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## Democracy: A hollow facade

without human rights

### A. Introduction

The essence of democracy lies in its adherence to fundamental human rights, without which it is an empty shell of governance.

### B. Human Rights as the Fundamental Element of Democracy

- (i) Freedom of speech is a vital component in upholding democracy
- (ii) Informed citizens and their choices influence democratic institutions and policies.
- (iii) Academic autonomy fosters intellectual exploration essential for democratic governance
- (iv) Cultural and religious liberties encourage diversity of belief and practice which crucial for democracy

### C. Challenges to human rights within democratic structures

- (i) Erosion of civil liberties in the name of national security.

Case Study: Recent law passed by Hong Kong is considered to follow erode civil liberties according to critics

- (ii) Aggravating humanitarian crises and displacement

Case Study: - Syrian civil war ongoing since 2011  
- Israel - Hamas war ongoing since 2023

- (iii) Increasing discrimination and violence against minority groups.

Case Study: According to BBC, the Chinese government has imprisoned more than 1 million Muslims of Uyghurs and subject them to violence and abuse.

(iv) Perpetuating social injustice and denying basic human rights

Case Study: According to BBC, India has been plagued by issues of economic inequality and poor working conditions. Deaths of 1100 garment workers in 2022

D. Way forwards to foster Human Rights for Democratic Stability

(i) Promoting inclusivity and empowering marginalized community.

(ii) Enforcing legal protections for vulnerable groups

(iii) Investing in conflict resolution and prevention

(iv) Enhancing electoral integrity and safeguarding democratic processes.

E. Conclusion

Introduction

Democracy stands as one of the most cherished political systems around the globe. It works on the ideals of equality, freedom and justice. It also fosters civic engagement and safeguards individual rights through the framework of inclusive governance. The true essence of democracy lies in the protection and promotion of human rights without which democracy becomes devoid of moral legitimacy. Freedom of speech and expression is considered one of the fundamental human rights and also a basis of democratic ideals. Similarly, a well-educated and informed citizen is also a key component in upholding the democratic practices. However,

the reality is far from perfect, as numerous challenges persist in upholding these rights within democratic structures. For example, increasing humanitarian crisis and erosion of civil liberties in the name of national security. Increasing discrimination and violence against minorities resulting into violation of human rights. However, by implementing strategic measures, these hurdles can be overcome, paving the way for a more equitable society. In a nutshell it can be stated that the essence of democracy lies in its adherence to human rights, without which it is an empty shell of governance.

<sup>body para 1</sup> As it has been stated above that fundamental human rights form the bedrock of democracy, their protection is necessary. Among these rights, freedom of speech holds particular significance. It enables citizens to express their opinions, engage in political activities and hold the authorities accountable whenever there is a need to do so. Without unrestrained exercise of freedom of speech, democratic countries risk limiting the open exchange of ideas and diversity of opinions leading to a lack of transparency and accountability. For example, in democratic countries like USA, the First Amendment passed by the Congress guarantees the right to free speech allowing the individuals to put forward their opposing views and challenge governmental actions if required. Hence, the preservation of freedom

speech is essential for fostering an informed democracy.

body para 2

There is no doubt that freedom of speech is a vital component in upholding democracy, but informed citizens who are free to make their own choices also play a critical role in shaping the trajectory of democratic institutions. Societies where citizens have the opportunity to access diverse sources of information, actively engage in analysing and evaluating various governmental policies. This active engagement empowers them to make choices aligned with their own interests. For example, during the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King with the help of informed citizens chived to minimize the racial segregation and discrimination. Thus, the choices of informed citizens ensures that democratic institutions remain responsive and accountable.

conclusion

In conclusion, the interdependence between democracy and human rights is undeniable, as supported by the intricate web of connections between them. Without human rights, democracy is prone to erosion and manipulation. As discussed earlier, freedom of speech, access to information, citizen engagement and various other rights form the pillars upon which democracy stands. However, these rights face numerous challenges from

ethnic cleansing to armed conflicts and civil wars, each undermining principles of democracy and human rights. Nevertheless, there still exists some hope. The way forwards outlined offer tangible solutions to address these challenges. By promoting civil engagement and investing in education and awareness, societies can strengthen their commitment to democracy. In essence, democracy is inseparable from the promotion and protection of human rights. By implementing these strategies, societies can move closer to becoming the type of democracies which are inclusive and accountable.

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