscious citizens. Each one must know his/her duty and fulfil them accordingly.

**Q. 5. Which law acts as a watchdog of democracy?**

**Answer:** The Right to Information law acts as the watchdog of democracy, as it entitles citizens to information about the activities of the government and question inefficiencies. Such a law helps to control corruption by making the activities of the government known to the people and entitling them to raise questions.

### **Self Assessment**

**Q. 1. Name the act which empowers the people to find out what is going on in the government?**

**Answer:** The Right to Information Act empowers the people to know the activities of the government and question the policies of political parties. It also acts as a watchdog of democracy as it controls corruption by monitoring and keeping records of the activities of the government and making it known to the people.

**Q. 2. How many countries in the world have a democratic form of government?**

**Answer:** 123 out of 192 countries in the world have a democratic form of government. All these are ruled by a democracy where power rests in the hands of the people who may elect representatives, are entitled to know the activities of the government, have equal rights and privileges, etc. For example, India has the most populous democracy in the world.

**Q. 3. How can democratic reforms be carried out?**

**Answer:** Democratic reforms can be carried out in the following manner:

**(i)** By increasing and improving the quality of participation by ordinary citizens in political matters.

**(ii)** Right to Recall, which was introduced in Lok Sabha, allows the citizens to replace any government office holder.

**(iii)** Independent media to question the policies of political parties.

**(iv)** The reforms must be carried out by political activists and politically conscious people

All these are necessary to uphold the principles of democracy and carry out reforms, ensuring its success.

**Q. 4. Mention any two constitutional provisions that make India a secular state.**

**Answer:** Two constitutional provisions that make India a secular state are:

**(i) Right to Freedom of Religion:** One of the rights in the Indian Constitution is the Right to Freedom. It states that every citizen of India has the right to freedom of religion or the right to follow any religion or belief of their choice. They are free to practice and spread their religion without fear of violence or intolerance.

**(ii) Cultural and Educational Rights:** Right to education is one of the most important provisions in the Indian Constitution. This right states that every citizen of India has a right to receive education at any educational institution and will not be denied admission in the same. There will no discrimination based on religion, race, caste, creed or language.

Cultural Rights provides the right to develop and preserve any culture or language as long as it is not imposed on any section of the society.

**Q. 5. Name any two challenges to the working of democracy in India.**

**Answer:** Two challenges to the working of democracy are:

**(i) Corruption:** Corruption occurs when government officials use their position and authority to serve your own interests and engage in bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, favouritism etc. All these practices lower the morals and undermine the principles of democracy.

**(ii) Communalism:** Communalism occurs when people of the same religion, culture have similar economic, political and social interests. Thus, such communities have diverging interests and ideologies which can clash with the interests of another community. The political parties often use such situations to further their own interests, adding to the tension.

**Q. 6. How much part of the globe is still not under the democratic government?**

**Answer:** 1/4th of the globe is not under a democratic government. The reason is that these countries face foundational challenges of transitioning to a democracy. It also involves bringing down the existing government which proves to be economically, socially and politically difficult. Myanmar was facing foundational problems while it was making the transition, but now it has successfully initiated a democratic government, by tackling the dominating influence of the military on the government.

**Q. 7. Suggest a desirable condition that a good democracy should have.**

**Answer:** A desirable condition that a good democracy should have is that all elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner. Conducting impartial and unbiased elections is very significant in the formation of a good democratic government. Electing genuine, good-willed, and hardworking candidates is very rewarding to the success of democracy.

**Q. 8. Is democracy a brutal rule of the majority?**

**Answer:** According to the principles of democracy, majority rule should be a means of organizing the government and taking legal actions without depriving the minority groups of their basic rights or privileges. It implies that the will of the majority if considered must not exclude any minority community. In India, however this a challenge because most citizens believe that and if a political party gains popularity in any part of government then their will is legal and ultimate. The will of minorities is shaped largely by the will of a single political party due to their ignorance or reluctance to participate in the political decisions or overpowering influence of parties.

**Q. 9. If all the decision of a political party are made by a single family, and all other members are neglected, then what challenge is being faced by that party?**

**Answer:** There will be a dictatorship, lack of integrity or unity among the members, and no common interests if all the decisions of a political party are made by a single family. All decisions must, therefore, be made by and in the presence of all members of the party to prevent conflict of interests, rivalry, strikes, etc. which will also affect the daily routines of the public masses.

**Q. 10. What is 'democracy reform' or 'democratic reform' or 'Political reform'?**

**Answer:** Institutional changes that aim to improve the quality of democracy that is practiced to empower the citizens and overcome challenges of democracy are known as Democratic reforms.

