



Class 9 Social Science – Chapter 6

Notes



Democracy



Textbook: *Understanding Society: India and Beyond – Grade 9, Part 1*



Subject: Social Science – Political Science



Chapter: 6



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1. What Is Democracy?

Democracy is a form of government in which the **source of power and authority lies with the citizens**.

Citizens participate in governance by choosing their representatives through **free and fair elections**.

Democracy is based on important principles such as:

-  Freedom
-  Equality
-  Justice
-  Rights
-  Duties
-  Participation
-  Representation

The Constitution of India provides the framework for democratic governance and protects the Fundamental Rights of citizens.



2. India – The World's Largest Democracy

India is described in the textbook as the **world's largest democracy**.

With a population of more than **140 crore** and a voter base of more than **96.8 crore in 2024**, India represents an enormous exercise in democratic participation.

What makes Indian democracy significant?

-  Huge and diverse electorate
-  Regular elections
-  Participation across different regions
-  Representation of diverse communities
-  Constitutional safeguards
-  Democratic institutions

India's democratic system brings together citizens from different **linguistic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds**.

3. The Constitution and Democracy

The **Constitution of India** is central to India's democratic system.

Important Dates

26 November 1949

 Constitution adopted

26 January 1950

 Constitution came into force

The Constitution:

-  Protects Fundamental Rights
-  Promotes equality
-  Prevents discrimination
-  Establishes institutions of government
-  Provides for democratic participation
-  Supports governance at different levels

The textbook specifically notes that citizens cannot be discriminated against on the basis of **religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth**.



4. Democratic Traditions in Early India

The textbook explains that democratic ideas in India **did not appear suddenly in modern times**.

They developed through a long historical process.

A verse from the **Rigveda, 10.191.3**, is presented in the chapter in connection with ideas of collective counsel, common assembly and shared resolve.



Early Assemblies

The previous chapter discussed assemblies associated with early Indian society.

These traditions demonstrate that ideas of:

- 🗣️ Collective discussion
- 🗣️ Consultation
- 👥 Assembly
- 🧠 Shared decision-making

have deep historical roots in India.



5. Democracy Around the World

Democracy takes different forms in different countries.

The textbook introduces:



Representative Democracy

People elect representatives who govern on their behalf.

Example: 🇮🇳 India



Parliamentary Democracy

The executive is accountable to the legislature.

Examples: 🇮🇳 India and 🇨🇦 Canada

Presidential Democracy

The executive is independent of the legislature, and the President is elected by the people.

Example:  United States of America

Direct Democracy

Citizens participate directly in important decision-making processes.

Example:  Switzerland

Direct democracy can be difficult to practise on a large scale in very populous countries.



6. Parliamentary and Presidential Democracy

Parliamentary Democracy

In a parliamentary system:

-  People elect the legislature
-  Executive members are also part of the legislature
-  The executive is accountable to the legislature
-  The Prime Minister heads the government in India

Example:

 India

Presidential Democracy

In a presidential system:

-  The President is elected by the people
-  The executive is independent of the legislature
-  The President heads the government

-  The President is accountable to the people

Example:

 **United States of America**

7. Essential Features of Democracy

Democracy is more than simply holding elections.

Important features include:

Popular Sovereignty

The ultimate authority rests with the people.

Rule of Law

Everyone is subject to the law.

Separation of Powers

Different organs of government have different functions.

Fundamental Rights

Citizens are guaranteed important rights.

Accountability and Transparency

Government institutions must be answerable to citizens.

Multi-Party System

Different political parties can participate in political competition.

These features are specifically highlighted in the textbook's discussion of Indian democracy.



8. Rule of Law

Rule of Law means that the law is supreme and applies to everyone.

No individual, institution or government authority is above the law.



Importance

Rule of law helps protect:

- Equality
- Rights
- Justice
- Constitutional government

It is an essential safeguard for democracy.



9. Separation of Powers

Democratic government distributes authority among different institutions.



Legislature

Makes laws.



Executive

Implements laws and runs administration.



Judiciary

Interprets laws and delivers justice.



Why is separation important?

It helps prevent excessive concentration of power and creates **checks and balances** among institutions.

10. Accountability and Transparency

Transparency

Government actions and decisions should be open to public scrutiny.

