

What is Democracy? Why Democracy? | Easy Notes

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Introduction:

In civics, we generally study about the political system, institutions, people's rights and freedom. Similarly, Last year, you learnt about the basic principles in the preamble, Laws and Indian Constitution. So you would have an idea what forces help in running the government. This year, you have to understand what kind of government works in different places. Also, the meaning and significance of the most effective form of government.

What is Democracy?

- Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people.
- It has several minimal **features**:
 1. **Decision making power:** The *decision making power* rests in the hands of those leader who are elected by the people of the country.
 2. **Different choices and fair opportunity:** Elections in a democratic country are conducted in a *free and fair* manner. Whereby, leaders frequently win or lose the votes.
 3. **Choice on equal basis:** In democracy, each adult citizen enjoys voting rights which are based on the principle of *one vote, one value*.
 4. **Rule of Law:** Lastly, a democratic government *rules within the limits* set by constitutional law and citizens' rights.
- To understand these features better, let's read some **examples of different countries**:-

Pakistan:

- In October 1999, **General Pervez Musharraf** led a military coup and overthrew a democratically elected government.
- After that, he declared himself the *Chief Executive* of the country. (Remember, people did not elect him.) Later, he changed his designation to President.
- In 2002, he held a referendum that granted him a five year extension. However, according to human rights organizations and democracy activists, the referendum was based on malpractices and fraud.
- In the same year, he issued **Legal Framework Order**.
 - This order made such amendments in the constitution that placed the military officers on the top and gave the President the right to dismiss the national and provincial assemblies.
 - Moreover, the elected representatives had limited powers and they could not take final decision.

Thus, we can say, there was an absence of the first feature of democracy.

China: