Chapter 9: From the Rulers to the Ruled: Types of Governments

Questions — Questions and Activities

Q1 Write names of the various types of government that you have learnt in the chapter.

SOLUTION

The chapter describes the following types of government:

Democratic governments:

1. Direct democracy — citizens participate directly in all decisions (e.g., Switzerland in limited form).
2. Representative democracy — people elect representatives; further divided into:
   a. Parliamentary democracy (e.g., India, UK, Australia) — executive is part of and accountable to the legislature.
   b. Presidential democracy (e.g., USA, South Korea) — executive (president) is elected separately and is independent of the legislature.

Other forms of government:

3. Monarchy — ruled by a hereditary king or queen (monarch). Two types:
   a. Absolute monarchy (e.g., Saudi Arabia) — monarch holds all power.
   b. Constitutional monarchy (e.g., United Kingdom) — monarch has only nominal power; real power rests with elected parliament and prime minister.
4. Theocracy — governed by religious law and religious leaders (e.g., Iran, Afghanistan, Vatican City).
5. Dictatorship — one person or small group holds absolute power without constitutional limits (e.g., Hitler's Germany, Idi Amin's Uganda, North Korea).
6. Oligarchy — a small, powerful, usually wealthy group makes all important decisions (seen in some ancient Greek city-states; signs observed in some modern democracies too).

Answer: Democracy (direct and representative — parliamentary and presidential), Monarchy (absolute and constitutional), Theocracy, Dictatorship, and Oligarchy.

Q2 Which type of Government does India have? And why is that called that type?

SOLUTION

India has a parliamentary democracy.

It is called a parliamentary democracy because:
1. The source of authority is the people — citizens elect their representatives through universal adult franchise.
2. The elected members form the legislature (Parliament), which consists of two houses — the Lok Sabha (Lower House) and the Rajya Sabha (Upper House).
3. The executive — the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers — are also members of Parliament (the legislature). This distinguishes parliamentary democracy from presidential democracy, where the executive is separate.
4. The Council of Ministers is accountable to the legislature. It can continue in office only as long as it retains the confidence of the Lok Sabha.
5. The judiciary is independent of both the executive and the legislature (separation of powers).

In short, India is called a parliamentary democracy because the executive is drawn from and answerable to the elected legislature, and power ultimately comes from the people through elections.

Answer: India has a parliamentary democracy — the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers are members of Parliament and remain accountable to the Lok Sabha (elected lower house), with an independent judiciary and power sourced from the people through elections.

Q3 You read that an independent judiciary is present in all types of democracies. State any three reasons why you think it is important for the judiciary to be independent.

SOLUTION

The chapter states that an independent judiciary ensures that every citizen's fundamental rights are protected and that laws are followed by citizens and all organs of government.

Three reasons why an independent judiciary is important:

1. Protection of fundamental rights: An independent judiciary can strike down actions by the executive or laws made by the legislature that violate citizens' fundamental rights — such as the right to equality, freedom of speech, and

protection against exploitation. If the judiciary were controlled by the executive or legislature, it could not protect citizens from abuses of power.

2. Upholding the rule of law and separation of powers: In a democracy, the three organs — legislature, executive, and judiciary — must work independently and not interfere in each other's functions. An independent judiciary ensures that neither the executive nor the legislature acts beyond its constitutional limits. Without independence, the judiciary could become a tool of the powerful rather than a guardian of the constitution.

3. Ensuring equality before law: One of the fundamental principles of democracy is that all citizens are treated equally before the law — regardless of their wealth, position, or power. An independent judiciary can hold even the government accountable and ensure that laws are applied fairly to all, including those in power. A judiciary that is not independent could be pressured to favour the powerful and discriminate against ordinary citizens.

Answer: An independent judiciary is important because: (1) it protects citizens' fundamental rights from violations by the state; (2) it upholds separation of powers and prevents any organ from exceeding its authority; and (3) it ensures equal treatment before the law for all citizens, including holding the government accountable.

Q4 Do you think democratic government is better than other forms of government? Why?

SOLUTION

Based on the chapter, democratic government is generally considered better than other forms for the following reasons:

1. Power rests with the people: In a democracy, the source of authority is the people themselves. Citizens elect their representatives through universal adult franchise, which means every adult has an equal say in choosing the government — regardless of wealth, religion, or birth.