Accountability

Government officials and institutions must explain and justify their actions.

The textbook gives examples such as:

-  Parliamentary Question Hour
-  Auditing of government accounts
-  Right to Information

These mechanisms help citizens monitor government functioning.

11. Question Hour

Question Hour is the first hour of a parliamentary session when members ask questions to the government.

It helps Parliament:

-  Examine government actions
-  Seek information
-  Check implementation
-  Hold the government accountable

Therefore, Question Hour is an important democratic accountability mechanism.

12. Role of Media in Democracy

The media plays an important role in a democracy.

It includes:

-  Newspapers
-  News channels
-  Social media platforms
-  Digital media

Media:

-  Brings public issues to attention
-  Gives people a voice
-  Keeps citizens informed
-  Highlights problems
-  Encourages public discussion

Because of its role in safeguarding people's voices and democratic principles, the media is often called the:

 **“Fourth Pillar of Democracy”**

13. Civil Society

Civil society refers to voluntary groups, NGOs and community associations that function within society.

Examples include:

-  Community organisations
-  Environmental groups
-  Social organisations
-  NGOs
-  Citizen associations

Civil society can:

-  Raise public concerns
-  Encourage participation
-  Create awareness
-  Hold institutions accountable

The textbook includes civil society among the participatory processes that strengthen democratic life.

14. Participatory Democracy

Democracy is not limited to voting.

Participatory democracy emphasises citizens' active involvement in:

-  Policy-making
-  Local government
-  Public consultations
-  Community initiatives
-  Local decision-making

Citizens can participate through local councils, public consultations and community-driven initiatives.

15. Democracy at the Grassroots

India has democratic institutions at different levels.

Three-Tier System

1.  **Union Government**
2.  **State Government**
3.  **Local Government**

This structure supports both administrative efficiency and democratic participation.

16. Panchayati Raj

The **Panchayati Raj system** provides democratic institutions in rural areas.

Important institutions include:

-  Gram Sabha
-  Gram Panchayat
-  Panchayat Samiti
-  Zila Parishad

Gram Sabha

The Gram Sabha provides a platform for local citizens to participate in decisions concerning their village.

It represents democracy at the grassroots level.

17. Urban Local Government

Urban areas have local bodies such as:

-  Municipalities
-  Municipal Corporations

They deal with local issues such as:

-  Water supply
 -  Sanitation
 -  Roads
 -  Street lighting
 -  Waste management
 -  Local public services
-

18. Tribal Self-Governance

The Constitution also provides mechanisms to protect tribal heritage and traditions.

Autonomous District Councils

In specific north-eastern regions, **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)** have legislative and judicial authority to preserve tribal customs.

PESA Act, 1996

The **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996**, applies to tribal areas in other states.

It gives an important role to the **Gram Sabha** as the primary decision-making body.

19. Federalism

Federalism is a system in which power and responsibilities are shared between different levels of government.

In India, power is distributed between:

 Union



 States



 Local Bodies

The Constitution provides the framework for this distribution of powers.

The textbook describes India's federal system through the Union, State and Concurrent Lists, with residual powers remaining with the Union government.

20. Universal Adult Franchise

Universal Adult Franchise means that adult citizens have the right to vote without discrimination based on factors such as:

-  Gender
-  Gender
-  Caste
-  Religion
-  Place of birth

When the Constitution came into force in **1950**, India extended voting rights to men and women alike.

21. Women and Democracy

Women were historically denied voting rights in many countries.

United Kingdom

Women received full voting rights in **1928**.

United States

Women received voting rights in **1920**.

India

When the Constitution came into force in **1950**, universal adult franchise applied to men and women alike.

However, the textbook emphasises that **having the right to vote does not automatically guarantee equal political participation**. Social prejudices can still affect women's representation.



22. Women's Representation in Local Bodies

The Constitution provides reservation for women in local government.



Panchayats

Article 243D provides for **not less than one-third reservation** for women in seats filled by direct election in every Panchayat.

Some states have gone further and provided **50% reservation** in Panchayati Raj Institutions.



Municipalities

Article 243T provides for not less than one-third reservation for women in seats filled by direct election in every Municipality.

Some states have also provided 50% reservation in Urban Local Bodies.



23. Elections and Democracy

Periodic elections are an important feature of representative democracy.

