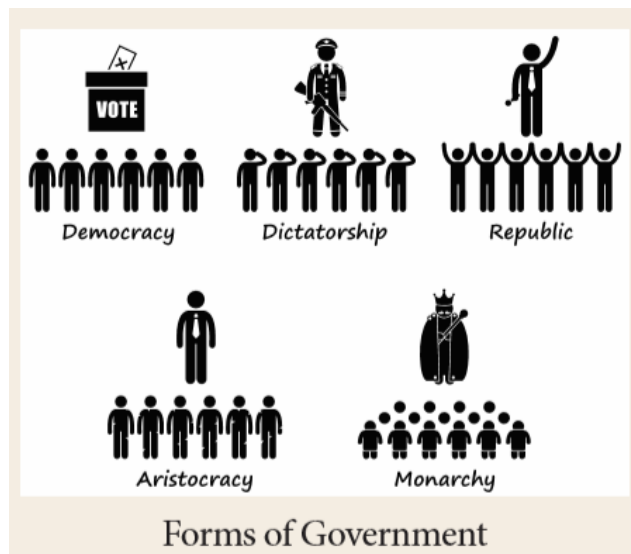


9th Social Science Lesson 5 Notes in English

5. Forms of Government and Democracy

Forms of Government

- The governance of nations differs significantly based on who has power.
- There are different forms of government: **aristocracy, monarchy, autocracy, oligarchy, theocracy, democracy and republic.**



Aristocracy

A form of government in which power is held by the nobility. Example: **United Kingdom, Spain.**

Monarchy

A system of government in which one person reigns supreme, usually a king or queen (constitutional monarchy). Example: **Bhutan, Oman, Qatar.**

Autocracy

A system of government by one person with absolute power. Example: **North Korea, Saudi Arabia.**

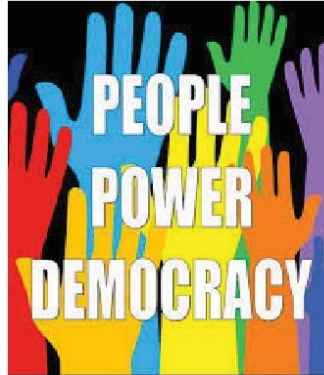
Oligarchy

A small group of people having control of a country or organisation. Example: **Former Soviet Union, China, Venezuela.**

Theocracy

A system of government in which religious doctrines form the basis of government headed by a priest who rules in the name of God or proclaims himself as a God. Example: **Vatican**.

Democracy



A system of government in which eligible members in the population **vote to elect their elected representatives**, and the party or individual who obtains the majority votes forms the government. Example: **India, USA, France**.

Republic

A state in which **supreme power is held by the people** and their elected representatives and which has an elected or nominated President rather than a monarch. Example: India, Australia.

What Is Democracy?

- Democracy is a form of government that allows people to choose their rulers.
- Only leaders elected by people should rule the country.
- People have the freedom to express views, freedom to organise and freedom to protest.

Meaning of Democracy

Democracy is a system of government in which the **supreme power is vested in the people of a country and people elect their representatives either directly or indirectly** through fair and free elections, which are usually held periodically.

Definition

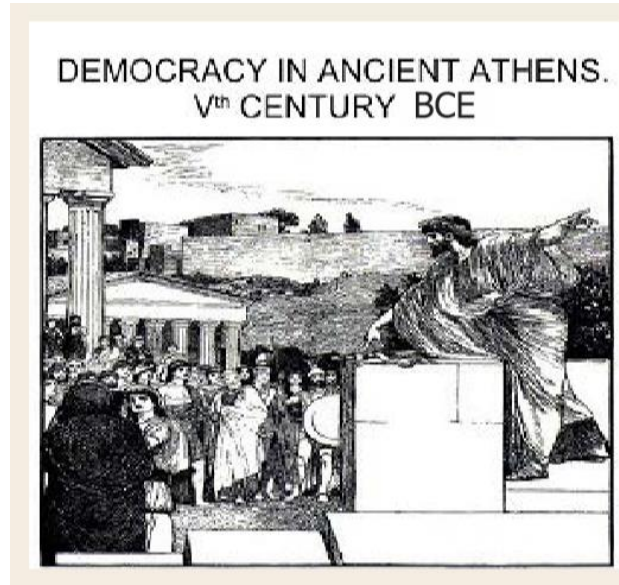
According to Mahatma Gandhi, **"True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village."**

Salient Features of Democracy

- Elected representatives of people and final decision-making power to the representatives.
- Free and fair elections

- Universal adult franchise with each vote having equal value.
- Fundamental rights and protection of individual freedom.

