

Democracy is accepted globally as the better method of government. The main reason for this is that democratic government is based on people's participation and it represents public opinion. In this chapter, you will be able to study the system of democratic government relevant to the following topics;

- Origin and the expansion of democratic governance.
- Features of democratic governance.
- Nature of the state and the government.
- Nature of the national state, its origin and expansion.
- Role of the state.
- Nature of constitutions and their features.
- Organizational structure and the performance of the government.
- Responsibilities of citizen.
- Responsibilities towards citizen.
- Requirements for the success of democratic governance.
- Importance of democratic governance.

Introduction to Democratic governance

In the long history of civilization, man used to live together with a view of facilitating the fulfillment of his basic needs. With the gradual development of society, the need arose for an organized system of governance to facilitate weal of society and protection of law and order.

Accordingly, various countries have practised different methods of governance to rule them. Monarchism, (federal) aristocratic system, and democratic governance can be cited as examples. At present, most countries including Sri Lanka have implemented democratic governance.

Democracy

In Sinhala, “praja” means people while “thantra” is the system of governance. “vadaya” is the ideology. Accordingly, democratic governance is the governance maintained by the public to govern themselves.

If you consider the Tamil word ‘**Makkaladchi**’, ‘**Makkal**’, means people and ‘**adchi**’ means governance. In that sense, **Makkaladchi** simply means public governance.

The word ‘democracy’ is derived from the Greek words ‘Demos’ and ‘Kratos’. ‘Demos’ denotes public whereas ‘Kratos’ denotes power. So the Greek meaning of the word is power of the people. The system of government which allows people to participate in the administration directly and indirectly is democratic government.

The origin and the expansion of democratic governance

There is historical evidence to show that some features of democratic governance had been in existence in both the East and the West.



Fig 1.1 - Cariatid porch-Athens Greece Fig 1.2 - Parthenon Acropolis Athens Greece

It is said that the governance of the Greek city-state (polis) of Athens was based on direct democratic principles. The supreme governing body of the city-state of Athens was the citizen's council that consisted of citizens in the government in Greece. The citizens, opinion on the functions of government have been directly inquired in the citizens council. Therefore the citizens were given an opportunity to take an active part in the government. But urban women, slaves and foreigners were not allowed to participate in it. This method of governance in Athens was recognized as direct democratic governance. Collective decision making can be cited as direct democratic governance.

History records about a republican government in the “VAJJI” kingdom of India in the sixth century B.C. The seven principles of “Aparihani Dhamma” can be seen in the present democratic governance also. Some of them are given below.

- Regular meetings and discussion.
- Meet, discuss and leave peacefully.
- Avoid framing of non-functional laws, strict enforcement of framed laws, and obedience to framed laws.
- Respect elders, obey and respect their advice and abide by them.

Accordingly, this shows how the East followed the principles of democracy in their governments.

From 5th century A.D. upto the 15th century A.D. feudal system existed in Europe. After the 15th century A.D. the advancement of commercial economy took place replacing the agricultural economy which was based on service bound land use. A capitalist class also was born. After 15th century A.D. national states came into existence in Europe. With the spread of liberal ideas, the freedom of the individual was greatly appreciated.

The power of the people’s representatives took precedence over that of the monarchy. The English revolution (Great Revolution) that took place in 1688 is an example of this. Later the power of the parliament which consisted people’s representatives began to develop.

Types of democratic governance

When we inquire about democratic governance, two main types of it can be noticed.

- Direct democracy
- Indirect democracy (Representative Democracy)

Direct democracy

The governance which existed in the Greek city-state (polis) of Athens is a good example of direct democracy.

Direct democracy is the system in which people gather in one place, discuss and take collective decisions on state administrative functions with the consent of the people swiftly and directly.

Professor Garner

The problems arising out of implementing direct democracy at present,

- The large land masses of present states
- Immense population of present states
- The difficulty of getting all the citizens to rally in one place
- Complexity of social needs

Indirect democracy

Considering the practical problems in implementing direct democratic governance, the system of elected representatives began. It is called indirect democracy or representative democracy.

Indirect Democracy took root in Europe as an instrument of administration. Philosophic ideas nurtured it further. As a result, representative institutions such as the Parliament came in to being.

“Democracy is, government of the people by the people and for the people”

- Abraham Lincoln -

“Democracy provides rights for everybody as a tool of governance”

- Sealer -

In a representative democracy the citizens themselves cannot take part in the governance. At times even in a representative democracy the opinion of the voters are directly assessed in some countries.

