CLASS 10 · DEMOCRATIC POLITICS II · CHAPTER 5

Outcomes of Democracy

Every section of the chapter in one sentence, with the key terms highlighted. To test yourself, cover the highlighted words with a strip of paper and say them aloud. The cartoons, graphs and tables are taken from the chapter PDF.

One-liners Outcomes table Memory tricks Flashcards Quiz Revision plan

One line per section

1 **How do we assess democracy's outcomes?**

We ask **what democracy does** and whether it meets our expectations in five areas: **quality of government**, **economic well-being**, **inequality**, **social differences and conflict**, and **freedom and dignity**.



Is democracy all about coping with multiple pressures and accommodating diverse demands?

Cartoon: Is democracy all about coping with multiple pressures and accommodating diverse demands? (© RK Laxman)

1.1 Why democracy is better

From Madam Lyngdoh's class (Class IX), democracy is better than dictatorship because it **promotes equality** among citizens, **enhances the dignity** of the individual, **improves the quality of decision-making**, provides a **method to resolve conflicts** and **allows room to correct mistakes**.

1.2 Good in principle, not so good in practice

Most people support democracy over rule by a **monarch, military or religious leaders**, yet few are satisfied with it in practice; this **dilemma** makes us ask whether we prefer democracy only for **moral reasons** or also for **prudential reasons**; **over a hundred countries** practise some kind of democracy (constitutions, elections, parties, rights), though they differ socially, economically and culturally.

1.3 Democracy is just a form of government

Democracy cannot solve every socio-economic and political problem; it is **just a form of government** that can only **create conditions** for achieving goals, and **citizens have to take advantage** of those conditions.

2 Accountable, responsive and legitimate government

People should have the **right to choose their rulers** and **control over the rulers**, so the **most basic outcome** of democracy is a government that is **accountable to the citizens** and **responsive to their needs and expectations**.

2.1 Is democratic government efficient?

Non-democratic rulers decide **quickly** because they ignore assemblies and public opinion, while democracy is based on **deliberation and negotiation**, so **some delay** happens; but decisions taken after following **procedures** are **more acceptable and more effective**, so the **cost of time** is worth it.

2.2 Transparency

Democratic decisions follow **norms and procedures**, and a citizen has the **right and the means to examine the process of decision making**; this is called **transparency**, often missing in a non-democratic government.



Cartoon: Governmental Secrecy (© Mike Keefe, Cagle Cartoons)

2.3 How to measure this outcome

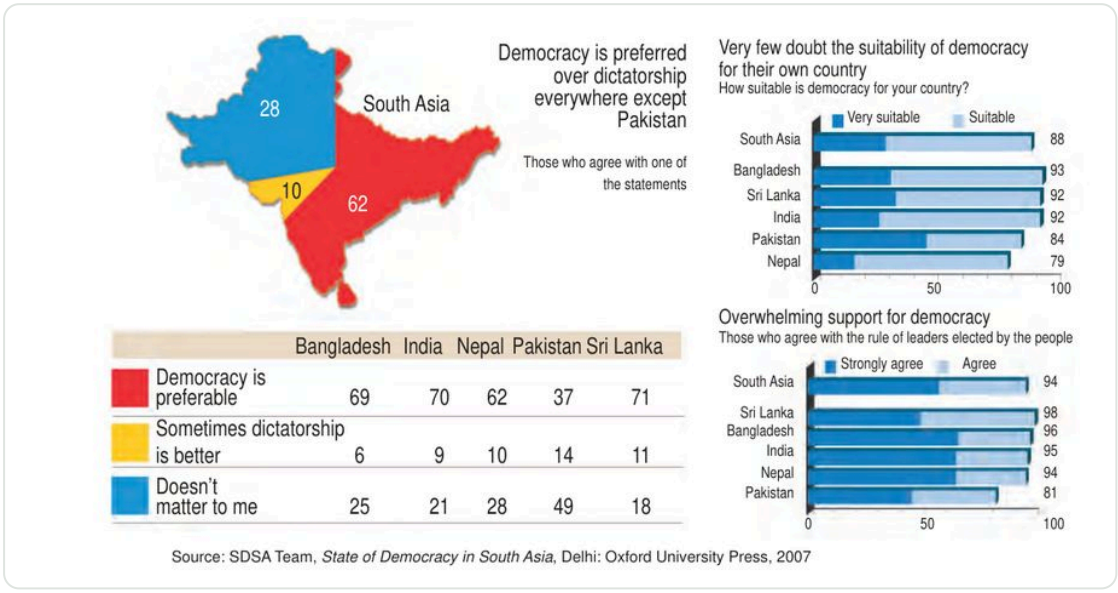
Look for **regular, free and fair elections**, **open public debate** on major policies and laws, and citizens' **right to information**; the record is **mixed**: good at **regular free elections and open debate**, weak at giving **everyone a fair chance** and at **sharing information**, but still **much better than non-democratic regimes**.

