

Introduction

Democracy is a governing system as well as a life style. Democracy can simply be defined as a governing system based on public preference. Among the governing systems seen in the world today, the democratic governance has been given a prominent place.

Studying this chapter, you will be able to gain broader understanding about the followings:

- Democracy
- Basic features of a democratic governance
- Duties bound by the rights of a citizen in a democratic society
- Tasks should be done by the political parties to establish social unity
- Elections and franchise of a democratic society
- Acting as a democratic citizen with assertiveness
- Contribution to nation building as a democratic citizen

3.1.1 Introduction to democracy

The class teacher of Grade 9 of Namalyaya Maha Vidyalaya wanted to elect a monitor at the beginning of the new term. The teacher inquires the students a suitable way to elect. Given below is a part of the conversation took place:



Januda

I'd like to elect Rashmika as the monitor

But, I don't like to elect him



Ramesh



Denvi

We'd like Rashik as the monitor

We'd like to elect Januda as the monitor



Fathima



Teacher

Children, you have proposed many names. So it is not an easy task to elect a monitor. Well, can anybody suggest a way to take a fair decision that can be accepted by everyone in such a situation ?

Teacher, let's have a vote and elect the monitor by checking the preference. I think it is a democratic way to do this.



Chenethu



Devaki

Chenethu, What a lot you know! Today we will be able to learn about democracy. There is a topic of Democracy in our Civic Education subject.

Very good. Chenethu's idea is really valuable. Let's have a vote and elect the monitor who gets the majority of votes.



Teacher

The English word "Democracy" is formed by two Greek words "Demos" and "Kratos". "Demos" means public while "kratos" denotes power. Therefore, the meaning of the word "Democracy" in Greek language is the power of people.

Scholars have given various definitions for Democracy. A few such definitions are given below for your knowledge:

Democracy is a public governance done by the people for the people.

Abraham Lincoln

Democracy is a governing system which provides rights for everybody.

Sealer

Democracy can be introduced as a system of governance done by the people with the decision of the majority.

Democracy is important as a governing system, as well as a life style. Fulfilling duties while enjoying rights, respecting others' views, taking decisions through discussions and respecting equity are some of the features of a democratic life style. Through making such features as the vision of people, a good and peaceful society builds up. It is important to develop such features as a member of a family as well as a member of the school. Further, developing such features within all the members of the society confirms the well-being of a democratic governance.

Activity 3.1



1. Collect some definitions of democracy.
2. Build up a simple definition of democracy of your own.

Basic types of democracy

The teacher in charge of Civic Education of Grade 9, Namalyaya Maha Vidyalaya came to the class in her period. A part of the conversation took place between the students and the teacher in the class is given below:

I have heard that something called Direct Democracy functioned in the past.



Banuka



Rajeshvari

Yes. Yes. I have heard that Direct Democracy had functioned in the Greek, city of Athens.



Siyam

Doesn't the Direct Democracy function today ?



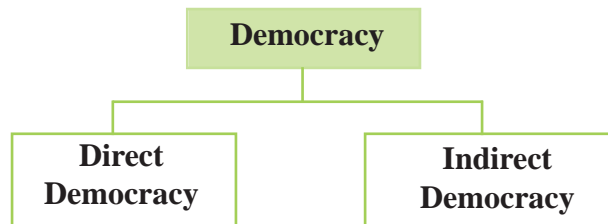
Thilona

In one of the books I have read, I found that today mostly Indirect Democracy functions. In some instances we can see features of Direct Democracy in Indirect Democracy.

Very good children. You know a lot about the lesson that I am going to teach you today.



Teacher



Direct democracy

The main feature of direct democracy is the direct participation of people in governing. The governance that existed in Greek City State (known as polis) of Athens was direct democracy. The main governing institution of Athens was citizen council. There the public opinion was inquired directly. All the citizens had participated in governance.

Direct involvement of people in decision making and governance is direct democracy.

Women, slaves and foreigners were not allowed to participate in the governance in Athens where direct democracy functioned. Only elderly male residents in the city were given opportunity to take an active role in the direct democratic governance.

Reasons for easy functioning of direct democracy in the past

- Limited human needs
- Limited population
- Easy to discuss, take decisions and gathering in one place

The problems of implementing direct democracy at present

- Immense population
- Difficulty of gathering in one place
- Complexity of human needs
- Complex nature of present governance

Activity 3.2



1. Explain briefly the problems arising out of implementing direct democracy at present giving examples.
2. List out some weaknesses in direct democracy in Greek State of Athens if any.