2. Accountability and the right to change government: The government is accountable to the people. If it does not perform its functions properly, citizens can change their representatives through elections. This creates a constant check on what the government does, which is absent in dictatorships or absolute monarchies.

3. Protection of rights and freedoms: A democracy guarantees fundamental rights — such as equality before law, freedom of speech and expression, and protection against exploitation. Citizens can lead their everyday lives as they choose (in dress, belief, expression) as long as they do not harm others' rights.

4. Wellbeing of all citizens: Democratic values and ideals focus on the welfare and prosperity of all people, not just a ruling family or small group. An independent judiciary ensures laws are applied equally.

5. Contrast with other forms: Table 9.2 in the chapter shows that dictatorship, absolute monarchy, and oligarchy lack universal adult franchise, equality, freedom of speech, separation of powers, and focus on the wellbeing of all — all of which democracy provides.

However, the chapter also cautions that even democracies face challenges such as corruption, wealth disparity, erosion of judicial independence, and manipulation of information. Therefore, citizens must remain vigilant to keep democracy true to its ideals.

Answer: Yes, democracy is generally better because it places power in the hands of all people through free elections, guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, ensures the government is accountable and can be changed, and works for the wellbeing of all citizens — benefits absent in dictatorships, absolute monarchies, theocracies, and oligarchies.

Q5 These are some practices in a few different countries. Match the practice with the type of government:
I. All citizens are treated equally before law
II. The government refers to the religious leader for each and every decision it takes.
III. After the queen's death, her son became the new king.
IV. The ruler is not bound to follow any Constitution. He makes all the decisions as per his choice.

SOLUTION

Matching each practice with its type of government, using chapter definitions:

I. 'All citizens are treated equally before law' → Democracy

Equality before law is a fundamental principle of democracy stated in the chapter.

II. 'The government refers to the religious leader for each and every decision it takes.' → Theocracy

A theocracy is governed by religious law and religious leaders; the chapter gives Iran as an example where the Supreme Leader (a religious cleric) holds ultimate authority.

III. 'After the queen's death, her son became the new king.' → Monarchy

Monarchies are hereditary — the chapter states that the eldest son of the ruling monarch typically becomes the next king.

IV. 'The ruler is not bound to follow any Constitution. He makes all the decisions as per his choice.' → Dictatorship

A dictatorship is defined in the chapter as a form where one person or small group possesses absolute power with no limits imposed by a constitution or law.

Note: The table in the question lists the government types in the order Dictatorship / Monarchy / Democracy / Theocracy — so the correct matching by position is: I → Democracy, II → Theocracy, III → Monarchy, IV → Dictatorship.

Answer: I → Democracy; II → Theocracy; III → Monarchy; IV → Dictatorship.

Q6 Below is a list of countries. Find out the types of government these countries have:

1. Bhutan
2. Nepal
3. Bangladesh
4. South Africa
5. Brazil

SOLUTION

This is a research activity. The chapter does not state the government type for these five countries. To find out, apply the classification framework taught in the chapter:

Step 1 — Identify the source of authority. Ask: Who decides 'this is the government'? If the people elect their government, it is a democracy. If rule passes by hereditary succession within a royal family, it is a monarchy. If religious law and religious leaders hold ultimate authority, it is a theocracy. If one person or a small group holds absolute power without constitutional limits, it is a dictatorship or oligarchy.

Step 2 — Identify the type more precisely using the chapter's sub-categories:

- Democracy: Is it direct (all citizens decide) or representative (elected representatives govern)?
- If representative: Is the executive part of and accountable to the legislature (parliamentary democracy) or elected separately and independent of it (presidential democracy)?
- Monarchy: Does the monarch hold all power with no constitutional limits (absolute monarchy), or does an elected parliament hold real power with the monarch in a ceremonial role (constitutional monarchy)?

Step 3 — Check whether the country has a constitution, free elections, an independent judiciary, and fundamental rights for citizens — these are markers of a democracy as described in the chapter.

For each country in the list, use these questions to classify its government correctly. Note that Table 9.1 in the chapter already shows India (parliamentary), USA (presidential), and South Korea (presidential) as reference examples of how different democracies are structured.

Answer: This is a research activity — the chapter provides the framework, not the per-country answers. Classify each country by asking: Who is the source of authority (people / hereditary monarch / religious leader / absolute ruler)? Then identify whether it is a democracy (parliamentary or presidential), monarchy (absolute or constitutional), theocracy, or dictatorship, using the definitions and markers taught in the chapter.

