Chapter 6: Democracy

Questions — Questions and activities

Q1 Read the passage and answer the questions that follow:
A school cabinet was responsible for planning a Republic Day celebration, and members had different opinions on which activities to include. After a discussion, they decided to vote, and the activities supported by the majority were selected.
a. Which democratic values are reflected in this situation?
b. How does voting help resolve differences of opinion?
c. Why is the majority decision important in a democracy?
d. Mention responsibilities of elected representatives after a decision is made.

SOLUTION

a. The situation reflects the democratic values of free discussion, equality of voice, collective decision-making, and majority rule. Each member was heard before voting, showing respect for diverse opinions and participatory decision-making.

b. Voting provides a peaceful, fair, and transparent method to resolve differences. When individuals hold varying views, a vote counts each person's preference equally and produces a clear outcome accepted by all, avoiding conflict and ensuring no single person imposes their will on others.

c. The majority decision is important because democracy functions on the principle that the will of the greater number guides collective action. It ensures decisions are broadly acceptable, prevents minority domination, and gives legitimacy to the outcome while still respecting minority viewpoints.

d. After a decision is made, elected representatives are responsible for implementing it faithfully, keeping all members informed about progress, ensuring that the decision benefits everyone, remaining accountable for outcomes, and being open to feedback or review if the decision does not serve its intended purpose.

Answer: (a) Discussion, equality, voting, and majority rule. (b) Voting counts each voice equally and produces a peacefully accepted outcome. (c) It gives decisions legitimacy and prevents any one person from dominating. (d) Representatives must implement the decision, keep members informed, ensure accountability, and remain open to review.

Q2 How would democracy be affected if citizens stopped following laws and civic responsibilities? Explain with an example.

SOLUTION

Democracy depends not only on institutions and elections but also on citizens fulfilling their civic responsibilities. The chapter states that 'democracy is not limited to elections—it is reflected in everyday behaviour, decision-making, and civic responsibility.'

If citizens stopped following laws, the Rule of Law would break down. Without the Rule of Law,

powerful individuals could act above the law, courts could not resolve disputes fairly, and personal influence or force would replace legal procedures. Trust between citizens and the government would erode.

For example, if citizens damage public property, spread misinformation on social media, or ignore public rules, democratic values are weakened. The chapter specifically notes that 'actions such as damaging public property, spreading misinformation, or violating public rules weaken democratic values.' Similarly, 'indifference towards public issues can adversely affect the health of a democracy.' An uninformed or irresponsible citizenry cannot hold governments accountable, making democracy hollow in practice.

Answer: Without civic responsibility and law-abiding behaviour, the Rule of Law breaks down, trust in institutions erodes, and democracy weakens. For example, spreading misinformation or damaging public property undermines democratic values, as the chapter notes that democracy is reflected in everyday behaviour, not elections alone.

Q3 Which situation best reflects the idea of popular sovereignty and why?

a. A law is passed without public discussion
b. Citizens vote to choose their representatives
c. A court gives a final judgment
d. A minister takes an independent decision

SOLUTION

The correct answer is (b) Citizens vote to choose their representatives.

Popular sovereignty means that the ultimate source of power lies with the people. The chapter states: 'the idea of popular sovereignty means that the state derives its authority from the people.' Citizens exercising their right to vote directly expresses this principle — through Universal Adult Franchise, every citizen aged 18 years and above chooses the government through free and fair elections.

Option (a) — passing a law without public discussion — bypasses people's participation. Option (c) — a court judgment — reflects the Rule of Law, not popular sovereignty directly. Option (d) — a minister's independent decision — concentrates power in one person rather than deriving it from the people.

Answer: (b) Citizens vote to choose their representatives. This best reflects popular sovereignty because the chapter defines it as the state deriving its authority from the people through free and fair elections and Universal Adult Franchise.