Indirect democracy

- As it was difficult to implement direct democracy, indirect democracy began.
- Governing done by the public representatives is a feature of indirect democracy. Public representatives are elected by the elections held time to time.
- Indirect democracy can be introduced as representative democracy.

The constitution provides opportunities to inquire the public preference directly on some factors in countries where indirect democracy functions today.

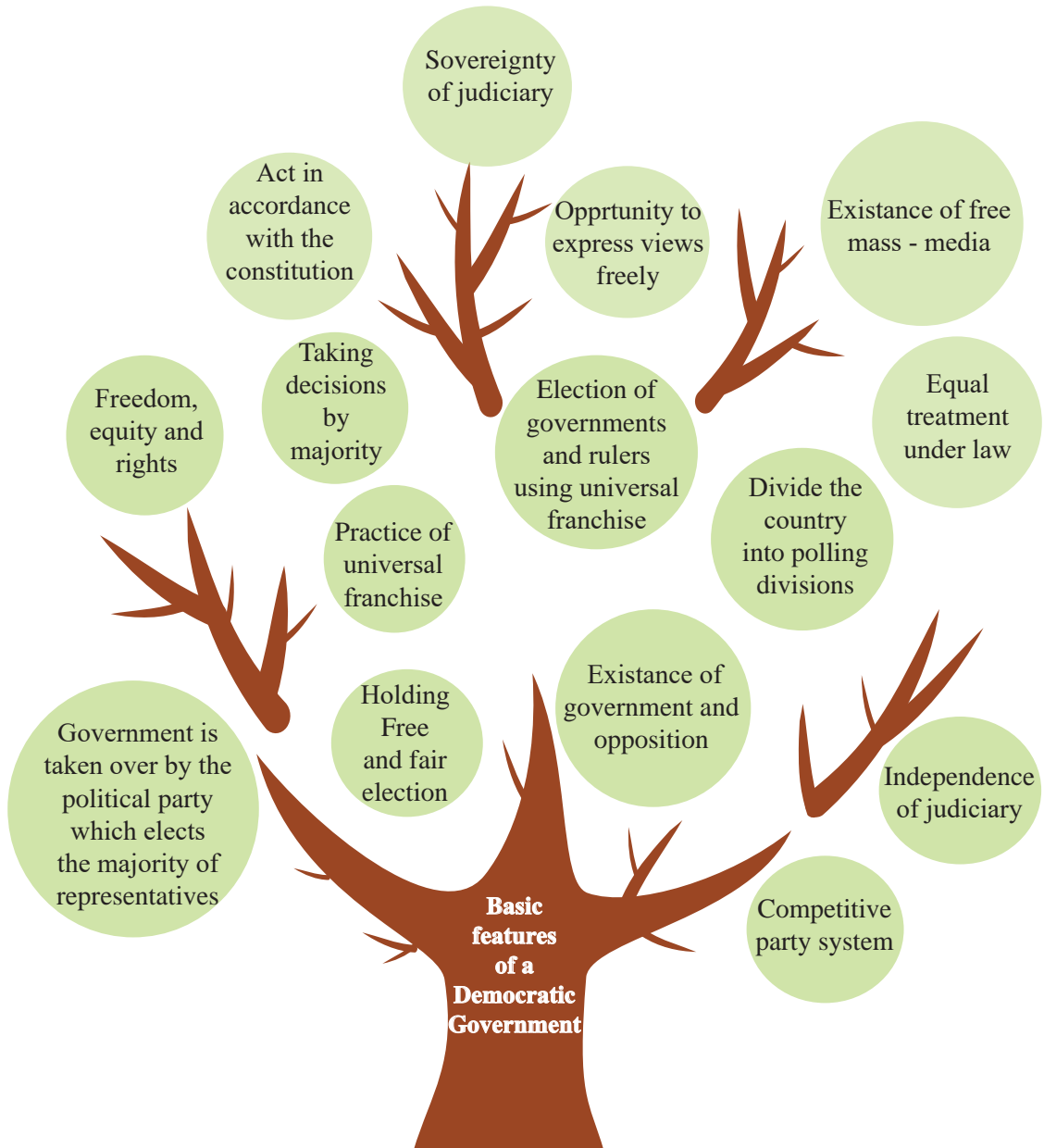
Referendum can be regarded as an example for a function of direct democratic procedure. Holding referendum is legalized by the present Sri Lankan constitution, in our country too.

3.1.2 Basic features of a democratic governance

The basic feature of a democratic governance is that the government is directed by the representatives elected by the decision of the majority. There can be many features seen where a democratic governance is practised.

