

6

Democracy

The Big Questions (Page - 137)**1. How has the idea of democracy evolved over time and shaped our understanding of it today?**

Ans. Democratic ideas in India have deep historical roots. The Sabha, Samiti and Vidhata in the Vedic period encouraged collective decision-making, while the Bauddha Samghas practised discussion and voting. Later, the freedom struggle strengthened democratic ideas. The Constitution of India, drafted by the Constituent Assembly, established modern democracy based on liberty, equality, justice and fraternity.

2. What are the different forms of democracy, and how are they practised in India and other parts of the world?

Ans. There are different forms of democracy:

- **Representative Democracy:** People elect representatives who govern on their behalf. India follows representative democracy.
- **Direct Democracy:** Citizens directly participate in decision-making. Switzerland has important features of direct democracy.
- **Parliamentary Democracy:** The executive is accountable to the legislature. India and Canada follow parliamentary democracy.
- **Presidential Democracy:** The executive is independent of the legislature and is headed by a President. The United States of America follows presidential democracy.

Although democratic systems differ from country to country, they share basic principles such as **freedom, equality, participation, rule of law, rights and duties**.

3. What are the essential features of a democracy and how do they extend beyond government institutions?

Ans. The essential features of democracy are:

- **Popular Sovereignty:** The ultimate source of power is the people.
- **Rule of Law:** Everyone is equal before the law and no one is above the law.
- **Fundamental Rights:** Citizens' rights, freedoms and dignity are protected.
- **Separation of Powers:** Powers are divided among the legislature, executive and judiciary.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** The government is answerable to citizens and its functioning should be open.
- **Multi-Party System:** Different political parties represent different interests and provide choices to citizens.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Groups:** The government protects weaker and disadvantaged sections of society.
- **People's Participation:** Citizens participate in elections as well as other democratic activities.

Democratic values extend beyond government institutions through **media, civil society organisations, community institutions, cooperatives, trade unions and local self-government**. Citizens also strengthen democracy by being informed, respecting others' rights, following laws and participating responsibly in society.

4. What are the challenges faced by Indian democracy?

Ans. Indian democracy faces several challenges, such as **illiteracy, misinformation, poverty, inequality, regionalism, gender inequality and social discrimination**. The weak implementation of laws and policies can also reduce people's trust in democratic institutions. Fake news and misinformation can create confusion and influence public opinion.

THINK ABOUT IT (Page - 140)

- **Why is it important that the ultimate source of power rests with the people in a democracy?**

Ans. It is important because people are the ultimate source of authority in a democracy. Through free and fair elections, citizens choose their representatives and can hold the government accountable. This ensures that the government works according to the needs and wishes of the people.

- **How does people's participation through voting strengthen popular sovereignty?**

Ans. People's participation through voting strengthens popular sovereignty because it allows citizens to choose their representatives and government. It ensures that the ultimate source of political power remains with the people and makes the elected government accountable to them.

LET'S EXPLORE (Page - 141)

- **The Constitution not only guarantees Fundamental Rights to citizens but also outlines their Fundamental Duties and the Directive Principles of State Policy. Discuss their significance and identify the differences among them.**

Ans. The Constitution provides Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles of State Policy to strengthen democracy and promote the welfare of citizens.

Basis	Fundamental Rights	Fundamental Duties	Directive Principles of State Policy
• Meaning	- Basic rights and freedoms guaranteed to citizens.	- Responsibilities that citizens should follow.	- Guidelines for the government to promote social and economic welfare.
• Purpose	- Protect citizens' freedom, equality and dignity.	- Promote responsible citizenship and respect for the nation and others.	- Guide the State in making policies for the welfare of society.
• Who follows?	- Protected and enjoyed by citizens.	- Citizens are expected to follow them.	- Government and State authorities are guided by them.
• Nature	- Legally enforceable through courts.	- Generally not directly enforceable in courts.	- Generally not directly enforceable in courts.

In short: Fundamental Rights protect citizens, Fundamental Duties remind citizens of their responsibilities, and Directive Principles guide the government in promoting public welfare.

