TEXT BOOK FOR
SECONDARY COURSE

PART - 2

SOICAL SCIENCE

BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION HUBLI, KARNATAKA

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CONSTITUTIONAL VALUES AND POLITICAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

Mona, who is a student of class X in a school in Shillong asked her teacher a question that had been bothering her for long. She said, "Sir! in newspapers and the television news, I find the reference of the President of United States of America (USA) quite often, but the Prime Minister of USA is never mentioned. Why it is so?" The teacher replied, "You have rightly noticed the differences. It is so because the government of USA is based on its own Constitution, whereas our governmental system is based on our Constitution. It is the Constitution of a country that makes provisions according to which various institutions and offices are created and are made to function. In fact, the Constitution defines all aspects of the political system that a country has and more important than any thing else, the Constitution reflects certain values that form the core of that political system. These values guide not only the government, but also the citizens and the society at large." Just like Mona, you may also have questions related to the Indian Constitution and its political system such as, what are the values reflected in the Constitution? What is the nature of the Indian political system? Why India is called a federal system? Why is it said to have parliamentary form of government? We shall discuss all these questions in this lesson.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

● explain how the Constitution is the basic and fundamental law as well as a living document;

● analyze the Preamble of the Constitution and identify the core values reflected in it;

● appreciate the core constitutional values that permeate the salient features of the Indian Constitution; and

● examine the nature of the Indian federal system and the parliamentary form of government.

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15.1 THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Let us begin with a discussion on the Constitution of India. But even before that the question that needs to be answered is: what is the meaning of the term constitution?

15.1.1 Meaning of the Constitution

You may have come across the term constitution quite often. It is used in various contexts such as Constitution of a State or a Nation, Constitution of an Association or Union, Constitution of a Sports Club, Constitution of a non-governmental organization (NGO), Constitution of a company and so on. Does this term mean the same in all these contexts? No, it is not so. As used commonly, constitution is a set of rules, generally written, which defines and regulate the structure and functioning of an organization, institution or a company. But when it is used in the context of a State or a Nation, *Constitution means a set of fundamental principles, basic rules and established precedents* (means *standards/instances*). It identifies, defines and regulates various aspects of the State and the structure, powers and functions of the major institutions under the three organs of the Government – the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. It also provides for rights and freedoms of citizens and spells out the relationships between individual citizen and the State and government.

A Constitution may be written or unwritten, but it contains fundamental laws of the land. It is the supreme and ultimate authority. Any decision or action which is not in accordance with it will be unconstitutional and unlawful. A Constitution also lays down limits on the power of the government to avoid abuse of authority. Moreover, it is not a static but a living document, because it needs to be amended as and when required to keep it updated. Its flexibility enables it to change according to changing aspirations of the people, the needs of the time and the changes taking place in society.

? Do you know

Unlike the Constitutions of most of the democratic countries, the British Constitution is known as unwritten constitution, because it is largely unwritten and uncodified. It was not framed as a complete statement like the Constitution of USA or the Indian Constitution. The Constitution of USA and the Indian Constitution are written constitutions.

15.1.2 The Indian Constitution

Have you seen the document of Indian Constitution? Do you recognize the cover page shown in the illustration? If you have seen or if you get a chance to see it, you will agree that it is a very lengthy document. In fact, Indian Constitution is the longest of all the written constitutions. It was prepared by a representative body, known as

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the Constituent Assembly. Most of its members were deeply involved in the freedom struggle. They are respectfully called the founding fathers of the Constitution. The process of constitution-making was greatly influenced by the following factors: (a) aspirations generated during the long-drawn freedom struggle, (b) the constitutional and political changes that took place during the British rule, (c) The ideas and thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, popularly known as Gandhism, (d) the socio-cultural ethos of the country and (e) the experiences of the functioning of Constitutions in other democratic countries of the world. The Constitution came into effect on 26 January, 1950 and since then we celebrate this day as the Republic Day every year.
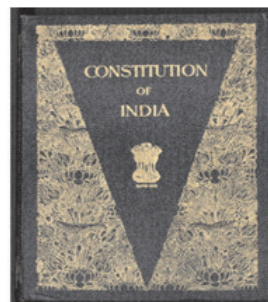
Figure 15.1 *Cover Page of the Document*

Do you know

The Constituent Assembly began to prepare the Constitution on 9 December, 1946. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as its President on 11 December, 1946. Dr. Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee. The Constituent Assembly met for 166 days, spread over a period of 2 years, 11 months and 18 days. The making of the Constitution was completed on 26 November, 1949 when the Constituent Assembly adopted the Draft Constitution of India.

The Constitution of India defines all aspects of the Indian political system including its basic objectives. It has provisions regarding (a) the territories that India will comprise, (b) citizenship, (c) fundamental rights, (d) directive principles of state policy and fundamental duties, (e) the structure and functioning of governments at union, state and local levels, and (f) several other aspects of the political system. It defines India as a sovereign, democratic, socialist and secular republic. It has provisions for bringing about social change and defining the relationship between individual citizen and the state.

ACTIVITY 15.1

See a copy of the Constitution of India that is available in a Library or see it on the internet. Find out if there is an NGO or a Sports Club or a Students' Union or Teachers' Association or any social or cultural organisation nearby, which you may approach. Request any of them to show you the copy of the constitution they have.

Compare any of these constitutions with the Constitution of India. Write briefly what are the differences you find between the two?

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INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.1

1. What is the meaning of Constitution?

2. Fill in the blanks:

   (i) The Indian Constitution is the .... constitution.

   (ii) The Indian Constitution was prepared by ....

   (iii) The Constitution of India is a living document, because it needs to be ....

   (iv) The 26 January is celebrated every year as .... because the Constitution came in to effect on ....

15.2 CONSTITUTIONAL VALUES

The Constitution of any country serves several purposes. It lays down certain ideals that form the basis of the kind of country that we as citizens aspire to live in. A country is usually made up of different communities of people who share certain beliefs, but may not necessarily agree on all issues. A Constitution helps serve as a set of principles, rules and procedures on which there is a consensus. These form the basis according to which the people want the country to be governed and the society to move on. This includes not only an agreement on the type of government but also on certain ideals that the country should uphold. The Indian Constitution has certain core constitutional values that constitute its spirit and are expressed in various articles and provisions. But do you know what is the meaning of the word, 'value'? You may immediately say that truth, non-violence, peace, cooperation, honesty, respect and kindness are values, and you may continue to count many such values. In fact, in a layman's understanding, value is that which is very essential or 'worth having and observing' for the existence of human society as an entity. The Indian Constitution contains all such values, the values that are the universal, human and democratic of the modern age.

ACTIVITY 15.2

Read the list of the words stated below. Out of these, choose 6 words that you consider values for yourself and write those in the given box:

Freedom	Love	Money	Passion	Creativity	Ambition
Motivation	Happiness	Excitement	Knowledge	Success	Fame
Adventure	Enthusiasm	Peace	Friendship	Sleeping	Beauty

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Of the 6 values, select your topmost value and state 2 reasons in the given space below for considering it as your topmost value.

My topmost value ....

Reasons are:

1. ....

2. ....

Do you think that the topmost value impacts your attitude and behaviour? For example, a person who strongly believes in the value of non-violence, always tries to be non-violent in her/his actions.

15.2.1 Constitutional Values and the Preamble of the Constitution

Have you read the Preamble to the Indian Constitution printed in the beginning of this material? As has been stated above, the constitutional values are reflected in the entire Constitution of India, but its Preamble embodies 'the fundamental values and the philosophy on which the Constitution is based'. The Preamble to any Constitution is a brief introductory statement that conveys the guiding principles of the document. The Preamble to the Indian Constitution also does so. The values expressed in the Preamble are expressed as objectives of the Constitution. These are: sovereignty, socialism, secularism, democracy, republican character of Indian State, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, human dignity and the unity and integrity of the Nation. Let us discuss these constitutional values:

1. **Sovereignty**: You may have read the Preamble. It declares India "a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic". Being sovereign means having complete political freedom and being the supreme authority. It implies that India is internally all powerful and externally free. It is free to determine for itself without any external interference (either by any country or individual) and nobody is there within to challenge its authority. This feature of sovereignty gives us the dignity of existence as a nation in the international community. Though the Constitution does not specify where the sovereign authority lies but a mention of 'We the People of India' in the Preamble clearly indicates that sovereignty rests with the people of India. This means that the constitutional authorities and organs of government derive their power only from the people.

2. **Socialism**: You may be aware that social and economic inequalities have been inherent in the Indian traditional society. Which is why, socialism has been made a constitutional value aimed at promoting social change and transformation to end all forms of inequalities. Our Constitution directs the governments and the people to ensure a planned and coordinated social development in all fields. It directs to prevent concentration of wealth and power in a few hands. The Constitution has specific provisions that deal with inequalities in the Chapters on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy.

? Do you know

The following provisions under the Directive Principles of State Policy promote the value of socialism:

"The State shall, in particular, strive to minimise the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations. " (Article 38(2)

"The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing- (a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; (b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment; (d) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women;…" (Article 39)

3. **Secularism**: We all are pleased when anyone says that India is a home to almost all major religions in the world. In the context of this plurality (means **more than one or two; many**), secularism is seen as a great constitutional value. Secularism implies that our country is not guided by any one religion or any religious considerations. However, the Indian state is not against religions. It allows all its citizens to profess, preach and practise any religion they follow. At the same time, it ensures that the state does not have any religion of its own. Constitution strictly prohibits any discrimination on the ground of religion.

4. **Democracy**: The Preamble reflects democracy as a value. As a form of government it derives its authority from the will of the people. The people elect the rulers of the country and the elected representatives remain accountable to the people. The people of India elect them to be part of the government at different levels by a system of universal adult franchise, popularly known as 'one man one vote'. Democracy contributes to stability, continuous progress in the society and it secures peaceful political change. It allows dissent and encourages

tolerance. And more importantly, it is based on the principles of rule of law, inalienable rights of citizens, independence of judiciary, free and fair elections and freedom of the press.

5. **Republic**: India is not only a democratic nation but it is also a republic. The most important symbol of being a republic is the office of the Head of the State, i.e. the President who is elected and who is not selected on the basis of heredity, as is found in a system with monarchy. This value strengthens and substantiates democracy where every citizen of India is equally eligible to be elected as the Head of the State. Political equality is the chief message of this provision.

6. **Justice**: At times you may also realise that living in a democratic system alone does not ensure justice to citizens in all its totality. Even now we find a number of cases where not only the social and economic justice but also the political justice is denied. Which is why, the constitution-makers have included social, economic and political justice as constitutional values. By doing so, they have stressed that the political freedom granted to Indian citizens has to be instrumental in the creation of a new social order, based on socio-economic justice. Justice must be availed to every citizen. This ideal of a just and egalitarian society remains as one of the foremost values of the Indian Constitution.

7. **Liberty**: The Preamble prescribes liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship as one of the core values. These have to be assured to every member of all the communities. It has been done so, because the ideals of democracy can not be attained without the presence of certain minimal rights which are essential for a free and civilized existence of individuals.

8. **Equality**: Equality is as significant constitutional value as any other. The Constitution ensures equality of status and opportunity to every citizen for the development of the best in him/her. As a human being everybody has a dignified self and to ensure its full enjoyment, inequality in any form present in our country and society has been prohibited. Equality reflected specifically in the Preamble is therefore held as an important value.

9. **Fraternity:** There is also a commitment made in the Preamble to promote the value of fraternity that stands for the spirit of common brotherhood among all the people of India. In the absence of fraternity, a plural society like India stands divided. Therefore, to give meaning to all the ideals like justice, liberty and equality, the Preamble lays great emphasis on fraternity. In fact, fraternity can be realized not only by abolishing untouchability amongst different sects of the community, but also by abolishing all communal or sectarian or even local discriminatory feelings which stand in the way of unity of India.

10. **Dignity of the individual:** Promotion of fraternity is essential to realize the dignity of the individual. It is essential to secure the dignity of every individual without which democracy can not function. It ensures equal participation of every individual in all the processes of democratic governance.

11. **Unity and integrity of the Nation:** As we have seen above, fraternity also promotes one of the critical values, i.e. unity and integrity of the nation. To maintain the independence of the country intact, the unity and integrity of the nation is very essential. Therefore, the stress has been given on fostering unity amongst all the inhabitants of the country. Our Constitution expects from all the citizens of India to uphold and protect the unity and integrity of India as a matter of duty.

12. **International peace and a just international order:** The value of international peace and a just international order, though not included in the Preamble is reflected in other provisions of the Constitution. The Indian Constitution directs the state (a) to promote international peace and security, (b) maintain just and honourable relations between nations, (c) foster respect for international law and treaty obligations, and (d) encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration. To uphold and observe these values is in the interest of India. The peace and just international order will definitely contribute to the development of India.

13. **Fundamental Duties:** Our Constitution prescribes some duties to be performed by the citizens. It is true that these duties are not enforceable in the court of law like the fundamental rights are, but these duties are to be performed by citizens. Fundamental duties have still greater importance because these reflect certain basic values like patriotism, nationalism, humanism, environmentalism, harmonious living, gender equality, scientific temper and inquiry, and individual and collective excellence.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.2

1. What do you mean by the term value?

2. State two important constitutional values embodied in the Preamble of Indian Constitution? Why do you consider these two values as very important?

3. Match the values/objectives given below in column 'A' with the statements in column 'B'.

A Constitutional Values/Objectives	B Statements
(i) Sovereignty	a. promoting social change to end all forms of inequalities.
(ii) Socialism	b. government of the people, by the people and for the people.
(iii) Secularism	c. equal treatment without any discrimination.
(iv) Democracy	d. the Head of the State is an elected person.

(v) Equality	e. freedom to profess, preach and practise any religion.
(vi) Liberty	f. international peace & security and honourable relations among nations.
(vii) Fraternity	g. complete political freedom and supreme authority.
(viii) International peace & just international order	h. freedom of thought, expression and belief.
(ix) Republic	i. the spirit of common brotherhood.

ACTIVITY 15.3

Collect the views of at least five persons on the extent they think the constitutional values have been realized or objectives have been attained. These persons may be your classmates or teachers or members of your family or social workers in your neighborhood or any other. The constitutional values and objectives are stated in one column of the following table. They have to award marks in another column, out of the total marks of 10, based on their rating of the achievement made in respect of each of the values/objectives.

Constitutional Values/ Objectives	Extent to which achieved Marks out of 10				
	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5
Social & Economic justice					
Liberty of thought & expression					
Equality of status and opportunity					
Unity and integrity of the nation					
Abolition of untouchability					
International peace & security					
Universal adult franchise					
Sovereignty with the people of India					
Independence of judiciary					

Based on the analysis of the responses, identify which value/objective has been realized to the maximum extent and which to the minimum extent. Try to find out the reasons.

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15.2.2 Values and the Salient Features of the Constitution

The discussion on the Preamble embodying constitutional values clearly demonstrates that these are important for the successful functioning of Indian democracy. Your understanding of these values will be further reinforced, when you will find in the following discussion that constitutional values permeate all the salient features of Indian Constitution. The main features of the Constitution as shown in the illustration are as follows:

1. **Written Constitution:** As has been stated earlier, the Constitution of India is the longest written constitution. It contains a Preamble, 395 Articles in 22 Parts, 12 Schedules and 5 Appendices. It is a document of fundamental laws that define the nature of the political system and the structure and functioning of organs of the government. It expresses the vision of India as a democratic nation. It also identifies the fundamental rights and fundamental duties of citizens. While doing so, it also reflects core constitutional values.

2. **A Unique Blend of Rigidity and Flexibility:** In our day-to-day life, we find that it is not easy to bring about changes in a written document. As regards Constitutions, generally written constitutions are rigid. It is not easy to bring about changes in them frequently. The Constitution lays down special procedure for constitutional amendments. In the unwritten constitution like the British Constitution, amendments are made through ordinary law-making procedure. The British Constitution is a flexible constitution. In the written constitution like the US Constitution, it is very difficult to make amendments. The US Constitution, therefore, is a rigid constitution. However, the Indian Constitution is neither as flexible as the British Constitution nor as rigid as the US Constitution. It reflects the value of continuity and change. There are three ways of amending the Constitution of India. Some of its provisions can be amended by the simple majority in the Parliament, and some by special majority, while some amendments require special majority in the parliament and approval of States as well.

3. **Fundamental Rights and Duties:** You must be familiar with the term fundamental rights. We quite often find it in newspapers or while watching television. The Constitution of India includes these rights in a separate Chapter which has often been referred to as the 'conscience' of the Constitution. Fundamental Rights protect citizens against the arbitrary and absolute exercise of power by the State. The Constitution guarantees the rights to individuals against the State as well as against other individuals. The Constitution also guarantees the rights of minorities against the majority. Besides these rights, the Constitution has provisions identifying fundamental duties, though these are not enforceable as the fundamental rights are. These duties reflect some of the basic values embodied in the Constitution.

4. **Directive Principles of State Policy:** In addition to Fundamental Rights, the Constitution also has a section called Directive Principles of State Policy. It is a unique feature of the Constitution. It is aimed at ensuring greater social and

economic reforms and serving as a guide to the State to institute laws and policies that help reduce the poverty of the masses and eliminate social discrimination. In fact, as you will study in the lesson on "India-A Welfare State", these provisions are directed towards establishment of a welfare state.