Given below is a creative way of presenting the basic features of democracy done by a group of Grade 9 students:

Basic Features of democratic governance



3.1.3 Features needed to have a successful democratic governance

Students are given instructions to prepare a poster by the teacher in charge of Civic Education, collecting information on the features needed to have a successful democracy. Given below are the details, included in the poster, created by Devin's group:

Factors that determine the success of democracy

- Having high political knowledge and understanding of the public
- Taking intelligent decisions when electing rulers by the public
- Having a dedicated and honest leadership
- Having a good economic condition in the country
- Having media freedom
- Existence of sovereignty of the judiciary in the country
- Clear division of functions of the government
- Existing a powerful opposition



An occasion casting votes at a polling centre

3.1.4 Some countries where indirect democracy functions

- Sri Lanka
- India
- Japan
- The United Kingdom
- France
- Switzerland
- The United States of America
- Canada

Activity 3.3



Some features needed to have successful democracy are given in column I. Write briefly in column II how those features affect successful democratic governance.

Column I	Column II
Features needed for successful democracy	The effect on successful democratic governance
Having high political knowledge and understanding of the public	
Dedicated and honest leadership	
Acting intelligently when electing rulers	
Existing a powerful opposition	
Functioning the sovereignty of judiciary	

(Further information about democratic governance can be learnt in the first chapter of Grade 10 Civic Education textbook.)

3.2 The duties bound by the rights of a citizen in a democratic society

3.2.1 Rights of a citizen

A conversation taken place among Grade 9 students about the rights of a citizen in a democratic society is given below:



Nilupuli

My father told me that rights are the recognition of the society for a person to lead a good life.

We all have a right to have a name and a nationality.



Sadev



Janani

It's true that we have a right for a name and a nationality. I think the right to live freely is the most important among all the others.

Not only that, what about the right to education?



Supun



Fathima

We have a right to do a legal job, don't we?

It is important to have the right to follow any religion one likes.



Nisal



Raj

Right to elect rulers in a democratic society too is an important right of a citizen.

You all are very good. Almost everyone knows the rights of a citizen in a democratic society.



Teacher

One student listened to this conversation, and summarized the rights of a citizen as follows:

- Right to live
- Right to possess a name and a nationality
- Right to obtain education
- Right to do a legal job
- Right to follow a religion that one likes
- Right to elect rulers
- Right to live in an area that one likes
- Right to vote a party that one prefers
- Right to join unions

Duties bound by rights cause for the safeguarding of rights. This would also safeguard other's rights. Let's inquire such duties.

3.2.2 Duties to be fulfilled to the society while enjoying rights

When enjoying rights, what we have to fulfill to the society can be regarded as duties. Each duty is bound by a right. In fact duties and rights are like two sides of a coin. As Sri Lankans, we have been fulfilling duties from generation to generation since past.

Fulfilling duties is a must to safeguard peace and harmony, co-existence and social security in a democratic society.

According to that, there are many duties to be fulfilled to the society, as a citizen, when we enjoy the rights. Some examples are given below:

- Educate well
- Obeying and respecting parents/teachers
- Caring elders
- Keeping the environment clean
- Protecting public property
- Respecting and caring religious leaders
- Being law-abiding
- Assisting the police and the security forces
- Paying taxes regularly and accurately imposed by the government
- Being honest to pay bills for the services used
- Avoiding bribery and anti social activities and help to abolish them
- Avoiding anti social activities
- Rejecting terrorism
- Protecting cultural heritage
- Not being treacherous
- Proper garbage disposal and support the steps taken by the government
- Fostering the national unity

As a student, your duty is to have a good education and be a good citizen to the society. For that, teachers' duty is to provide you with knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies. Fulfilling duties by the teachers would directly influence to safeguard your rights.

The basic duties to be fulfilled by a citizen are given in the Article No. 28 of the constitution of 1978. Some of them are given below:

- To defend and follow the constitution and the law
- To improve the national upliftment and to foster national unity
- To work faithfully in one's chosen occupation
- To preserve and protect public property, and to combat against misuse of public property and waste
- To respect the rights and freedom of others
- To protect nature and conserve its natural resources

3.2.3 Importance of enjoying rights within the legal frame work

Every citizen has to enjoy rights within the legal frame work. Otherwise, it would cause to violate others' rights. If all the citizens enjoy rights within the legal frame work, it will cause the national development.

- Although every citizen has a right to use a road, that should be done under the rules and regulations of roadways.
- Although every citizen has a right to do a job, that job should be a legal one.
- Although there is a right to win labour rights, it should not be done against the law of the country.