The referendum in the Constitution of the Sri Lanka Democratic Socialist Republic, is one such example.

Importance of democracy as a system of governance

Most of the present states consist of multicultural societies. In such a society, every member of the population can become a partner in the mechanism of governance.

In most countries, government bodies have been established to enable people's representation at both national and local levels.

- Democracy is useful as a system of government, as it builds up on the people's will. The representative is elected on the majority will.
- The government is taken over by the party or group which elects the majority of representatives.
- The laws are passed by the majority votes of the elected representatives.

The importance of democracy as a way of living

Democracy plays a major role in society and as a way of living. A democratic society respects different opinions, taking decisions by consensus, respecting equality while enjoying rights and fulfilling related duties.

A society which adheres to such conditions automatically creates opportunities for the smooth implementation of democracy.

Activities

- List the basic qualities of direct democracy which were followed in Athens, Greece.
- Taking the definition of representative democracy in the text into consideration, draft a simple definition.
- Prepare a note which indicates the qualities that one should develop when one is a member of a democratic society.

Features of democratic governance

Election of governments and rulers using universal franchise

In a democratic country, ruling representatives are elected by general franchise. Moreover, franchise is utilized in referendums in direct democracies.

Franchise is given to people without being biased for all the citizens over an age limit. Voting power is given irrespective of sex, community, employment or income.

In article 3 of the constitution of the Sri Lanka Democratic Socialist Republic, it is mentioned;

"The sovereignty of the republic of Sri Lanka is established for the public. Sovereignty cannot be relinquished: Sovereignty is inclusive of administrative power, fundamental rights and franchise."



Fig 1.3 - Photograph of a polling center

Activity

Mention the elections in which the Sri Lankan voter is able to exercise universal franchise.

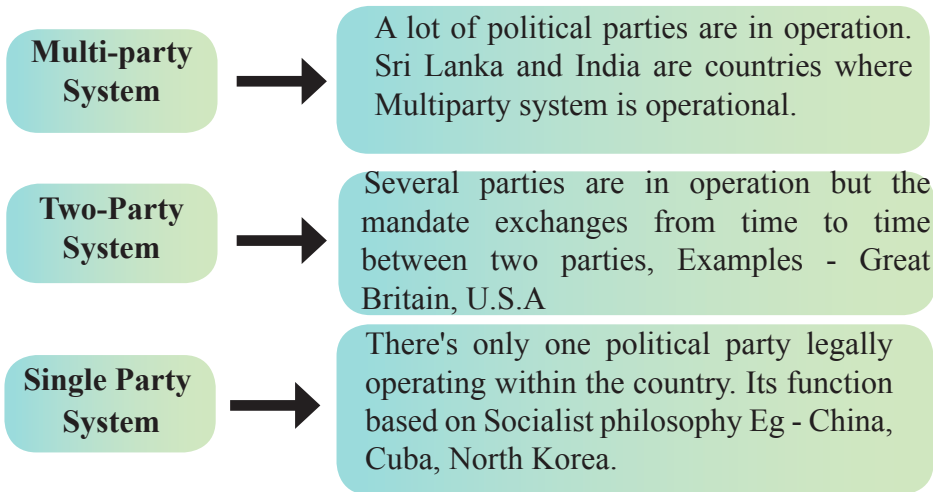
Competitive party system

Political parties are an essential item in the operation of a democratic government.

A political party, in the simple meaning is an organized entity of persons with the aim of acquiring ruling power of a country based on principles of governing the country.

It is an opportunity given to a number of competitive parties to capture political power in a country. They are in constant competition to acquire power presenting various political and economic programmes. Accordingly, the people can select their party on their own.

Different types of party systems can be identified in this manner;



Good features of a competitive party system

- Wide opportunity for representing public opinion
- Prevention of autocracy
- Correction of the unhealthy policies of a government through criticism
- Provision of the opportunity to represent the diversity that exists in society
- Creation of unity out of diversity

Activity

- Explain the service rendered by the multiparty system in a democratic government.
- Name the several political parties active in the following countries.

Sri Lanka	India	Great Britain

Polling division system

It is necessary to divide the country into polling divisions as a strategy to join people's representatives for democratic governance. Based on these divisions representatives are elected to the legislature and local governments. The simple majority and the proportionate representation systems are followed mostly in electing members at present.