2.4 Responsive and free of corruption?

We expect a government **attentive to people's needs** and **largely free of corruption**, but democracies' record here is **not impressive**: they often **ignore the demands of the majority** and are **not free of corruption**; still, **non-democracies are not less corrupt** or more sensitive.

2.5 Legitimate government

Democracy is certainly better in one way: it is **legitimate government**, **people's own government**, even if slow or less clean; South Asian surveys show **overwhelming support** for democracy, even where it is absent, and **democracy's ability to generate its own support** is itself an outcome.



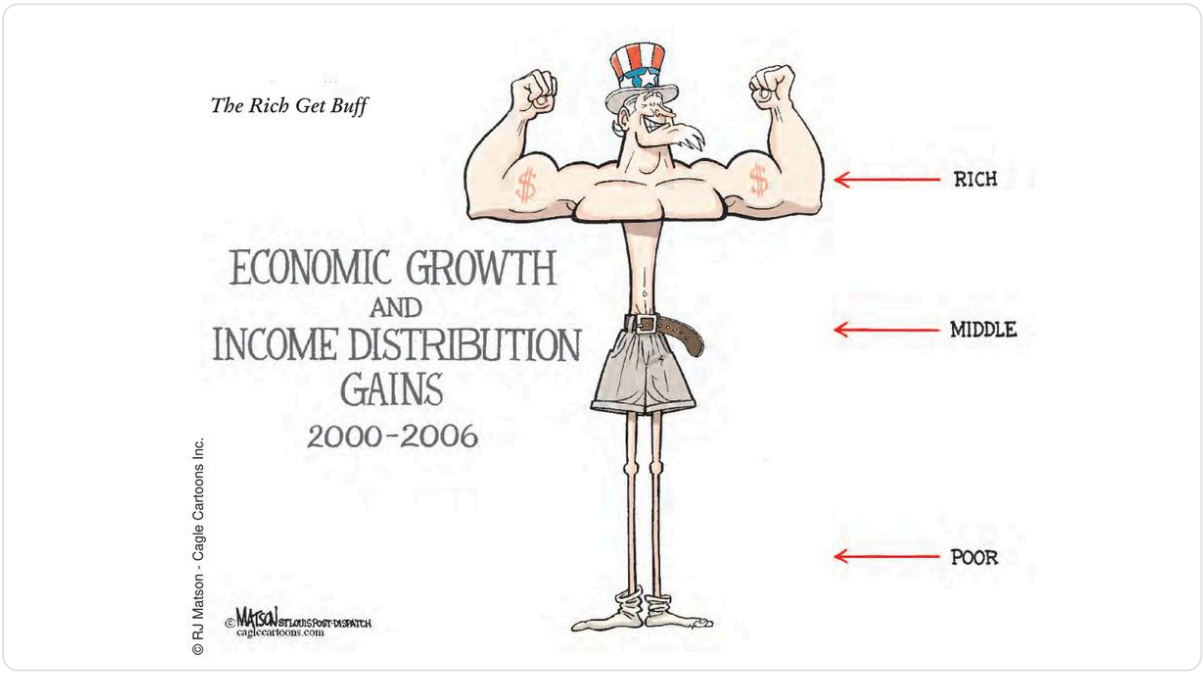
	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Democracy is preferable	69	70	62	37	71
Sometimes dictatorship is better	6	9	10	14	11
Doesn't matter to me	25	21	28	49	18