- **The Right to Education (Article 21A) was added in 2009, ensuring free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14. Discuss its significance.**

Ans. The Right to Education (Article 21A) was added to the Constitution in 2009. It provides free and compulsory education to children between 6 and 14 years of age.

It is significant because education:

- Provides children with opportunities to learn and develop.
- Promotes **equality of opportunity**.
- Helps children become **aware and responsible citizens**.
- Enables children to participate effectively in society and democracy.
- Helps reduce social and economic inequalities.

Thus, Article 21A strengthens democracy by ensuring that children have access to **basic education**, which is essential for their development and meaningful participation in society.

THINK ABOUT IT (Page - 142)

What do you think would happen if the same organ of the government made laws, implemented them, and enforced them? Share your thoughts with your classmates.

Ans. If the same organ of government made, implemented and enforced laws, it could lead to a concentration and misuse of power. There would be no proper system of checks and balances, which could weaken democracy and threaten citizens' rights. Therefore, the separation of powers among the legislature, executive and judiciary is essential for the effective functioning of democracy.

LET'S EXPLORE (Page - 145)

The first column of the table below lists some key features of democracy in India. Fill in the second column with suitable examples from your state, town, or village. One row has been completed for you.

Ans.

Feature of Democracy	Examples
• Popular Sovereignty	- Citizens vote to elect their representatives in Lok Sabha, State Assembly and local elections.
• Rule of Law	- Everyone, including government officials, is equal before the law and disputes are settled by courts.
• Separation of Powers	- The Legislature makes laws, the Executive implements them and the Judiciary interprets them.
• Fundamental Rights	- Citizens enjoy rights such as the Right to Equality, Right to Freedom and Right to Constitutional Remedies.
• Accountability and Transparency	- Parliamentary procedures such as Question Hour and the auditing of government accounts ensure accountability. Laws like the Right to Information provide transparency.
• Multi-Party System	- Several political parties contest elections, giving citizens different choices and representing diverse interests.

LET'S EXPLORE (Page - 148)

Select your ideal team from Fig. 6.5 and give reasons for your selection.

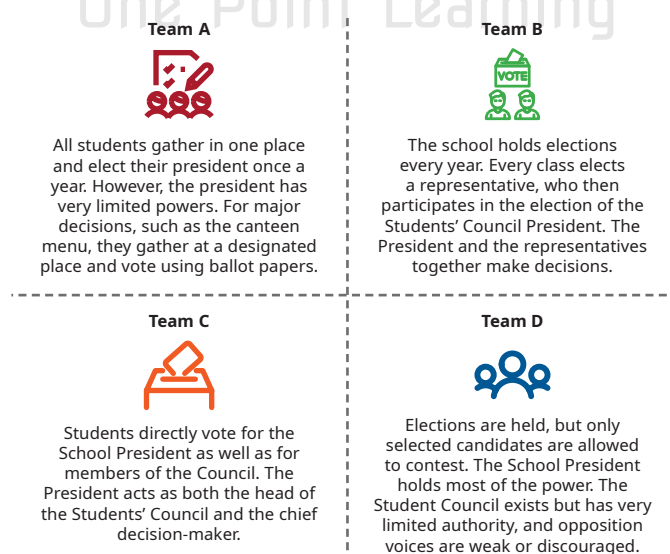


Fig. 6.5

Answer: I would select Team B as my ideal team because it follows the main principles of democracy. The school holds regular elections, every class participates in choosing representatives, and the President and representatives make decisions together. This ensures people's participation, representation and shared decision-making.

LET'S EXPLORE (Page - 149)

Work in pairs or small groups. Choose any two of India's neighbouring countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka) and find out the following:

- Does the country hold regular elections?
- Who chooses the Head of the Government?
- Is there more than one political party?
- How much freedom do citizens have to express their opinions and criticise the government?

How would you describe this system? Give reasons for your answer.

- Democratic or Partially democratic or Non-democratic

Ans. Ans. Comparison of Two Neighbouring Countries:

1. Bangladesh

- **Does the country hold regular elections?**
- Yes, Bangladesh has a parliamentary system and holds national elections.
- **Who chooses the Head of Government?**
- The Prime Minister is the Head of Government and is chosen through the parliamentary process.
- **Is there more than one political party?**
- Yes, Bangladesh has a multi-party system.
- **How much freedom do citizens have to express opinions and criticise the government?**
- Citizens have some freedom to express their views, but political and other pressures can limit freedom of expression.