When enjoying rights some limitations are imposed with the intension of protecting social well-being and peace. Some examples for that are media prohibition during war conditions, rallies at times of destroying lives and public property and prohibiting picketing can be taken as some examples. That is highly effective towards the social well-being as well as the national development.

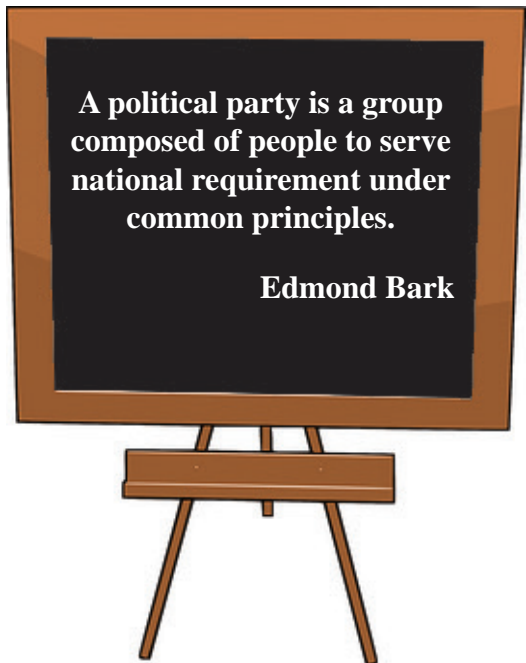
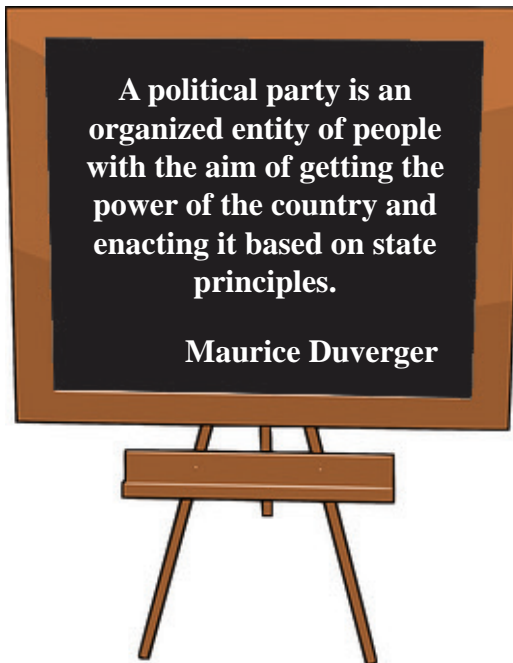
3.3 Let's identify the functions of a political party

3.3.1 Introducing political parties

There was a discussion about political parties between two Grade 9 students. Given below are two simple definitions of political parties presented by two students:



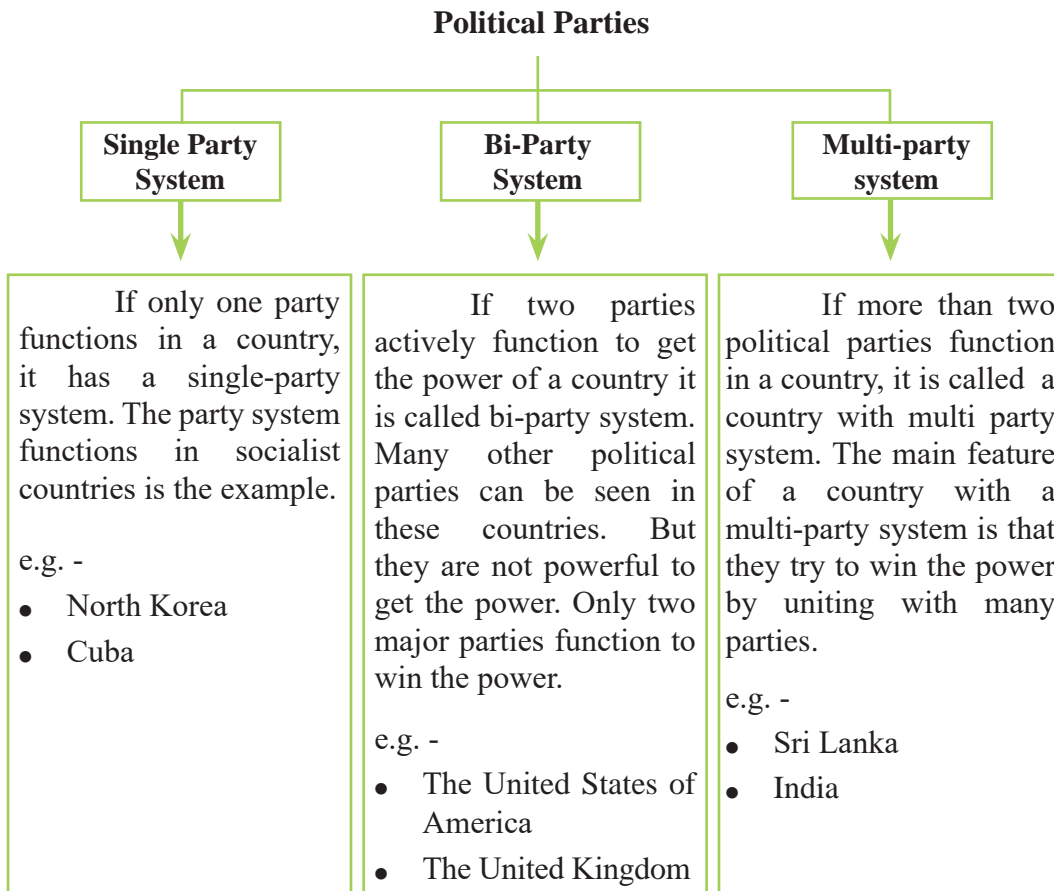
Definitions of political parties given by various scholars are stated below for your knowledge:



What is meant by a political party is a group of people organized to obtain the State power based on certain principles.

3.3.2 Different types of party systems in various countries

There are different types of party systems functioning in our country. Political parties function in other countries too. Political parties are categorized according to the functions of the party system of the country.



3.3.3 Duties of a political party

- Mobilising the scattered public opinion
- Promoting the aims and politics of the party
- Training future leaders
- Making the public aware
- Respecting democratic political views and opinions of the opponent parties
- Competition with the other parties to win the power of the country
- Providing social welfare services

3.3.4 The role of a political party to establish social unity

A large number of people having various kinds of views can be seen in a country. The duty of a political party should be to direct them towards a common goal. Thereby, a party should not work only to achieve its political goals.

The major responsibility of social development in a country is possessed by political parties. Accordingly, some of the functions to be fulfilled by political parties are given below:

- Implementing democratic ruling meaningfully based on the national needs disregarding religious, ethnic and geographical differences
- Creating a basis for all the ethnic groups to exist in a multicultural society to enjoy their rights
- National development through national unity
- Following a policy to refrain from religious and ethnic conflicts
- Dedicate to establish sustainable peace and for living with peace, co-existence, co-operativity and national unity

3.4 Franchise and elections

3.4.1 Franchise

Franchise is the preference. Further, expressing one's opinion at an election to elect rulers or representatives is franchise. Among the rights of a citizen in a democratic country, franchise is given a prominent place. The right to elect people's representatives at an election is regarded as franchise.

The right to express one's opinion at an election to elect people's representatives and to check public opinion is franchise.

In our country, the citizens who complete 18 years of age are entitled legally for the franchise. It is necessary to include the name properly in the electoral list.

Given below are some of the reasons for disqualification to be an elector according to the constitution of 1978:

- If he is not a citizen of Sri Lanka
- If he is under any law in Sri Lanka found to be of unsound mind
- If he is disqualified with civic rights
- If he is given a life imprisonment
- If he is sentenced to death
- If he is a named bankrupt by law

3.4.2 Elections

In a democratic governance, representatives are elected by the citizens casting their votes. Elections are held to elect people's representatives and to check the public opinion on important matters of the country.

Expressing one's vote is exercised in different situations. Through that, electing representatives for government institutions in a democratic society is done. Not only that to obtaining the public opinion in relation to important events of the country, to react to that, vote is used. Accordingly, election is the method of checking public opinion of democratic countries.

Elections functioning in Sri Lanka at present:

- Presidential election
- Parliament election
- Provincial Council election
- Election of Local Government Institutions

3.4.3 Universal franchise

Franchise is granted to all qualified citizens to express their right to vote in elections without discrimination. Teacher of Civic Education inquired about the limited franchise that functioned, before getting the universal franchise in our country.



Damith

I learnt in History that we gained limited franchise under the constitutional reforms in 1910. Franchise was given only to the males who were above 21 years, educated and rich.

That constitutional reform is introduced as Crew Mc Cullum reforms.



Amjad



Bhagya

A significant feature of the Crew Mc Cullum reforms is the electing of representatives by voting to the Legislative Council for the first time.

Among the unofficial representatives, four had been elected at the limited election.