**Q. 11. Discuss the board challenges to democracy.**

**Answer:** The broad challenges to democracy are:

**(i) Foundational Challenge:** One-fourth of the world still doesn't have a democratic form of government. These countries face this challenge while changing into a democratic government. This involves major steps like establishing a sovereign state and mowing down the non-democratic authorities. Systems will take years to change as they have taken years to develop initially. Nepal, for instance, recently changed to democracy but is yet to develop in many ways.

**(ii) Challenge of Expansion:** The challenge of expansion is faced by most democracies because it involves giving greater power to the local governments, including women and minority groups, etc., thereby applying the principles of democracy to all regions, societies, and communities. In India, for instance, some economically backward communities are yet to get political powers which clearly demonstrate the challenge of expansion.

**(iii) Deepening of Democracy:** This challenge involves strengthening the organizations and practices of democracy, usually happening in a way that people can realize their expectations of it. Due to their varying expectations in different societies, however, it is becoming difficult especially in the case of elections.

**Q. 12. What do you understand by 'regionalism'?**

**Answer:** Regionalism is a political ideology that focusses on developing a political system based on one or more regions. It aims to strengthen loyalty to a distinct region. It prioritizes local interests over national interests. It can be positive and negative. Positive regionalism means love towards one's culture, language, and region whereas negative regionalism is an excessive attachment to a single region, thereby posing a threat to the unity and integrity of the country.

**Q. 13. How is 'deepening of democracy' a major challenge to modern democracies? Explain.**

**Answer:** 'Deepening of democracy' requires the institutions that uphold democracy to become more transparent in their methods and functioning and being more responsive to the needs of the citizens of the country. There also has to be an attempt to bring down the influence of the domination of rich and powerful people in making governmental decisions. This is a major challenge to democracy because it involves a commitment to the true values of democracy, through the distribution of powers to local governments.

**Q. 14. Mention the major types of challenges which most of the democracies of the world are facing?**

**Answer:** The major challenges that most of the democracies are facing are as follows:

**(i)** Elections are not free and fair due to corruptive practices by political parties and authority figures.

**(ii)** Economic inequality, problems of centralization due to diverse races, ethnic groups, religions, and inadequate understanding complexity of modern societies lead to challenges in implementing democratic principles.

**(iii)** The inefficiency of political leaders who are self-serving, opportunists who spend time strengthening their own positions instead of attending to the needs of the people. This earns their mistrust in political parties and the government as a whole.

**(iv)** Democracies do not offer political instability as the government is frequently elected, there are numerous changes in policies in domestic and international subjects, business and immigration which hinder economic growth significantly.

**Q. 15. What are the steps that can be taken for the removal of poverty in India?**

**Answer:** Some steps that can be taken by the government for removal of poverty are:

**(i) Population Control:** To remove poverty, active steps must be taken to control rapid population growth through awareness programs on family planning.

**(ii) Employment:** Problems of unemployment and disguised unemployment must be solved. Development of agriculture, cottage industries in rural areas will benefit the livelihood of various farmers.

**(iii) Distribution of Income:** The inequality in the distribution of income should be reduced to decrease poverty. Every worker must receive income as per his/her labor. There should also be no inequalities between the income of men and women for the same kind of labor.

**(iv) Illiteracy:** Illiteracy is a serious problem in India which leads to immense poverty in rural areas. Schools and colleges must be opened in rural areas to educate villagers about the evils of poverty, over-population, and open new opportunities in the professional fields.

**(v) Basic facilities:** Minimum needs of the poor should be fulfilled by providing basic amenities like clean drinking water, health care, and sanitation, along with educational facilities.

**Q. 16. "Different countries face a different kind of challenges". Support the statement with suitable examples.**

**Answer:** Different countries face a different kind of challenges to democracy as they depend on the stage of development in the socio-economic sphere.

1. Ordinary people may have different expectations from democracy in different countries. Every country has a unique situation which must be handled differently. For example, well-established democracies like that of USA, minority groups have gained equal rights but still suffer from poverty, marginalization, racism etc.
2. In Saudi Arabia, women are still restricted from participating in public activities and minority groups lack freedom of religion.
3. India faces the challenge of over-population which breeds further problems like illiteracy, unemployment, unequal distribution of wealth etc. Other challenges include terrorism which still grips modern democracies across the world.

Q. 17. What are the guidelines to be kept in mind while adopting political reforms?

Answer: The following guidelines should be kept in mind while adopting political reforms:

**(i)** Laws which empower people to carry out democratic reforms, like the Right to Information Act, help to control corruption.