5. **Integrated Judicial System:** Unlike the judicial systems of federal countries like the United States of America, the Indian Constitution has established an integrated judicial system. Although the Supreme Court is at the national level, High Courts at the state level and Subordinate Courts at the district and lower level, there is a single hierarchy of Courts. At the top of the hierarchy is the Supreme Court. This unified judicial system is aimed at promoting and ensuring justice to all the citizens in uniform manner. Moreover, the constitutional provisions ensure the independence of Indian judiciary which is free from the influence of the executive and the legislature.

6. **Single Citizenship**: Indian Constitution has provision for single citizenship. Do you know what does it mean? It means that every Indian is a citizen of India, irrespective of the place of his/her residence or birth in the country. This is unlike the United States of America where there is the system of double citizenship. A person is a citizen of a State where he/she lives as well as he/she is a citizen of U.S.A. This provision in the Indian Constitution definitely reinforces the values of equality, unity and integrity.

7. **Universal Adult Franchise**: The values of equality and justice are reflected in yet another salient feature of the Constitution. Every Indian after attaining certain age (at present 18 years) has a right to vote. No discrimination can be made on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, and place of birth or residence. This right is known as universal adult franchise.

8. **Federal System and Parliamentary Form of Government**: Another salient feature of the Indian Constitution is that it provides for a federal system of state and parliamentary form of government. We shall discuss these below in detail. But it is necessary to note here that the federal system reflects the constitutional value of unity and integrity of the nation, and more importantly the value of decentralization of power. The parliamentary form of government reflects the values of responsibility and sovereignty vested in the people. The core principle of a parliamentary government is the responsibility of the executive to the legislature consisting of the representatives of the people.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.3

1. What are the main features of the Indian Constitution?

2. What are the constitutional values reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy?

3. Why Indian judiciary is called an integrated judiciary?

4. What is the meaning of single citizenship?

15.3 FEDERAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

As you may have found, whenever there is a discussion on the nature, structure and processes of political system in India, it is said that India is a federal state. There are generally two types of states in the world. The state that has only one government for the entire country, which is known as unitary state. The United Kingdom has a unitary system. But there are states like United States of America and Canada which have governments at two levels: one at the central level and the other at the state level. Besides having two sets of government, a federal system must have three other features: (i) a written constitution, (ii) division of powers between the central government and the state governments, and (iii) supremacy of judiciary to interpret the constitution. India also has a federal system having all these features, but with a difference. Let us examine the nature of the Indian federation.

15.3.1 Characteristics of the Indian Federal System

1. **Two-tier Government:** You must have heard that there are two sets of government created by the Indian Constitution: one for the entire nation called the union government (central government) and another for each unit or State, called the State government. Sometimes, you may also find the reference of a three-tier government in India, because besides the Union and State governments, local governments-both rural and urban- are also said to constitute another tier. But constitutionally India has a two-tier government. The Constitution does not allocate separate set of powers to the local governments as these continues to be under their respective State governments.

2. **Division of Powers:** Like other federations, both the Union and the State governments have a constitutional status and clearly identified area of activity. The Constitution clearly divides the powers between the two sets of governments, so that the Centre and the States exercise their powers within their respective spheres of activity. None violates its limits and tries to encroach upon the functions of the other. The division has been specified in the Constitution through three Lists: the Union List, the State List and the Concurrent List. The *Union List* consists of 97 subjects of national importance such as Defence, Railways, Post and Telegraph, etc. The *State List* consists of 66 subjects of local interest such as Public Health, Police, Local Self Government, etc. The *Concurrent List* has 47 subjects such as Education, Electricity, Trade Union, Economic and Social Planning, etc. On this List both the Union government and State governments have concurrent jurisdiction. However, the Constitution assigns those powers on the subjects that are not enumerated under Union List, State List and Concurrent

List to the Union government. Such powers are known as *Residuary Powers*. If there is any dispute about the division of powers, it can be resolved by the Judiciary on the basis of the constitutional provisions.

3. **Written Constitution:** As we have earlier seen, India has a written Constitution which is supreme. It is also the source of power for both the sets of governments, the Union and the State. These governments are independent in their spheres of governance. Another feature of a federation is the rigid constitution. Although the Indian Constitution is not as rigid as the US Constitution, it is not a flexible constitution. As mentioned earlier, it has unique blend of rigidity and flexibility.

Do you know

Whereas there have been only 27 Amendments in the Constitution of the United States of America since it was ratified on 21 June, 1788, 120 Amendment Bills to the Indian Constitution since 26 January, 1950 have been introduced out of which 98 have become Acts till January 2013. (source: india.gov.in)

4. **Independence of Judiciary:** Another very important feature of a federation is an independent judiciary to interpret the Constitution and to maintain its sanctity. The Supreme Court of India has the original jurisdiction to settle disputes between the Union and the States. It can declare a law as unconstitutional, if it contravenes any provision of the Constitution. The judiciary also has the powers to resolve disputes between the Union government and the State governments on the constitutional and legal matters related to the division of powers.

15.3.2 Indian Federal System with a Strong Centre

In view of the above provisions, the Indian system appears to have all the features of a federal system. But have you gone through a statement which says that, "India is federal in form but unitary in spirit"? In fact, Indian federal system has a strong Union government. This was deliberately done in the context of the prevailing situation on the eve of independence and in view of the socio-political situations. Apart from India being a vast country of continental dimensions, it has diversities and social pluralities. The framers of the Constitution believed that we required a federal constitution that would accommodate diversities and pluralities. But when India attained independence, it was faced with challenges like maintaining unity and integrity and bringing about social, economic and political change. It was necessary for the Centre to have such powers because India at the time of independence was not only divided into Provinces created by the British but it also had more than 500 Princely States which had to be integrated into existing States or new States had to be created.

In fact, the Central government has been made strong deliberately. Besides the concern for unity, the makers of the Constitution also believed that the socio-economic problems of the country needed to be handled by a strong central

government in cooperation with the States. Poverty, illiteracy, social inequalities and inequalities of wealth were some of the problems that required unified planning and coordination. Thus, the concerns for unity and development prompted the makers of the Constitution to create a strong central government. Let us look at the important provisions that have created a strong central government:

1. The First Article of the Constitution itself hints at Indian federal system being different. It states that India shall be "a Union of States". Nowhere does the Constitution describe India as a federal state. The Central government has sole power on the territory of India. The very existence of a State, including its territorial integrity is in the hands of the Parliament. The Parliament is empowered to 'form a new State by separation of territory from any State or by uniting two or more States. It can also alter the boundary of any State or even its name. However, the Constitution provides for some safeguards. The Central government must secure the view of the concerned State legislature on such decisions.

? Do you know

After independence a number of new States have been created. In 2000-2001, three new States were created by bifurcating them from the existing States : the State of Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand from Bihar and Uttarakhand from Uttar Pradesh. There were a number of reasons for doing so, including the slow pace of development in these regions.

2. Secondly, the division of powers is in favour of the Union government. The Union List contains all the key subjects. Besides, even in relation to the Concurrent List the Constitution has assigned precedence to the Centre over States. In the situation of a conflict between laws made on any subject of the Concurrent List by a State and also by the Parliament, the law made by the Parliament would be effective. The Parliament may legislate even on a subject in the State List, if the situation demands that the Central government needs to legislate. This may happen, if the move is ratified by the Rajya Sabha.

3. Thirdly, the federal principle envisages a dual system of Courts. But, in India we have unified or integrated judiciary with the Supreme Court at the apex.

4. Fourthly, the Union government becomes very powerful when any of the three kinds of emergencies are proclaimed. The emergency can turn our federal polity into a highly centralised system. The Parliament also assumes the power to make laws on subjects within the jurisdiction of the States. In yet another situation, if there are disturbances in any State or part thereof, the Union Government is empowered to depute Central Force in the State or to the disturbed part of the State.

5. As you will study in the lesson on "Governance at the State Level, the Governor of the State is appointed by the President of India, i.e. the Union government.

He/She has powers to report to the President, if there is a constitutional breakdown in the State and to recommend the imposition of President's Rule. When the President's Rule is imposed on the State, the State Council of Ministers is dismissed and the Governor rules over the State as a representative of the Central government. The State legislature also may be dissolved or kept in suspended animation. Even in normal circumstances, the Governor has the power to reserve any bill passed by the State legislature for the assent of the President. This gives the Central government an opportunity to delay the State legislation and also to examine such bills and veto them completely.

6. The Central government has very effective financial powers and responsibilities. In the first place, items generating revenue are under the control of the Centre. The States are mostly dependent on the grants and financial assistance from the Central government. Moreover, India has adopted planning as the instrument of rapid economic progress and development after independence. This also has led to considerable centralisation of decision making.

7. Finally, according to the constitutional provisions, the executive powers of the Centre are superior to those of the States. The Central government may choose to give instructions to the State government. Moreover, we have an integrated administrative system. The All-India Services are common for the entire territory of India and officers chosen for these services serve in the administration of the States. Thus, an IAS officer who becomes the collector or an IPS officer who serves as the Commissioner of Police, are under the control of the Central government. States cannot take disciplinary action nor can they remove these officers from service.

From the above discussion, it is clear, that there is a tilt in favour of the Centre at the cost of the States. The States have to work in close co-operation with the Centre. This has lent support to the contention that the Indian Constitution is federal in form but unitary in spirit. Constitutional experts have called it a 'semi-federal' or a 'quasi federal' system.

ACTIVITY 15.4

Consult books or surf the internet and make a list of the States of India and find out the year in which each of the States was created.

15.3.3 Demand for Greater Autonomy to States

The working of the Indian federation over the last six decades clearly shows that primarily because of the centralized federal system, the relations between the Centre and the States have not always been cordial. It is quite natural that the States would expect a greater role and powers in the governance of the State and the country

Notes

as a whole. Which is why, from time to time, States have demanded that they should be given more powers and more autonomy. With a view to seek solution, the Administrative Reforms Commission, Sarkaria Commision and several other Commissions were appointed by the Government of India, the latest being the Commission on Centre-State Relations in March, 2010.

The core of important recommendations of various Commissions has accepted that there is no need to bring about changes in the fundamental fabric of the Constitution. However, the need to have a permanent Inter-State Council has been felt. In addition, it is desired that both the Centre and the States should have the concern for the development of backward territories or areas. If economic development of these backward regions is undertaken in a planned manner, the separatist tendencies will be automatically controlled. Differences between the Union and the States should be resolved by mutual consultation. The view on the demand of the States to provide more financial resources at their disposal has found favour. In order to improve Centre-State relations in the country, recommendations have been made for economic liberalization and suitable amendments to the Constitution.

ACTIVITY 15.5

For the last five years an intensified agitation is going on to create a separate State out of a region of the present State. Identify that State, enumerate the reasons for such a demand and point out a major step that the political leaders of that region have taken during May-September, 2011

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.4

1. What are the main features of a federal system?

2. State two important reasons why is it said that "India is federal in form, but unitary in spirit"?

3. The States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand were created during 2000 and 2001. Find out from which States they were separated? State also the reasons why were they created?

15.4 PARLIAMENTARY FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN INDIA

Another important feature of the Indian political system is its parliamentary form of government both at the union and state levels. There are two forms of government:

presidential and parliamentary. In presidential system, the three organs of government are independent of one another. There is absence of close relationship between the executive and the legislature. The United States of America has a presidential form of government. But, in a parliamentary form of government, there is a very close relationship between the executive and the legislature. United Kingdom has a parliamentary form of government. In fact, the Constitution makers of India adopted the British model, as the system of government that operated in India before 1947 was to a great extent quite similar to the British parliamentary government. In India, we have parliamentary form of government both at the central and state level. The Indian system reflects all the main features of a parliamentary government: (i) close relationship between the legislature and the executive, (ii) responsibility of the executive to the legislature, (iii) the executive having a Head of the State as the nominal executive, and a Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister as the real executive.

Figure 15.2 *Parliament of India*

1. **Close Relationship between the Legislature and the Executive:** In India, there is a close relationship between the executive, i.e. the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head and the legislature, i.e. the Parliament. Only the leader of the majority party or coalition of parties can be appointed as the Prime Minister. All the members of the Council of Ministers must be the Members of Parliament. It is only on the advice of the Council of Ministers that the President can summon and prorogue the sessions of both Houses of Parliament and even dissolve the Lok Sabha. All the elected Members of the Parliament participate

in the election of the President and he/she can be removed from office only when an impeachment motion against him/her is passed by both the Houses of Parliament.

2. **Responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature:** The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to Lok Sabha. It means that the responsibility of every Minister is the responsibility of the entire Council of Ministers. It is responsible to Rajya Sabha also. In fact, both the Houses have powers to control the Council of Ministers. They do it by asking questions and supplementary questions on the policies, programmes and functioning of the government. They debate on the proposals of the government and also subject its functioning to intensive criticism. They can move adjournment motion and calling attention notices. No bill tabled by the Council of Ministers can become law unless it is approved by the Parliament. The annual budget also is to be passed by the Parliament. In real terms, the tenure of the Council of Ministers depends on the Lok Sabha. The Council of Ministers has to resign if it looses the confidence of Lok Sabha, which means the support of the majority in that House. The Council of Ministers can also be removed from office by the Lok Sabha through a vote of no-confidence.

3. **Nominal and Real Executive:** There are two parts of the executive in India, nominal executive and real executive. The President who is the Head of the State is the nominal and formal executive. Theoretically, all the executive powers are vested by the Constitution in the President of India. But, in practice these are not exercised by him/her. These are actually used by the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head is the real executive. The President can not act without the advice of the Council of Ministers.

4. **Prime Minister as the real executive:** It is the Prime Minister who is the pivot of the parliamentary executive. All the members of the Council of Ministers are appointed by the President on the recommendations of the Prime Minister. The allocation of portfolios among the Ministers is the prerogative of the Prime Minister. He/She presides over the meetings of the Cabinet and is the only link between the Council of Ministers and the President. Any Minister can be removed from office if the Prime Minister decides. When the Prime Minister resigns, the entire Council of Ministers has to go.

The parliamentary system in India has been functioning quite satisfactorily. The parliamentary governments in States also are structured on the pattern of the Central government. The executive consists of the Governor and the Council of Ministers with Chief Minister at the head. Whereas, the Governor functions as the Head of the State, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers act as the real executive. State legislatures are bicameral (State Assembly and Legislative Council) in only a few States; in most of the States these are unicameral (Legislative Assembly).

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.5

1. In a parliamentary system, what kind of relation is between the executive and the legislature?

2. Why is the President of India only the nominal executive?

3. What is the meaning of collective responsibility?

4. How do both the Houses of Parliament have control over the Council of Ministers?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Constitution means a set of fundamental principles, basic rules and established precedents, which identifies, defines and regulates the major institutions of the State, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. It also specifies the powers and functions of institutions, provides for rights and freedoms of citizens and spells out the relationship between individual citizen and the State and government.

- The Constitution of India defines the basic objectives of the system it has established. It has established in India a sovereign, democratic, socialist and secular republic. It has provisions for bringing about social change and defining the relationship between individual citizen and the state.

- The Constitution of any country serves several purposes. It lays out certain ideals that form the basis of the kind of country that we as a citizens aspire to live in. A Constitution helps serve as a set of principles, rules and procedures that all persons in a country can agree upon as the basis of the way in which they want the country to be governed and the society to move on. This includes not only an agreement on the type of government but also on certain ideals that they all believe the country should uphold. The Indian Constitution also has certain core constitutional values that constitute its spirit and are expressed in various articles and provisions.

- The constitutional values are reflected in the entire Constitution of India, but its Preamble embodies 'the fundamental values and the philosophy on which the Constitution is based'. These are: sovereignty, socialism, secularism, democracy, republican character, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, human dignity and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

- The constitutional values also permeate all the salient features of Indian Constitution such as written constitution, the constitution having a unique blend of rigidity and flexibility, fundamental rights, directive principles, fundamental duties, integrated judicial system, single citizenship, universal adult franchise, federalism and parliamentary form of government.

- India is a federal state, as it has a written constitution, two tiers of government- at the union level and the state level. There is a division of powers between the Union government and State government, and there is also the independent judiciary. But it is a federation with a strong Centre. The Constitution itself has made the Union government more powerful than the State governments.

- India has a parliamentary form of government at both the central and state levels. The President is the Head of the State and a nominal executive, whereas the Prime Minister as head of the Council of Ministers is the real head of the executive. There is a close relationship between the executive and legislature and the Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Parliament.

TERMINAL EXCERCISES

1. Answer the following questions in brief:

    (i) Define Preamble

    (ii) What is a Constitution?

    (iii) Who framed the Constitution of India?

    (iv) What is meant by 'Universal Adult Franchise'?

2. Answer the following questions:

    (i) Describe the importance of the Constitution.

    (ii) What are the major constitutional values embodied in the Preamble? How are these being practised in our daily lives?

    (iii) What are the salient features of the Constitution of India?

    (iv) Explain any three federal features of the Indian Constitution.

    (v) How can you say that the Constitution of India is rigid as well as flexible?

    (vi) Why is India called a federal state in form but unitary in spirit?

    (vii) Examine the nature of the parliamentary form of government in India.

    (viii) Have you ever been part of the Republic Day celebration in your own area/region as a participant or a spectator? If so, mention the highlights of that function.

    (ix) Given below is the recorded conversation between a Saudi Arabian Citizen and an Indian. The points made by the Saudi Arabian are given below, whereas the replies by the Indian could not be recorded and hence are left blank. On the basis of what you have read in this lesson and your general knowledge, complete the conversation with relevant replies ('SA' stands for the Saudi Arabian and I stands for the Indian).