According to the constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, polling divisions are divided by the Demarcation Commission. For this purpose, the land and population are taken as the main criteria.

The electoral map of Sri Lanka is given below as an example.



Fig 1.4 - The map of polling divisions in Sri Lanka

Benefits of electing representatives based on the polling divisions

- Opportunity for electing representatives to represent public opinion irrespective of differences that exist in the society like community, religion, language or caste.
- Provision of the opportunity to generate leaders necessary to maintain the political process
- Provision of the opportunity to the people to elect a representative responsible for the division
- Providing an opportunity for regional development

Activity

- Name the electoral district of your resident area.
- How many representatives are elected for the district?
- How many districts has Sri Lanka been divided into?

Free and fair elections

Electing representatives to government bodies is a cornerstone in a democratic country. Similarly elections give the opportunity for the government to obtain the participation of the people in administrative functions.

Elections are essential for democracy to exist and holding free and fair elections is also an essential factor. The voters must be able to help a political party or a group and vote freely. Candidates too should be able to engage in election affairs freely.

Features of a free and fair election

- Holding elections in due course
- All the eligible citizens must be assured of his vote/candidacy in a free and fair manner
- Confirmation of the right to participate in a free and fair election.
- Holding elections in line with the election laws
- Holding elections in peaceful surroundings

Activity

- Three rights of a voter in a democratic country are given below in the first column. Mention three duties related to a free and fair election in the second column.

Column I	Column II
Rights of a voter	Duties related to the rights
1.Voting	
2. Participation in election propaganda meetings	
3.Addressing election rallies	

Existence of a government and an opposition

In an election for the selection of representatives for government bodies, the party which wins a majority of representatives becomes the government in a parliamentary system of government. Administration rests with the government. The party or parties which get a minority of representatives becomes the opposition.

The role of the opposition to make a democratic rule a success

- Assist the government in their good work
- Direct the government in the proper direction by way of investigation and constructive criticism
- Oppose the government in anti-democratic policies and actions
- Act to establish a better alternative government

Activity

Explain in brief how the opposition can assist the government to render good service to the people.

Freedom, equality and rights

The state in which an individual is allowed to fulfil political, economic and social needs can be called 'freedom' in simple terms.

In simple terms, freedom is the opportunity for developing one's personality sans external resistance.

- G.D.H. Cole -

It is very important that this freedom is enjoyed so as to cause no hindrance or obstacle to the other members of society. Freedom can only be enjoyed within the boundaries of law.

The freedom that the individual gets to consummate his life, contributes in general to the progress of society as a whole.

Providing every individual with equal opportunities is equality. What is implied here is the provision of opportunities for the enjoyment of rights and freedom to everyone without any discrimination.

Execution of qualities such as freedom, equality depends on the security of rights. Rights can be interpreted as the entitlements of humans given by society to consummate his social life

Human rights can be defined as the entitlements unfavoured by any means which humans receive at birth to live as a human - being in the society.

The Universal declaration of human rights was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December 1948.

Entertaining the rights of a person properly results in leading a healthy social life. The intention of providing rights in a democratic society is to develop the whole society through personal development. Education is one example of the rights you are entitled to. It is your responsibility to dedicate knowledge, skills, etc. gained through education for social development.

Activities

Mention obligations a citizen should fulfil in column II for the rights in column I

column I	column II
Rights	Obligations attached to rights
Right to peaceful assembly	
Right to education	
Right to work and to receive equal wages for equal work	

- Mention moral obligations that should be fulfilled by you to your parents and elders.

Act in accordance with the constitution

The basic law of a country is the constitution. In a democratic government governance of the country takes place in conformity with the constitution.

The constitution is a document which defines the formation, the execution and the powers of the major component of a government, which are the legislature, executive and the judiciary and describes the relationship between the said institutions with the people.

- Professor Ivor Jennings -

Though there is no consensus about the contents of a constitution most of the constitutions consist of the following;

- How the major components of the government, the legislature, executive and the judiciary are constructed
- The tasks, powers and the relationships between the said institutions
- Relationship between the government and the people
- Fundamental rights of the people
- Provision to amend the constitution

Benefits of adherence to the constitution in a democratic country

- Ensures the regularity and the consistency of the administration
- Awareness of people's rights by both the rulers and subjects
- Possibility of preventing rulers being arbitrary
- Protection of the sovereignty of the judiciary
- Protection of fundamental rights
- Fulfillment of necessities and aspirations of the people from government institutions
- Equal treatment under law for every one

Media freedom and the right of access to information

The people of a democratic country have freedom of expression and access to information. This is fulfilled by the media. Media is the main factor in forming public opinion.