Conclusion: Bangladesh can be described as partially democratic because it has elections and multiple political parties, but political rights and freedom of expression have faced significant challenges.

2. China

- **Does the country hold regular elections?**
- China does not hold direct and competitive elections for national leaders.
- **Who chooses the Head of Government?**
- The Premier is nominated by the State President and formally confirmed by the National People's Congress.
- **Is there more than one political party?**
- The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dominates political activity, and there is no meaningful political competition.
- **How much freedom do citizens have to express opinions and criticise the government?**
- Freedom to criticise the government is highly restricted, and criticism can lead to censorship or other action.

Conclusion: China can be described as non-democratic because there are no free and competitive national elections, meaningful opposition is not allowed, and freedom of political expression is restricted.

LET'S EXPLORE (Page - 152)

A democratic system seeks to promote participation, ensure fairness, limit the concentration of power, and resolve disagreements peacefully. Identify examples from the above case study that reflect these features.

Answer: The case study shows how democracy works at the grassroots level.

- **Participation:** In **Jethipura** Gram Panchayat, villagers participate through Gram Sabhas, Special Gram Sabhas and Mahila Sabhas. In **South Manubankul** Gram Panchayat, people, especially women, participate in community activities and development programmes.
- **Fairness:** The participation of women and marginalised sections ensures that different groups have a voice in decision-making.
- **Limiting concentration of power:** Decisions are taken collectively through local democratic institutions rather than by a single person.
- **Peaceful resolution:** Local issues related to health, sanitation, education and welfare are discussed and addressed through meetings and collective decision-making.

Thus, both Gram Panchayats reflect the principles of participation, inclusion, shared power and peaceful resolution of issues, which are essential features of democracy.

LET'S EXPLORE (Page - 153)

India continues to work towards more inclusive institutions. Discuss in class about the advantages of increased representation of women in the legislature.

Answer: Increased representation of women in the legislature makes democracy more inclusive, equal and representative. Women representatives can raise and address issues related to education, health, safety, employment and social welfare. Their greater participation also helps reduce gender inequality and ensures that laws and policies reflect the needs of all sections of society. It can also inspire more women and girls to participate in public life and leadership.

Thus, greater representation of women leads to more balanced and inclusive decision-making and strengthens democracy.

THINK ABOUT IT (Page - 154)

As we studied in earlier grades, the village serves as a unit of grassroots democracy in India, empowering rural communities to participate in decision-making processes. Many Indian leaders, such as Chaudhary Charan Singh and Babu Jagjivan Ram, who emerged from these rural backgrounds, advocated for the rights of the rural poor and other marginalised sections of society.

Explore and discuss the contributions of eminent Indian leaders who worked towards strengthening grassroots democracy.

Ans. Many Indian leaders worked towards strengthening grassroots democracy and empowering rural and marginalised communities.

- **Mahatma Gandhi** advocated Gram Swaraj, emphasising self-reliant and self-governing villages.
- **Chaudhary Charan Singh** strongly supported the interests of farmers and rural communities. He worked for land reforms and relief for rural debtors and believed in strengthening democracy at the grassroots level.
- **Babu Jagjivan Ram** dedicated his life to equality and social justice and worked for the rights and welfare of marginalised sections of society.
- **Balwantrai Mehta** helped strengthen local self-government through his committee's recommendations for the Panchayati Raj system and the decentralisation of power.

Thus, these leaders helped strengthen grassroots democracy by promoting local self-government, rural development, social justice, participation and decentralisation of power.

LET'S EXPLORE (Page - 155)

In small groups, identify two or three examples of information shared on social media that you believe may be misleading or false. Discuss what made you question their reliability and how such information can influence people's opinions. Reflect on why access to accurate and authentic information is important in a democracy.

Ans. Social media often contains information that may be misleading or false. For example:

- Fake messages about changes in exam dates or results without any official announcement.
- Unverified claims about health treatments or home remedies.
- False information about government schemes or benefits.

