

Q54

Q813

"Man's Capacity for justice makes democracy possible but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary"  
Comment.

The radical aspect of democracy that sets it apart from all systems of governments before it, is that it reposes trust in the wisdom of the people. Thus the character of a population determines the prospects of democracy in a nation.

Democracy is possible because each individual has the capacity for justice i.e. for identifying the difference between right and wrong, applying the prevalent conceptions of ethics at the time. Since democracy operates by numerical majority, it is essential that injustice done even to a minority will affect the electoral choices of a majority. Only a sense of justice can ensure this. The massive electoral defeat of the Congress government in 1978 after the lifting of the arbitrarily imposed emergency, is an example of people's capacity for justice and penalising the wrongdoer, at a time when even the judiciary did not (ADM Jabalpur case)

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However, the need for democracy also rises from the character of the people - especially those in power. In the absence of democracy, the tyranny of the rulers stands little chance of being checked. Often, it is the most egregious forms of injustice that provides the final push for a change to democracy, as seen in South Sudan recently where a powerful and brutal military regime was displaced by popular effort to give way to a democracy. Examples like Bhutan where democracy was established supported by a monarch are rare.

Thus democracy is both a realisation of and a safeguard against the nature of man and men.

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