Vihanga



Devaki

At the limited election, two for the Europeans, one for the Burghers and one for the educated Sri Lankans had been elected.

The first Member of the Parliament elected was Sir Ponnambalam Ramanadan on behalf of the educated Sri Lankans.



Vihanga



Teacher

Well. You have learnt a lot about the limited franchise. Now I'll explain you how we got the universal franchise.

Universal franchise was given to the Sri Lankan citizens, both males and females, who were above 21 years of age by the Donoughmore Constitutional Reforms in 1931. Hence the Universal Franchise provided basis for the welfare of the citizens. The age limit for the universal franchise has been reduced from 21 to 18 years in 1958.

Qualifications required to grant franchise

- Being a citizen of Sri Lanka
- Completion of 18 years of age
- Citizen's name should be included in the electoral list
- Being a person not subjected to disfranchise

Factors to be considered when casting the vote

- Electing educated, intelligent and exemplary leaders as representatives
- Being alert of policy papers produced before the elections
- Electing leaders who take care of public expectations instead of having personal expectations
- Electing leaders who are dedicated to implement national goals and principles

Importance of universal franchise

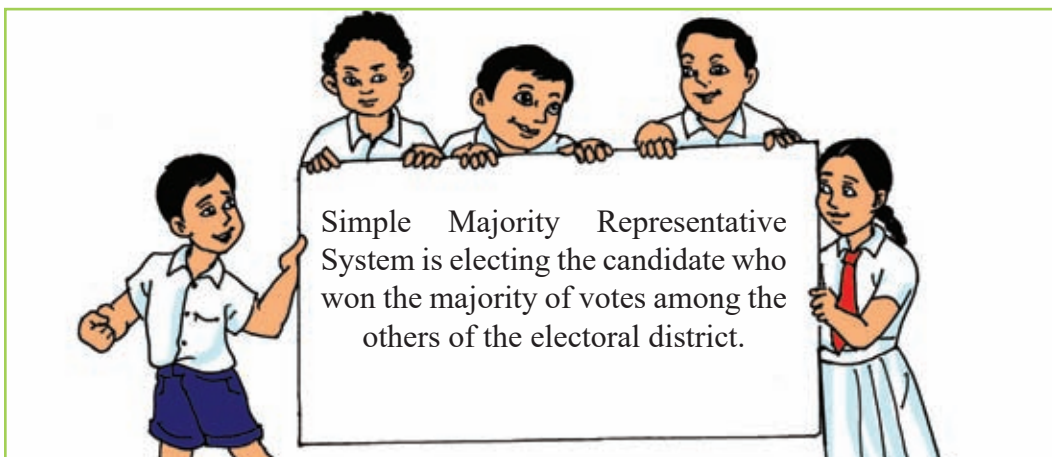
- Getting opportunity to all the citizens who are qualified to cast vote for one's political opinion, without any discrepancy
- Getting opportunity to elect suitable leaders
- Getting opportunity to all citizens to engage in active politics
- Being able to expand political knowledge of the people
- Developing the sense of citizens that they are stake holders of governance
- Getting opportunity to elect rulers whom they like and reject rulers they dislike

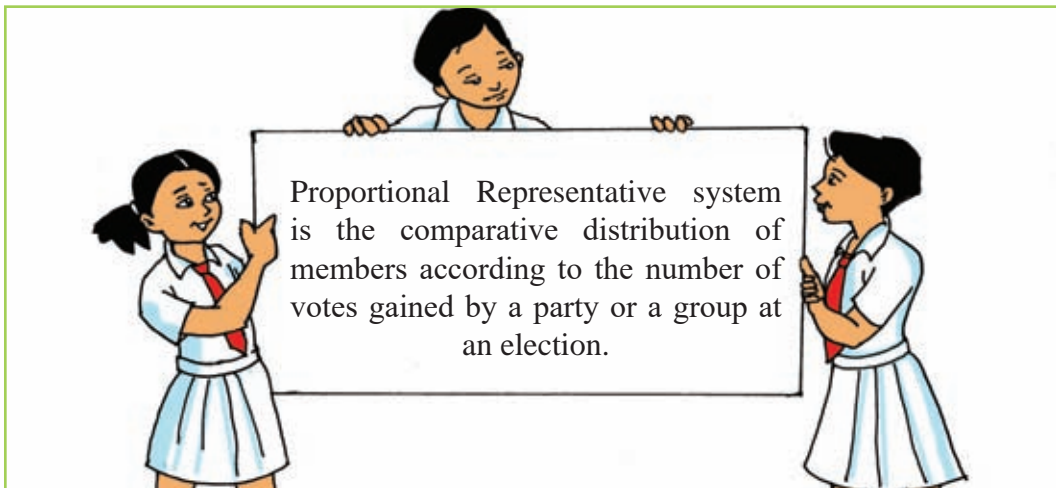
3.4.4 Rights of the public related to elections

Election is an opportunity where people participate in governance. Let us simply discuss only two strategies of electing representatives at elections. They are introduced as representative systems.