Elections allow citizens to:

-  Choose representatives
-  Express preferences
-  Change governments
-  Influence public policy
-  Participate in governance

India's ability to conduct elections across a huge and diverse population demonstrates the organisational strength of its democratic institutions.

 **Note:** The textbook says the detailed study of elections comes in the **next chapter**, “**Elections.**”



24. Democratic Institutions in India

Important institutions include:



Parliament

Makes laws and holds the executive accountable.



Election Commission of India

Conducts and supervises elections.



Judiciary

Protects constitutional principles and delivers justice.



Local Bodies

Enable participation at the grassroots level.



Accountability Institutions

These include:

-  Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)
-  Central Information Commission (CIC)

-  Lokpal
-  Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

These institutions contribute to transparency and accountability.

25. Challenges to Indian Democracy

Democracy faces several challenges.

The textbook identifies issues including:

-  Illiteracy
-  Misinformation
-  Inequality
-  Poverty
-  Regionalism
-  Gender inequality
-  Social discrimination
-  Gaps in implementation of laws and policies

These challenges can reduce equal participation and public trust in institutions.

26. Misinformation and Fake News

The spread of **fake news and misinformation**, especially through social media and digital platforms, is a major concern.

Misinformation can:

-  Influence public opinion
-  Create confusion
-  Increase conflict
-  Distort public debate
-  Reduce trust in institutions

What Should Citizens Do?

Before believing or sharing information:

-  Check the source
-  Compare credible sources
-  Look for reliable reporting
-  Avoid forwarding unverified claims
-  Think critically

The textbook emphasises that access to **accurate and authentic information** is important for informed democratic participation.

27. The Emergency, 1975–77

One of the major challenges to Indian democracy discussed in the chapter is the **National Emergency of 1975–77**.

Background

In the early 1970s, public dissatisfaction increased because of issues such as:

-  Inflation
-  Unemployment
-  Allegations of misgovernance
-  Widespread protests

In **June 1975**, a National Emergency was imposed on the grounds of **internal disturbance**.

During the Emergency

-  A majority of Fundamental Rights were suspended
-  Press censorship was imposed
-  Political leaders and activists were arrested
-  Democratic institutions came under severe strain
-  Citizens' freedoms were restricted

Mass movements led by **Jayaprakash Narayan**, popularly known as **Lok Nayak**, mobilised students and citizens, particularly in Bihar and Gujarat.

1977

The Emergency was lifted in **1977** and general elections were held.

The defeat of the ruling government demonstrated the importance and resilience of democratic participation.

28. Constitutional Emergency Provisions

The Constitution contains provisions relating to different types of emergency.

Article 352

National Emergency

Article 356

President's Rule

Article 360

Financial Emergency

These provisions are specifically noted in the chapter's discussion of the Emergency.

29. Democracy and You

Young citizens also have an important role in democracy.

Being **well-informed** is one of the responsibilities of a young citizen.

Stay Informed

Students can:

-  Read newspapers
-  Follow reliable news
-  Use the internet responsibly
-  Verify information
-  Form informed opinions

Access to authentic information helps young citizens understand public issues and participate positively in society.



30. Civic Responsibility

Civic responsibility includes:

-  Respecting others' rights
-  Using social media responsibly
-  Following laws and rules
-  Appreciating India's diversity
-  Participating in activities that strengthen unity
-  Taking leadership in school and community
-  Contributing to nation-building

The textbook also highlights programmes such as:

-  **NSS – National Service Scheme**
-  **NCC – National Cadet Corps**
-  **Bharat Scouts & Guides**

as avenues for developing civic responsibility and participation.



31. Youth and Democracy

Young people can strengthen democracy by:



Being Media Literate

Check information before believing or sharing it.



Understanding the Constitution

Know your rights and responsibilities.



Following Fundamental Duties

Act responsibly towards society and the nation.



Taking Leadership

Participate in school and community activities.

Nation-Building

Participate in constructive programmes and community service.