We can question such information when it does not come from a reliable or official source, provides no evidence, uses exaggerated language, or is widely forwarded without verification.

Misleading information can create confusion, fear and false beliefs. It can influence people's opinions and lead them to form incorrect or biased views about important issues.

Access to accurate and authentic information is essential in a democracy because it helps citizens make informed decisions, participate responsibly in elections and public discussions, and form independent opinions. It also helps prevent the spread of rumours and strengthens trust in democratic institutions.

THINK ABOUT IT (Page - 156)

Observe Fig 6.9 and explore the various other digital and non-digital ways through which you can participate in a democracy.

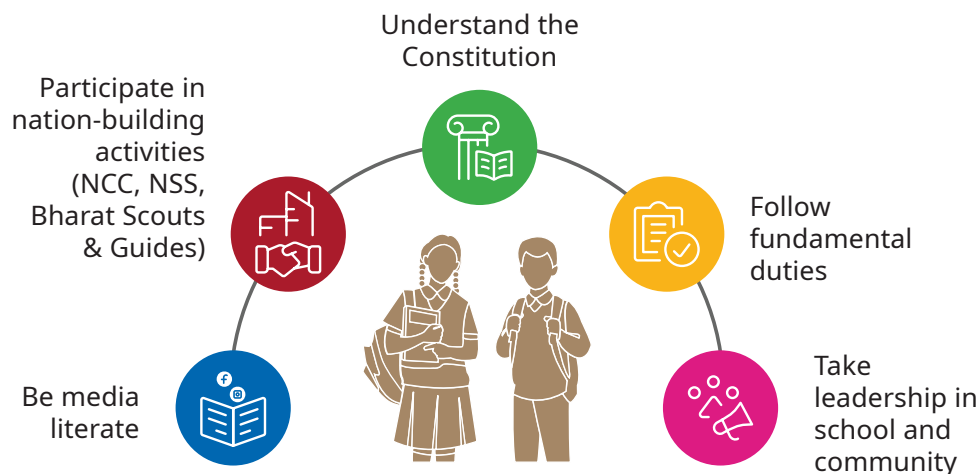


Fig. 6.9. Youth and Democracy

Ans. Young people can participate in a democracy in many digital and non-digital ways. They can:

- Participate in NCC, NSS, Bharat Scouts and Guides and other national activities.
- Understand the Constitution and follow democratic values.
- Be media literate and identify reliable information.
- Follow Fundamental Duties and act responsibly.
- Take leadership roles in school and community activities.
- Join community service and awareness programmes.
- Participate responsibly in online discussions and digital campaigns.
- Share accurate information and raise awareness about important social issues.

These activities help young people become informed, responsible and active citizens, strengthening democracy.

THINK, DISCUSS, ACT (Page - 157)

1. Think: How do your actions as a student contribute to your school community and to democracy in a larger context?

Ans. As a student, I contribute by following rules, respecting others, participating in school activities, expressing my views responsibly and working with others. These actions promote responsibility, cooperation and participation, which are important values of democracy.

2. Discuss: Talk to your classmates about a social or community issue that you care about. How can you, as a student, make a difference?

Ans. One issue I care about is cleanliness in the school and community. As a student, I can spread awareness, avoid littering, encourage proper waste disposal and participate in cleanliness drives. I can also motivate others to keep their surroundings clean.

3. Act: Choose one activity to fulfil your civic responsibility this month. Reflect on how your actions contribute to strengthening democracy and community spirit.

Ans. This month, I will participate in a community cleanliness drive. By working with others for a common goal, I can contribute to my community. Such activities promote cooperation, active participation, responsibility and community spirit, thereby strengthening democratic values.

Questions and activities (Page - 158-159)

1. Read the passage and answer the questions.

- A school cabinet was responsible for planning a Republic Day celebration, and members had different opinions on which activities to include. After a discussion, they decided to vote, and the activities supported by the majority were selected.

a. Which democratic values are reflected in this situation?

Ans. The democratic values reflected are participation, equality, discussion, majority rule, respect for different opinions, and collective decision-making.

b. How does voting help resolve differences of opinion?