Q7 What are possible hurdles in a democracy in achieving its values and ideals? How can they be overcome?

SOLUTION

The chapter explicitly lists the following hurdles that democracies face in achieving their values and ideals:

Hurdles mentioned in the chapter:

1. Corruption — corrupt practices by officials and politicians undermine fair governance and erode public trust.
2. Wealth disparity — large gaps between rich and poor can prevent equal access to opportunities and allow the wealthy to exert disproportionate influence.
3. Excessive control by a few over democratic institutions — when a small group

of politicians or wealthy businesspeople (as in an oligarchy) dominates decision-making, the voice of ordinary citizens is weakened.
4. Erosion of the judiciary's independence — if the judiciary loses its independence, laws can be applied unequally and citizens' fundamental rights may not be protected.
5. Manipulation of information channels — if information is controlled or distorted, citizens cannot make well-informed choices, which weakens the foundations of democracy.

How these hurdles can be overcome:
The chapter asks citizens to remain vigilant to minimise these issues. Based on the democratic principles in the chapter, the following approaches are consistent:
1. Active citizen participation — citizens must remain engaged in democratic processes: voting, holding representatives accountable, and participating in public discourse.
2. Protecting and strengthening an independent judiciary so that the rule of law and fundamental rights are upheld for all.
3. Ensuring a free press and access to accurate information so that citizens can make informed decisions.
4. Promoting equality and education so that all citizens — not just the wealthy — can meaningfully participate in democracy.
5. Strong institutions with separation of powers — the legislature, executive, and judiciary must remain independent and check each other's power.

Answer: Hurdles include corruption, wealth disparity, excessive control by a few, erosion of judicial independence, and manipulation of information. They can be overcome through vigilant citizen participation, strengthening independent institutions, ensuring a free press, promoting equality, and maintaining separation of powers.

Q8 Democracy is different from monarchy and dictatorship. Explain.

SOLUTION

The chapter explains how democracy differs from monarchy and dictatorship across several key dimensions:

1. Source of authority and power:
   - Democracy: Power comes from the people. Citizens are the source of

authority and choose their government through free and fair elections (universal adult franchise).

- Monarchy: Power comes from hereditary succession — the monarch (king or queen) inherits the position within a royal family. In an absolute monarchy, the king may even claim divine authority.

- Dictatorship: Power is seized by one person or a small group, often by force, without the consent of the people.

2. How the government is formed:

- Democracy: Through regular, free elections at fixed intervals. In India, general elections happen every five years.

- Monarchy: Through hereditary succession — the eldest son of the ruling monarch typically becomes the next ruler. The people have no role in choosing the monarch.

- Dictatorship: Through seizure of power, passing laws to eliminate opposition (e.g., Hitler became a dictator after being appointed Chancellor and passing laws giving himself full power).

3. Limits on power (constitution and rule of law):

- Democracy: The government must follow the constitution. The judiciary is independent and ensures that all — including the government — obey the law.

- Absolute Monarchy: The monarch is not bound by any constitution. He/she makes all the laws and decisions.

- Dictatorship: The ruler has absolute power with no constitutional limits and is not answerable to the people.

4. Rights of citizens:

- Democracy: Citizens have fundamental rights — equality before law, freedom of speech and expression, right against exploitation.

- Monarchy/Dictatorship: Citizens may have few or no rights; in a dictatorship especially, people can be forced to follow rules on even the smallest aspects of their lives (as seen in the story of Shane in North Korea).

5. Accountability:

- Democracy: The government is accountable to the people. If it fails, citizens can vote it out at the next election.

- Monarchy/Dictatorship: The ruler is not accountable to the people. There is no mechanism for citizens to remove or change the ruler through peaceful, democratic means.

In summary, democracy gives power to all citizens equally, operates under constitutional limits, protects fundamental rights, and keeps the government accountable through elections. Monarchy and dictatorship concentrate power in one person or family, operate without accountability to citizens, and generally deny the people equal rights and freedoms.

Answer: Democracy differs from monarchy and dictatorship in that: (1) power comes from the people through free elections (not hereditary succession or seizure); (2) the government is bound by a constitution and an independent judiciary; (3) citizens have guaranteed fundamental rights and freedoms; and (4) the government is accountable to citizens and can be changed through elections — none of which apply in monarchies or dictatorships.