**(ii)** Ordinary citizens should have an active political participation in the process of democratic formation.

**(iii)** Democratic reforms should be carried out by political parties, movements, and conscious citizens.

**(iv)** Any legal change must be productive in its political approach.

**(v)** Any proposal for political reforms must consider the agents of its implementation for its success.

**Q. 18. How are challenge to democracy linked to the possibility of political reforms.**

**Answer:** Democracy is the prominent form of government in the modern world, but it faces some major challenges. They are Challenge of Expansion, Deepening of Democracy and Challenge of Foundation. Every challenge is linked with the possibility of political reforms because through successful reformation, democracy can see a brighter future in politics. For example, the Right to Information Act, makes the results of the legal actions clear to the people, ensuring that the principles of democracy. Political reforms also strengthen the participation of the people and prevent exploitation of political power by the rich and powerful.

**Q. 19. List out the demerits of democracy.**

**Answer:** While it seems that democracy is the ideal form of government, there the demerits are:

**(i) Corruption:** Democracies give rise to corruption. Political compromises are made, and the coalition are formed breaking the unity and integrity between political parties. Power and privileges are distributed to supporters of various dominions while the deserving candidates are deprived.

**(ii) Inefficiency:** Democracies also lead to inefficiency as the political leaders are busy strengthening their position and authority by forming alliances with other parties instead of doing their jobs in the administration. Legal actions and decisions are often taken without proper implementation.

**(iii) Expensive:** A Democratic form of government places heavy burdens on taxes. Elections for various offices in the government, the election machinery, etc., are all expensive to maintain and time-consuming. It can lead to inefficiency.

**(iv) Quantity over Quality:** Equality in a democracy treats everyone equally despite their intellect or potential. Due to this, self-serving and opportunist people find their way into the government while genuine people shy away from elections or fall behind. Majority rule also enables the rule of numerous rather than wise.

**Q. 20. Which is the most popular form of government in the contemporary world?**

**Answer:** Democracy is the most popular form of government in the contemporary world because of the following reasons:

**(i)** It allows us to select our representatives through elections.

**(ii)** It also ensures that every citizen is entitled to basic fundamental rights.

**(iii)** Minority groups do not face any discrimination as their needs are given serious consideration

(iv) It has better governance due to transparency and laws that make the legal actions taken by the government clear to ordinary people

(v) Basic principles of democracy include freedom and equality

(vi) Democracies prevent war against other countries with a democratic form of government

**Q. 21. How is Myanmar facing the foundation challenge of making a transition to democracy? Explain.**

**Answer:** Myanmar has suffered from a brutal military rule. It has resulted in the massacre of innocent people, arrests of activists of democracy and ordinary people. Most of the sufferings of the citizens of Myanmar include violation of human rights, corruption, economic depression, religious violence etc.

In recent times, Myanmar is ushering a new kind of government which is a democracy to ensure that its minority groups get their basic rights. Elections were conducted on November 8th, 2015, where the National League for Democracy party, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, was victorious. She states that, for the success of democracy, economic inequalities should be addressed. In this context, there are constant arguments between the NLD and the military on persuasive military influence within the government and the society. The new government will prevent violence against the minority group of Rohingya as well as other other ethnic groups.

**Q. 22. Discuss some ways and means for political reforms in India.**

**Answer: (i)** Laws should be made to keep track of the activities of the political parties, by maintaining records of members, hold free and fair elections etc.

**(ii)** The rate of public participation in the policies and decisions in the democratic government should be increased in order to reform politics according to the principles of democracy.

**Q. 23. Describe any three factors that are responsible reforms in India.**

**Answer:** Some of the factors responsible for reforms in India are as below:

**1. Modern Education:** There is no discrimination in acquiring education in modern times. Everyone can avail it. People have become aware of their rights and duties.

**2. Transport and communication:** With increased means of transport and communication, ideas and knowledge is shared along with cultural values which lead to intermingling of people of different backgrounds. This gives an idea of modern practices.

**3. Awareness:** With ever increasing media and reform movements, people are more aware of the correctness of certain practices. This helps in differentiating between the right and the wrong and forming an opinion.

**Q. 24. "Most established democracies face a challenge of expansion." Comment.**

**Answer:** Most established democracies face the challenge of expansion because local governments are granted greater power, minority groups and women are given rights and included in the democratic activities of the government. It also involves the mass participation of various institutions, regions, and communities and implementing democratic principles in all these spheres. It also means that decisions should be made with the participation of ordinary citizens.

**Q. 25. What is called 'democratic reforms'? By whom these are to be carried out? What does 'legal ways of reforming politics' imply?**

**Answer:** Democratic reforms refer to the changes made to resolve challenges to democracy and ensures that its principles are followed. They are carried out by political parties, movements, activists, and politically conscious people. Legal ways of reforming politics imply that a legal change must empower the citizens. Laws like Right to Recall and Right to Information must be passed to assess the activities of political parties, like the list of members, political agendas, electoral lists, etc. to prevent corruption. Courts must pass judgments related to corruptive practices quickly to resolve conflicts and scams. Also, media should be given independence to question parties and leaders on various matters.