Evolution of Democracy



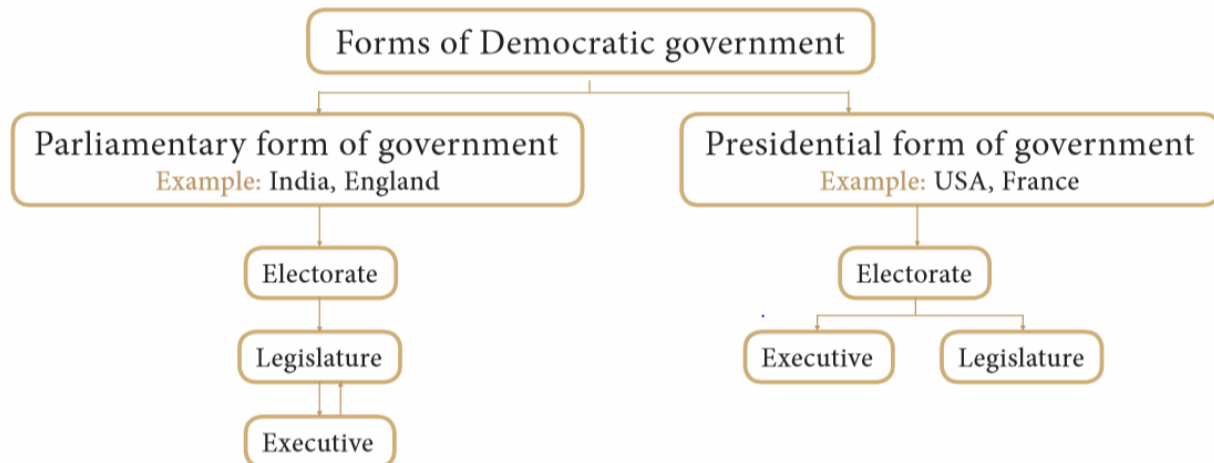
- Democracy began **2,500 years ago** in some of the city-states of ancient Greece. It is important to know that democratic institutions existed in India as early as the Vedic period.
- **Chanakya's Arthashastra** tells us that in ancient India, an autonomous village community was the basic unit of the local government.
- In ancient Tamil Nadu, **Kudavolai system** was a very notable and unique feature of the village administration of the **Cholas**.
- The evolution towards a democracy is represented by the following values: **freedom, equality, liberty, accountability, transparency and trust**.

Types of Democracy

There are two types of democracies:

1. Direct democracy
2. Indirect (representative) democracy

The types of democracy refers to the kind of government or social structures which allow people to participate equally.

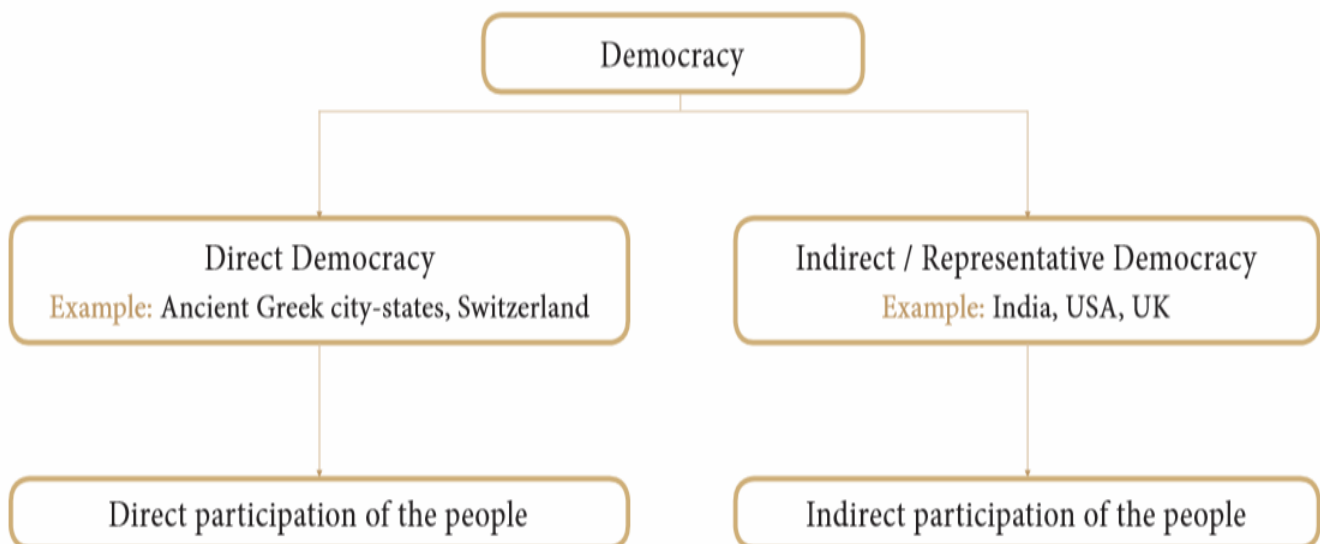


Direct Democracy

When the people themselves directly express their will on public affairs, the type of government is called pure or direct democracy. Example: **Ancient Greek city-states, Switzerland**

Indirect Democracy / Representative Democracy

When the people express their will on public affairs, through their elected representatives, the type of government is called indirect or representative democracy. Example: **The prevailing system of democracy in India, USA and UK**



Democracy in India

- India has a parliamentary form of democracy. The Indian Parliament comprises the elected representatives of people and makes the laws for the country.