Source: SDSA Team, *State of Democracy in South Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007

Graphs: Support for democracy in South Asia (SDSA survey, 2007): democracy preferred over dictatorship everywhere except Pakistan; suitable for own country (South Asia 88); rule by elected leaders (South Asia 94)

3 Economic growth and development

Over **1950–2000**, **dictatorships had a slightly higher rate of economic growth**, but growth depends on **population size, global situation, cooperation from other countries and economic priorities**; between **poor countries the difference is negligible**, so democracy is **not a guarantee of development** but **should not lag behind dictatorships**, and it has other positive outcomes.



Cartoon: The Rich Get Buff: economic growth and income distribution gains, 2000-2006 (© RJ Matson, Cagle Cartoons)

3.1 Economic outcomes of democracy: the evidence

Table 1: growth rate of **all democracies 3.95** vs **all dictatorships 4.42**, but **poor dictatorships 4.34** vs **poor democracies 4.28** (virtually no difference); **Table 2**: in **South Africa and Brazil** the **top 20% take over 60%** of national income and the **bottom 20% get under 3%**, while **Denmark and Hungary** are much more equal.

Table 1

Rates of economic growth for different countries, 1950 2000

Type of regimes and countries	Growth Rate
All democratic regimes	3.95
All dictatorial regimes	4.42
Poor countries under dictatorship	4.34
Poor countries under democracy	4.28

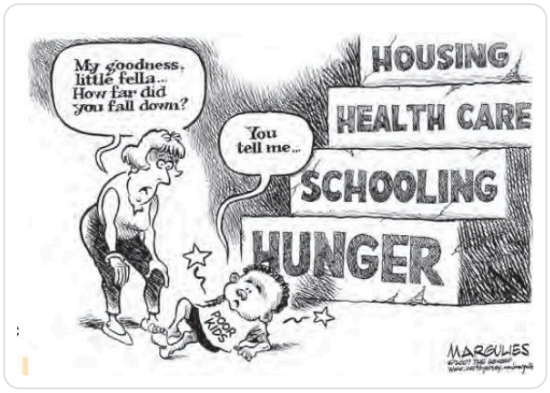
Source: A Przeworski, M E Alvarez, J A Cheibub and F Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950 -1990*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Table 2

Inequality of income in selected countries

Name of the Countries	% share of national income	
	Top 20 %	Bottom 20 %
South Africa	64.8	2.9
Brazil	63.0	2.6
Russia	53.7	4.4
USA	50.0	4.0
United Kingdom	45.0	6.0
Denmark	34.5	9.6
Hungary	34.4	10.0

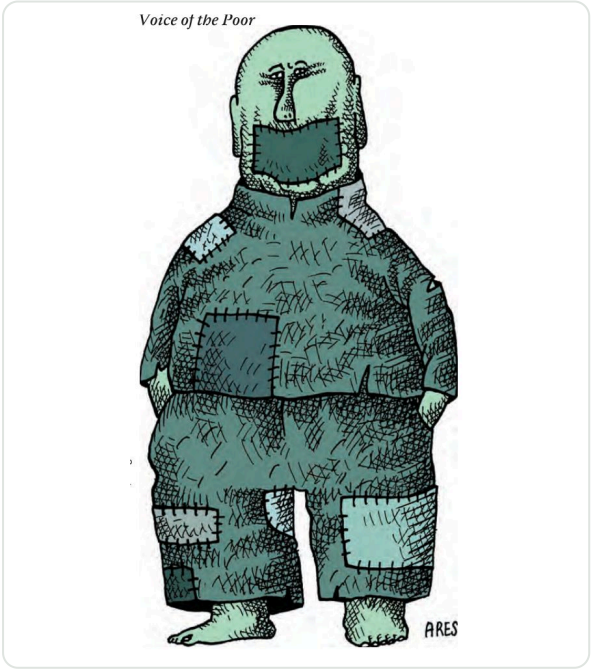
Table 1: Rates of economic growth, 1950-2000 · Table 2: Inequality of income in selected countries