Notes

(a) SA   Our country is ruled by a hereditary King. We cannot change him. So, we have a monarchial form of government.

I   ....

(b) SA   We, in Saudi Arabia do not have any such system as yours, because we have no political parties. There are no elections and the people do not have any say in the formation of the government. So much so that even media cannot report any thing that the King does not like.

I   ....

(c) SA   In our country, there is only one religion. Hence, there is no freedom of religion. Every citizen is required to be Muslim.

I   ....

(d) SA   Yes, Non-Muslims are allowed to follow their own religion but only privately and not in public.

I   ....

(e) SA   In my country, there is discrimination on the basis of sex. Women are not considered equal to men. They are subjected to many public restrictions. So much so that testimony of one man is considered equal to that of two women.

I   ....

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE INDIAN

1. After independence no king rules in India. Instead, we have a President who is elected by the people indirectly. So, India is a republic with a parliamentary form of government wherein political parties play a major role as representatives of the people.

2. In this regard, we are very lucky. We have the freedom to form associations, unions as well as political parties. Every Indian citizen has the right to vote and contest elections. Besides, the media in India is also free to express its views on any issue in spite of the fact that India is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious country.

3. But we are a secular nation. The state does not have any religion of its own. Every citizen has a fundamental right as freedom of religion guaranteed by the Constitution. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and others have freedom to practise his/her religion.

4. Strange enough! In our country the Constitution guarantees right to profess, preach and practise any religion publically.

Notes

5. In India the Constitution provides for gender equality, though in practice we also have to go a long way. But women have equal rights in every sphere of life. They are engaged in all kinds of job and business. They have also been made the beneficiary of reservations.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

15.1

1. When used in the context of a State or a Nation, Constitution means a set of fundamental principles, basic rules and established precedents. It identifies, defines and regulates various aspects of the State and the structure, powers and functions of the major institutions under the three organs of the Government, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. It also provides for rights and freedoms of citizens and spells out the relationship between individual citizen and the State and government.

2. (i) longest (ii) the Constituent Assembly (iii) needs to be amended as and when required to keep it updated (iv) Republic Day, 26 January 1950

15.2

1. Value is that which is very essential or 'worth having and observing' for the existence of human society as an entity.

2. The values expressed in the Preamble are expressed as objectives of the Constitution. These are: sovereignty, socialism, secularism, democracy, republican character of Indian State, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, human dignity and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

3.

A	B
(i)	(g)
(ii)	(a)
(iii)	(e)
(iv)	(b)
(v)	(c)
(vi)	(h)
(vii)	(i)
(viii)	(f)
(ix)	(d)

15.3

1. (i) Written Constitution; (ii) Unique blend of rigidity and flexibility; (iii) Fundamental Rights and Duties; (iv) Directive Principles of State Policy; (v) Integrated Judicial System; (vi) Single Citizenship; (vii) Universal Adult Franchise; (viii) Federal System and Parliamentary Form of Government.

2. social and economic equality, elimination of social discrimination, international peace

3. Although the Supreme Court is at the national level, High Courts at the state level and Subordinate Courts at the district and lower level, there is a single hierarchy of Courts. At the top of the hierarchy is the Supreme Court.

4. It means that every Indian is a citizen of India, irrespective of the place of his/ her residence.

15.4

1. (i) Two-tier government at the Centre and at the state level; (ii) Division of Powers between the Centre and the States; (iii) Written Constitution; (iv) Supremacy of Judiciary

2. (i) The Central government has sole power on the territory of India. The very existence of a State including its territorial integrity is in the hands of the Parliament; (ii) The division of powers between the Centre and the States is in favour of the Union government. The Union List contains all the key subjects; (iii) India has a unified or integrated judiciary with the Supreme Court at the apex; (iv) Union government becomes very powerful when any of the three kinds of emergencies are proclaimed; (v) During all the three types of Emergencies, The Union government becomes all powerful, and India becomes almost a unitary state; (vi) According to the constitutional provisions, the executive powers of the Centre are superior to those of the States.

3. Gather relevant information from books, magazines or by surfing internet to answer

15.5

1. There is a close relationship between the executive, i.e. the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head and the legislature, i.e. the Parliament. The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Parliament. If the Lok Sabha passes a no-confidence motion against the Council of Ministers, it has to resign.

2. The President who is the Head of the State is the nominal and formal executive. Theoretically, all the executive powers are vested by the Constitution in the President of India. But in practice these are not exercised by him/her. These are actually used by the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. The Council

of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head is the real executive. The President can not act without the advice of the Council of Ministers. The President is elected by an Electoral College that consists of the Members of Parliament. If the Parliament passes an impeachment against the President, he/she leaves the office.

3. It means that the responsibility of every Minister is the responsibility of the entire Council of Ministers. Even one ministry is criticized, the entire Council of Ministers is considered responsible for that.

4. They do it by asking questions and supplementary questions on the policies, programmes and functioning of the government. They can move adjournment motion and calling attention notices. No bill tabled by the Council of Ministers can become a law unless it is approved by the Parliament. The annual budget also is to be passed by the Parliament.

16

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES

Now-a-days, terms like 'right to education', 'right to information' and 'right to protest peacefully' are being used quite frequently. Many a time, you also feel that you have certain rights. Simultaneously, you may have been told by some one, may be your teacher, that you have certain duties towards other individuals, society, nation or the humanity. But do you think that every human being enjoys the rights or everyone performs the duties? Perhaps not. But everyone will agree that there are certain rights that must be enjoyed by individuals. Particularly, in a democratic country like ours, there are rights that must be guaranteed to every citizen. Similarly there are certain duties that must be performed by democratic citizens. Which is why, the Constitution of India guarantees some rights to its citizens. They are known as Fundamental Rights. Besides, the Indian Constitution also enlists certain core duties that every citizen is expected to perform. These are known as Fundamental Duties. This lesson aims at discussing the details about the Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

● explain the meaning of rights and duties and critically evaluate their need and importance in our day to day life;

● assess the importance of Fundamental Rights given in the Constitution of India and analyse their exceptions and restrictions;

● appreciate the implications of recently added Right to Education;

● compare between Fundamental Rights and Human Rights;

● understand the process of seeking justice through constitutional means in case of violation of Fundamental Rights; and

● appreciate the importance of Fundamental Duties and the need to perform them as a good and law-abiding citizen of India.

Notes

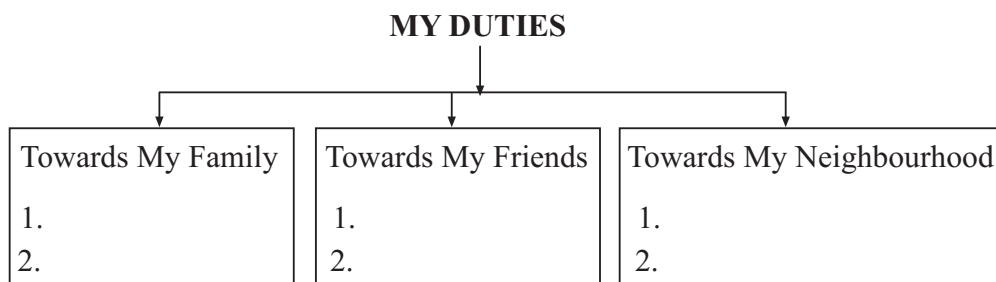## 16.1 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES

We often talk about rights, but do you know what does the term 'rights' mean? Rights are rules of interaction between people. They place constraints and obligations upon the actions of the state and individuals or groups. For example, if one has a right to life, this means that others do not have the liberty to kill him or her. Rights are defined as claims of an individual that are essential for the development of his or her own self and that are recognized by society or State. These are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement and are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed to people or owed to people, according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory. Rights are often considered fundamental to civilization, being regarded as established pillars of society and culture.

But the rights have real meaning only if individuals perform duties. A duty is something that someone is expected or required to do. Parents, for example, have a duty to take care of their child. You have duties towards your parents. A teacher has a duty to educate students. In fact, rights and duties are two wheels on which the chariot of life moves forward smoothly. Life can become smoother if rights and duties go hand in hand and become complementary to each other. Rights are what we want others to do for us whereas the duties are those acts which we should perform for others. Thus, a right comes with an obligation to show respect for the rights of others. The obligations that accompany rights are in the form of duties. If we have the right to enjoy public facilities like transport or health services, it becomes our duty to allow others to avail the same. If we have the right to freedom, it becomes our duty not to misuse this and harm others.
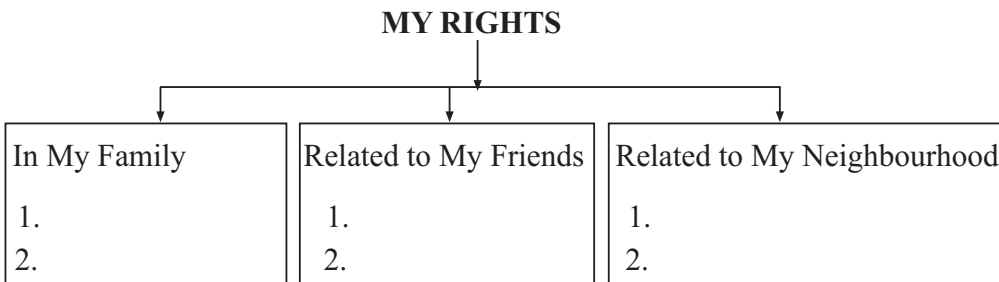
ACTIVITY 16.1

Write down in the boxes given below your rights and your duties towards family, friends and the neighbourhood.

MY DUTIES

Towards My Family	Towards My Friends	Towards My Neighbourhood
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.

Notes

MY RIGHTS

In My Family	Related to My Friends	Related to My Neighbourhood
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.

What do you think are the differences between your duties and rights? Do you think they are interrelated? How?

16.2 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

As we have seen, rights are claims that are essential for the existence and development of individuals. In that sense there will a long list of rights. Whereas all these are recognized by the society, some of the most important rights are recognized by the State and enshrined in the Constitution. Such rights are called fundamental rights. These rights are fundamental because of two reasons. First, these are mentioned in the Constitution which guarantees them and the second, these are justiciable, i.e. enforceable through courts. Being justiciable means that in case of their violation, the individual can approach courts for their protection. If a government enacts a law that restricts any of these rights, it will be declared invalid by courts. Such rights are provided in Part III of the Indian Constitution. The Constitution guarantees six fundamental rights to Indian citizens as follows: (i) right to equality, (ii) right to freedom, (iii) right against exploitation, (iv) right to freedom of religion, (v) cultural and educational rights, and (vi) right to constitutional remedies. While these fundamental rights are universal, the Constitution provides for some exceptions and restrictions.

? **Do you know**

Originally, there were seven Fundamental Rights in the Constitution. Besides the above mentioned six rights, there was the Right to Property also. Since this Right created a lot of problems in the way of attaining the goal of socialism and equitable distribution of wealth, it was removed from the list of Fundamental Rights in 1978 by 44th constitutional amendment. However, its deletion does not mean that we do not have the right to acquire, hold and dispose of property. Citizens are still free to enjoy this right. But now it is just a legal right and not a Fundamental Right.

16.2.1 Right to Equality

Right to equality is very important in a society like ours. The purpose of this right is to establish the rule of law where all the citizens should be treated equal before

the law. It has five provisions (Articles 14-18) to provide for equality before law or for the protection of law to all the persons in India and also to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

(i) **Equality before Law:** The Constitution guarantees that all citizens will be equal before law. It means that everyone will be equally protected by the laws of the country. No person is above law. It means that if two persons commit the same crime, both of them will get the same punishment without any discrimination.

(ii) **No Discrimination on the basis of Religion, Race, Caste, Sex or Place of Birth:** The State cannot discriminate against a citizen on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. This is necessary to bring about social equality. Every citizen of India has equal access to shops, restaurants, places of public entertainment or in the use of wells, tanks or roads without any discrimination. However, the State can make special provisions or concessions for women and children.

(iii) **Equality of Opportunity to all Citizens in matter of Public Employment:** The State cannot discriminate against anyone in the matter of public employment. All citizens can apply and become employees of the State. Merits and qualifications will be the basis of employment. However, there are some exceptions to this right. There is a special provision for the reservation of posts for citizens belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

Figure 16.1 *Working in Office Without Gender Based Discrimination*

(iv) **Abolition of Untouchability:** Practising untouchability in any form has been made a punishable offence under the law. This provision is an effort to uplift the social status of millions of Indians who had been looked down upon and

kept at a distance because of either their caste or the nature of their profession. But, it is really very unfortunate that despite constitutional provisions, this social evil continues even today. Can you find any difference when you see a nurse cleaning a patient, a mother cleaning her child and a lady cleaning a toilet in the illustration? Why do people consider the cleaning of a toilet in a derogatory manner?

(v) **Abolition of Titles:** All the British titles like Sir (Knighthood) or Rai Bahadur which were given to the British loyalists during the British rule, have been abolished because they created distinctions of artificial nature. However, the President of India can confer civil and military awards to those who have rendered meritorious service to the nation in different fields. The civil awards such as Bharat Ratna, Padma Vibhushan, Padam Bhushan and Padma Shri and the military awards like Veer Chakra, Paramveer Chakra, Ashok Chakra are conferred. Do you know that these awards are not titles? Educational and military awards can be prefixed with one's name?

(Bharat Ratna, Padma Vibhushan, Pramvir Chakra, Veer Chakra, Ashok Chakra)

Figure 16.2 *Medals Showing Civil and Military Awards*

ACTIVITY 16.2

Gather the opinion of at least 5 of your classmates, friends or adults in your family and neighbourhood on the following questions:

1. Do you think that reservation of posts for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes is proper?

2. Do you think that the people still avoid drinking water given by an individual of Scheduled Caste?

3. Do you agree that there is equality before law for all the citizens in the real sense of the term?

Put their responses in the table given below and draw conclusions. What opinion do you have regarding these questions?

Questions	Responses of Persons				
	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5
Question 1					
Question 2					
Question 3					

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.1

1. What do you mean by rights and duties? How are they interrelated?

2. Which of the following statements do not conform to the Right to Equality and why?

    (i)   Reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes provided only in a case of discrimination.

    (ii) A former Union Minister facing charges of corruption is exempted from attending the Court.

    (iii) Access to public places is open to all.

    (iv) Eligibility for employment is based on religion.

    (v)   Rai Bahadur Sohan Singh is a candidate in Lok Sabha elections.

3. Which one of the following is not a form of untouchability?

    (i)   There are separate doors for entry in a sacred place, one for Dalits and one for others.

    (ii) A Gym refused to admit Dalit clients.

    (iii) Dalits share the village hand pumps for water with others.

    (iv) A Dalit bride was not allowed to wear a bridal dress on her marriage day.

16.2.2 Right to Freedom

You will agree that the freedom is the most cherished desire of every living being. Human beings definitely want and need freedom. You also want to have freedom. The Constitution of India provides Right to Freedom to all its citizens. This Right is stipulated under Articles 19-22. The following are the four categories of Rights to Freedom:

I. Six Freedoms: Article 19 of the Constitution provides for the following six freedoms:

    (a)   Freedom of speech and expression

    (b)   Freedom to assemble peacefully and without arms

(c)   Freedom to form Associations and Unions

(d)   Freedom to move freely throughout the territory of India

(e)   Freedom to reside and settle in any part of India

(f)   Freedom to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business

The purpose of providing these freedoms is to build and maintain an environment for proper functioning of democracy. However, the Constitution has authorized the State to impose certain *reasonable restrictions* on each of them:

1.   Restrictions may be put on the Right to Freedom of speech and expression in the interests of the sovereignty, integrity and security of India, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

2.   Right to assemble peacefully and without arms may be restricted in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India or public order.

3.   Right to form associations or unions may have restrictions in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, public order or morality.

4.   Right to move freely throughout the territory of India and to reside and settle in any part of India may also be restricted in the interest of the general public or for the protection of the interests of any Scheduled Tribe.

5.   Right to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business may have restrictions in the interests of the general public. The State is also permitted to lay down the professional or technical qualifications necessary for practising any profession or carrying on any occupation, trade or business.

II. Protection in respect of conviction for offences: Article 20 of the Constitution provides for the protection in respect of conviction for offences. No one can be convicted for an act that was not an offence at the time of its commission, and no one can be given punishment greater than what was provided in the law prevalent at the time of its commission. Also, no one can be prosecuted and punished for the same offence more than once and can be forced to give witness against his or her own self.

III. Protection of life and personal liberty: As provided in Article 21, no one can be deprived of his or her life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.

IV. Protection against arrest and detention in certain cases: It is provided in Article 22 that whenever a person is arrested, he or she should be informed, as soon as it is possible, of the grounds for arrest and should be allowed to consult and to be defended by a legal practitioner of his or her choice. Moreover, the

arrested person must be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours of such an arrest excepting a person who has been arrested under preventive detention law. The case of the person arrested under preventive detention law has also to be referred to an Advisory Board within a period of three months of his or her arrest.

Notes

? Do you know

1. What will happen if the State misuses its power in the name of reasonable restrictions? Who will decide the reasonableness? According to the Constitution, only the courts can decide this issue and not the government.