Quick Revision

 Topic	 Key Point
 Democracy	Government in which authority ultimately rests with citizens
 Popular Sovereignty	People are the ultimate source of political authority
 Rule of Law	Everyone is subject to the law
 Separation of Powers	Different organs have different functions
 Fundamental Rights	Constitutional rights of citizens
 Accountability	Government must answer for its actions
 Transparency	Government functioning should be open to scrutiny
 Media	Often called the fourth pillar of democracy
 Civil Society	Voluntary groups, NGOs and community associations
 Representative Democracy	People elect representatives
 Direct Democracy	Citizens participate directly in decision-making
 Parliamentary Democracy	Executive is accountable to legislature
 Presidential Democracy	Executive is independent of legislature
 Decentralisation	Power shared with local bodies
 Federalism	Power shared between levels of government

 Universal Adult Franchise	Adult citizens have the right to vote
 Misinformation	False or misleading information can weaken democracy
 Emergency	Exceptional constitutional situation affecting governance
 Civic Responsibility	Responsible participation in democratic life

32. Important Terms to Remember

-  **Democracy**
 -  **Popular Sovereignty**
 -  **Rule of Law**
 -  **Separation of Powers**
 -  **Fundamental Rights**
 -  **Accountability**
 -  **Transparency**
 -  **Fourth Pillar of Democracy**
 -  **Civil Society**
 -  **Representative Democracy**
 -  **Direct Democracy**
 -  **Parliamentary Democracy**
 -  **Presidential Democracy**
 -  **Decentralisation**
 -  **Federalism**
 -  **Universal Adult Franchise**
 -  **Misinformation**
 -  **Emergency**
 -  **Civic Responsibility**
 -  **Participatory Democracy**
-

33. Important Practice Questions

1

What is democracy? Explain its main principles.

2

How has the idea of democracy evolved over time?

3

What are the different forms of democracy?

4

Differentiate between **parliamentary democracy** and **presidential democracy**.

5

What is **popular sovereignty**?

6

Why is the **Rule of Law** essential for democracy?

7

Explain the importance of **separation of powers**.

8

How do accountability and transparency strengthen democracy?

9

Why is the media called the **fourth pillar of democracy**?

10

What is participatory democracy?

11

How does **Panchayati Raj** strengthen democracy at the grassroots level?

12

What is federalism? Explain how it operates in India.

13

What is Universal Adult Franchise? How did India implement it?

14

Why does the right to vote not automatically guarantee equal political participation?

15

What is the role of women in strengthening democratic institutions?

16

What are the major challenges faced by Indian democracy?

17

How can misinformation and fake news weaken democracy?

18

What happened during the Emergency of 1975–77?

19

What are the roles of Articles **352**, **356** and **360**?

20

What responsibilities do young citizens have in a democracy?

These themes correspond closely to the chapter's own end-of-chapter questions, which ask students to examine democracy, Rule of Law, social media, the Constitution, democratic institutions and challenges to Indian democracy.



34. Chapter 6 Exam Focus

Before your exam, make sure you can:

- ✓ Define **Democracy**
 - ✓ Explain **Popular Sovereignty**
 - ✓ Explain the **Rule of Law**
 - ✓ Explain **Separation of Powers**
 - ✓ Understand **Fundamental Rights**
 - ✓ Explain **Accountability and Transparency**
 - ✓ Compare **Direct and Representative Democracy**
 - ✓ Compare **Parliamentary and Presidential Democracy**
 - ✓ Explain the role of **Media**
 - ✓ Explain **Civil Society**
 - ✓ Understand **Participatory Democracy**
 - ✓ Explain **Panchayati Raj** and grassroots democracy
 - ✓ Explain **Federalism** and decentralisation
 - ✓ Understand **Universal Adult Franchise**
 - ✓ Explain **women's political participation**
 - ✓ Understand the **Emergency of 1975–77**
 - ✓ Identify major **challenges to Indian democracy**
 - ✓ Explain the importance of **media literacy**
 - ✓ Understand **civic responsibility**
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Final Quick Revision

Democracy

 People →  Participation →  Representatives →  Rights →  Accountability →  Responsible Citizenship

Indian Democracy

 Constitution +  Elections +  Institutions +  Rights +  Participation +  Free Expression

Young Citizen

 Stay Informed →  Verify Information →  Know the Constitution →  Respect Others →  Use Social Media Responsibly →  Participate in Nation-Building

★ Remember

Democracy is not only about voting. It also requires participation, equality, rights, responsibilities, accountability, transparency, informed citizens and respect for

democratic values. The textbook explicitly asks students to consider whether voting alone is enough to make a country democratic.