- Simple Majority Representative system
- Proportional Representative system

There was a discussion about the representative methods among the students in the class. Later, they displayed two definitions of their own in front of the class.





Great Britain is an example for a country that holds elections using Simple Majority Representation system. Even in our country the same system functioned from 1931 - 1978.

Members for the parliament, provincial councils and Local Government Institutions are elected based on Proportional Representative System.

The teacher in-charge of Civic Education inquired about the rights and duties of citizens at an election. Based on a group discussion Devni's group came up to present a leaflet.

Rights of citizens related to election

- Inclusion of one's name in the electoral list
- Right to vote
- Getting the membership of a political party as one wishes
- Establishment of political parties
- Organising political meetings, taking part in them and expressing opinions
- Contesting as a candidate in elections
- Engaging in political propaganda activities
- Criticizing the government based on fair reasons

Duties of citizens related to election

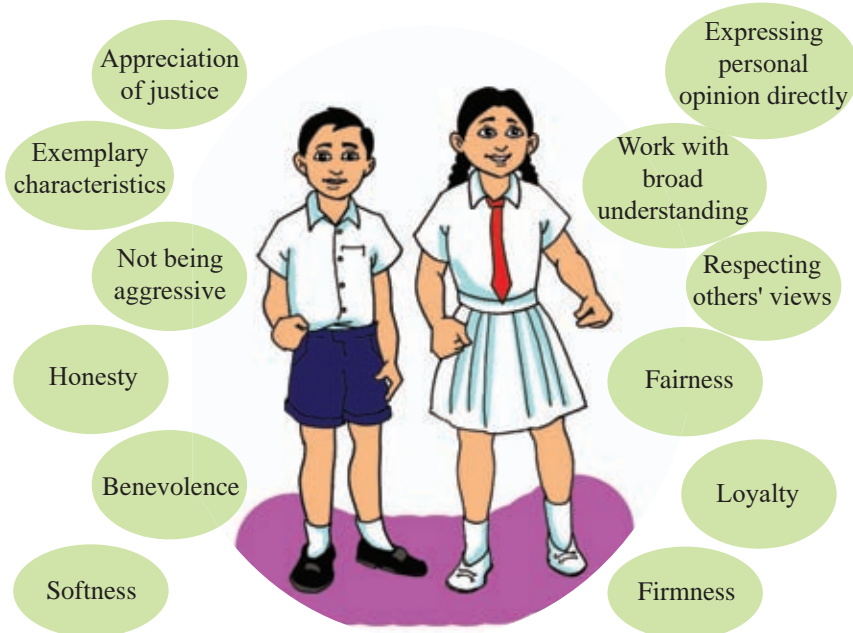
- Casting the vote
- Following the rules and regulations of elections
- Avoidance of violence
- Acceptance of victory and defeat in equanimity
- Helping to implement election rules
- Canvassing without violating others' rights.
- Expressing ideas without damaging others' dignity
- Respecting others' rights while enjoying victory and defeat
- Working without harming the law and order of the country and not supporting such activities

3.5 Assertiveness

3.5.1 Introduction to Assertiveness

Assertiveness means working on just, reasonable and firm principles according to one's own self-conscience. Assertiveness is a quality that should be developed right from the beginning as a student. It is very important to work with assertion to succeed your future life.

3.5.2 Qualities necessary to develop assertiveness within a person



Self assertiveness

- In the presence of any challenge being without changing one's proper and fair actions
- To do everything according to one's self-assertiveness
- Even at challenging situations not to involve in any unfair deals even under influence
- To work on firm principle critically with optimistic attitudes

Assertiveness with others

- When working with others, to work with one's own principles, self-conscience, rules and regulations and social norms
- Expressing one's own feelings when and where necessary
- Acting critically with positive attitudes and firm principles
- Responding firmly on correct things without having any personal benefits
- Need to be optimistic, firm and constructive when building up assertiveness with others

Activity 3.4



Some of the qualities necessary to develop assertiveness within a person are given in Column I. State how these qualities influence personal development in column II.