2. Only some of the Fundamental Rights are enjoyed by the foreigners and not all. For example, the Right to Equality before Law and Right to Freedom of Religion are enjoyed by the foreigners also, but most other Fundamental Right are exclusively for the Indian citizens only.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.2

1. What are the freedoms provided in the Indian Constitution?

2. Which freedom has been violated in the following cases?

    (i) The state policy did not allow the leader of a particular political party to cross its border and enter the state without any reason.

    (ii) Workers were not allowed to unite and highlight their demands.

    (iii) People forced to leave their own state and go elsewhere.

    (iv) The son of a shoemaker was not allowed to open a sweet shop in the village.

    (v) A political party was not accorded permission to hold a public meeting.

3. What are the provisions in the Constitution for the protection of citizens in respect of conviction for offenders, the protection of life and personal liberty and the protection against arrest and detention?

ACTIVITY 16.3

Below are stated Freedoms granted to citizens by the Constitution and the reasonable restriction that the State can impose. Match the Freedom with appropriate Reasonable Restriction. Do you think these restrictions are appropriate? Give reasons for your view.

Notes

Freedoms	Reasonable Restrictions
1. Freedom of speech and expression	(a) Restriction on the movement of a person/group to prevent spread of violence.
2. Freedom to form Associations and Unions	(b) Not allowed to run trades like gambling, prostitution, selling of narcotic drugs.
3. Freedom to assemble peacefully and without arms.	(c) Not allowed to reside too close to aerodrome
4. Freedom to move freely throughout the territory of India	d) Restriction on the use of language that may instigate people for communal violence
5. Free to reside and settle in any part of India	e) Not allowed to form an association to help terrorist activities
6. Freedom to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business	f) Should be peaceful and participants should not carry any weapon.

16.2.3 Right against Exploitation

Have you ever thought how many ways exploitations take place in our society? You might have seen a small child working in a tea shop or a poor and illiterate person being forced to work in the household of a rich person. Traditionally, the Indian society has been hierarchical that has encouraged exploitation in many forms. Which is why, the Constitution makes provisions against exploitation. The citizens have been guaranteed the right against exploitation through Articles 23 and 24 of the Constitution. These two provisions are:

1. **Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour:** Traffic in human beings and *begar* and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any breach of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

? Do you know

1. **Traffic** in human beings means selling and buying of human beings as material goods. Trafficking, especially of young women, girls and even boys is continuing as an illegal trade.

2. Earlier especially in the feudal Indian society, people belonging to the poor and downtrodden sections were made to do work free of charge for landlords and other powerful people. This practice was *Begar* or forced labour.

3. **Prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc.:** As the Constitution provides, no child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment. This right aims at eliminating one of the most serious problems, child labour, that India has been facing since ages. Children are assets of the society. It is their basic right to enjoy a happy childhood and get education. But as shown in the illustration and as you also may have observed, in spite of this constitutional provision, the problem of child labour is still continuing at many places. This malice can be eliminated by creating public opinion against it.

Figure 16.3 *Children working in hazardous situation*

ACTIVITY 16.4

Gonu and Sonu aged 9 and 11 respectively belonged to a remote village in the State of Jharkhand. Their father sold them to a bangle manufacturer of Firozabad in Uttar Pradesh for Rs. 2,000 each. They were made to work in a factory where many more children were already working under extremely unhealthy and hazardous conditions. They were not given enough food to eat and they hardly got time to sleep. In case they got hurt or burnt or fell ill, they were beaten up, tortured and forced to work for more than 18-20 hours. Some children who managed to escape from there, went to other cities and took to begging, stealing or some other menial jobs. They always dreamt of meeting their parents, but they could never do so.

Read the above news story and answer the following questions :

1. Which Fundamental Rights are violated in this story.

2. What action should be taken against the parents who sell their children or make them work in such conditions?

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3. What measures may be taken to save such children from exploitation?

Put yourself in the shoes of Sonu and Gonu being made to work for long hours in a bangle factory. What can you do to seek help and change your circumstances?

16.2.4 Right to Freedom of Religion

As you know, one of the objectives declared in the Preamble is "to secure to all its citizens liberty of belief, faith and worship". Since India is a multi-religion country, where Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and many other communities live together, the Constitution declares India as a 'secular state'. It means that Indian State has no religion of its own. But it allows full freedom to all the citizens to have faith in any religion and to worship, the way they like. But this should not interfere with the religious beliefs and ways of worship of other fellow beings. This freedom is available to the foreigners as well. In respect of the Right to freedom the Constitution makes the following four provisions under Articles 25-28:

1. **Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion:** All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise and propagate religion freely. However, it does not mean that one can force another person to convert his/her religion by force or allurement. Also, certain inhuman, illegal and superstitious practices have been banned. Religious practices like sacrificing animals or human beings, for offering to gods and goddesses or to some supernatural forces are not-permissible. Similarly, the law does not permit a widow to get cremated live with her dead husband (voluntarily or forcibly) in the name of *Sati Pratha.* Forcing the widowed woman not to marry for a second time or to shave her head or to make her wear white clothes are some other social evils being practised in the name of religion. Besides the above stated restrictions, the State also has the power to regulate any economic, financial, political or other secular activities related to religion. The State can also impose restrictions on this right on the grounds of public order, morality and health.

2. **Freedom to manage religious affairs:** Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious group or any section thereof shall have the right (a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (d) to administer such property in accordance with law.

3. **Freedom as to the payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion:** No person shall be compelled to pay any tax, the proceeds of which are specifically used in payment of expenses the incurred on the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious sect.

4. **Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions:** (1) No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds. However, it will not apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such an institution. But no person attending such an institution shall be compelled to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted there or attend any religious worship that may be conducted there. In case of a minor, the consent of his/her guardian is essential for attending such activities.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.3

1. What is the main objective of making 'right against exploitation,' a fundamental right?

2. Write one term for the following statements:

    (a) A practice where a person is compelled to serve without any payment
    ....

    (b) Selling and buying of a human beings
    ....

3. Mention any four real life-situations of exploitation being openly practiced in your neighbourhood.

16.2.5 Cultural and Educational Rights

India is the largest democracy in the world having diversity of culture, scripts, languages and religions. As we know the democracy is a rule of the majority. But the minorities are also equally important for its successful working. Therefore, protection of language, culture and religion of the minorities becomes essential so that the minorities may not feel neglected or undermined under the impact of the majority rule. Since people take pride in their own culture and language, a special right known as Cultural and Educational Right has been included in the Chapter on Fundamental Rights. In Articles 29-30 two major provisions have been made:

1. **Protection of interests of minorities:** Any minority group having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

2. **Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions:** All Minorities, whether based on religion or language, have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. In making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, the State shall ensure that the amount

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fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause. The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

? Do you know

Minority does not mean minority at the national level. There can be minorities at the state level also. For example, the Sikhs are a majority community in Punjab, but they are a minority community in Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana and many other States. Similarly Telugu, Kannad and Bangala speaking people are in minority in most of the States in India except in their own, i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal.

16.2.6 Right to Constitutional Remedies

Since Fundamental Rights are justiciable, they are just like guarantees. They are enforceable, as every individual has the right to seek the help from courts, if they are violated. But in reality it is not so. Encroachment or violation of Fundamental Right in our day to day life is a matter of great concern. Which is why, our Constitution does not permit the legislature and the executive to curb these rights. It provides legal remedies for the protection of our Fundamental Rights. This is called the Right to Constitutional Remedies stipulated in Article 32. When any of our rights are violated, we can seek justice through courts. We can directly approach the Supreme Court that can issue directions, orders or writs for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights.

16.2.7 Right to Education (RTE)

The Right to Education is added by introducing a new Article 21A in the Chapter on Fundamental Rights in 2002 by the 86th Constitutional Amendment. It was a long standing demand so that all children in the age group of 6-14 years (and their parents) can claim compulsory and free education as a Fundamental Right. It is a major step forward in making the country free of illiteracy. But this addition remained meaningless, as it could not be enforced until 2009 when the Parliament passed the Right to Education Act, 2009. It is this Act which aims at ensuring that every child who is between 6-14 years of age and is out of the school in India, goes to school and receives quality education, that is his/her right.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.4

1. What are the major cultural and educational rights guaranteed by the Constitution?

Notes

2. Tamil, Kannad and Telugu speaking people living in Delhi are amongst the many minority communities. What can they do to conserve their distinct language and culture?

3. Which one of the following situations is not covered under the Cultural and Educational Rights:

    (a) To conserve one's distinct language.

    (b) No discrimination in granting funds to the minorities.

    (c) Right to establish institutions of their own choice.

    (d) The Minority school must admit children belonging to the majority community.

4. "The right to constitutional remedies is the most important fundamental right." Do you agree with this statement? Give justification to your answer.

16.3 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS

You have already read that Fundamental Rights are indeed very essential for the well being of every citizen. We also know that people have always struggled against injustice, exploitation and inequality for the creation of better surroundings, better living conditions and preservation of the human dignity. Efforts to avail such rights to all human beings have been made at the international level also by recognising various rights which are popularly known as Human Rights. The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Human Rights in 1948 and enshrined them in Universal Declaration of Human Rights about which you will study later. Some of the Human Rights are: Equality before Law, Freedom from Discrimination, Right to Life, Liberty and Personal Security, Right to Free Movement, Right to Education, Right to Marriage and Family, Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion, Right to Peaceful Assembly and Association and Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of the Community. If you carefully examine the above mentioned rights, you will realise how important the Human Rights are.

That is why, many of the Human Rights have found place in the Chapter on Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution. The Human Rights which could not find place under the Fundamental Rights have been included in the Chapter on Directive Principles of State Policy. Moreover, keeping in view the importance of Human Rights, the National Human Rights Commission was founded in 1993 by the Government of India to guarantee that the Indian citizens also enjoy those rights.

Do you know

Human rights are universal, fundamental and absolute : universal because they belong to all humans everywhere; fundamental because they are inalienable; absolute because they are basic to a real living.

1. Fundamental Duties

After going through the Fundamental Rights, you must have observed and realized that in return for every right, the society expects the citizens to do certain things which are collectively known as duties. Some such important duties have been incorporated in the Indian Constitution also. The original Constitution enforced on 26th January, 1950 did not mention anything about the duties of the citizen. It was expected that the citizens of free India would perform their duties willingly. But things did not go as expected. Therefore, ten Fundamental Duties were added in Part-IV of the Constitution under Article 51-A in the year 1976 through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment. However, whereas Fundamental Rights are justiciable, the Fundamental Duties are non-justiciable. It means that the violation of fundamental duties, i.e. the non-performance of these duties by citizens is not punishable. The following ten duties have been listed in the Constitution of India:

1. to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag, National Anthem;

2. to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;

3. to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;

4. to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do;

5. to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;

6. to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;

7. to protect and improve the natural environments including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife;

8. to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;

9. to safeguard public property and not to use violence; and

10. to serve towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity.

Besides, a new duty has been added after the passage of Right to Education Act, 2009. "A parent or guardian has to provide opportunities for the education of his child/ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

16.3.1 Nature of Fundamental Duties

These duties are in the nature of a code of conduct. Since they are unjusticiable, there is no legal sanction behind them. As you will find, a few of these duties are vague. For example, a common citizen may not understand what is meant by 'composite culture', 'rich heritage' 'humanism', or 'excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activities'. They will realize the importance of these duties only when these terms are simplified

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A demand has been made from time to time to revise the present list, simplify their language and make them more realistic and meaningful and add some urgently required more realistic duties. As far as possible, they should be made justiciable.

? **Do you know**

1. Proper upbringing of the children and maintenance of the parents in their old age were included in the list of Fundamental Duties in the Soviet Constitution of 1977.

2. To educate the children, not to interfere with public welfare, to pay the taxes and the right to work have been included in the Constitution of Japan.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.5

1. Which international document on Human Rights was prepared and passed by the United Nations General Assembly?

2. List any four Fundamental Rights which are Human Rights also.

3. Carefully study the following illustrations and identify and list one Fundamental Duty for each illustration which can be associated with or are related to it.
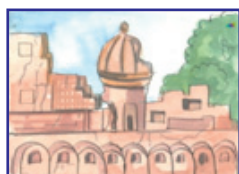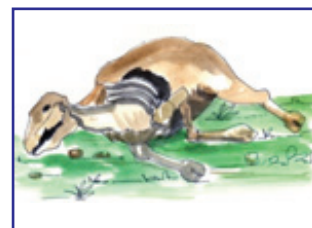
Illustrations to be included:(a) Leafless trees, fallen trees, dead animals etc. (b)Some ruined monuments (c) Marchers in a procession with placards like Inqulab zinadabad, Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Hindustan Amar Rahey (d) Soldier guarding the border or patrolling on the border (e) a few places of worship representing different religions

4.   If you are to take a pledge to abide by four Fundamental Duties on **the** Independence Day, which four duties, according to you are the most important ones and why?

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT?

- Rights are claims of an individual and these are essential for the development of himself or herself and that are recognized by the society or the State. A duty is something that someone is required to do for any number of reasons, including moral or legal obligations. Rights and duties are interdependent.

- Whereas all the rights are recognized by the society, some of the most important rights are recognized by the State and enshrined in the Constitution. Such rights are called Fundamental Rights.

- The Constitution guarantees six Fundamental Rights to Indian citizens as follows: (i) Right to equality, (ii) Right to freedom, (iii) Right against exploitation, (iv) Right to freedom of religion, (v) cultural and educational rights, and (vi) Right to constitutional remedies. While these Fundamental Rights are universal, the Constitution provides for some exceptions and restrictions.

- The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted several types of Human Rights in 1948 and enshrined them in Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A number of the Human Rights have been given place as Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution so that their implementation may become a legal duty of the government. The Human Rights which could not find place under the Fundamental Rights, have been taken care of under Directive Principles of State Policy.

- Ten Fundamental Duties have been added in Part-IV of the Constitution under Art 51A in the year 1976 through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment. Unlike Fundamental Rights which are justiceable, the Fundamental Duties are non-justiceable which means that their violation i.e. non-performance of these duties is non-punishable.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Explain the significance of Fundamental Rights in our day to day life. Which fundamental right do you consider the most important in your life and why?

2. Enumerate the six Fundamental Rights granted to us by the Constitution.

3. How far will the Right to Education eradicate illiteracy from India? Explain.

4. Describe the main provisions of the Right to freedom of religion.

5. Highlight only three restrictions imposed on the Right to Freedom. In your opinion, are these restrictions justified? Give arguments to support your answer.

6. Do you agree that Human Rights are reflected in the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution?

7. What are the fundamental duties enumerated in the Constitution? Which of these do you consider as your most important duties and why?

8. Read the following statements; identify the correct ones and rewrite the incorrect ones after necessary corrections:

   (i) A person is not free to change his/her religion without permission from the government.

   (ii) Every government or government-aided school can impart religious instructions.

   (iii) Students of institutions managed by private bodies cannot be compelled to take part in religious worships.

   (iv) As a multi-religious state, India can confer any privilege or favor on any religion.

   (v) The government can impose taxes for the maintenance of important religious places.

   (vi) Places of worship can be constructed any where even if they obstruct the national development projects.

9. Match the rights in column 'A' with their corresponding duties in column 'B'.

A	B
(a) The constitution gives us the freedom of expression	(a) It is our duty not to deny the use of them to others.
(b) If we have the right to practise the religion of our own choice	(b) It is our duty to obey the rules and maintain discipline.
(c) If we have a right to use a public park, a well or a tank	(c) It is the duty of others not to kill us or injure us.
(d) If we have the right to live.	(d) It is our duty to allow others to practise their religion.
(e) If we have the right to be taught.	(e) It also reminds us and tells us not to hurt the feelings of others.

Project

Survey your neighbourhood or nearby places and identify 3-5 children below the age of 14 who are working in menial jobs as beggar or rag pickers. Try to know

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from them the factors which have forced them to reach such a stage. Based on your observations and discussions with your elders or with some NGO, fill-in the following table:

Sl. No.	Name of the Child	Factors that led him/her to difficult situation	Ways in which I can help him/her
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

16.1

1. Rights are defined as claims of an individual that are essential for the development of his or her own self and that are recognized by society or State. A duty is something that someone is expected or required to do. Rights and duties are interdependent. Life can become smoother if rights and duties go hand in hand and become complementary to each other. Rights are what we want others to do for us whereas the duties are those acts which we should perform for others. Thus, a right comes with an obligation to show respect for the rights of others. The obligations that accompany rights are in the form of duties.

2. (i) Because the provision for reservation is not a case of discrimination.

   (ii) Because everyone is equal before law and discrimination cannot be made on any basis including the status of a person.

   (iv) Because religion cannot be made the sole basis of employment in any situation.

   (v) Because the Constitution of India has abolished all the Titles. Mr. Sohan Singh can not use the title of Rai Bahadur.

3. (iii) Dalits share the village hand pumps for water with others.

16.2

1. (a) Freedom of speech and expression; (b) Freedom to assemble peacefully and without arms; (c) Freedom to form Associations and Unions; (d) Freedom to

move freely throughout the territory of India; (e) Freedom to reside and settle in any part of India;   (f) Freedom to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business

2.   (i)   Freedom to move freely throughout the territory of India

   (ii)   Freedom to form Associations and Unions

   (iii) Freedom to reside and settle in any part of India

   (iv) Freedom to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business

   (v)   Freedom to assemble peacefully and without arms

3. Article 20, Article 21 and Article 22 respectively

16.3

1. Traditionally, the Indian society has been hierarchical that has encouraged exploitation in many forms. Which is why, the Constitution makes provisions against exploitation.

