1. **What is democracy? What are its various characteristics?**

Democracy is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and the Representatives of the people, elected by the voters on the basis of a universal adult franchise.

The various characteristics of the democracy are:

* have formal constitution
* hold elections
* have parties
* guarantee right to citizens promotes equality among citizens
* enhances the dignity of the individual
* Improves the quality of decision making
* Provides a method to resolve conflict
* Allows room to correct mistakes
1. **What is meant by an accountable, responsive, and legitimate government? Explain.**

Accountable: A democratic government develops a mechanism for citizens to take part in the decision-making process. For this, free and fair elections, open debate on major policies, legislation, Right to information- such rights are given to the citizens.

Responsive: Democracy is a responsive government. It is responsive towards the needs and expectations of the citizens. It takes care of and makes policies for the welfare of the citizens.

Legitimate: A democratic government is a legitimate government. It is elected by the people and people wish to be ruled by the representatives elected by them.

OR

Democracy produces a government that is accountable to citizens and is responsive to their needs and expectations. It makes sure that people have the right to choose their rulers and if these representatives do not work according to the people, people have the right to remove them.

A democratic government is a legitimate government, as it is elected by citizens and enjoys the confidence and trust of the citizens. It follows procedures and its decisions are more acceptable to the people and are more effective. Regular elections are a key feature of the democratic government.

Democracy produces a responsive government where people start taking actions when the government becomes insensitive about their aspirations. People can force the government to respond to them through protests, campaigns and rallies

1. **Democracy means a delay in the decision-making. Which one is preferable-quick decision making process of dictatorship or slow decision-making process of democracy?**

Democracy involves debates and deliberations in the parliament before making a law. The views of all the members of parliament are taken into consideration before taking the final decision. Dictatorship means decisions taken by one person or one party. Different views of other members of the government or public are not considered. Democracy means delay in the decision-making process as the debates take a long time. It means that the implementation will also take time. Dictatorship means quick decisions. But those decisions are orders of the government and people are not allowed to disagree with them. Even citizens are not supposed to criticize the decisions made by the government. Democracy is better even if it takes more time in making the decisions. At least, the views of the citizens are considered and they are not ordered to just follow them. Individuals can disagree with the policies of the government and show their protest against the government.

1. **What are the conditions under which democracies accommodate social diversities?**

Democracies have a responsibility of creating a society that is safe and harmonious for its citizen. Differences among ethnic populations should be sorted out amicably in democracies. They should develop a procedure that would reduce tension in times of trouble. A society without conflict is not possible because it is made up of people from different walks of life and different backgrounds. Difference of opinion is bound to arise and it is the responsibility of the government to settle it amicably and without hardship to anyone.
Democracies should ensure that,

1. Different persons or groups are elected and form a government.
2. A majority community in terms of religion or race or linguistic group should not come to power.
3. Citizen should have a chance of being in the majority.
4. No one should be barred on the basis of birth from being in the majority for then democratic rule ceases to be accommodative for that person or group.
Democracy is simply not the rule of the majority. Majority has to work hand in hand with the minority as the government is represented by all sections of the people.
5. **Democratic government is a legitimate government?” Support the statement with arguments.**

A democratic government is said to be a legitimate government. It may be slow, less efficient, not always very responsive or clean, but a democratic government is peoples’ own government. That is why there is an overwhelming support for the idea of democracy all over the world. People here choose their own representatives and bring them to power.

They believe that democracy is suitable for their country as it is a legitimate government. Democracy’s ability to generate its own support is itself an outcome that cannot be ignored.

1. **Give arguments to support or oppose the following assertions:**

**(i) Industrialised countries can afford democracy but the poor need dictatorship to become rich.**

**(ii) Democracy can’t reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens.**

**(iii) The government in poor countries should spend less on poverty reduction, health, education and spend more on industries and infrastructure.**

**(iv) In a democracy, all citizens have one vote, which means that there is an absence of any domination and conflict.**

(i) This is a wrong statement as there is no relationship between democracy and the industrial growth of a nation. The economic development of the nation is dependent upon the resources, policies, and the government's openness to attract investments. If the dictatorship could have brought wealth to the nation, then many countries such as Nigeria and Myanmar, which are under dictatorial rule, would have become rich.

(ii) I agree with this statement that democracy cannot reduce income inequality as there are sectional communities that have different professions. Democracy brings social and political equality. People have the right to vote and access fundamental rights.