The people have a right to know about the activities and the decision making process of the government. It is an essential factor of good governance. Likewise the media has the ability to make the government aware of public opinion.

Media freedom is of paramount importance in a democratic country to form public opinion.

The role of the free media in a democratic country

- Presenting true and correct information to the public
- Presenting unbiased information for the benefit of the people
- Making the government aware of the grievances of the people
- Ensuring that the rulers followed the path of democracy
- Improving the knowledge of the people
- Providing the latest information on time

Activity

Prepare a list of ethics for the media in providing day to day information to the public.

Sovereignty of the judiciary

The judiciary plays the role of dispensing justice. In a democratic country the judiciary plays a major role in safeguarding freedom and protection of rights.

The judiciary should be independent and free from the influences of the legislature and the executive, and any other aspects. Modern states have taken numerous steps to protect the sovereignty of the judiciary in the constitution. The independence of the judiciary ensures that and fair justice is meted to the people.

The supremacy of law and equality before law

Law is above all the others in a country. It is the supremacy of the law. The supremacy of law is that the rulers as well as subjects must obey and respect the law. They should not over reach the law. It should be practised on equal term for both the rulers and subjects.

The application of law irrespective of nationality, caste, creed, or sex or an individual basis is in brief called equality before law.

Features that illustrate the supremacy of law

- Everybody respecting the law, being obedient to the law and not superseding it
- Punishing the offenders under the existing law
- Arresting individuals only on the basis of an indictment
- Equality before law.
- Everybody receiving the protection of law in absolute fairness

Activity

Mention two procedures vested for the protection of the sovereignty of judiciary in the constitution of Sri Lanka.

Nature of the state and the government

The State

While the state is a permanent institution, the government is an institution subject to changes from time to time. Present state is considered a national state, and there are four basic characteristics evident in such a state. They are land, population, government and autonomous power.

Land

- Land area is demarcated by fixed frontiers.
- The maritime boundary.
- The sky above the land area.

Population

- The population living within the land limits.

Government

- Safeguarding of law and order and motivating people to fulfill common goals within the state are entrusted to the government.

Autonomous power

- Autonomous power is the authority that can be applied for the sake of the public without the intervention of any particular internal or external force. Autonomous power helps in enacting laws and in obtaining the allegiance of the public to such laws.

Definitions presented about the state

“ The state is a community of persons more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent of external control and possessing an organized government to which the great body of in habitants render habitual obedience ”

- Professor Garner -

“ The state is an organization established by the people to live happily and honourably ”

- Aristotle -

Nature of the nation - state

The national state was established in Europe after the 15th century.

Main features of a nation - state

- Based on the concept of one state for one nation
- Consists of supreme power, land, population and the government
- Governed by a professional hierarchy of authorities
- Use of Supreme power regarding external and internal matters

Origin and the expansion of the nation - state

After the 15th century the formation of national states commenced. England, Spain and France were the first nation states. Then Germany and Italy too joined. By the 20th century nation states had all over the world.

Reasons behind the origin of nation states

- Protestant reformation
- The Great revolution
- The rise of capitalist economy with the collapse of the feudal system
- Development of scientific knowledge

The required religious background was provided by protestant reformists. The political thinkers like Nicolo Machiaveli, Jin Bodan and Thomas Hobbs strengthened the nation state.

Countries like England, France, Holland and Portugal emerged as strong countries owing to several reasons. Some of them are,

- National cohesion
- Military and Naval strength
- Advanced economic condition
- Creative abilities of these nations

The role of the nation state

Modern nation states have emerged as big and small landmarks. Likewise, some have large populations while others have small populations. Taking the land areas and population into consideration, it is possible to imagine the social and

economic differences faced by them. Economic inequalities and racial varieties are some such examples. The state is vested with solving the basic problems and protecting social justice and equality.

Accordingly, given below are examples of the tasks that devolve upon the Government.

- Protection of law and peace
- Providing welfare services
- Taking steps for poverty alleviation
- Maintenance of public services
- Implementation of development plans
- Solving problems of war, rebellion and ethnic disputes
- Protecting basic Human Rights and their development

Activity

Prepare an article suitable for a wall newspaper presenting examples of action that Sri Lanka as a state, follows to alleviate poverty and to provide social welfare services.