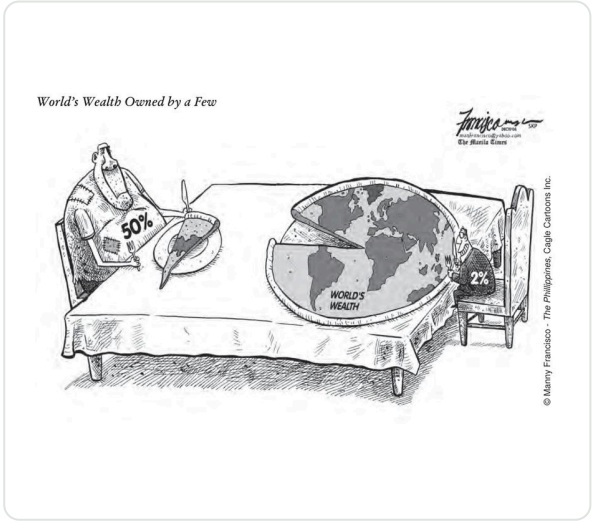
Cartoon: Poor Kids: housing, health care, schooling, hunger (© Jimmy Margulies, Cagle Cartoons)

4 Reduction of inequality and poverty

Democracies are based on **political equality** (**equal weight in electing representatives**), yet **economic inequalities are growing**: a small number of **ultra-rich** hold a highly **disproportionate share** of wealth that keeps rising, while the poorest struggle for **food, clothing, house, education and health**.



Cartoon: Voice of the Poor (© Ares, Cagle Cartoons)



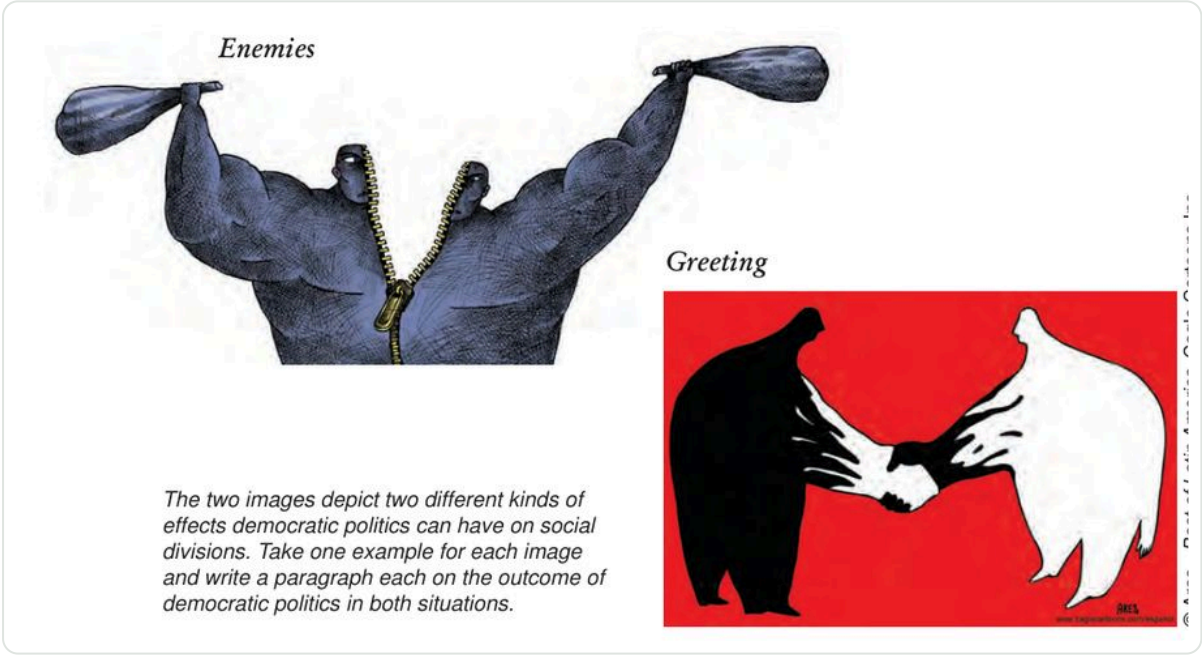
Cartoon: World's Wealth Owned by a Few (© Manny Francisco, Cagle Cartoons)

