



Introduction

This is a learning as well as an exam preparation video.

At the end of the video are practice assignments for you to attempt.

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Chapter 8: Challenges to Democracy

Chapter 8: Challenges to Democracy

Introduction

Democracy and Challenges:
Democracy is considered the best form of government. However, it faces many challenges. On a global level, democracy faces three challenges.



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Introduction

- **Foundational Challenge:** This challenge is faced by the people of non-democratic countries. This includes throwing off the dictatorial regime, to not allow the military to assume control and to establish a democratic and a sovereign state. Countries such as Syria and Iraq face this kind of challenge.

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- **Challenge of Expansion:** Several countries where democracy is already established face the challenge of expansion. Greater representation to local bodies and inclusion of women and minority groups in politics are challenges faced by democratic countries. Countries such as India and the USA face this kind of challenge.

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- **Challenge of Deepening of Democracy:** This challenge is faced by almost all democratic countries. The main challenges for the government are to strengthen democratic institutions and practices of democracy (e.g. to control the influence of rich and powerful people in deciding laws and policies).

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Political Reforms:

All proposals forwarded to overcome various challenges faced by democratic countries are known as 'democracy reforms' or 'political reforms'. Certain points need to be kept in mind while promulgating democracy reforms in the country.

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Political Reforms:

The points are described as such :

- Laws to curb bad or corrupt practices in the country are not always easy to promulgate. They may help the democratic spirit of the country to strengthen but cannot completely overcome the challenges posed to democracy. Any democratic reforms should be carried out mainly by political activists, movements, political parties and conscious citizens.

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Political Reforms:

- Before implementing democratic reforms, it is important to carefully study the impact of such reforms on society as a whole. Sometimes, the results of such reforms may be counterproductive. For example, many states have banned men and women who have more than two children from contesting panchayat elections. This has actually robbed the people of their right to contest elections. However, some laws or Acts may prove beneficial for democracy in the long run. For example, the Right to Information Act.

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Political Reforms:

- Democratic reforms should not only be brought about to strengthen governmental institutions but also to increase and improve the quality of political participation by citizens of the country.

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Redefining Democracy:

Democracy is the form of government in which people elect their own representatives. Apart from this, democracy has some more important features. These are

- All major decisions are taken by leaders elected by the people of the country.
- A fair opportunity should be provided to the people to change the current government.
- The above opportunity should be available to all people on an equal basis.

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Redefining Democracy:

- Right to vote and the principle of one vote having one value are important aspects of democracy.
- Holding of free and fair elections is an important condition required for the successful working of a democracy.
- Power sharing is an integral part of democracy.
- A majority community should not dominate the minorities. The voice of the latter should be heard and respected by the majority.
- It is important to eliminate gender, social, religious and caste differences in society.

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Summary:

Here we have summarised the points that you have learned in democratic government and politics.

- You have learned the democratic rights at length and understood that these rights are not limited to the right to vote, stand in elections and form political organisations. Also, you have read about some social and economic rights that democracy should offer to its citizens.

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Summary:

- You get to know that power-sharing is the spirit of democracy and how power-sharing between governments and social groups is necessary in a democracy.
- You saw how democracy cannot be the brute rule of the majority and how a respect for the minority voice is necessary for democracy.
- You have learned how eliminating discrimination based on caste, religion and gender is important in a democracy.
- Finally, in this chapter, you get to know about the outcomes of democracy.

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