Main forms of states

Depending on the devolution of power between the central government and the local government bodies, the states are categorized as follows.

01. Unitary state
02. Federal state

Unitary state

Unitary states are states with central governments in which power is concentrated. Such a central government is vested with the powers to implement the legislative, executive, and the judicial power.

In a unitary state local governments implement the powers vested by the central government. (further details are given in chapter 2)

Federal state

A Federal state is a system of government with two tiers of governments.

Here, both the central government and local government bodies exercise the powers of the legislature, executive and judiciary. (Detailed clarification are given in the second chapter)

Basic aspects of a federal state

- Devolution of power between the central government and the local government bodies.

Activity

Tabulate the main features of a unitary state and a federal state.

Government

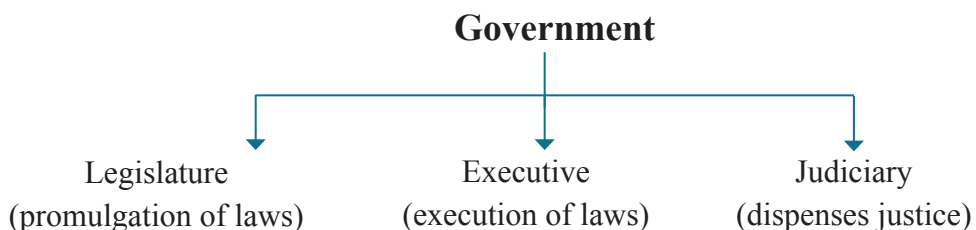
The government is the agent that implements the will of the state. The government protects the law and peace and it leads the people to a common goal.

The government is the agent which converts the wish of the state or the people into policies and implements them.

- Professor Garner -

In a democratic country the government is elected to power through an election by majority vote. The government can be changed occasionally depending on the public opinion expressed in elections.

The government consists of the following institutions.



Activity

Differentiate between the state and the government.

Main components of the government and their functions

The government consists of the main institutions such as the legislature, executive and the judiciary.

Legislature

Representatives for the legislature are selected by general franchise in an election for a fixed term. Tasks of this body are;

- Promulgation of laws
- Financial administration
- Control of the executive



Fig 1.5 - Parliament of Sri Lanka

Executive

The executive is the implementing body of the laws promulgated by the legislature. The selection procedure of the members depends on the nature of the constitution. In a parliamentary government, the executive consists of the prime minister and the cabinet. The political party which wins the majority of seats in a general election gets the opportunity to form the cabinet.

In a presidential government the president is elected in a separate election.

Judiciary

The judiciary sorts out the disputes arising out of the implementation of the laws enacted by the legislature. The main purpose of the judiciary is the dispensation of justice. The judiciary plays the major roles of protecting the rights of citizens and safeguarding the constitution.

In federal states, the problems that crop up between the central and regional governments are solved by higher seats of the judiciary.

The procedures of appointing judges for higher courts are included in the constitution.

Activity

Tabulate the roles of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

Forms of governments

In modern states two types of government are to be seen. They are as follows;

- Parliamentary government
- Presidential government

Parliamentary government

A parliamentary government, consists of a parliament with representatives elected by the people for a fixed term, a cabinet executive appointed by the parliament and an independent judiciary.

In a parliamentary government the executive is directly appointed by parliament from the representatives elected. As such the executive is accountable to parliament. Hence the parliamentary government is described as a government of responsibility. The prime minister and the cabinet are collectively accountable to the parliament. If it deviated from this process the legislature has the ability to defeat the government at any moment.

Two types of parliamentary governments are there: the nominal executive and the political executive. In Britain, the nominal executive is the king or the queen. It comes down as a tradition.

The political executive in a parliamentary government is the Prime Minister and the cabinet which is elected by the people directly.

Features of a parliamentary government

- It consists of two types, i.e. the nominal executive and the real executive.
- The executive is elected by the legislature.
- A direct relationship exists between the executive and the legislature.
- The executive is collectively accountable to the parliament.
- The legislature has power to remove the executive.

Activity

Establish a student parliament in your school and take steps to conduct proceedings. Obtain the guidance and assistance of your subject teacher.

Presidential government

The president is elected by a presidential election in a presidential government. Thus, the head of the executive is the president.