(iii) This is not a correct statement. For the development of a country, it is important to focus on **poverty reduction, health, education**. The country is made up of its people and it cannot grow until its population is literate and healthy. By increasing the literacy rates and improving the health standards of its people, the government can develop the required human resources which are essential for the industrial development of the country.

(iv) The statement is not completely true. Though it is right that in a democracy every citizen has the right to cast one vote but it does not mean that there is an absence of conflicts. The major group of the society may try to dominate the minority of society. This, in turn, will give rise to the conflicts in the society.

1. **Identify the challenges to democracy in the following descriptions. Also, suggest policy/institutional mechanism to deepen democracy in the given situations:**

**(i) Following a High Court directive, a temple in Orissa that had separate entry doors for Dalits and non-Dalits allowed entry for all from the same door.**

**(ii) A large number of farmers are committing suicide in different states of India.**

**(iii) Following allegation of killing of three civilians in Gandwara in a fake encounter by Jammu and Kashmir police, an enquiry has been ordered.**

(i) The biggest challenge, in this case, is to eliminate the inequalities that are based on casts. Legal action must be taken against such people who indulge in such practices of discrimination. They should be severely punished as our constitution declares any discrimination based on caste as a crime punishable by law.

(ii) A large number of farmers are committing suicides in different states of India because of the economic inequalities that still exist in our country. Farmers, sometimes, are unable to repay their loans due to uncertain losses in their crops that may have happened because of the weather conditions. In such a situation, farmers who get overburdened by the loan sometimes take severe steps like committing suicide. The government should provide these farmers with subsidies which will help them to earn profits and have a satisfactory level of earning.

(iii) Here, the challenge to democracy is to control the power of the police and other authoritative officials. Another major challenge is to preserve the people’s trust in government arms like the police.

1. **How can democracy accommodate the dignity of women and caste discrimination in one system?**

In case of the dignity of women, most societies across the world were historically male-dominated societies. Long struggles by women have created some sensitivity today that respect for and equal treatment of women. Respecting and accepting women as equal to men are necessary ingredients of a democratic society. Though practically it is not happening always, once the democratic principle is recognized, it becomes easier for women to wage a struggle against what is now unacceptable legally and morally.

Democracy in India has strengthened the claims of the disadvantaged and discriminated castes for equal status and equal opportunity. There are instances still of caste-based inequalities and atrocities, but these lack the moral and legal foundations. Perhaps it is the recognition that makes ordinary citizens values their democratic right.

1. **Democracies lead to peaceful and harmonious life among citizens. Support this statement with suitable arguments.**
2. Democracy develops a harmonious social life. Democracies accommodate various social divisions.
3. Democracies usually develop a procedure to conduct their competition. This reduces the possibility of these tensions becoming explosive or violent.
4. In democracies people learn to respect the differences and also evolve mechanism to negotiate the differences.
5. The majority always needs to work with the minority so that the government functions to represent the general view.
6. Democracy has ability to handle social differences, divisions and conflict.
7. **Do you believe that democracy can reduce economic disparities? Give reasons to support your answer.**

Ans. Yes, this is for the following reasons;

1. A democracy believes inequitable distribution and makes efforts to serve the poor at the root level.
2. A democracy believes in providing equal opportunity to all. Democratic governments have been supporting poor people through various schemes to uplift their economic level.
3. Poor people are being provided food and shelter at a subsidized rate and also free

medicines and treatment facilities.

1. They are being insured for any unhappenings so that their families do not get crushed.
2. They are being provided free education, reservation in educational institution and

government jobs, etc.

1. **How do we assess democracy’s outcome?**

1. Comparative analysis between democracy and dictatorship.

2. It provides accountable, responsible, representative and legitimate government.

3. It develops mechanism for the people’s participation in the decision making process.

4. It promotes economic development. At the same time democracy has the characteristics of economic inequality and disparities.

5. We can also assess its outcome on the basis of the way it accommodates the social diversities.

6. It also promotes dignity and freedom of the citizens

1. How do people take part in decision making in democracy? Explain.

Ans. 1. Decisions are made by the representatives elected by the people. These representatives represent the ideas and opinions of those voters who have elected them to take decisions on their behalf.

2. In a democracy, people want to know if a decision was taken through correct procedure, can find this out. In this way, they have some degree of control over the whole process of decision making.

3. In a democracy people have the right and mean to examine the process of decision making.

4. Sometimes important issues are put forward by the government for public debate before a decision is taken.

5. Demonstration, movement, pressure groups, etc. provide means in the hands of people to influence decision making.