

## 10<sup>th</sup> – Outcomes of Democracy



The most basic outcome of democracy is to provide political and social quality to the citizens. The democracy is expected to produce a government that works according to needs and expectations of citizens.

**Assessment of Outcomes Of Democracy:** - The expected and actual outcomes of democracy can be assessed by quality of government, economic well-being, inequality, social differences, freedom and dignity. After assessing outcomes of democracy it can be recognised that democracy is a form of government which can create conditions for achieving its goal. The citizens can take advantage of those conditions and achieve their goals. Democracy has been considered a better form of government than other alternatives because it

- promotes equality among citizens
- enhances the dignity of an individual
- improves the quality of decision-making provides a method to resolve conflicts
- allows room to correct mistakes

**Political Outcomes:** - The political outcomes of democracy are to produce accountable, responsive and legitimate government.

**Accountable and Responsive Government:** - In a democracy, accountable and responsive government is the one that is answerable to its citizens. It is responsible for making all decisions on behalf of its citizens and according to their needs and expectations. Before taking any decision, it is responsibility of the government to follow procedures. If the government has made wrong decision then it has to accept that and rectify it immediately.

In contrast, non-democratic governments do not bother about complains of citizens. They are also not worried about public opinions. It takes decision very fast and which are not acceptable to the citizens. Therefore, the outcome of democracy is to produce a government that follows procedure and is accountable to the people. The democratic government develops mechanisms for citizens to hold the government accountable and mechanism for citizens to take part in decision making.

**Transparency and Decision-Making:** - Transparency means openness, communication and accountability of the government. It means that government should be operated in such a way that it is easy for citizens to see what actions are performed while decision-making. Transparency is considered missing in non-democratic government. But in reality, democratic governments also do not have very good record to share information of decision-making with its citizens.

**Legitimate Government:** - In democracy, a legitimate government is a lawful government where all the laws of the country are equally applicable to all its citizens and people are governed without fear or favour as well. A legitimate government should be attentive to the need and demands of the people and people should be governed without fear or favour. A democratic government may be slow, less efficient and not always responsive a team but it is people's own, government. That's why it is certainly better and more legitimate form of government.

**Economic Outcomes:** - Economic growth, development, reduction of poverty and inequality are the prominent economic outcomes of democracy.

**Economic Growth and Development:** - It is expected from a government that it should bring economic growth and development. But many democracies of the world are unable to fulfil this expectation because of population size, global situation, cooperation from other countries, economic priorities, etc. There are some significant differences between rates of economic growth among countries under dictatorship and democracy.

**Reduction of Inequality and Poverty:** - Democracy is based on political equality and all individuals have equal right to choose their representative. But along with this (political equality) we can see growing economic inequality among the individuals. A small number of ultra-rich enjoy a highly disproportionate share of wealth and incomes. Due to this



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reason their share in total income of the country is increasing. On the other hand the income of poor is declining. Sometimes they (poor) find it difficult to meet their basic needs of life, such as food, clothing, house, education and health. Though poor constitute a large proportion of voters, yet the democratic governments are not keen to take up the question of poverty. The situation is much worse in some other countries. Even people of poor countries are now dependent

**Social Outcomes:** - The social outcomes of a democracy should be accommodating social diversity and providing dignity and freedom to the citizens.

**Accommodation of Social Diversity:** - Democracies usually develop a procedure to accommodate various social divisions. This reduces the possibility of social tensions becoming explosive or violent. No society can fully and permanently resolve conflicts among different groups. But democracy is best to handle social differences, divisions and conflicts.

A democracy must fulfil the following two conditions in order to achieve its goal

1. It is necessary to understand that democracy is not simply rule by majority opinion. The majority always needs to protect the interest of the minority, thus the government's function is regarded as representation of general interest.
2. It is also necessary that rule by majority does not become rule by majority community in terms of religion or race or linguistic group, etc. Rule by majority means that in case of every decision or in case of every election, different persons and groups may and can form a majority.

Thus, democracy remains democracy only as long as every citizen has a chance of being in majority at some point of time. If someone is barred from being in majority on the basis of birth, then the democratic rule ceases to be accommodative for that person or group. Non-democratic regimes often turn a blind eye to or suppress internal social differences.

**Dignity and Freedom of the Citizens:** - Democracy stands much superior to any other form of government for promoting dignity and freedom of the individual. Every individual wants to receive respect from fellow beings. The Passion for respect and freedom are the basis of democracy. Democracies throughout the world have recognised and achieved this (respect and freedom) in various degrees. But it is not a simple matter to recognize that all individuals are equal.

**Dignity and Freedom of Women:** - we take the matter of dignity of women, we may see that long struggles by women have created some sensitivity today that respect to and equal treatment of women are necessary ingredients of democratic societies. That does not mean that women are actually always treated with respect, But once the principle is recognised, it becomes easier for women to wage a struggle against what is now acceptable legally and morally. In a non-democratic set-up, this unacceptability would not have legal basis because the principle of individual freedom and dignity would not have the legal force.

**Dignity and Freedom of Disadvantaged Groups:** - Democracy in India has strengthened the claims of the disadvantaged and discriminated castes for equal status and equal opportunity. Still, there are instances of caste-based, inequalities and atrocities, but these lack the moral and legal foundations. It is the recognition that makes ordinary citizens value their democratic rights.

**Conclusion:** - The most distinctive feature about democracy is that, its examination never ends. As people get some benefits, they ask for more and want to make democracy even better. Thus, people always come up with more expectations and many complaints. It shows that people have developed awareness and the ability to expect and look critically at power holders. Democracy transforms people from the status of a subject into that of a citizen. Today most of the individuals believe that their 'precious' vote definitely makes a difference to the way the government is run to their own self-interest.