Special features of the presidential government

- The president implements executive power.
- The president is both the leader of the government and the state.
- The executive is not directly responsible to the legislature.
- The legislature does not control the executive directly.

The presidential government is the government which concentrates all the executive powers in the constitution sans the influences of the legislature on the president, who is independent and not accountable to the legislature for his political policies.

- Professor Garner -

Activity

- Tabulate the differences between the presidential and the parliamentary governments.
- Explain briefly the appointment and the powers of the president under the 1978 constitution of Sri Lanka.

Responsibilities of the citizen

In a democratic society, the citizen can enjoy a series of civil, political and economic rights. While enjoying the rights, he has to fulfil duties to society. They are categorized as,

- Legal duties
- Moral duties

Payment of taxes, obedience to the existing law, safeguarding the constitution, protecting law and order are examples for legal duties. Failing to fulfil legal duties is a reason to be punished.

Respecting elders, following the social customs and duties are examples of moral duties. The conscience of a person is the judge regarding fulfilling moral duties.

The individual should enjoy all the rights while contributing to the betterment of society. A person has a right to do a job. But he should do it with devotion for the development of society.

Study the articles mentioned below, of the constitution (1978) of Sri Lanka Socialist Republic to learn about the duties of citizens.

The exercise and the enjoyment of rights and freedom are inseparable from the performance of duties and obligations and accordingly it is the duty of every person in Sri Lanka -

- (a) To uphold and defend the constitution and the law
- (b) To promote national interest and to foster national unity
- (c) To work conscientiously in his chosen occupation
- (d) To prepare and protect public property and to combat misuse and waste of public property
- (e) To respect the rights and traditions of others
- (f) To protect nature and conserve natural resources

Responsibilities towards the citizen

The state is also responsible in many aspects towards the citizen. Most states have included these policies in the constitutions itself. Therefore, the responsibilities of the governments towards people while carrying out administrative work are as follows;

- Protection of law and order
- Safeguarding the principles of equality
- Conforming to the constitution
- Protecting the fairness of the law
- Ensuring equal distribution of the national wealth
- Ensuring transparency in financial control
- Providing social security and welfare
- Protecting and safeguarding the environment

Activity

- Mention three rights enjoyed by you as a student and make a list of responsibilities you have to accomplish related to the rights.
- Tabulate one's rights as a member of the family and one's duties.
- Make a list of duties you have to accomplish for the country as a future citizen.

Factors required for the success of democratic governance

A series of factors are influential in the success of democratic governance. Some of them are described below;

Free and fair elections

An opportunity was provided to learn the features of a free and fair election under the “ features of democratic governance ”.

The rulers are selected by the elections based on the general franchise. The voter must be given the opportunity to cast his vote free of influence, according to his political opinion. It is a basic feature of a free election.

A fair election is one in which all the political groups are allowed to engage in election activities, in a suitable environment without corruptions and malpractices.

Holding elections alone is not adequate for the existence of democracy; they should be free and fair.

Coming to power in a free and fair election is a reason to get public support, confidence and acceptance towards the rulers. This is called the legitimacy of a government.

Existence of the supremacy of the law

The laws are the rules promulgated by the government to control the external behavior of citizens. The obedience submission to the laws and respecting it by both rulers and subject should be done, whereas superseding the laws should not be done. The existence of the supremacy of the law is helpful to the government to maintain its affairs and to establish public confidence.

Sovereignty of the Judiciary

The judiciary is considered the main tower in building democracy and maintenance of this institute without any influence is a must in a democracy. The judiciary should exist as an institute free of undue influence to dispense justice and fairness according to the existing law.



Fig 1.6

Then only justice will be dispensed to all the citizens of the country according to the existing law. Democratic governments set up provisions to protect the sovereignty of the judiciary in the constitutions. The existence of a sovereign judiciary is vital for building a just and law abiding society.

Existence of people with political intelligence

Bringing a people friendly government into power is of paramount importance for successful democratic governance. The voter is of prime importance in this process.

The political parties and groups present their policies to the people. The voters should be politically intelligent to vote correctly taking them into consideration.

Moreover, the voter must display concern to elect the candidates of exemplary character in society and great leaders devoted to build the nation. The intelligent voter must be concerned to prevent the selection of politicians who are guilty of wrong doing in society. Thereby the voter is able to build a good government in the country. The existence of intelligent, politically educated public is very useful in building a peaceful political environment and eradicating fraud and corruption.