2. (a) *begar*

   (b) human trafficking

3. Mention the life situations based on your own experiences, like a 10-year boy working in a tea shop.

16.4

1. In Articles 29-30 two major provisions have been made: Protection of interests of minorities; and Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions

2. Any minority having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

3.   (d)   Minority school must admit children belonging to majority community

4. Encroachment or violation of Fundamental Rights in our day to day life is a matter of great concern. Which is why, our Constitution does not permit the legislature and the executive to curb these rights. It provides legal remedies for the protection of our Fundamental Rights. This is called the Right to Constitutional Remedies.

16.5

1. The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Human Rights in 1948 and preserved them in Universal Declaration of Human Rights

2. Right to Equality, Right to Freedom, Right to Freedom of Religion and Cultural and Educational Rights

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3. (a)   to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures;

    (b)   to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture

    (c)   to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;

    (d)   to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so

    (e)   to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;

4. (a)   to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;

    (b)   to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;

    (c)   to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;

    (d)   to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures;

These duties are focused on the central spirit of the Constitution and the goals that Indian political system tries to achieve.

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17

INDIA – A WELFARE STATE

Ramakrishnan and his friend Abdul who were coming from Chennai got down at New Delhi railway station. While they were crossing the road to hire a taxi, Ramakrishnan was hit by a cycle rickshaw. He was immediately admitted in a government hospital for treatment, where Dr. Nirmala handled his case. Worried Abdul phoned Ramakrishnan's uncle and informed his own family also. After about an hour, Dr. Nirmala told Abdul that there was nothing to worry as Ramakrishnan had no serious injury. By then Ramakrishnan's uncle also reached and Ramakrishnan was discharged. Abdul noticied that the doctor did not charge anything for her medical advice and charged nominally for the medicines. He asked Ramakrishnan's uncle, how it was possible? The uncle who is a teacher told that in a country like India which is a welfare state, all this is the responsibility of the government. Now Abdul was confronted by a basic question, "what does a welfare state mean"?

You may also have come across this term while going through newspapers or magazines or watching a discussion on television. You might have noted that whenever India is described as a welfare state, there is a reference to Directive Principles of State Policy. Why? Like Abdul, you may have a number of questions. In the lesson analyse and understand all the important facets of India being a welfare state.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson you will be able to:

● explain the meaning of a welfare state and understand how India is a welfare state;

● identify the factors which led to the inclusion of Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India;

- appreciate the importance of Directive Principles in realizing the objectives of a welfare state of India.

- identify and classify various categories of Directive Principles;

- distinguish between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy; and

- analyse the measures taken to implement Directive Principles to realize the objectives of a welfare state

17.1 WHAT IS A WELFARE STATE?

The basic question i.e. what is a welfare state that bothered Abdul needs to be answered. As we have seen, India is described as a welfare state. There are a number of other nations in the world, which are also described as welfare states. Why are they called so and others are not? What is the meaning of the term, welfare state? It is a concept of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of economic and social well-being of its citizens. A welfare state is based on the principles of equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth. It also focuses on the governmental responsibility for those who are unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions of a good life. Under this system, the welfare of its citizens is the responsibility of the state. India was not a welfare state before independence. The British rule was not very interested in protecting and promoting the welfare of the people. Whatever it did was in keeping with the interests of the British colonial government and not in the interests of the people of India.

When India attained independence, it had innumerable problems and challenges. The social and economic inequality was all pervasive. Economically, India's situation was miserable. Socially also India was having a number of problems. There were social inequalities and all the vulnerable sections of the society such as women, dalits, children were deprived of basic means of living. The Constitution makers were very much aware of the problems. That is why, they decided that India would be a welfare state. As you must have seen, India is described as a "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic" in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. Accordingly, the Constitution has extensive provisions to ensure social and economic welfare of the people of India. In this regard two specific provisions have been made, one in the form of Fundamental Rights and the other as Directive Principles of State Policy.

The Fundamental Rights embodied in Part III of the Indian Constitution act as a guarantee that all Indian citizens can and will enjoy civil liberties and basic rights. These civil liberties take precedence over any other law of the land. They are individual rights commonly included in the Constitutions of liberal democracies. Some of these important rights are: equality before the law, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of religion, and

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the right to constitutional remedies for the protection of civil rights. But this was not enough. Indian citizens also needed opportunities for economic and social development. That is why Part IV on Directive Principles of State Policy was included in the Indian Constitution.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1

1. What do you mean by the term welfare state?

2. Why did Constitution-makers decide that India would be a welfare state?

3. Name at least two sections of Indian society that were adversely affected by prevailing social inequalities.

17.2 DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY

As we have seen in the Lesson on 'Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties', the fundamental rights provided in the Indian Constitution are primarily political rights. The Constitution makers were well aware that even if all the fundamental rights are truly enforced, the goals of Indian democracy would not be realized unless the people of India could avail of social and economic rights. However, they were also alive to the limitations of the abilities of Indian state which attained independence after centuries of foreign rule and was at a low level of socio-economic development. In that situation, if the economic and social rights had been included in the list of fundamental rights, the Indian state would have failed to enforce these rights because of its own limitations. But at the same time, these rights needed to be given special importance. This was done by including a separate Chapter as Part-IV known as the ***Directive Principles of State Policy*** in the Constitution.

17.2.1 Characteristics

The Directive Principles of State Policy are guidelines to the central and state governments of India. The governments must keep these principles in mind while framing laws and policies. It is true that these provisions of the Constitution of India are non- justiceable, which means that these are not enforceable by any court of law. But the principles are considered fundamental in the governance of the country. It is the duty of the central and state governments to apply these principles in making laws to establish a just society in the country. The principles have been inspired by the Directive Principles stated in the Constitution of Ireland and also by the principles of Gandhian philosophy.

The main aim of these principles is to create social and economic conditions under which all the citizens can lead a good life. In other words it is to establish social and economic democracy in the country. These principles act as a yardstick in the

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hands of the people to measure the performance of governments in respect of achieving the objective. All executive agencies have to be guided by these principles. Even the judiciary has to keep them in mind while deciding cases.

? Do you know

- The Directive Principles of State Policy have been listed in the Constitution under articles 36 to 51.
- A new directive was added by Forty Second Amendment. It speaks about the duty of the state to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wild life of the country.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2

1. Fill in the blanks:

    (a) The Directive Principles of State Policy are aimed at making India a .... state.

    (b) These principles are guidelines to .... of India, to be kept in mind while framing laws and policies.

    (c) The idea of Directive Principles is said to be borrowed from the constitution of ....

    (d) The directive principles are related to ....

2. Do you think the Indian Constitution would have failed to reflect the basic tenets of democracy, if it would not have included the Directive Principles of State Policy? Give reasons

17.2.2 Types of Directive Principles

If you go through the directive principles stated in the Constitution, you will find that they are of different types. Some are concerned with socio economic development, some are related to Gandhian thought, and some to foreign policy. The Constitution does not classify them under different heads, but for our better understanding, we may classify them under the following specific categories:

- Principles promoting social and economic equality;
- Principles related to Gandhian thought;
- Principles related to International peace and security; and
- Miscellaneous Principles.

A. Principles promoting social and economic equality

There are certain principles that are very important for realizing the goals of social and economic democracy in India. Many people in India have been suffering from social and economic inequalities since ages. The following principles, in particular, are aimed at ensuring economic and social equality:

Figure 17.1 *Social and Economic Inequalities*

1. The state should ensure for its people adequate means of livelihood.
2. The state should ensure fair distribution of the material resources of the country for the common good.
3. The state should distribute the wealth in such a way that the wealth is not concentrated in a few hands.
4. There should be equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
5. The state is directed to take steps to impart compulsory and free education to the children up to the age of 14 years.
6. The state should try to secure participation of workers in the management of the factory.
7. Childhood and Youth should be protected against exploitation. Men, women and children should not be forced by economic necessity to enter jobs and vocations not suited to their age or strength.
8. The state should ensure to the people (a) the right to work (b) the right to education (c) the right to state assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement.
9. The state should make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work for the workers and maternity relief for women.

ACTIVITY 17.1

Read the situation given below and do the activity that follows:

There is a factory where men and women are working together and are doing equal work for equal time. The owner pays more wages to men and less to women.

Identify the Directive Principle which is not being observed in this case

....

....

Write a letter to the Editor of a National daily expressing why this is against the principles of a welfare state

Letter to the editor

....

....

....

....

B. Principles related to Gandhian thought

Gandhian thinking promotes a non-violent social order. Swaraj (Self-rule) , Sarvodaya (welfare for all) and svavlambam(self-reliance) are the basic principles of Gandhian thought. We are all well aware that Mahatma Gandhi was in the forefront of freedom movement. His philosophy and actions guided not only our freedom movement but also the framing of the Indian Constitution. The following Directive Principles in particular reflect Gandhian thought:

1. The state shall promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the society and in particular the interests of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

2. The state shall take steps to organize the village panchayats. These panchayats should be given such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government.

3. The state shall make efforts to prevent the consumption of alcoholic drinks and other harmful drugs.

4. The state shall try to promote cottage industries in rural areas.

5. The state shall take steps to improve the quality of livestock and ban the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle.

ACTIVITY 17.2

1. According to the constitutional provisions, local government bodies should have 33% representation of women. Visit the office of at least one village panchayat

3. The state shall aim at establishing a uniform civil code for all citizens throughout the country.

4. The state shall take steps to separate the Judiciary from Executive.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.3

1. Mention the major categories of Directive Principles of State Policy.

2. Match the following Principles with their appropriate category, as done for the first in the following table:

Sl. No.	Directive Principles	Category
a.	The state shall ensure for its people adequate economic means of livelihood	Principles promoting social and economic equality
b.	The state shall take steps to separate judiciary from executive.	
c.	The state shall endeavor to maintain just and honourable relations between nations.	
d.	The state shall take steps to organize the village panchayats.	
e.	There should be equal pay for equal work both for men and women.	
f.	The state shall try to promote cottage industries in rural areas.	

17.3 DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

As you have learnt, the Directive Principles aim at establishing a welfare state. The aim of Fundamental rights is also the same; but there are some basic differences between the two.

First, Directive Principles are not justiceable. No constitutional provision or law binds the government to implement these. Fundamental rights are justiceable and enforceable. Fundamental rights cannot be denied to any citizen. These are protected by the Supreme Court and High Courts.

Second, these principles are only instructions or directions for the state to frame policies to implement them. Such policies should be a step towards realizing the

Notes

goals of a welfare state. Fundamental Rights have been ensured by the Constitution and the state is bound to protect the rights of all its citizens.

Third, even in respect of the placement in the Constitution, the Directive Principles come after the Fundamental Rights. It means that importance of Fundamental rights is more than that of Directive Principles.

However, it is important to appreciate that Directive Principles cannot be ignored even if these do not have the same kind of constitutional sanction as the Fundamental Rights. Implementation of Directive Principle enhances the credibility and popularity of any government, which and as we all know is the basis for regaining power in a democracy. Moreover, it is also apparent that the aim of both the Fundamental rights and Directive Principles is the same. They are not contradictory but complementary to each other. Fundamental Rights guarantee political democracy and Directive Principles are there to establish social and economic democracy. The real strength of the Directive Principles is derived from vigilant public opinion. The policies which are favoured by most citizens are usually implemented with great enthusiasm. No government can ignore the public interest. Each one of us is a vehicle for public opinion. It will be good if you try to create public opinion in favour of implementation of Directive Principles which you feel are important.

? Do you know

Shehzad Khan and Seema Dhanu who lead a group of young people, known as the Bal Panchayat in a village near Jaipur, Rajasthan have set a notable example of being catalytic to social development. This group of young people works on a variety of issues such as cleanliness, right to education, rights of thegirls of their village and also of the neighbouring villages. They are very actively engaged in preventing child labour. For this cause, they have lobbied with families, the panchayat and block administration to help working children go back to schools. Recently, Shehzad even approached the Chief Minister of Rajasthan to present the concerns regarding the lives of children in the villages. This example indicates that each one of us can raise a voice and make the government act for the betterment of the society?

17.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY

You may now be interested in knowing whether the central and state governments have done anything to implement these Directive Principles. Have you heard about *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan*, a massive programme of the Central government being implemented in all the States of India? You may also be aware of *Right To Education Act 2009* passed by the Indian Parliament.These are the outcomes of efforts being

made to implement the Directive Principles. Some states like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh have reserved 50 percent seats in Panchayat elections for women. These instances indicate that although there is no legal force behind the Directive Principles and there is no obligation on the state to enforce them, yet the governments have been implementing these principles. Some of the implemented principles are:

● Minimum wages have been fixed in almost all the spheres of employment.

● Equal wages for equal work for both men and women have been enacted.

● Various programmes have been launched to boost rural employment. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Swaran Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yozna are the examples.

● Panchayati Raj has been given constitutional status. Village Panchayats have been set up and are functioning at village level.

● The Eighty-sixth constitutional amendment was adopted to ensure *provision for free and compulsory education for children* and the Right to Education Act was passed in 2009 to make it a fundamental right.

● Many laws have been passed to protect children from exploitation.

● A number of welfare schemes have been implemented for the poor and backward classes and also for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Seats have been reserved for them in the Parliament and Vidhan Sabhas.

● Several laws and welfare schemes have been launched to protect women from exploitation.

● The forty second constitutional amendment added a Directive principle , which ensures *Protection and improvement of environment and safeguarding of forests and wild life*. A number of Programmes like *Save the Tiger* project Rhino, elephant etc. are being implemented in pursuance of the newly added directive principle. Judiciary has been separated from the executive.

● Cottage industries have been establish*ed and protected* by giving tax concessions.

● *Our foreign policy is in consonance with the principles of interna*tional peace and security, an*d maintaining* just and honourable relations between nations.

● The Government of India supports and works for world peace.

In view of the above, it is clear that governments at central, state and local levels are working for the implementation of the Directive principles. A lot of work has been done but still problems of poverty, unemployment, poor health and illiteracy do exist. The spirit of Directive Principles is to improve the quality of life of people. This is a continuous process and the efforts of the government showing some results. There are challenges that need comprehensive response based on the Directives Principles.

Notes

ACTIVITY 17.3

Collect information in respect of four welfare programmes that are being implemented in your State with the support of the Central government or State government. You can get this information from the local newspapers, internet, conversations with teachers/tutors and informed adults.

Sl. No.	Name of the Programme	Period of Implementation	Supported by State/ Central government
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.4

1. Name the Constitutional Amendments that (a) ensures the provision for free and compulsory education for children of 6-14 years; and (b) ensures protection and improvement of environment and safeguarding of forests and wild life.

2. Write the Directive Principle of State Policy,that should guide the government to act in case of each of the following incidents given below:

	Incidents	**Directive Principles**
(a)	A 10 year old boy is washing utensils in a hotel for a small wage.	
(b)	An 8 year old girl is not being given admission to a school.	
(c)	Selling of Alcohols and harmful drugs is being encouraged.	
(d)	Safety of historical monuments is not being taken care of.	

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- A welfare state is one in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. A welfare state is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life.

- Directive principals have been included in the Constitution of India for the socio economic development of the people.

- Directive principals are non-justiceable and cannot be enforced by any court of law.

- But these principles are considered fundamental in the governance of the country, making it the duty of the central and state governments to apply these principles in making laws to establish a just society in the country.

- The Directive Principles of State Policy can be categorized as (a) Principles promoting socio-economic equality; (b) Principles related to Gandhian thought; (c) Principles related to International Peace and Security; and (d) Miscellaneous Principles.

- Directive Principles are different from Fundamental Rights; but both are complementary to each other.

- The Central and State governments have been implementing these directive principles, but much more needs to be done to realize the goals of a welfare state.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What do you mean by a welfare state? Why did the Constitution-makers decide that India would be a welfare state?

2. What is the purpose of Directive Principles of State Policy?

3. How are Directive Principles of State Policy different from Fundamental Rights? Explain.

4. What are Directive principles of State Policy which reflect Gandhian thought?

5. How have Directive Principles helped in promoting socio-economic development and equality?

6. India and Pakistan have recently had secretary level talks to discuss conventional and nuclear confidence building measures as a part of peace process between

the two countries. To which Directive Principle of State Policy is this related and how?

7. Describe any three Directive Principles of State Policy which have been implemented.

Read the story given below and answer the questions:-

Bholu is a 10-year old who has come to a city. He has nobody to look after him so he begins working as a rag picker. He is staying on footpath outside the local hospital. He does not go to any school and earns his living by picking rags like plastic, toxic wastes and hospital wastes which are hazardous to health and also a risk to life. He earns about Rs. 20 a day and has no other option but to eat leftover and unhygienic food.

(a) What can be the possible reasons for Bholu's situation? Write any two.

(b) List two Directive Principles which are related to situations that children like Bholu may be facing.

(c) Discuss Bholu's situation with your friends and family and suggest two ways to improve it..

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

17.1

1. A welfare state is a concept of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of economic and social well-being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth.

2. When India attained independence, it had innumerable problems and challenges. There were social inequalities and all the vulnerable sections of the society such as women, dalits, children were deprived of basic means of living. The Constitution makers were very much aware of the problems. Which is why, they decided that India would be a welfare state.