Column I	Column II
Qualities necessary to develop assertiveness	How it influences personal development
Honesty	
Appreciating Justice	
Exemplary characteristics	
Benevolence	

3.6 Nation Building

3.6.1 Introduction to the concept "Nation Building"

Nation Building is working together with different ethnic groups, religious groups or social groups as one nation to achieve development goals facing future challenges. It is essential to disregard differences of ethnic, religious, parties, caste or creed in nation building.

For an example, in our country people belong to Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher live together. Further, they belong to different religious groups such as Buddhists, Hindus, Islamics, Catholics and Christians. Everybody must dedicate for nation building with a sense of Sri Lankans.

Need of a national policy for nation building

3.6.2 Introduction to national policy

A long term action plan prepared in order to achieve the identified national development needs, is called as a national policy. It should exclude political party differences. The main focus should be the development of the country. Further the national policies should be for the betterment of the country, not for the personal needs or personal expectations of the rulers. Whatever the government comes to power, the national policy should continuously exist further.

National policy for education, national policy for economic development and national policy for proper garbage disposal can be given as some examples.

3.6.3 Need of a national policy

Having a national policy is essential to fulfil the development needs of a country. It helps to achieve public expectations as well as to reach the specific objectives.

Some of the benefits gained by having a national policy are given below:

- Economic and social development of the country
- Achieving specific objectives and goals
- Fulfill public expectations
- Help to achieve future challenges
- National unity occurs
- Creating sustainable national peace
- Creating sustainable development

3.6.4 Contribution to national policy making

Contribution to national policy making is a duty and a responsibility of everybody. It is important to provide active contribution as well as to do so without having personal benefits. Given below are some ideas of Grade 9 students, regarding the ways of contribution to nation building as a citizen:

- Assisting to identify national needs
- Making aware of the relevant sectors regarding identified regional needs
- Making suggestions and procedures for national policy making
- Contributing to national policy making
- Taking part in national policy making without having personal benefits
- Working according to the national policies

3.6.5 Working according to the national policy

It is important to work according to the national policy as well as to contribute actively in policy making.

Given below are some examples:

- Appreciating national policies that focus on public well-being
- Active contribution to implement accepted national policies
- Contribution to national development by working according to the national policies

3.6.6 Importance of dedicated contribution for nation building

It is very important to provide dedicated contribution for nation building.

Some examples for that are given below:

- Everyone's contribution towards nation building with a sense of patriotism
- Mental and physical commitment of all the citizens to their job/ profession to build the country
- Whatever a citizen does, should be done aiming at the national development

Dear children, you may involve in different activities such as cleaning the classroom, cleaning the school premises, growing plants, proper garbage disposal, etc. in the school. Although they all seem to be minor activities, they play a major role in nation building. When small children get together, we can do a great contribution to nation building as creating a big river by collecting small rain drops.

3.6.7 Procedure to be followed for nation building as a citizen

Think about the steps to be followed for nation building. As a citizen we can do an immense service for the country to stand as one nation. Some procedures to be followed for that, examples are given below:

- Fulfilling personal duties well
- Paying attention to what a person can do to the society rather than what the society can do to a person
- Need of dedication towards national unity and peace as a citizen
- Maintaining an affordable lifestyle
- Protecting public property
- Conserving environment
- Working for personal development while contributing to national development
- Providing maximum contribution to national development
- Working without expecting any personal benefits
- Performing one's duty honestly and committedly
- Not engaging in activities that are threats or influences for national security
- Providing one's service to the national development by getting good knowledge and labour
- Refrain from mal-activities like theft, corruption bribery, etc.

Activity 3.5



List the ways that you can contribute for nation building as a school student.

Summary



- Democracy is a governing system as well as a life style.
- Enjoying rights of a citizen in a democratic society should be done within a legal frame work.
- Franchise and elections are very important rights of a citizen in a democratic society.
- People get opportunity to participate in governance through indirect representation in elections.
- Franchise granted to all qualified citizens without discrimination is called universal franchise.
- Working on just and reasonable principles with self-confidence is called assertiveness.
- Having assertiveness with one self and working assertively with others highly enhance social development.
- For Nation Building, it is highly necessary for all the citizens to dedicate without any discrimination.
- There are a large number of qualities necessary to develop assertion within a person.
- Self assertion and assertion with others cause social development.
- Working together as one nation to achieve development goals facing future challenges of different ethnic groups, religious groups and societies is important.
- It is very important to work based on fruitful national policies for nation building.
- It is very important to fulfil duties as a citizen to nation building.
- One should work devotedly as a Sri Lankan, to build up national unity and sustainable peace.