Activity

- Make a list of facts a voter should pay attention to when deciding to vote.

Existence of sound economic standards

Fulfillment of fundamental rights of the highest standard is a key factor in strengthening democracy. The availability of food, clothing, housing, education, health and common amenities adequately is useful for the existence of a democratic society.

Existence of qualities like freedom, rights, equality depends on the economic level. To achieve these conditions, social welfare is also undertaken by a democratic government.

Availability of free and unbiased media

You will be able to learn the role played by the media under "the features of a democratic governance."

As the right to access information is an essential factor in a democracy, it is up to the media to ensure it. Therefore, the existence of an environment conducive to the provision of information in a free and unbiased manner is essential for the success of democracy. Media has an obligation and a responsibility to provide unbiased and true information with a sense of responsibility. The media can build public opinion correctly by doing so.

Democratic life

Establishment of democratic principles in society is vital for democratic governance. A democrat should have the following qualities.

- Taking decision through discussions
- Tolerating of opposition
- Respecting majority decision
- Co-operation
- Respect human rights
- Obedience to law
- Enjoying rights while fulfilling duties
- Identifying factors that obstruct democracy and present constructive comments.

Accordingly, the members of institutions like the family, educational institutes, places of employment, must appreciate democratic principles in conducting their affairs.

Importance of democratic governance

Enjoyment of equal rights.

Democracy is based on basic concepts like personal freedom, rights, and equality. In a democracy, all citizens are entitled to equal rights irrespective of

differences. No one is discriminated against. There are provisions to establish a suitable machinery to build such an environment in a democratic government. The existence of a constitution and act in accordance with it in a democratic country is an example of this.

Possession of equal rights facilitates building of social integrity, reducing social conflicts and helps personal development. The opportunity to enjoy equal rights is contributive to the development of the entire society.

Opportunity to develop personal abilities and skills

The citizens of a democratic country has the opportunity to develop their skills to the maximum. An individual has the opportunity to develop one's intelligence, abilities and various skills. There are no limitations or obstacles imposed in this regard.

Not only are opportunities provided to acquire education and vocational training but special identified skills are also improved.

Enjoyment of freedom and rights based on equality are of great help for the development of personal abilities and skills.

Opportunity for the citizens to take part in the government

A special feature of democratic governance is the political right of the people to take part in governance. Since they cannot take part directly, it is done through representatives. Therefore, the rulers are elected by voters through general franchise. The citizens can engage in election activities. One can present himself as a candidate. Moreover, by being vigilant of the activities of an elected government, a citizen can present his opinion.

Priority to human development

For example, food, housing, education, health, employment and other common amenities are factors which affect human development. They are facts behind the qualitative development of the living conditions of the people.

In the political fight to win power in a working democracy, the priority goes to the policies relevant to people's welfare in election manifestoes.

Therefore, special attention is given to provide such facilities in a democracy. With the development of democracy the state has become a welfare institute in the last decades of the 20th century.

In some democratic countries services like education and health are given free. Sri Lanka is also one such example.

Foundation for the development of a peaceful society

Most countries at present are multi- racial and multicultural societies. Every citizen is a partner in the administration in a democratic country. The following aspects have contributed to build a peaceful society

- Existence of the supremacy of law
- Sovereignty of the judiciary
- Freedom, equality and possession of equal rights
- Respect for majority decisions
- Respect for minority opinion
- Decision taken by discussions
- Opportunity for peaceful expression of ideas of the citizen

Social welfare

The transition of the state to a welfare organization occurred with the development of democracy in the early decades of the 20th century. As a result, special attention was paid to social activities which contributed to the quality of the standard of living of the citizens in a democratic government.

The government intervention in the administration of the programmes in the education, health, housing, transport sectors, social security, poverty alleviation and caring for the aged are good examples.



Fig 1.7 - Education

Activity

Give instances as examples of citizens acquiring the following rights in Sri Lanka.

Rights	Examples of opportunities
1. Possession of equal rights	Eg; Equality before law (1) ----- (2) -----
2. Personal capabilities and skills development	(1) ----- (2) -----
3. Participation in governance	(1) ----- (2) -----

As a student and a member of a family, write down in column II and III respectively the opportunities you get to develop the qualities in column 1.

Column 1 Quality	Column 2 (As a school student)	Column 3 (As a member of the family)
1. Cooperation.		
2. Respect others' opinion		
3. Respect laws		
4. Taking decisions by discussion		