4.1 Democracy and poverty

Democracies are **not very successful in reducing economic inequalities**; the **poor are a large proportion of voters**, yet elected governments are **not as keen to address poverty** as expected; in **Bangladesh more than half** the people live in poverty, and several poor countries **depend on rich countries even for food**.

5 Accommodation of social diversity

Democracy should produce a **harmonious social life**: like **Belgium**, democracies **develop a procedure to conduct their competition**, which stops tensions turning **explosive or violent**; no society can fully resolve conflicts, but democracy helps **respect differences** and **negotiate them**, whereas non-democracies **turn a blind eye to or suppress** them.



Cartoons: Enemies and Greeting: two kinds of effects democratic politics can have on social divisions (© Ares, Cagle Cartoons)

5.1 Two conditions (lesson of Sri Lanka)

First, democracy is **not simply rule by majority opinion**: the majority must **work with the minority**, and **majority and minority opinions are not permanent**; second, **rule by majority must not become rule by majority community** (religion, race, language), because democracy stays democracy only while **every citizen has a chance of being in majority**; anyone **barred by birth** is not accommodated.

6 Dignity and freedom of the citizens

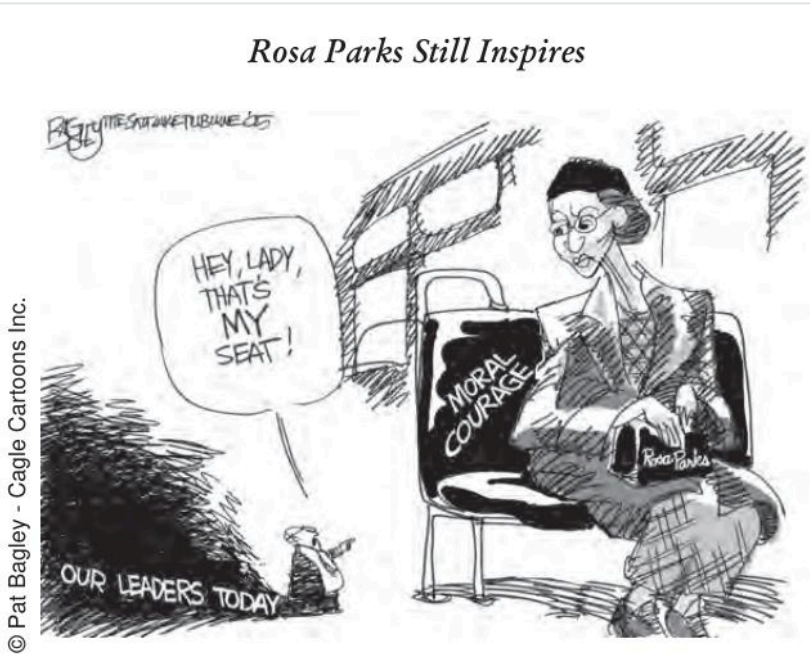
Democracy is **much superior** to any other government in promoting the **dignity and freedom of the individual**; the **passion for respect and freedom** is the basis of democracy, though societies built on **subordination and domination** find equality hard to accept.