3. Women and Dalits

17.2

1. (a) Welfare
   (b) Central and state governments
   (c) Ireland
   (d) Social and economic rights

2. Yes . The main aim of the Directive Principles of State Policy is to create social and economic conditions under which all the citizens can lead a good life. In other words it is to establish social and economic democracy in the country.

Notes

17.3

1. We may classify Directive Principles of State Policy under the following specific categories:

    (a) Principles promoting social and economic equality

    (b)   Principles related to Gandhian thought

    (c)   Principles related to International peace and security and

    (d) Miscellaneous Principles.

2. (a) Principles promoting social and economic equality

    (b) Miscellaneous Principles.

    (c) Principles related to International peace and security

    (d) Principles related to Gandhian thought

    (e) Principles promoting social and economic equality

    (f) Principles related to Gandhian thought

17.4

1. (a) The Eighty Sixth Constitutional Amendment

    (b) The Forty Second Constitutional Amendment

2. (a) Childhood and youth should be protected against exploitation

    (b) State shall take steps to impart compulsory and free education to children up to the age of 14 years

    (c) State shall make efforts to prevent consumption of alcoholic drinks and other harmful drugs

    (d) State shall take steps for maintenance and protection of historical monuments

Notes

18

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND FIELD ADMINISTRATION

Ramphal had left his village and come to a city in search of livelihood. His family also joined him there when he got a job. After a gap of 8 years, he and his son, Vijay visited his native village. Both were surprised to see a newly built primary school with a boundary wall, a volley ball ground and the village tube well with a park around it. All these had come up after they had left the village. Vijay also saw his younger cousins playing with the children of the high caste people the privileged class. It was a pleasant surprise for him, because earlier, they being poor and considered untouchables were not allowed to play with the children of the privileged villagers. He was curious to know how all that could happen. When he chanced to meet the school teacher, Vijay asked him the reasons behind the changes. The teacher said that those changes were the outcome of the efforts made primarily by the newly elected Sarpanch and Panches of the Gram Panchayat with the support from the field administration. Vijay felt still happier when came to know that one of his aunties had also been elected as a Panch. He wanted to know more about local government institutions like Gram Panchayat and field administration. In this lesson, the details as told by the teacher have been discussed.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson you will be able to:

● recognize the need to establish Local Government in villages and cities;

● appreciate the efforts of people to strengthen the democracy through local governments;

● analyse the structure and functions of the local government in India (rural as well as urban;

● analyse the changes made by 73rd and 74th amendment of Constitution and appreciate the steps taken towards women's empowerment;

- recognize the necessity and importance of different officers at different levels of field administration for assisting the representatives for better functioning of local governments; and

- appreciate the role of local governments in our daily life.

18.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Vijay asked the teacher why a Gram Panchayat is called a local government institution. You must be aware by now that India being a federal system has governments at two levels, Union government at the Centre and State governments at the state level. Besides these two governments, the Constitution of India has provided for a set of institutions for rural and urban areas, commonly known as Local government. It is the third tier of the government aimed at development and social justice at the local level and acts as an instrument of decentralization of powers. This is said to be the best government largely because of its closet interface with the local people. It provides a forum to them to deliberate on the nature of local problems and devise appropriate solutions that are in conformity with the local situations. Local government is in fact a government of the local people, by the local people and for the local people. Being located nearest to the people, the local government institutions are under constant observation of the society. This goes a long way in enhancing local government's accountability. In fact, the role of local self-government institutions is so pervasive and the services provided by them is so closest to the daily lives of the local communities that it is said to serve the local citizenry from "cradle to the grave".

The teacher asked Vijay if he knew that right from ancient times there had been some sort of community based institutions in different parts of India. They had been variously known as Panchayats, Biradaries or by some other names. The eldest person or any other commonly accepted leader used to deal with different problems of the members of the village or community. In many films or T.V. serials you must have noticed Panchayats listening to the complaints of the members and making decisions to resolve the issues. A story 'Panch Parmeshwar' by renowned litterateur Prem Chand also depicts the role of Panchayat. That old traditional organization "Panchayat" is still prevalent and working in the villages. Keeping in view the importance, acceptance and utility of this traditional institution, the government of India has continued with this system to work for the welfare of the people.

### 18.1.1 Rural and Urban Local Government

He further shared that it is not only in the villages where local governments are working. In cities also there are local bodies which are working for the welfare of the city dwellers. The only difference is that rural local bodies have a smaller area

and smaller population to look after but the local bodies of the cities have larger area and population to look after. The local governments in India thus are of two types, one for the rural areas and the other for the urban areas. The system of rural local government is known as the Panchayati Raj System and that of the urban local government has three kinds of institutional arrangements in different cities and towns. These are known as Municipal Corporations, Municipalities and Nagar Panchayats. The organization and functioning of both the Panchayati Raj System and Urban local governments have been greatly influenced by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts 1992.

18.2 PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM

As we have seen earlier that in the past, Panchayats used to be the seat of justice. Local disputes and other problems were referred to Panchayats and their decisions used to be respected by one and all. Our national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi had a firm faith in this system. The Constitution makers also considered this system to be very important and made provisions for it in the Directive Principles of State Policy. The Constitution states that the State shall take steps to organize Village Panchayats and empower them with such powers and authorities as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of local self government.
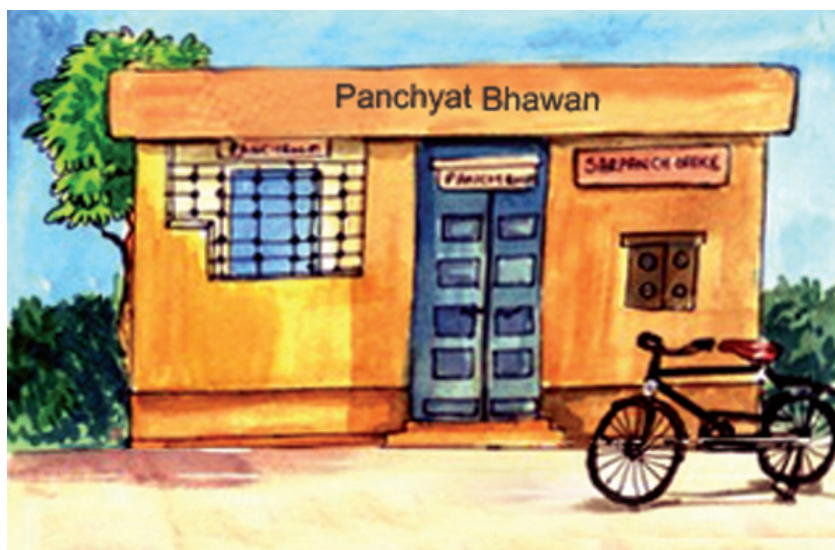
Figure 18.1

As a follow up, the present day Panchayats began functioning under the Community Development Programme introduced during the first Five year Plan. To make the system more effective a Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Balwant Rai Mehta that went into its details. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in its report

submitted in 1957 recommended the establishment of a three-tier Panchayati Raj System: Gram Panchayats at the village level, the Panchayat Samitis at the block level or intermediate level and the Zila Parishad at the district level. In 1958, the National Development Council also recommended a similar structure of local government where village was at the bottom of the system and district at the top. However, it is the 73rd Constitutional Amendment 1992 that provided the present shape to the Panchayati Raj System. Now the Panchayati Raj Institutions in most of the States have been set up at three levels, village, intermediate and district levels. But in smaller States having a population of less than 20 lakh, there are only two tiers, the village level and the district level.
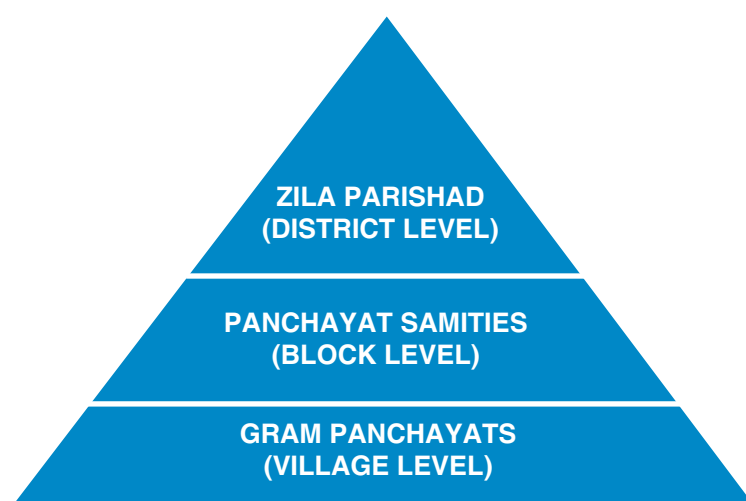

Figure 18.2 *The three tier structure of Panchayati Raj System*

18.2.1 The 73rd Constitutional Amendment 1992

The passage of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 marks a new era in the federal democratic set up of the country and provides constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The main features of the Act are:

(i)   establishment of a three-tier structure: Village Panchayat (Gram Panchayat); intermediate panchayat (Panchayat Samiti; and the district panchayat (Zila Parishad);

(ii)   regular elections, every five years;

(iii) reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population;

(iv)   not less than one-third reservation of seats for women at three different levels of PRIs;

(v)   establishment of State Finance Commissions to recommend measures to improve the finances of panchayats;

Notes

(vi) establishment of State Election Commissions to conduct election to the PRIs;

(vii) establishment of District Planning Committees to prepare development plans for the districts;

(viii) preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and their execution concerning 29 subjects listed in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution;

(ix) establishment of Grama Sabha (village assemblies) and their empowerment as a decision making body at the village level; and

(x) rotation in accordance with the reservation of seats for women and the Scheduled Castes in the PRIs.

By the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been given such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function. It contains provisions for devolution of powers and responsibilities related to (a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice; and (b) the implementation of such schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them.

Do you know

Consequent upon the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, almost all the States/UTs, except J&K, NCT Delhi and Uttaranchal have enacted their legislation. Moreover, almost all the States/UTs have held local body elections. As a result, 2,32,278 Panchayats at village level; 6,022 Panchayats at intermediate level and 535 Panchayats at district level have been constituted in the country. These Panchayats are being manned by about 29.2 lakh elected representatives of Panchayats at all levels. This is the broadest representative base that exists in any country of the world.
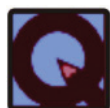
INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.1

1. Define local government. State two examples to justify the need for a local government.

2. Trace the evolution of Panchayati Raj System since the ancient days.

3. Identify the type of local government institutions that are set up in the area where you reside and name the institutions.

4. To what extent do you think the facilities and support provided by the local government impact our quality of life.

5. How has the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 impacted the Panchayati Raj System?

Notes

ACTIVITY 18.1

Find out the following by discussing with your teachers or elders in your family and/or neighbourhood or your classmates:

1. Names of local government institutions set up at the village level if you reside in rural area or in the town/city, if you reside there.

2. Designations of Office bearers in the concerned institutions and their number.

18.2.2 The Organisation, Functions and Sources of Funds of Gram Panchayats

A. Organisation

Village Panchayat also called Gram Panchayat is the grass root institution of Panchayati Raj System. At village level there is a Gram Sabha or Village Assembly and a Gram Panchayat having a Chairperson known as Gram Pradhan or Sarpanch (Mukhia), a Vice Chairperson and some Panches. In fact, the Village Panchayats are organized and they function according to the Act passed by every State government. That is why, you may find variations in different States. But mostly, the Panchayati Raj Institutions are organized and they function as follows:

A **Gram Sabha or Village Assembly** consists of all the adults i.e. voters (persons above the age of 18 years) living in the area of a Gram Panchayat i.e., village or a group of small villages. The Gram Sabha has now been recognized as a legal body. It acts like the legislative body. In one year at least two meetings of the Gram Sabha are held. In its first meeting the Gram Sabha considers the budget of the Gram Panchayat. In its second meeting it considers the reports of the Gram Panchayat. The main functions of Gram Sabha are to review the annual accounts of Panchayat,

Figure 18.3 *Meeting of Gram Sabha*

discuss audit and administrative reports and the tax proposals of its Panchayat and accept community service, voluntary labour and schemes for Panchayat. The members of Gram Sabha elect the members and also the Chairperson of Gram Panchayat. The States have to ensure that all the Gram Sabhas in their respective areas are functional.

The **Village Panchayat or Gram Panchayat** is the executive committee of Gram Sabha. It is the most important unit of rural local self-government. As we have seen, all the members of each Gram Sabha are voters who elect the members of the Panchayat by a secret ballot. In most of the States, a Village Panchayat has 5 to 9 members who are called Panches. In every Panchayat, one-third of the seats are reserved for women. However, there are States where the percentage of seats reserved for women is even more. Seats are also reserved for persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Sarpanch (Mukhia) of the Panchayat is directly elected by all the voters of the village. Some offices of Sarpanches are now reserved for women, and some for persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Sarpanch calls the meetings of the Panchayat and presides over those meetings. He/She is to call at least one meeting of the Panchayat per month. The Panches can also request him/her for calling a special meeting. He/She has to call such special meeting within three days of the request. Sarpanch keeps the records of the meetings of Panchayat. The Panchayat can assign any special function to him/her. A Vice Chairperson is elected by the members of the Panchayat. The tenure of the Village Panchayat is of 5 years.

B. Functions of Gram Panchayats

Vijay showed greater interest in knowing more about Gram Panchayat and asked the teacher about the functions and sources of funds of this institution. The teacher explained the details. All the major functions of Gram Panchayat are related to the welfare and development of the village. With a view to fulfill the needs and requirements of the villagers every Gram Panchayat has to perform some important functions such as provision of safe drinking water, paving of streets, developing and maintaining good drainage system, ensuring cleanliness of the village, upkeep of street lights, dispensary, etc. These functions are known as obligatory functions. Some other functions are discretionary and can be performed, if the Panchayat has the resources and funds. These are plantation of trees, setting up and maintenance of insemination centre for cattle, developing and maintaining play ground for sports and setting up and running the library. From time to time some other functions can be assigned to Panchayats by the State government or Union government. But along with these functions of Panchayats, every member of the village also has the duty towards his/her village. One should keep the surroundings of his /her home clean, not waste drinking water and plant more and more trees.

Notes

C. Sources of Income of Gram Panchayats

Financial resources are essential for performance of the functions by Panchayats, whether these are obligatory functions or developmental work. Gram Panchayats can work better, if they have adequate funds to spend. Over and above the Grants-in-aid, State governments have empowered Panchayats to levy taxes and collect funds. Some of the sources are as follows:

1. taxes on property, land, goods and cattle;

2. rent collected for facilities like Barat Ghar or any other property of panchayat;

3. various types of fines collected from the offenders;

4. grants-in- aid from the State government and Union government;

5. a part of the land revenue collected by the State government given to the Panchayats; and

6. donations collected from the villagers for some common cause.

ACTIVITY 18.2

Have you ever thought of the impact young persons like you can make on the society? Read the following experience of a young person:

Vimla Devi is the 43 year old Sarpanch of the village Sundergaon. She has studied only up to sixth class. After she became the Sarpanch, she initiated several developmental works, be it construction of roads, drainage system or parks or spreading awareness about agricultural and health facilities. She has also played a major role in resolving cases of domestic violence. As she said, she had never dreamt of becoming a functionary like Sarpanch in her male dominated village. But now she is confident of bringing about many positive changes in her village.

In the context of this experience write answers to the following questions:

● Which Constitutional Amendment made this possible for Vimla Devi to do what she did?

● What do you think has been the impact of this amendment on women's empowerment?

● Write about at least 2 issues related to your society, which bother you.

● Talk to your friends and make a list of various actions you would like to take to positively impact the society you live in.

18.2.3 The Organisation and Functions of Panchayat Samiti

A. Composition

Panchayat Samiti is the intermediate or the middle tier of the Panchayati Raj System. These are named differently in different States. Its organization and functions also vary as these are determined by the Act passed by the concerned State. It coordinates all the activities of the Panchayats in a Block. A Panchayat Samiti is constituted by the following members:

- all the Sarpanches (Mukhias) or Chairpersons of the Gram Panchayats within the Block

- MPs, MLAs and MLCs of that Block

- some directly elected Members

- the elected Members of Zila Parishad from that Block

- some Officers of that Block

? Do you know

A Panchayat Samiti is created at the Block level. Each Block consists of the areas of several Panchayats. In different States it is known by different names: in Andhra Pradesh Mandal Praja Parishad, Assam the Anchalik Panchayat, Gujarat the Taluka Panchayat, Karnataka the Mandal Panchayat, Madhya Pradesh the Janapada Panchayat, Tamil Nadu, the Panchayat Union Council, and Uttar Pradesh the Kshetra Samiti. However, its most popular name happens to be Panchayat Samiti.

The term of each Panchayat Samiti is five years in all States. In its very first meeting, each Panchayat Samiti elects two of its members as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Chairpersonships of at least 1/3rd Panchayat Samities stand reserved for women members. Likewise, some of the offices of Chairperson are reserved for members belonging to Scheduled Castes. The tenure of the Chairperson is co-terminous with the tenure of the Panchayat Samiti. The members of a Panchayat Samiti can remove the Chairperson by passing a resolution supported by 2/3rd majority. A Panchayat Samiti usually meets at least six times in one year. There cannot be a gap of more than two months between its two meetings. A meeting of Panchayat Samiti is either ordinary or special. The date of every meeting is fixed by the Chairperson of the Panchayat Samiti and in his/her absence by the Vice-Chairperson. Its chief administrative officer is Block Development Officer popularly known as BDO.

