Q. Explain characteristics of democracy.

Ans: Democracy is a system of government in which the power is vested in the hands of the people. There are some important characteristics of democracy which are explained below.

1. **Free and Fair election**: Democracies always conduct free and fair elections. Free and fair elections means that citizens have equal access to electoral process. They can elect representatives of their own choice by the process of voting.
2. **Role of judiciary**: Judiciary plays an important role in democracy. It ensures timely and fair justice to each and everyone in the society irrespective of religion, caste, or creed. Fair judicial process is important for establishing peace and economic progress as it prevents exploitation of the poor.
3. **Role of media**: Media plays and important role in democracy. Newspaper and television is very important to create awareness among the public. Media is helpful in shaping public opinion and providing a platform for discussions on political and social issues.
4. **Respect for human rights**: One of the essential characteristics of democracy is to protect basic human rights as freedom of speech, right to equal opportunity, to organize and participate fully in the political, economic and cultural life of society.
5. **Participation in political system**: The people in a democracy have the right to participate in the political system that in turn protects their rights and freedoms.