6.1 Dignity of women

Most societies were **male dominated**, but **long struggles by women** made **respect and equal treatment of women** part of democracy; once the **principle is recognised**, women can fight what is now **unacceptable legally and morally**, which would have **no legal basis** in a non-democracy.

6.2 Caste inequalities

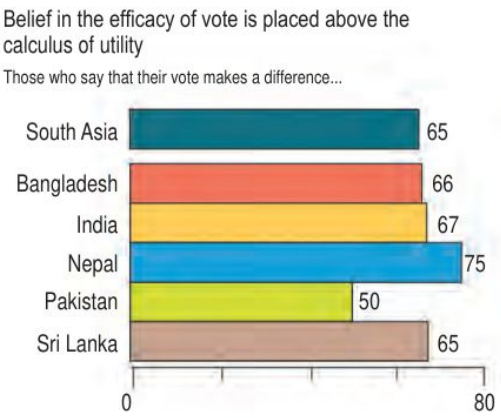
Democracy in India has **strengthened the claims of disadvantaged and discriminated castes** for **equal status and equal opportunity**; caste atrocities still happen but they **lack moral and legal foundations**.



Cartoon: Rosa Parks Still Inspires (© Pat Bagley, Cagle Cartoons)

6.3 An examination that never gets over

Expectations are the **criteria for judging** democracy, and its **examination never gets over**: as it passes one test, people **ask for more**; **complaining is itself a testimony to its success**, because it **transforms people from subjects into citizens**, and most people believe **their vote makes a difference**.



Source: SDSA Team, *State of Democracy in South Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Graph: Those who say their vote makes a difference: South Asia 65, Bangladesh 66, India 67, Nepal 75, Pakistan 50, Sri Lanka 65 (SDSA, 2007)



Source: Election Commission of India

Poster: How to cast your vote using EVM and VVPAT (Election Commission of India)

Five outcomes in one table

OUTCOME	WHAT WE EXPECT	WHAT DEMOCRACY DELIVERS	WHERE IT FALLS SHORT
Government	Accountable, responsive, legitimate; transparent decisions	Regular free elections, open public debate, transparency; legitimate "people's own" government with overwhelming support	Slow (deliberation); unfair chances in elections; poor at sharing information; corruption; ignores majority demands

OUTCOME	WHAT WE EXPECT	WHAT DEMOCRACY DELIVERS	WHERE IT FALLS SHORT
Economic growth	Development, at least as good as dictatorships	Among poor countries growth is nearly equal (4.28 vs 4.34)	Dictatorships slightly faster overall, 1950–2000 (4.42 vs 3.95); no guarantee of development
Inequality & poverty	Fair distribution of wealth and opportunities	Political equality: one person, equal weight in elections	Ultra-rich share keeps rising; poor ignored though they are many voters; Bangladesh: over half poor
Social diversity	Peaceful, harmonious social life	Procedures for competition; respects and negotiates differences (Belgium)	Fails if majority becomes permanent or a majority community rules (Sri Lanka)
Dignity & freedom	Respect and freedom for every individual	Legal and moral backing for women and disadvantaged castes; subjects become citizens	Discrimination and caste atrocities still happen in practice

Memory tricks

5 OUTCOME AREAS (CHAPTER ORDER)

G-E-I-S-D

"Good Eggs Is Sunday Dinner": **G**overnment, **E**conomic growth, **I**nequality & poverty, **S**ocial diversity, **D**ignity & freedom.

WHY DEMOCRACY IS BETTER

E-D-Q-C-M

"Every Dog Quietly Chews Mangoes": **E**quality, **D**ignity, **Q**uality of decisions, **C**onflict resolution, **M**istakes corrected.