- The participation of people in the decision making and the consent of citizens are the two important elements of the parliamentary form of government in India. India is the largest democratic country in the world.
- Democracy in India works on five basic principles. These are sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic.
- **Every person who is a citizen of India and who is not less than 18 years of age can exercise their right to vote in India, based on universal adult suffrage.**
- There is no discrimination based on a person's caste, creed, religion, region, gender and education when it comes to providing the right to vote.

Merits and Demerits of Democracy

Merits

- Responsible and accountable government
- Equality and fraternity
- Sense of responsibility among common people
- Local self-government
- Development and prosperity for all
- Popular sovereignty
- Sense of cooperation and fraternal feeling

Demerits

- Indirect or representative nature of democracy
- Lack of interest in democratic process and hence lower turnout in elections
- Instability in governance due to fractured mandate
- Delay in decision-making process.

Elections in India



1952 – India's First General Elections

- India has a **quasi-federal** government, with elected representatives at the federal, state and local levels.
- The general elections are conducted by the Election Commission of India. At the national level, **the President of India, appoints the Prime Minister**, who enjoys majority in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament of India.

Two Houses of Parliament	
Lok Sabha / Lower House / House of People	Rajya Sabha / Upper House / Council of States

- All members of the Lok Sabha are directly elected through general elections, which take place once in every **five years**, in normal circumstances.
- **Two Anglo Indian** members can be nominated by the President of India to the Lok Sabha.
- Members of the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Indian Parliament, are elected by an electoral college consisting of elected members of the legislative assemblies of the states and the Union Territories of India.
- The President of India nominates **12 members for their contributions to art, literature, science and social services**.

The First Elections in Democratic India

- General elections to the first Lok Sabha since independence were held in India between **25 October 1951 and 21 February 1952**.
- The Indian National Congress emerged victorious by winning **364 of the 489 seats**.
- Jawaharlal Nehru became the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the country.

Major challenges to Indian Democracy

- Democracy is the dominant form of government in the contemporary world. It has not faced a serious challenge or a rival so far.
- In the last hundred years, there has been an expansion of democracy all over the world.
- The various aspects of democracy and its challenges are:

1. Illiteracy
2. Poverty
3. Gender discrimination
4. Regionalism

5. Casteism, communalism and religious fundamentalism
6. Corruption
7. Criminalisation of politics
8. Political violence

Conditions for the Success of Democracy in India

- Empowerment of the poor and illiterates to enjoy the goodness of democracy.
- Willingness among the elected people not to misuse their powerful position and public wealth.
- Eradication of social evils and dangers from which democracy suffers.
- An impartial and efficient press to form public opinion.
- Presence of strong public opinion.
- Feeling of tolerance and communal harmony among the people.
- Awareness among the people of the fundamental rights that they are entitled to enjoy.
- Conscious check and vigilance on the working of the elected representatives. Powerful and responsible opposition.
- Though democracy in India has been appreciated worldwide for its working, there is still a lot of scope for improvement.
- The above-mentioned steps must be taken to ensure smooth functioning of democracy in the country. Indian democracy can be successful and vibrant only when its citizens imbibe and reflect in their behavior the basic democratic values like **equality, freedom, social justice, accountability** and respect for all.
- Their mindset, thinking and behavior are expected to be in tune with the essential conditions of democracy.
- They have to appreciate the opportunities for their desired roles like participation, making the system **accountable, fulfilling obligations, and playing proactive roles to actualize the goals of democracy.**

More to Know:

1. British India –General elections, 1920

General elections were held in British India in 1920 to elect members to the Imperial Legislative Council and the Provincial Councils. They were the first elections in the country's history.

2. The Parliament House in India was designed by the British architects **Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker in 1912-13** and construction began in 1921 and ended in 1927

3. Abraham Lincoln, one of the Presidents of USA, defines democracy as a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

4. The term 'republic' was first coined in **500 BCE in Rome**. It is derived from republica, a Latin word meaning public matter.
5. India became a Republic on 26 January 1950. It is governed in accordance with the Constitution adopted on 26 November 1949, which came into force on 26 January 1950.
6. The term 'democracy' is derived from two Greek words: demos meaning people and cratia meaning power. Thus, literally democracy means "the power of the people".