B. Functions of Panchayat Samiti

Panchayat Samiti performs a number of functions. Some important functions are: agriculture, land improvement, watershed development, social and farm forestry, and

technical and vocational education. Besides, the Panchayat Samiti implements certain schemes and programmes for which specific funds are allocated by the State government or Central government. It promotes and coordinates different development programmes of its areas. It also has the responsibilities like (a) provision of drinking water in the villages, (b) development and repair of rural roads, (c) framing of rules and regulations for the markets, (d) provision of improved seeds and chemical fertilizers, pesticides, agricultural tools and implements, (e) promotion of cottage industries such as handlooms, handicrafts, traditional art and artisans, (f) the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Tribes and other backward classes, and (g) promotion of the self employment schemes in the rural areas.

C. Sources of Income

The main source of income of Panchayat Samiti is the Grants given by the State government. Besides, it also levies taxes, levies and receives a fixed percentage of land revenue.

18.2.4 The Organisation and Functions of Zila Parishad

A. Composition

Zila Parishad is at the apex, being the third tier of Panchayati Raj System. It is situated at the district level. Zila Parishad also has a term of 5 years. Some of its members are directly elected and the Chairpersons of the Panchayat Samitis are ex-officio members. MPs and MLAs belonging to the district are also the members of Zila Parishad. Chairperson of the Zila Parishad is elected from the directly elected members. Not less than 1/3rd of the offices and seats are reserved for the women members. Seats are also reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Figure 18.4 *Zilla Parishad Latur (Maharashtra*

Notes

B. Functions of the Zila Parishad

The following are the major functions of the Zila Parishad, though you may find some variations across the States:

1. providing essential services and facilities to the rural population, planning and executing the development programmes for the district;

2. supplying improved seeds to farmers, informing them of new techniques of farming, undertaking construction of small-scale irrigation projects and percolation tanks, and maintaining pastures and grazing lands;

3. setting up and running schools in villages, executing programmes for adult literacy, and running libraries;

4. starting Primary Health Centers and hospitals in villages, managing mobile hospitals for hamlets, conducting vaccination drives against epidemics and family welfare campaigns;

5. executing plans for the development of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, running ashram for adivasi children, and setting up free hostels for scheduled caste students;

6. encouraging entrepreneurs to start small scale industries like cottage industries, handicrafts, agriculture products, processing mills, dairy farms, etc., and implementing rural employment schemes; and

7. constructing roads, schools and also taking care of the public properties;

C. Sources of Income of Zila Parshad

As you have seen, the Zila Parishad performs a number of important functions. For exciting them it needs money. This is arranged through its sources of income that are as follows:

1. income from taxes levied by Zila Parishad, license fees and market fees;

2. a share is given to Zila Parishad from the collected land revenue;

3. income from various properties of Zila Praishad;

4. grants from the State and Central governments; and

5. funds allotted by the State for developmental activities.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.2

1. How is Village Panchayat constituted? What is the role of Gram Sabha or Village Assembly?

2. List the important functions of a Gram Panchayat. Which of these functions are very essential? Are there certain functions which you feel the local governments need not take up? If so, why?

3. Describe the different sources of income of a Village Panchayat.

4. Based on the functions of Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad, draw a Plan of Action for one year to be implemented in a district by these institutions.

5. Collect information regarding reservation of seats for women in Panchayats from published Articles on Panchayati Raj or internet or your teachers or elders or your friends/classmates and list the names of States where the reservation for women in Panchayati Raj System is more than one-third.

18.3 URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

While Vijay was trying to appreciate various aspects of the Panchayati Raj System, the teacher asked him if he knew about the local government institutions functioning in the city where he and his family had shifted from the village. Vijay wanted to know, if such institutions exist in urban area, too. The teacher said, "Yes, they do." As Panchayati Raj System is meant for rural area, similarly there are institutions of urban local government. There are three types of urban local bodies – (a) *Municipal Corporations* for the big cities, (b) *Municipal Councils* for all other cities with smaller population and (c) *Nagar Panchayats* for transitional areas (semi urban areas). But a significant difference between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the urban local bodies is that while the PRIs are closely linked with one another, the urban local bodies are independent. In one State there may be all the three types of urban local bodies: in one big city a Municipal Corporation, in another small city a Municipal Council and in yet another small town a Nagar Panchayat. But they are not linked with one another.

It was during the British colonial rule that the first urban local government came into existence in 1688 when a Municipal Corporation was formed in the city of Madras (now known as Chennai). Later on, similar bodies were formed for the administration at Calcutta (Kolkata) and Bombay (Mumbai). At that time these municipalities were formed to help in the matter of sanitation and prevent epidemics. These Local bodies also had a few civic functions like managing water supply and drainage. But theses bodies were not given the required powers, finance and authority. Initially most of the members were nominated. Our national leaders also had felt the importance and need of such an organization for the local administration and linked these bodies to the planned development of the country. But nothing fruitful could be achieved without finance and the finance was missing. But even then this system proved to be an effective tool of administration. During the British rule many changes were made in urban local bodies. Gradually certain structural changes were made, powers of the local bodies were enhanced and some funds were also provided.

Notes

After independence four types of urban local bodies were functioning: (i) Municipal Corporations, (ii) Municipalities, (iii) Town Area Committees and (iv) Notified Area Committees. But the 74th Constitutional Amendment 1992 brought about major changes in the system of urban local government. Now three types of urban local governments are functioning: (a) Municipal Corporations for the big cities, (b) Municipal Councils for smaller cities and (c) Nagar Panchayats for those areas that are in transition from rural areas to urban areas.

18.3.1 The 74th Constituional Amendment 1992

As stated above, the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 brought about significant changes in the structure and functioning of urban local government. The following points are noteworthy:

● constitution of urban local bodies (namely, *Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council,* and *Nagar Panchayat*) in every Indian State;

● constitution of **Wards Committees** within the territorial area of a municipality, to ensure people's participation in civic affairs at the grass-root level;

● regular and fair conduct of **municipal elections** by State Election Commissions;

● provision for supersession of municipal governments for not more than 6 months;

● adequate representation of weaker sections (i.e., Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes) of the society and women in municipal governments through **reservation** of seats;

● specification by law, through the State Legislatures, of the **powers** (including financial) and **functional responsibilities** to be entrusted to municipalities and wards committees;

● constitution of **State Finance Commissions**, once in every 5 years, to review the financial position of municipalities and to make recommendations on the measures needed to improve their financial position; and

● constitution of a **District Planning Committee** at the district level and a **Metropolitan Planning Committee** in metropolitan areas of every State, for the preparation and consolidation of development plans.

18.3.2 Municipal Corporations

A. Composition

Municipal Corporations are established in big cities according to the provisions made in the Acts enacted by the State Legislatures. The Councillors of Municipal Corporations are elected for 5 years. The elected Councillors elect one of them as Mayor annually. The Mayor is known as the first citizen of the city. The 74th Constitutional Amendment has provided for reservation of not less than 1/3rd of the

total seats for women. There is also a provision of reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections in proportion to their population. Out of these reserved seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, one-third would be reserved for women belonging to these communities. In the event of dissolution of Municipal Corporation, the elections will be held within six months. There is an official post of Municipal Commissioner, who is the Chief Executive Officer and is appointed by the State government. In case of Union Territories like Delhi it is done by the Central government.

Figure 18.5 *Municipal Corporation*

B. Functions of the Municipal Corporations

The main functions of the Municipal Corporation are as follows:

1. **Health and Sanitation**: Responsible for cleanliness of the city, disposal of garbage; maintenance of hospitals and dispensaries; promoting and conducting vaccination drives; checking of adulteration etc.

2. **Electricity and Water Supply**: Provision and maintenance of street lights, supply of electricity, supply of safe drinking water; construction of infrastructure and providing facilities for water supply, maintenance of water tankers etc.

3. **Educational**: Establishment of primary schools, provision of mid-day meals and other facilities for the children.

4. **Public works**: Construction, maintenance and naming of roads; framing rules for the constructions of houses, markets, restaurants and hotels; removing of encroachments and demolition of dangerous buildings.

5. **Miscellaneous functions**: Maintaining record of Births & Deaths; provision and maintenance of cremation grounds/burial grounds, night shelters; making arrangements of scooter & taxi stands and public facilities.

6. **Discretionary functions**:

    (a) *Entertainment*: Provision of parks, auditoriums etc.;

    (b) *Cultural*: Organizing music, dramas, painting and other art shows; and activities like maintaince of libraries and museums;

    (c) *Sports Activities*: Provision of play grounds for various games and also arranging sports competitions & tournaments;

    (d) *Welfare Services*: Setting up and maintaining Community halls; running public distribution system; implementing family welfare schemes and also schemes for the welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes & backward classes.

C. Main Functions of Mayor

Mayor is the elected as the head of the Municipal Corporation and performs the following important functions:

●   presides over the meetings of the Corporation and maintains decorum and discipline in the meetings;

●   acts as a link between Councillors and the State government;

●   receives foreign dignitaries visiting the city.

D. Sources of Income of Municipal Corporation

Like Panchayati Raj System, Muncipal System also requires funds for the development and welfare activities in its area. Provision is made in the Municipal Act for generating the required funds. Some of the sources of income are as follows:

●   *Income from taxes*: Municipal Corporation imposes taxes on various items such as – house tax, entertainment tax, tax on hoardings and advertisements, registration fees, tax on building plans etc.

●   *Other fees and charges*: These include water supply charges, electricity charges, sewer charges, license fee from shop keepers, and toll tax and octoroi duty.

●   *Grants-in-Aid*: State government and Union government provide grants-in-aid for various projects and programmes related to development.

●   *Income from Rents*: Corporations rent out the properties and get rent for various shops, kiosks, community centres, Barat Ghars and various sites for fairs, marriages or other exhibitions.

18.3.3 Municipal Councils

A. Composition

Cities which do not have very large population have Municipalities known as Municipal Councils to look after the local cities, their problems and developmental

work. After the 74th Amendment, the constitution of Municipalities is obligatory for every concerned city. Every Municipal Council has Councillors who are elected by the adult voters of the city for 5 years. Only those persons can be elected as Councillors who fulfill the conditions laid down by the State Election Commission. If in any case, the Municipal Council gets dissolved before completing the full term of 5 years, the elections for a new Municipal Council will have to be held within six months. Chairperson or President of the Municipal Council is elected by the Councillors from among the elected members. Chairperson holds the office till he/she enjoys the confidence of the majority of the elected members. Every Municipal Council has an Executive Officer who is appointed by the State government. He/She looks after the day-to-day work and also the administration. The Health Officer, Tax Superintendent, Civil Engineer are the other important officers.

B. Functions of the Municipal Council

Functions of the Municipal Council are as follows:

1. *Health and Sanitation* - Managing cleanliness of the town, disposal of garbage, prevention of sale of unhygienic and adulterated food items, and maintenance of dispensaries or hospitals;

2. *Electricity and Water Supply* - Ensuring supply of electricity and safe drinking water, maintaining water tanks and also water tankers;

3. *Education* - Maintaining and running of primary schools and literacy centres.

4. *Birth and Death Records* - Keeping the records regarding registration of birth and deaths in the city/town and also issuing the certificates for the same;

5. *Public Works* - Paving of streets, repairing and maintenance of municipal roads, construction and maintenance of Barat Ghars, Community Halls, Markets, Public facilities etc.

C. Sources of Income

No work can be done without money. Municipal Councils have got different sources of income. These sources can be grouped as under:

●   *Taxes*: Taxes on properties, vehicles, entertainment and advertisement;

●   *Rents and fees/charges*: Charges for water supply, sewer system; Licenses fees, Rents of the community Halls, Barat Ghars and Shops etc.;

●   *Grants* from the State government;

●   *Fines*: Fines from the tax offenders, law breakers, on encroachments etc.

18.3.4 Nagar Panchayats

An urban centre with more than 30,000 and less than 100,000 inhabitants has a *Nagar Panchayat*. However, there are some exceptions. All the previous Town Area

Committees (urban centres with a total population of more than 5,000 and less than 20,000) are designated as N*agar Panchayats*. It is composed of a Chairperson and Ward Members. It may have a minimum of ten elected Ward Members and three nominated Members. Like other municipal bodies, Nagar Panchayat is responsible for (a) Cleanliness and disposal of garbage; (b) Supply of drinking water; (c) Maintenance of public amenities like street lights, parking space and public conveniences; (d) Setting up and maintaining fire services; and (e) Registration of deaths and births. Its sources of income are: Taxes such as house tax, water tax, toll tax; License fees and fee for approving building plans; Rents collected by renting Barat Ghars and other properties; and Grant-in- Aid from the State government.
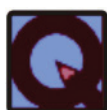
INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.3

1. How many types of urban local bodies were functioning before the 74th Constitutional Amendment 1992? What changes did the Amendment make?

2. What are the functions of a Municipal Corporation? Why are these functions important?

3. What are the sources of income of a Municipal Corporation?

4. Urban local bodies take responsibilities for providing services to their respective areas. Do you think the citizens also have certain responsibilities? What are those?

ACTIVITY 18.3

Make a list of important Office bearers of a Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat. If you have ever met any of them, name those Office bearers and also state the purpose of your meeting.

18.4 DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Since Vijay was a student of class IX in a school in the city, the teacher tried to explain him the role of district administration. He did so, because it was important to know that apart from the above stated rural and urban local self governments, there is administrative machinery in every district. This not only contributes to the functioning of the local bodies directly and indirectly, but also performs administrative and development functions. In every district there are Sub-Divisions and Blocks or Talukas and the officials posted there assist the district administration. He asked Vijay, if he was aware of the key Officials of his district. Finding him fumbling, the teacher explained various aspects of the district administration. The key officials at the district level are: District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police, District Education Officer, District Agriculture Officer, District Forest Officer etc. All these officers are the heads of their departments in the district.

Notes

18.4.1 District Magistrate

However, it is the District Magistrate who is in-charge of the whole district administration. This post is also named as Deputy Commissioner, District Collector or Upayukta. He/She belongs to the Indian Adminstrative Service (IAS). District administration is responsible to implement the policies and programmes of the State and Central governments. Especially after independence, the district administration is responsible not only for collection of revenue or taxes and maintenance of law and order, but is also for various activities related to welfare and socio-economic development of the district.

District had been an important unit of administration since long. During the British colonial period, it was mainly responsible for maintaining law and order and collection of revenues. But at present, state administration has been decentralized and the district administration is playing multi-faceted role. The District Magistrate, therefore, has been assigned various important powers and functions to perform on behalf of the State government. The main functions of District Magistrate are as follows:

1. maintaining law and order and ensuring peace in the district;

2. implementing various policies and programmes of the State government and the Central government;

3. acting as the main link between State government and district level institutions and offices;

4. co-ordinating the activities of different departments such as education, health, welfare, land management, police, jail and culture;

5. taking adequate and appropriate measures during emergencies and disasters and conducting relief work;

6. ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections for various representative bodies, such as Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha, Block Samities, Zila Parishad, Municipalities, etc.;

7. managing collection of the revenue and other taxes;

8. performing judicial functions and deciding various disputes and even imposing penalties and fines;

9. listening to the grievances of the people and redressing them.

18.4.2 Sub Divisional Officer

For better administration each district is divided into smaller units called Sub Divisions. Although the sub divisions of the district are under the District Magistrate, an officer called the Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) is made in-charge of this unit. The SDO is there to assist the District Magistrate in the field of administration and also

Notes

works as his/her representative. The SDO belongs to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or to the cadre of State Civil Service. He/She keeps the land records and collects land revenue. He/She has the power to issue licenses for armed weapons like guns and pistols, and is also authorized for the issuance of Driving License, Certificates regarding the domicile, Schedule Castes/Schedule Tribes and other Backward Classes.

18.4.3 The Block Development Officer

The Block is the unit of administration at the lowest level. The officer in-charge of the Block is called Block Development Officer (BDO). He/She belongs to State Civil Service cadre and looks after various activities of the Block. The BDO is linked with the middle tier of Panchayati Raj as he/she is the ex-officio Secretary of the Panchayat Samiti and keeps the record of the meetings, prepares budget and coordinates various developmental activities.

ACTIVITY 18.4

The District Magistrate of your District is considering to take up the activities stated in the table below. Prioritise these activities based on what you feel is the most important and what you feel is the least important.

Sl.No.	Activity	Priority 1 to 10
1.	Construction of a new cinema hall in the district	
2.	Improve roads	
3.	Improve Health services	
4.	New schemes for the development of scheduled castes and tribes and other backward castes	
5.	Renovate the municipal office	
6.	Recruit more doctors for the local municipal hospitals	
7.	Revision of electoral roles	
8.	Improvement of the drainage system	
9.	Recruit new teachers to the municipal schools	
10.	Hire experts for developing a contingency plan for disasters like fire, draught etc	

Note: While assigning priority, give justification for the number you are assigning to the activity.

18.5 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In view of the above, will you not agree that the rural and urban local bodies have opportunities for every citizen to actively participate in the decision-making process? These are the best institutions to impart political education to citizens and enable them to acquire leadership qualities. When citizens participate, they learn to realize and plead for issues and concerns of self as well as others. Since these local government bodies are nearer to them, the citizens can easily have access and seek solutions through personal initiative and intervention. Women in particular have greatest opportunities. Owing to reservation of seats for them, greater number of women participates in the running of these institutions. This has been one of the best ways to empower women and provide them opportunities to prove their capabilities.

