
Chapter – 04 Political Science

Key Elements of a Democratic Government

- For long people have struggled for their rights.
 - It is generally perceived that democracy is the best system to give rights to people.
 - **Ending of Racial Discrimination:**
 - (i) The continent of South Africa is very close to the Asian subcontinent.
 - (ii) For over nearly six decades in later part of the 20th century, the country was in the news for the practice of apartheid or racial discrimination.
 - (iii) Majority of the South African population was of blacks. The white settlers who settled here pursued a policy of ruthless suppression towards the black majority.
 - (iv) The discrimination was so apparent that everyone could see it.
 - (v) After several decades of endless struggle, the policy of racial discrimination towards blacks came to an end in 1994 with Nelson Mandela being sworn in as a black President.
 - **Participation:**
 - (i) For a successful democracy, it is essential for people to participate in its governance.
 - (ii) This participation takes place through voting in elections.
 - (iii) In India, general elections are held after every five years to keep a check on the government.
 - **Other ways of Participation:**
 - (i) In addition to election, there are several other ways of participation.
 - (ii) Some such methods are dharnas, rallies, strikes, signature campaigns and other form of protests.
 - (iii) Mass media like TV, newspapers, magazines and other agencies also play a major role in highlighting public issues and moulding public opinion.
 - **Need to Resolve Conflicts: Role of Government:**
 - (i) In any country problems may result in conflicts and lead to unpleasantness.
 - (ii) There may arise a situation when two people or two groups feel that they are not being treated fairly or are being discriminated on grounds of culture, region, religion, economic background, caste, race, etc.
 - (iii) It is the government's responsibility to resolve these conflicts.
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- **Rivers as a Source of Conflict**

- (i) The water flowing between two states or countries can lead to a conflict.
- (ii) For example, Tamil Nadu in India would get water only if Karnataka releases it and this leads to conflict.
- (iii) It has led to creation of a tribunal to see sharing of river water in these states.

- **Equality and Justice:**

- (i) One of the main responsibilities of a democracy is giving impartial justice and equality to all.
 - (ii) Equality and Justice are two different sides of the same coin and are inseparable in democracy. They go hand in hand.
 - (iii) Dr. Ambedkar, had waged a long struggle for getting rights to Dalits or untouchables.
 - (iv) Laws were made to abolish untouchability.
 - (v) Likewise, the Hindu Marriage Act provides equal inheritance right to daughters in their father's property.
 - (vi) Without justice and equality democracy would remain meaningless and directionless.
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