BASIC OUTCOME

A-R-L

Accountable, **R**esponsive, **L**egitimate: "A Real Leader". Only **L** is a clear win over dictatorship.

HOW TO MEASURE IT

E-D-I

Elections (regular, free, fair), open public **D**ebate, right to **I**nformation. Good at E and D, weak at I.

TRANSPARENCY

See the process

Transparency = the citizen's **right and means to examine the process** of decision making. Opposite of the "Governmental Secrecy" cartoon.

TABLE 1 GROWTH RATES

3.95 · 4.42

All democracies 3.95, all dictatorships 4.42. Poor countries: dictatorship **4.34** vs democracy **4.28**, almost a tie ("the 4.3 tie").

TABLE 2 INEQUALITY

60 / 3

South Africa & Brazil: top 20% take over **60%**, bottom 20% get under **3%**. Denmark & Hungary: about **34 / 10**.

FACTORS IN GROWTH

P-G-C-P

Population size, **G**lobal situation, **C**ooperation from other countries, economic **P**riorities: "Pizza Gets Cold Personally".

SOCIAL DIVERSITY CONDITIONS

2 × "not"

Majority is **not permanent** (works with minority) and **not a community** (religion, race, language). Lesson: **Sri Lanka**; model: **Belgium**.

SURVEY NUMBERS (SOUTH ASIA)

94 · 88 · 65

94 want rule by elected leaders, **88** find democracy suitable, **65** say their vote makes a difference. Pakistan is lowest each time.

DIGNITY EXAMPLES

W + C

Women and **C**aste: once the principle is recognised, discrimination loses its **legal and moral** base.

BIG IDEA

Subject → Citizen

Complaints show success: democracy's "exam" never ends, and it turns a **subject** into a **citizen**.

Nannu's RTI story (Exercise 8): read it as a timeline

`Jan 2004` Nannu, a daily wage earner in Welcome Mazdoor Colony (East Delhi), loses his ration card and applies for a duplicate.

`3 months` Rounds to the Food and Civil Supplies office; clerks ignore him.

`RTI` He files an application under the *Right to Information Act* asking for progress, officials' names and action against them.

`1 week` An inspector visits: the card is ready.

`Next day` The Food and Supply Officer offers him tea and asks him to withdraw the RTI application.

Lesson: the right to information makes government **accountable and responsive**; ordinary citizens can make officials act.

Democracy vs dictatorship, point by point

Speed of decisions	Dictatorship faster; democracy slower because of deliberation and negotiation, but its decisions are more acceptable and effective.
Transparency	Democracy: citizens can examine the process. Dictatorship: often missing.
Corruption & responsiveness	Democracy's record not impressive, but non-democracies are no less corrupt or more sensitive.
Legitimacy	Democracy clearly better: people's own government.
Economic growth	Dictatorships slightly higher overall (4.42 vs 3.95); negligible gap in poor countries.
Social differences	Democracy negotiates them; non-democracies ignore or suppress them.

Dignity & freedom	Democracy much superior: gives legal and moral force to equal treatment.

Only economic growth tilts (slightly) towards dictatorship; everywhere else democracy is equal or better.

Flashcards

Cover the answer (→) with your hand, say it out loud, then check.

Five ways democracy is better than other forms (Class IX)?

→ Promotes equality, enhances dignity, improves decision-making, resolves conflicts, allows correcting mistakes

Democracy is good in principle but...

→ Felt to be not so good in practice (the dilemma)

Why is democracy 'just a form of government'?

→ It only creates conditions; citizens must use them to achieve goals

Most basic outcome of democracy?

→ A government accountable to citizens and responsive to their needs

Why are democratic decisions slower?

→ Democracy is based on deliberation and negotiation

Why is the delay worth it?

→ Decisions after procedures are more acceptable and more effective

Define transparency.