Ans. Voting provides a fair method for choosing between different opinions. Each member gets an opportunity to express their choice, and the option receiving the majority of votes is accepted.

c. Why is the majority decision important in a democracy?

Ans. The majority decision is important because it reflects the choice of most participants while respecting the principle of equal participation.

d. Mention responsibilities of elected representatives after a decision is made.

Ans. Elected representatives should implement the decision fairly, remain accountable to the people, respect minority opinions, and work in the public interest.

2. How would democracy be affected if citizens stopped following laws and civic responsibilities? Explain with an example.

Ans. If citizens stop following laws and civic responsibilities, democracy becomes weak and disorderly. Public institutions may not function effectively, and people's rights and safety may be affected.

- **Example:** If people damage public property or spread false information, it can create disorder, increase conflicts, and weaken trust in democratic institutions.

3. Which situation best reflects the idea of popular sovereignty and why?

- a. A law is passed without public discussion
- b. Citizens vote to choose their representatives
- c. A court gives a final judgment
- d. A minister takes an independent decision

Ans. b. Citizens vote to choose their representatives.

- **Reason:** Popular sovereignty means that the ultimate source of power lies with the people. By voting, citizens choose their representatives and participate in forming the government.

4. The Rule of Law is violated when:

- a. Laws are applied equally to all
- b. Courts review government actions
- c. Powerful individuals are treated above the law
- d. Citizens challenge laws through legal means

Ans. c. Powerful individuals are treated above the law.

5. Why is the Rule of Law essential for protecting democracy?

Ans. The Rule of Law is essential for protecting democracy because it ensures that all individuals, including government officials, are equal before the law and no one is above the law. It prevents the misuse of power, protects the rights and freedoms of citizens, ensures fair treatment and justice, and makes the government accountable for its actions. Thus, it strengthens equality, justice, and trust in a democratic system.

6. Is voting alone enough to make a country democratic? Support your answer with examples from the chapter.

Ans. No, voting alone is not enough to make a country democratic. Democracy also requires rule of law, equality, fundamental rights, freedom of expression, accountability, transparency, separation of powers, and active participation of citizens.

- For example, citizens participate in democracy through Gram Sabhas, Panchayats, public consultations, civil society organisations, and the media. The Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 also strengthens democracy by enabling citizens to obtain information from government authorities and hold them accountable.

Thus, democracy is not limited to elections; it depends on active, informed and responsible citizens.

7. Social media allows people to express opinions freely.

a. How can this strengthen democracy?

Ans. Social media can strengthen democracy by:

- Giving citizens a platform to express their opinions and concerns.
- Spreading awareness about social and public issues.
- Encouraging debate, discussion and public participation.
- Helping citizens communicate with government authorities and raise issues.
- Giving people access to diverse viewpoints and information.

b. How can it weaken democracy if used irresponsibly?

Ans. It can weaken democracy when people:

- Spread fake news and misinformation.
- Create confusion and mislead people.
- Spread hatred, rumours and discrimination.
- Manipulate public opinion through false or biased information.
- Create conflicts and reduce trust in democratic institutions.

Conclusion: Social media strengthens democracy when it is used responsibly, respectfully and with verified information.

8. Write a paragraph on what democracy means to you as a young citizen.

Ans. To me, democracy means having the freedom and responsibility to participate in society and respect the rights and opinions of others. As a young citizen, I can contribute by being informed, following laws and rules, respecting diversity, using social media responsibly, taking part in school and community activities, and helping others. Democracy becomes stronger when citizens are aware, responsible and actively participate in public life.

9. Conduct a model parliament session or Gram Sabha in class on local issues – cleanliness, responsibilities towards public property, or school safety.

Ans.

Topic: Cleanliness and Responsibility towards Public Property

Participants:

- Sarpanch/Chairperson
- Gram Panchayat Members
- Students/Villagers
- Secretary
- Citizens

Issue for Discussion: The village has problems such as littering, improper waste disposal, dirty public places, and damage to public property.

