



CHAPTER – 3

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT?

Q. 1 What do you understand by the word ‘government’? List five ways in which you think the government affects your daily life.

Answer:

A Government is a prominent body which administers and implements decisions in an organized manner for the benefit of its nation’s citizens.

Government affects our daily life in the following ways:

- a. The government has the job of **protecting the boundaries of the country** and maintaining peaceful relations with other countries.
- b. It helps in running the **postal and railways services**.
- c. The government organizes **aid and assistance** for the people affected by natural disasters like tsunami.
- d. It ensures the **welfare** of its citizens and provides **good health** facilities.
- e. The government takes actions on social issues, for example, it has several programmes to help the poor.

Q. 2 Why do you think the government needs to make rules for everyone in the form of laws?

Answer:

Government makes laws and everyone who lives in the country has to follow these. This is the only way governments can function. Just like the government has the power to make decisions, similarly it has the power



force its decisions. Without the laws the government's power to make decisions is not of much use.

Q. 3 Name two essential features of a democratic government.

Answer:

The main features of a democracy are as below:

1. People have the power to **elect their leaders**. In this sense a democracy is rule by the people. The basic idea is that people rule themselves by participating in the making of these rules. In representative democracies, people do not participate directly but, instead choose their representatives through an election process.

2. Government is **accountable** to its people. If we are electing the leaders, hence it is the responsibility of leaders to meet and make the decisions for the entire population.

Q. 4 What was the suffrage movement? What did it accomplish?

Answer:

All over Europe and the USA, women and the poor have had to fight **for participation in government**. Women's struggle to vote got strengthened during the First World War. This movement is called the women's suffrage movement as the term suffrage usually means the **right to vote**. The suffragettes demanded the right to vote for all women and to get their demands heard they chained themselves to railings in public places. Many suffragettes were imprisoned and went on hunger strikes, they had to be fed by force. American women got right to vote in 1920 while women in the UK got to vote on the same terms as men some years later, in 1928.



Gandhiji strongly believed that every adult in India should be given the right to vote. However, a few people don't share his views. They feel that illiterate people, who are mainly poor, should not be given the right to vote. What do you think? Do you think this would be a form of discrimination? Give five points to support your view and share these with the class.

Answer:

Yes, it would be a form of discrimination on the basis of education. If these are not allowed to participate in the Government, then they might feel neglected and also their concerns may not get resolved.

- a. People from all sections of the society took an active part in the freedom struggle and hence, everybody should be treated equally before the law.
- b. Illiteracy and poverty are not a choice, but a social evil and this can only be eradicated by allowing these people to come forward and represent themselves.
- c. Universal Adult Franchise advocates for granting voting rights to all the citizens irrespective of their social status.
- d. In a democracy, people are the king and if some people are not allowed to represent themselves then it will defeat the purpose of a democracy altogether.
- e. Right to vote is the basis of democracy and if not provided defeats the whole purpose.