→ A citizen's right and means to examine the process of decision making

Three practices to measure accountable government?

→ Regular free & fair elections, open public debate, right to information

In which respect is democracy certainly better than its alternatives?

→ It is legitimate government: people's own government

Growth rate 1950–2000: all democracies vs all dictatorships?

→ 3.95 vs 4.42

Growth rate in poor countries: dictatorship vs democracy?

→ 4.34 vs 4.28 (virtually no difference)

Factors economic development depends on?

→ Population size, global situation, cooperation from other countries, economic priorities

Top 20% income share in South Africa and Brazil?

→ Over 60% (64.8 and 63.0); bottom 20% under 3%

Which countries are more equal in Table 2?

→ Denmark and Hungary

Democracies are based on which equality?

→ Political equality: equal weight in electing representatives

Country where more than half the population lives in poverty?

→ Bangladesh

Which country shows successful negotiation of ethnic differences?

→ Belgium

Two conditions to accommodate social diversity?

→ Not simply majority rule (majority not permanent); majority rule must not become rule by majority community

Why are complaints a sign of democracy's success?

→ People have awareness to look critically at power holders; subjects become citizens

Which Act did Nannu use to get his ration card?

→ Right to Information Act

Quick quiz

First three are the textbook MCQs (Exercises 5–7). The correct answer is outlined in green; cover the options and answer first.

1. Democracies have successfully eliminated...

- Conflicts among people
- Economic inequalities among people
- Differences of opinion about how marginalised sections are to be treated
- **The idea of political inequality**

2. Odd one out: democracies need to ensure...

- Free and fair elections
- Dignity of the individual
- **Majority rule**
- Equal treatment before law

3. Studies on political and social inequalities in democracy show that...

- Democracy and development go together
- **Inequalities exist in democracies**
- Inequalities do not exist under dictatorship
- Dictatorship is better than democracy

4. A citizen's right and means to examine the process of decision making is called...

- Legitimacy
- **Transparency**
- Accountability
- Deliberation

5. Between 1950 and 2000, which had a slightly higher rate of economic growth?

Democracies | **Dictatorships** | Both equal | Monarchies

6. Growth rate of poor countries under democracy (Table 1)?

3.95 | 4.42 | 4.34 | **4.28**

7. In which country do the top 20% take 64.8% of national income?

Brazil | USA | **South Africa** | Denmark

8. The example that reminds us democracy must not become rule by the majority community:

Belgium | **Sri Lanka** | Denmark | Hungary

9. Respect for women in democracy became stronger mainly because of...

Long struggles by women | Economic growth | Military rule | Foreign aid

10. A public expression of dissatisfaction with democracy shows...

Its failure | **The success of the democratic project** | The need for dictatorship | Lack of awareness

Revision plan

Day 1
Read the one-liners aloud twice. Then cover the highlighted terms and fill the blanks.

Day 2
Write the five-outcomes table from memory on blank paper. Check and fix in red.

Day 4
Flashcards + quiz. Re-read only the sections you missed.

Day 7
Explain "democracy vs dictatorship" to someone in 5 minutes without looking.

Day 14
Answer textbook Exercises 1–4 and Nannu's passage using the key terms.

MAP METHOD

On a blank South Asia outline map, write the survey numbers beside each country: "vote makes a difference" (Nepal 75, India 67, Bangladesh 66, Sri Lanka 65, Pakistan 50). Mark Belgium (accommodation works) and Sri Lanka (majority community rule) on a world map.

MEMORY PALACE

Walk through your home: the **door** is the government that opens to citizens (A-R-L), the **living room** holds the growth tables (3.95 vs 4.42), the **kitchen** is the world's-wealth cake (inequality), the **dining table** seats Belgium and Sri Lanka (diversity), and the **balcony** is Rosa Parks and the vote (dignity).

BLURTING

Close the book, set a 5-minute timer and write every key term and number you remember. The gaps show you what to revise.