Proceedings:

- **Chairperson:** Welcomes everyone and explains the purpose of the Gram Sabha.
- **Citizen 1:** Suggests placing dustbins at important public places.
- **Citizen 2:** Suggests regular cleaning of streets and drainage areas.
- **Citizen 3:** Requests awareness campaigns on waste segregation.
- **Panchayat Member:** Proposes that people should not damage public property such as streetlights, benches, roads and water facilities.
- **Secretary:** Records the suggestions and proposed actions.
- **Discussion:** Members discuss the advantages and difficulties of the proposals.
- **Voting:** The members vote on the proposed solutions.
- **Decision:** The majority agrees to:
 - a. Keep public places clean.
 - b. Use dustbins and avoid littering.
 - c. Separate wet and dry waste.
 - d. Protect public property.
 - e. Organise regular cleanliness drives.
 - f. Spread awareness among villagers.

Democratic Values Demonstrated: Participation, discussion, equality, majority decision-making, cooperation, accountability and civic responsibility.

Conclusion: The activity shows that democracy is not limited to elections. Citizens can participate directly in local decision-making and work together to solve community problems.

10. Choose any one democratic institution in India (such as Parliament, Election Commission, Judiciary, or Panchayat). Prepare a short note explaining:

- a. Its role in democracy
- b. How it ensures accountability and participation.

Ans.

Panchayat

a. Role in Democracy: The Panchayat is an important institution of grassroots democracy in India. It provides local self-government in villages and allows people to participate in decisions related to their community. It works on issues such as sanitation, roads, drinking water, education, health and village development. The Gram Sabha gives villagers an opportunity to discuss local problems and development plans.

b. How it ensures accountability and participation: The Panchayat ensures people's participation by involving villagers in Gram Sabha meetings and local decision-making. Representatives are elected by the people and are therefore accountable to them. People can question the Panchayat about its decisions and development work. Regular meetings, records and public discussions promote transparency and accountability.

- **Conclusion:** The Panchayat strengthens democracy by bringing government closer to the people and encouraging participation, responsibility and local decision-making.

Parliament

a. Role in Democracy: The Parliament of India is the central legislative institution of the country. It consists of the President, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Its main functions are to make laws, discuss national issues, approve government expenditure and represent the people. Members of Parliament are elected or otherwise constituted according to the Constitution.

b. How does it ensure accountability and participation?: Parliament ensures accountability by questioning the government, discussing its policies and examining its expenditure. The Question Hour allows Members of Parliament to ask questions to ministers. Parliamentary debates provide opportunities to discuss public issues and different viewpoints. Through elected representatives, citizens participate indirectly in national decision-making.

- **Conclusion:** Parliament strengthens democracy through representation, discussion, law-making, accountability and public participation.

11. What role does the Constitution play in strengthening democracy in India?

Ans. The Constitution is the foundation of Indian democracy. It:

- Establishes democratic institutions and processes.
- Guarantees Fundamental Rights.
- Provides for Universal Adult Franchise.
- Ensures equality before law.
- Establishes the Rule of Law.
- Provides for separation of powers.
- Defines the powers of different levels of government.
- Protects vulnerable sections of society.
- Provides constitutional remedies.
- Allows amendments to respond to changing needs while protecting its fundamental values.

Thus, the Constitution protects citizens' rights and provides the framework within which democracy functions.

12. What challenges do you think democracy in India faces today?

Ans. Indian democracy faces several challenges, including:

- **Misinformation and fake news** – False information can mislead citizens and influence public opinion.
- **Illiteracy and lack of awareness** – Limited awareness can reduce meaningful participation.
- **Poverty and inequality** – Unequal access to opportunities can affect participation.
- **Gender inequality** – Women may still face barriers to equal political representation.
- **Social discrimination** – Caste, gender, religious and other forms of discrimination can weaken equality.
- **Regionalism** – Excessive regional interests can sometimes create divisions.
- **Poor implementation of laws and policies** – This may reduce public trust in institutions.
- **Misuse of public resources and irresponsible behaviour** – Such actions can weaken democratic values.

Therefore, active citizenship, accurate information, equality, respect for laws and responsible participation are essential for strengthening Indian democracy.

One Point Learning