

## Chapter – 3: What is Government and Key Elements of a Democratic Government?

- Every country – need government – make decisions – get things done
- Decisions – where to build roads and schools, how to reduce inflated price, how to increase supply of electricity
- Takes action on social issues – several programmes for poor
- Other imp. things – postal service, railway service
- Also protects boundaries of country – maintain peaceful relations with other countries
- Ensure – all citizens – enough to eat – good health facilities
- Organizes aid – natural disasters – tsunami, earthquake
- Resolve dispute – punish for crimes – courts – part of government
- Humans – live together – need to organize them – rules – followed by everyone
- Governments – exercise leadership, take decisions, implement these among all people – on behalf of people inside country

### Levels of Government

- Government – manages lots of things
- Works at different levels –
  - Local level – village, town, locality
  - State level – covers entire state
  - National level – covers entire country
- This book – local level governments
- Further classes – higher level governments



## Laws and the Government

- Government makes laws – everyone follows them – that's how government works
- Power to make decisions – power to enforce these decisions
- Law – all person driving motor vehicle must have a license
- Someone who doesn't have license – fined or jailed
- Without laws – government's power to make decisions – useless
- Addition to government – people also take actions – feel law not followed
- Example – not hired because of religion or caste – approach the court – court gives appropriate orders

## Types of Government

- Who gives government the power?
- Answer to this question – depend on type of government
  - Democracy – people vote to elect representatives – they form government – have to explain its decision to everyone
  - Monarchy – monarch (king or queen) – power to make decisions – may have small group of advisers – final power with monarch – do not have to explain its decisions

## Democratic Governments

- India – democracy – result of long struggle
- Other places – people struggled for democracy
- Main feature of democracy – people – power to elect – rule themselves by participating
- Democratic government – now a days – representative democracy
- People – do not participate directly – choose representatives through election
- Representatives meet and make decisions
- Government – democratic only when allows – Universal Adult Franchise – right to vote for all adults
- Earlier times – women and poor – not allowed to vote
- Only those men who had property and were educated – allowed to vote
- Country – ruled by laws – these few men made
- India – before independence – small minority of people – allowed to vote
- Many people – shocked at unfairness – demanded – all adults should vote
- Journal '*Young India*' – 1931 – Gandhiji stated – cannot bear the idea –
  - Someone with wealth can vote – BUT – someone with character cannot
  - Poor guy – working honestly for whole day – cannot vote

- South Africa – many races –
  - Blacks – belong to South Africa
  - Whites – came there to settle
  - Indians – came as labourers and traders
- Maya Naidoo – lives in Johannesburg – helping mother in cleaning
- Found some pictures – 15 year old schoolboy
- Asked her mother about him – mother told her – he was Hector Pieterse – shot by police
- Maya was shocked – asked why?
- Mother explained – earlier – Africa ruled by apartheid law – discrimination based on colour of skin
- South African people – divided into white, black, Indian and other coloured races
- According to law – races – not allowed to live together, talk or even use common facilities
- Mother told Maya – there were separate hospitals, ambulances
- Ambulance for whites – best equipment – ambulances for blacks – not so good
- Separate buses, trains, bus stops
- Non-whites – not allowed to vote
- Best lands – available for whites only
- One such black township – South Western Township (Soweto)
- Hector – lived here – joined protest against learning Afrikaans language – whites spoke this language
- They wanted to learn Zulu – their own language
- South African police – beat up protestors – shot at them – killed Hector – 16 July 1976
- African National Congress – group of people – led struggle against apartheid – fought for several years along their leader – Nelson Mandela
- 1994 – succeeded – South Africa – became democracy – all people considered equal

## Participation

- Elections held regularly
- All governments – elected for fixed periods
- India – period of 5 years
- Government – want to stay in power – need to be re-elected
- This moment – people feel their power
- This way – government's power – limited

### Other ways of participating

- Elections – every five years
- Other than voting – many ways to participate
- Taking interest in working of government – criticizing it
- August 2005 – government increased electricity prices
- People organized rallies, protested against government
- Government – tried explaining – changed the decision in the end
- Many ways – people express their opinions – dharnas, rallies, strikes, signature campaigns
- Newspapers, TVs, magazines – play imp. role
- Also true – all sections – do not participate
- People – organize themselves – social movements

- People – alert and interested in working of government – democratic factor of government gets stronger
- Next time – rally is there – try to find out – why?

## **Need to Resolve Conflict**

- Maya's story – conflicts – lead to violence and death – one group feels right to stop other group forcefully
- Conflicts – people from different religions, regions, backgrounds – feel – they are discriminated
- This leads to fear and stress – government helps in resolving these conflicts
- Religious processions / celebrations – lead to conflicts – route of procession
- Government, specially police – resolve issues by making the representatives meet with each other
- They ensure – no violence happens
- Rivers – can be source of conflicts – begin in one state, flow through another, end in a third
- Cauvery water dispute – between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
  - Krishna Raja Sagara dam, Karnataka – used for irrigating and fulfill needs of Bengaluru
  - Mettur dam, Tamil Nadu – used for irrigating crops in delta region
- Both dams – on the same river
- Dam in Tamil Nadu – can be filled only when – water released from dam in Karnataka
- This leads to conflict – central government steps in to resolve the conflict

## **Equality and Justice**

- Government – committed to equality and justice
- Untouchability – banned by law – some groups of people – denied education, transport, medical facilities
- Dr. Ambedkar and many others – realized – such practices must stop – justice achieved when people are treated equally
- Government also realizes this – provides special provisions for these groups
- Our society – cares for boy child more than girl child
- Government steps in – provide justice – special provisions for girls – less or no fees in government schools or colleges