Q4 The Rule of Law is violated when:

a. Laws are applied equally to all

b. Courts review government actions

c. Powerful individuals are treated above the law

d. Citizens challenge laws through legal means

SOLUTION

The correct answer is (c) Powerful individuals are treated above the law.

The chapter states that the Rule of Law 'ensures equality before the law and equal protection of the law, and establishes that no one is above the law.' It further explains that disputes are resolved 'through procedures established by law, not by force or personal influence. This prevents misuse of power and protects people's rights.'

When powerful individuals receive special treatment that places them above the law, this directly violates the foundational principle of the Rule of Law. Options (a), (b), and (d) all describe lawful, democratic practices that uphold rather than violate the Rule of Law.

Answer: (c) Powerful individuals are treated above the law. The Rule of Law establishes that no one is above the law and that equality before the law applies to all, regardless of status or influence.

Q5 Why is the Rule of Law essential for protecting democracy?

SOLUTION

The Rule of Law is essential for democracy because it ensures that no person or institution — not even the government itself — is above the law. The chapter explains that it 'ensures equality before the law and equal protection of the law.' When disputes arise, they are resolved through legal procedures rather than by force or personal influence, preventing misuse of power.

Without the Rule of Law, the powerful could exploit their position to undermine citizens' rights, making elections and constitutional guarantees meaningless. The chapter notes that the Rule of Law 'promotes justice, accountability, and trust in the democratic system.' Citizens can only trust democratic institutions when they know that laws apply equally to everyone.

The judiciary plays a key role here: it interprets laws, reviews government actions, and can declare laws unconstitutional. Mechanisms like Public Interest Litigation (PIL) further extend access to justice. Together, these ensure that democracy is not just a formal procedure but a living system of rights and accountability.

Answer: The Rule of Law is essential because it ensures no one is above the law, prevents misuse of power, and guarantees equal protection for all citizens. It promotes justice, accountability, and public trust in democratic institutions, making constitutional rights meaningful in practice.

Q6 Is voting alone enough to make a country democratic? Support your answer with examples from the chapter.

SOLUTION

Voting alone is not enough to make a country democratic. While elections are a necessary feature of democracy, the chapter makes clear that democracy requires much more.

The chapter states that 'democracy is not limited to elections — it is reflected in everyday behaviour, decision-making, and civic responsibility.' India's democracy extends well beyond voting to include the Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights, Separation of Powers, accountability mechanisms, and active citizen participation at grassroots levels.

The chapter provides the example of the school teams (Fig. 6.5): Team D holds elections but only allows selected candidates and keeps opposition voices weak, showing that elections without genuine freedom do not constitute a full democracy. India's multi-party system, the RTI Act (which allows citizens to seek government information), Panchayati Raj institutions, and mechanisms like PIL all ensure democracy functions beyond polling day.

The chapter also notes that the Emergency of 1975–77 demonstrated how even a country with regular elections can have its democratic institutions severely strained when Fundamental Rights are suspended and the press is censored. This shows that voting needs to be accompanied by civil liberties, rule of law, and active citizenship to produce genuine democracy.

Answer: No, voting alone is not enough. The chapter shows that democracy also requires the Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights, accountability mechanisms (like RTI), grassroots participation (Panchayati Raj), and civic responsibility. The 1975–77 Emergency, when elections existed but rights were suspended, illustrates that voting without civil liberties does not ensure genuine democracy.

Q7 Social media allows people to express opinions freely.
a. How can this strengthen democracy?
b. How can it weaken democracy if used irresponsibly?

SOLUTION

a. Social media can strengthen democracy by making it easier for citizens to stay informed, discuss public issues, and hold governments accountable. The chapter describes media as the 'fourth pillar of democracy' — it raises public concerns and contributes to their resolution. Social media extends this role by giving voice to ordinary citizens across regions, enabling rapid sharing of information and enabling collective engagement in democratic debates. It can also be used to report government failures and mobilise citizens for civic action, deepening participatory democracy beyond election day.

b. If used irresponsibly, social media can seriously weaken democracy. The chapter warns that 'the spread of fake news, especially through social media and other digital platforms, has emerged as a major concern. Such misinformation can influence public opinion, create

confusion, and sometimes even lead to conflict.' False information erodes the informed citizenry that democracy depends on. When citizens cannot distinguish credible information from misinformation, they cannot vote wisely, cannot hold governments accountable, and can be manipulated into supporting harmful agendas. The chapter also notes that 'spreading misinformation... weakens democratic values.'

Answer: (a) Social media strengthens democracy by informing citizens, enabling public debate, and giving voice to diverse opinions — extending the media's role as the 'fourth pillar of democracy.' (b) Used irresponsibly, it spreads fake news that influences public opinion, creates confusion, and may lead to conflict, as the chapter warns — weakening the informed citizenry democracy requires.

Q8 Write a paragraph on what democracy means to you as a young citizen.

SOLUTION

This is a personal reflection question. The following is a model answer based on the chapter's concepts.

Model answer: To me as a young citizen, democracy means more than casting a vote when I turn 18. It means living in a society where every person — regardless of caste, gender, religion, or economic background — is treated equally under the law and has the freedom to express their views. It means that no leader or institution is above the Constitution, and that I have the right to seek information, question decisions, and participate in shaping my community. The chapter reminds me that democracy is 'reflected in everyday behaviour' — in respecting others' rights, using social media responsibly, and fulfilling civic duties. As a student, I can contribute by staying informed, being media literate, participating in school governance, and taking up community service through activities like NSS or NCC. Democracy is a living responsibility, not just a system I inherit.

Answer: Model: Democracy means equal treatment under law, freedom of expression, and the right to participate in governance regardless of background. It is reflected in everyday civic behaviour, not just elections. As a young citizen, I can contribute by staying informed, using media responsibly, and participating in school and community life.

Q9 Conduct a model parliament session or Gram Sabha in class on local issues—cleanliness, responsibilities towards public property, or school safety.

SOLUTION

This is a hands-on classroom activity. Here is guidance on what to do:

For a Model Gram Sabha: Assign roles — Sarpanch (chairperson), Ward Members, and citizens (the rest of the class). Select a local issue (e.g., cleanliness). Each 'citizen' may raise a concern; Ward Members respond; the Sarpanch maintains order and guides discussion toward a resolution. Record decisions as resolutions.

For a Model Parliament Session: Assign roles — Speaker, ruling party members, opposition members, and the treasury benches. Introduce a 'bill' on the chosen issue (e.g., school safety rules). Allow debate — ruling side argues for, opposition argues against or suggests amendments. Hold a voice vote to pass or reject the bill.

What to include: opening the session with a call to order; presenting the issue with facts; open debate where every member may speak; a vote on the resolution; recording the majority decision; and a closing address by the chairperson. Connect the activity to the chapter's principles — popular sovereignty, majority decision, accountability, and respectful discussion.

Answer: Guidance: Assign roles (Sarpanch/Speaker, members, citizens), select a local issue, open with a formal call to order, allow structured debate with every member speaking, hold a vote, record the majority decision, and close the session. Link each step to the chapter's democratic principles — sovereignty, majority rule, accountability, and free discussion.

Q10 Choose any one democratic institution in India (such as Parliament, Election Commission, Judiciary, or Panchayat). Prepare a short note explaining:
a. Its role in democracy
b. How it ensures accountability and participation.

SOLUTION

Institution chosen: Election Commission of India

a. Role in democracy: The Election Commission of India (ECI) is the constitutional body responsible for supervising, directing, and controlling elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of President and Vice-President. It ensures that elections are free, fair, and conducted on the principle of Universal Adult Franchise — the right of every citizen aged 18 and above to vote through a secret ballot. The chapter places the ECI under the 'Electoral Process' in the democratic institutions table, associating it with the values of 'Participation' and 'Equality.'

b. Accountability and participation: The ECI ensures accountability by enforcing the Model Code of Conduct during elections, preventing candidates and parties from misusing government resources. It ensures participation by setting up over one million polling stations — including in remote mountains, forests, deserts, and islands — so every eligible citizen can vote. Election symbols are used so that citizens who cannot read can still vote independently. By conducting elections in 22 scheduled languages plus other languages, the ECI guarantees that language is not a barrier to participation, making Indian democracy genuinely inclusive.

Answer: Election Commission of India: (a) It conducts free and fair elections under Universal Adult Franchise, ensuring all citizens aged 18+ vote through secret ballot — the foundation of popular sovereignty. (b) It enforces the Model Code of Conduct for accountability, sets up 1 million+ polling stations (including remote areas), uses election symbols for non-literate voters, and conducts elections in 22+ languages to maximise participation.

Q11 What role does the Constitution play in strengthening democracy in India?

SOLUTION

The Constitution is the foundational document that gives India's democracy its structure, values, and continuity. The chapter explains that it was adopted on 26 November 1949 and came into force on 26 January 1950, and is the world's longest written constitution.

First, the Constitution guarantees Fundamental Rights — six categories including the Right to Equality, Right to Freedom, and Right to Constitutional Remedies — that protect citizens from arbitrary state action and ensure dignity and justice for all.

Second, it enshrines the principle of popular sovereignty through Universal Adult Franchise, allowing every citizen aged 18 and above to vote. It provides for separation of powers among the legislature, executive, and judiciary, preventing any single organ from becoming too powerful and maintaining checks and balances.

Third, the Constitution provides for decentralisation through Panchayati Raj and Urban Local Bodies (Articles 243(d) and 243(t)), taking democracy to the grassroots. It also includes provisions like the PESA Act and Autonomous District Councils to protect tribal communities.

Finally, Article 368 allows amendments, making the Constitution flexible and capable of evolving with society's needs without compromising its core democratic values. Overall, the Constitution is the living framework that makes rights enforceable, power accountable, and participation inclusive.

Answer: The Constitution strengthens democracy by guaranteeing Fundamental Rights, establishing Universal Adult Franchise, separating powers among legislature, executive, and judiciary, and extending democracy to grassroots through Panchayati Raj. Article 368 allows amendments so it remains flexible. It makes rights enforceable, power accountable, and no citizen above the law.

Q12 What challenges do you think democracy in India faces today?

SOLUTION

The chapter identifies several challenges that Indian democracy faces, and students are expected to reflect on these.

First, illiteracy and misinformation remain barriers. The chapter states that 'India continues to face several challenges, such as illiteracy, misinformation, and inequality.' An uninformed or misinformed electorate cannot make sound democratic decisions.

Second, the spread of fake news through social media is a 'major concern' as it can 'influence public opinion, create confusion, and sometimes even lead to conflict.' This threat to informed citizenship directly weakens democratic decision-making.

Third, poverty, regionalism, gender inequality, and social discrimination 'create barriers to equal participation.' The chapter notes that despite women receiving voting rights in 1950, 'social prejudices continue to act as barriers and affect women's adequate representation in politics.'

Fourth, gaps in the effective implementation of laws and policies 'may reduce public trust in institutions.' The Emergency of 1975–77 also serves as a historical reminder that democratic institutions can come under strain when Fundamental Rights are suspended.

To address these challenges, the chapter emphasises the roles of civic awareness, media literacy, responsible use of social media, active participation in grassroots institutions, and programmes like NSS and NCC in building a vigilant and engaged citizenry.

Answer: The chapter identifies: (1) illiteracy and misinformation limiting informed participation; (2) fake news on social media creating confusion and conflict; (3) poverty, regionalism, gender inequality, and social discrimination as barriers to equal participation; (4) gaps in law implementation reducing public trust. The 1975–77 Emergency also illustrates that institutions can come under strain. Civic awareness and active participation are the chapter's recommended responses.