On the other hand the local government bodies have put forth a number of challenges. Being closest to the people, these institutions have raised the aspirations and expectations which they are not able to fulfill because of various constraints. The tasks of these institutions are challenging, but the resources are limited. This situation quite often leads to feuds and dissentions. Promoting and ensuring qualitative participation of citizens in the political process have been constrained by factors like poverty, illiteracy, social inequalities and the trends of criminalization of politics. The elements of casteism and communalism also create problems. The increasing trend of corruption and nepotism has been great challenges to the effective functioning of the local bodies.
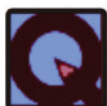
INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.4

1. Examine the significance of District Administration in governance.

2. What are the major functions of a District Magistrate?

3. What opportunities do local bodies provide to citizens? What are the major challenges of local bodies?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Local self government in India is the third tier, the first and second being the Central government and the State governments. There are two sets of Local government bodies, one for rural areas and the other for urban areas. Panchayati raj System is for rural areas and Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats are in urban areas.

Notes

- Although setting up of Village Panchayat was mandated by the Directive Principles of State Policy, Local government bodies got constitutional status by the 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts passed by the Parliament in 1992.

- These Amendments made it mandatory for all State governments to have Local government bodies and to ensure that they function effectively and continuously. Over and above reserving seats for Scheduled castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections, these Acts promote empowerment of women by reserving seats for them

- Panchayati Raj System is a three tier system, having Gram Panchayats at village level, Panchayat Samities at intermediate or Block level and Zila Parishad at district level. These institutions work for the welfare and socio-economic development of the people of their respective areas. They also provide basic facilities such as safe drinking water, sanitation, dispensaries, paving of lanes & roads, primary schools, old age homes and other local needs of the areas.

- The urban local bodies, Municipal Corporations in big cities, Municipal Councils in smaller cities and Nagar Panchayats in transitional areas have been strengthened by the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992. Like Panchayati Raj Institutions, they have also reserved seat for Scheduled castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections, as well as for women.

- These local bodies provide basic facilities to the people, develop and maintain infrastructure, conduct developmental activities and look after the welfare of the people of their respective areas.

- Both rural and urban local bodies are closest to the people and function as the truly grassroot democratic institutions. They provide opportunities to the people to be a part of the decision-making process, they have challenges like casteism, corruption, shortage of needed financial resources and indifference of the people.

- The District Administration headed by the District Magistrate not only performs traditional functions of maintaining law and order and collection of revenues, but also does significant development work. It is the real implementation tool for the implementation of development and welfare programmes of State and central governments.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Why are Local governments important? Express your own view point.

2. Explain the composition and functions of Panchayati Raj Instituions and examine their roles.

3. Explain briefly the structure and functioning of urban local bodies.

4. What are the major changes brought about by the 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts 1992 in the structure and roles of the Panchayati Raj System and Urban local bodies?

5. Do you think that the 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts 1992 empowered women in true sense of the term? Give justifications.

6. A widow with two children works as a domestic help in a village. She wants to educate her children, but is unable to do so. Suggest the ways in which the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat can ensure that her children and such other children get education.

ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

18.1

1. Local government is a government of the local people, by the local people and for the local people.

   The local government institutions provide a platform for the common people to participate and contribute to development and social justice at the local level.

   It provides a forum to them to deliberate on the nature of local problems and devise appropriate solutions that are in conformity with local situations. Local government is in fact a government which functions at the grassroot level.

2. Panchayati Raj System was functional in ancient time in our country. They had been variously known as Panchayats. Biradaries or by some other name, generally headed by village elders. By 73rd Constitutional Amendment Panchayati Raj System got constitutional status and consists of elected representatives of the people.

3. Find out the local government institutions in your area and note down their names.

4. Local Government provides for maintainence of water, drainage system, provision of drinking water etc. Thus impacts your quality of life in many ways.

5. (a) Established three tier Panchayati Raj System.

   (b) Establishment of District Planning Committees to prepare development plans for the districts;

   (b) Establishment of Gram Sabha (village assemblies) and their empowerment as a decision making body at the village level; and

Notes

(d) By ensuring reservation for Scheduled Castes, Schedule Tribes and women, the act has given them the opportunity to participate in the decision making process of local government and hence has empowered them

(e) Established state finance commission, state election commission.

18.2

1. Village Panchayat or Gram Panchayat is the grassroot institution of Panchayati Raj System. In the Panchayats, one-third of seats are reserved for women. Seats are also reserved for persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes. The Panchayat has a Sarpanch (Mukhia) who is directly elected by all the voters of the village. The panchayat also has panchs and a Vice Chairperson elected by the members of the Panchayat.

2. Three functions of the Gram Panchayat are :

   (i) provision of safe drinking water,

   (ii) paving of streets,

   (iii) developing and maintaining good drainage system.

   Discretionary functions are some of the functions which the Panchayat may not necessarily take up. These functions can be performed only if the Panchayat has the resources and funds. These include plantation of trees, setting up and maintenance of insemination centre for cattle, developing and maintaining playground for sports and setting up and running the library.

3. Some of the sources of funds for a Panchayat are as follows:

   (i) taxes on property, land, goods and cattle;

   (ii) rent collected for facilities like Barat Ghar or any other property of panchayat;

   (iii) various types of fines collected from the offenders;

   (iv) a part of the land revenue collected by the State Government given to the Panchayats; and

   (v) donations collected from the villagers for some common cause.

   (vi) grants-in-aid from State and Union government.

4. Try and collect this information from different sources to write this answer.

5. Collect the information from the the sources mentioned in the question itself.

18.3

1. After independence four types of urban local bodies were functioning: (i) Municipal Corporations, (ii) Municipalities, (iii) Town Area Committees and

(iv) Notified Area Committees. But the 74th Constitutional Amendment 1992 brought about major changes in the system of urban local government. Now three types of urban local governments are functioning: (a) Municipal Corporations for the big cities, (b) Municipal Councils for smaller cities and (c) Nagar Panchayats for those areas that are in transition from rural areas to urban areas.

2. These functions are very important as they improve the quality of lives of the citizens. Health, water supply or electricity are all of critical importance in every persons life, by ensuring that the city is clean, or providing for hospital and safe drinking water, the municipal corporation helps in improving the quality of life of citizens.

3. (i)   Income from taxes – Housing tax, entertainment tax, tax on hoardings etc.

    (ii) Grant-in-Aid from State and Union Government

    (iii) Income from rents – Municipal corporation rent out properties like shops, kiosks, community halls etc.

    (iv) other fees and charges like toll tax, sewer charges, water and electricity charges etc.

4. Write the answer based on your own understanding of the role of the urban local bodies and the responsibilities that the citizens can take up to support the local government.

18.4

1. District administration is headed by District Magistrate other officials of the District Administration are Suprintendent of Police, District Education Officer, District Agriculture Officer, SDOs etc.

Sub Divisional Officer

The SDO assists the District Magistrate in the field of administration and also works as his/her representative.

He/She keeps the land records and collects land revenue and has the power to issue Certificates regarding domicile, Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribes and other Backward Classes.

The Block Development Officer

The BDO is linked with the middle tier of Panchayati Raj as he/she is the ex-officio Secretary of the Panchayat Samiti and keeps the record of the meetings, prepares budget and coordinates various developmental activities.

2. The main functions of District Magistrate are as follows:

    (i)   maintaining law and order and ensuring peace in the district;

(ii) implementing various policies and programmes of the State government and the Central government;

(iii) acting as the main link between State government and district level institutions and offices;

(iv) co-ordinating the activities of different departments such as education, health, welfare, land management, police, jail and culture;

(v) ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections for various representative bodies, such as Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha, Block Samities, Zila Parishad, Municipalities, etc.

3. Local bodies are the best institutions to impart political education to citizens and enable them to acquire leadership qualities. When citizens participate, they learn to analyse and plead for issues and concerns of self as well as others. Since these local government bodies are nearer to them, citizens can have access and seek solutions through personal initiative and intervention. Women also have great opportunities to participate as members of local bodies.

The challenges to the effective functioning of local government bodies are –

Being close to the people, these institutions have raised democratic aspirations and expectations which they are not always able to fulfill because of various constraints. These constrains include factors like poverty, illiteracy, social inequalities and the trends of criminalization of politics. The elements of casteism, communalism and the increasing trend of corruption and nepotism have been great challenges to the effective functioning of the local bodies.

Notes

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GOVERNANCE AT THE STATE LEVEL

As you have read, India is a federation having governments at two levels: state level and union or central level. Every citizen is related to and influenced by the governments functioning at both the levels. We are all guided by the laws made by state and union legislatures, administered by both the governments and get justice from courts at both the levels. All the three branches of government, executive, legislature and judiciary exist and function at both the levels. For a comprehensive understanding of the system of governance, this lesson discusses the institutions and processes of the government at the state level.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

● explain the method of appointment, powers and position of the Governor;

● assess the relationship between the Governor and the Chief Minister, Chief Minister as the real head of the state government and his/her powers and role;

● explain the composition and powers of the state Council of Ministers;

● analyze the composition and powers and functions of the State Legislature;

● appreciate the organisation and jurisdiction of the High Court as well as the working of the Subordinate Courts; and

● describe the need of a government at the state level and analyse how it impacts citizens and their daily life.

19.1 GOVERNOR

You have studied in the lesson on "Constitutional Values and the Indian Political System" that India has a parliamentary form of government. Both at the state and union levels it has institutions and processes in place like any other parliamentary

system. At the state level, there is a Governor in whom the executive power of the State is vested by the Constitution. But the Governor acts as a nominal head, and the real executive powers are exercised by the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister.

Figure 19.1 *Raj Bhavan, Ahamedabad*

19.1.1 Appointment

The Governor of a State is appointed by the President of India. In order to become a Governor, a person must have the following qualifications. He/She:

(a)   must be a citizen of India,

(b)   must be at least 35 years old, and

(c)   should not hold any office of profit during his/her tenure.

If a person is a member of either House of the Parliament or the Legislature of a State, or a member of the Council of Ministers at the national or the state level and is appointed as Governor, he/she resigns that post. The Governor is appointed for a term of five years but normally holds office during the pleasure of the President. The pleasure of the President means that the Governor may be removed by the President even before the expiry of his/her term. He/She may also resign earlier. However, in reality, while appointing or removing the Governor, the President goes by the advice of the Prime Minister.

ACTIVITY 19.1

Although there is a Governor in each State, there can be one Governor for two or more States. At times, if a Governor resigns then the Governor of a neighbouring

State looks after the administration of two States. Even now there may be some such cases. Find out from your teachers or friends or newspapers/internet at least one case where one person is the Governor of more than one State?

19.1.2 Powers of Governor

With every job there are powers attached. The powers of the Governor are conferred by the Constitution to enable him/her to perform his/her functions effectively as a Head of the State.

The powers of the Governor can be categorized as (i) executive powers, (ii) legislative powers, (iii) financial powers, (iv) judicial powers, and (v) discretionary powers.

(a) **Executive Powers:** The Constitution of India vests the entire executive powers of the State in the Governor who performs these functions according to the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister as its head. He/She appoints the Chief Minister and other members of the Council of Ministers. He/She also appoints persons on important posts such as the Chairpersons and Members of the State Public Service Commission, State Election Commission, State Finance Commission and the Advocate General, Judges of the courts, other than the High Court. He/She is consulted when the Judges of the State High Court are appointed by the President. But in practice the Governor's powers are only formal. He appoints only that person as Chief Minister who is the Leader of the majority in the Legislative Assembly. He/She appoints Members of the Council of Ministers only on the advice of the Chief Minister. All other appointments are made and executive functions are performed by him/her exactly as per the advice of Council of Ministers.

(b) **Legislative Powers**: The Governor is an inseparable part of the State Legislature and as such he/she has been given certain legislative powers. He/She has the right to summon and prorogue the State Legislature and can dissolve the State Legislative Assembly. He/She addresses the State Legislative Assembly or the joint sessions of the two houses of the legislature. He/She may nominate one person of Anglo-Indian Community as a member of Legislative Assembly in case the community is not represented. He/She also nominates one-sixth of the members to the Legislative Council, if the State has a bi-cameral legislature. Once again, in real practice the Governor does all this on the recommendations of the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister. A bill passed by the State Legislature becomes a law or Act only when the Governor gives assent to it.

(c) **Financial Powers**: You must have read in the newspapers that every year the budget is presented by the government in the Legislature for its approval. In fact, the budget i.e. 'the Annual Financial Statement' of the State is prepared and presented by the State Finance Minister before the State Legislature, on behalf

of the Governor. Moreover, no money bill can be introduced in the State Legislature without the recommendations of the Governor. He/She also has control over the State Contingency Fund.

(d) Discretionary Powers: As we have seen earlier, the Governor acts on the advice of the State Council of Ministers. This means that in reality, the Governor has no powers. But according to the Constitution, under special circumstances, he/she may act without the advice of the Council of Ministers. Such powers, which are exercised by the Governor on his own, are called discretionary powers. Firstly, if no political party or coalition of parties wins a clear majority in the Legislative Assembly, he/she can exercise his/her discretion in inviting a person to be the Chief Minister. Secondly, the Governor acts as a link between the Centre and the State. He/She can reserve any bill passed by the State Legislature for the consideration of the President of India. Thirdly, if he/she thinks that the government of the State is not functioning according to the Constitution, he/she can report to the President. In that case under Article 356, the President's Rule is imposed, the State Council of Ministers is removed and the State Legislature is dissolved or put under suspension. During such emergency, the Governor rules on behalf of the President.

19.1.3   Relationship between the Governor and the Council of Ministers

As we have seen above, the State executive consists of the Governor, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers. Normally, the Governor exercises all his/her powers on the advice of the Council of Ministers. We know that when the Chief Minister is sworn in, the Governor simply performs a formal duty. He/She invites the leader of the majority in the State Legislative Assembly to be sworn in as the Chief Minister. The members of the Council of Ministers are also appointed by the Governor on the recommendations of the Chief Minister. The majority can consist of members of Legislative Assembly belonging to one party or a group of parties and independents. However, when there is no clear majority in the House electing one candidate as its leader, the Governor can exercise his/her discretionary power. Similarly, although theoretically the Ministers hold their offices during the pleasure of the Governor, in practice the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers remain in office till they enjoy the support of the majority in the Legislative Assembly. The Governor can dismiss them only when the President's Rule is imposed.

The Chief Minister is required to communicate to the Governor all the decisions of the Council of Ministers. He/She may call for necessary information related to the state administration. If a Minister individually takes a decision, the Governor may ask the Chief Minister to place such a matter for consideration of the Council of Ministers. It is true that the Governor is a nominal head and the real powers are exercised by the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister. But it will not

Notes

be correct to say that the Governor is just a constitutional or ceremonial head. He/She can exercise his/her powers effectively under certain circumstances, especially when there is political instability in the State. Since he/she is a link between the Centre and the State, he/she becomes very effective, if the central government sends directions to the State government. The discretionary powers also make the Governor to act as a real executive in particular circumtances.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.1

1. There is one correct option out of four given in each of the following sentences. Tick (√) the correct option:

   (i) The Governor is: (a) elected (b) appointed (c) nominated (d) selected.

   (ii) The candidate for the post of the Governor should have the age of: (a) 18 years 23 years (c) 30 years (d) 35 years.

   (iii) The tenure of the Governor is: (a) 2 years (b) 5 years (c) 6 years (d) for life.

2. Given below are some statements. Indicate which statement is right and which is wrong.

   (i) The Governor can appoint any person the Chief Minister and a Member of the Council of Ministers.   Right/Wrong

   (ii) The Governor can appoint the Chairperson of the State Public Service Commission on the advice of the Council of Minsters.   Right/Wrong

   (iii) The Governor is an inseparable part of the State Legislature.
                                                                                        Right/Wrong

   (iv) There is no need of getting the consent of the Governor, if a Bill is passed by the State Legislature.   Right/Wrong

   (v) No Money Bill can be introduced in the Legislative Assembly without the recommendations of the Governor.   Right/Wrong

3. In one of the States, the Lokayukta had established corruption charge against the Chief Minister and a few Ministers. Demands were made for the resignation of the Chief Minister. In that situation the Governor sent a report to the President suggesting the State government was not functioning according to the Constitution and recommended the imposition of President's Rule on the State. Which power did the Governor use? Why do you think the Governor has been given such powers?

19.2 THE CHIEF MINISTER AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

19.2.1 Appointment

As we have seen earlier, the Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister as its head functions as the real executive. You are also aware how the Chief Minister and other members of the Council of Ministers are appointed by the Governor. Their term of office is for five years, but they remain in office till they enjoy the support of the majority in the Assembly. If a person who is appointed as the Chief Minister or a Minister, is not a member of the State Legislature, he/she has to become member of any of the two houses within six months of his/her appointment. The portfolios or different ministries are allocated to the Ministers by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister.

19.2.2 Functions of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers

Have you ever given thought to the fact that whenever anything happens in a State, it is the Chief Minister who is said to be responsible for that? If good things happen, he/she is praised, and if bad things occur, he/she is criticized. Why so? In fact, the Chief Minister is the Head of the Government in the State. He/She plays very important roles. He/She:

- advises the Governor on the appointment of Council of Ministers and allocation of portfolios to them;

- presides over the meetings of the State Council of Ministers and also coordinates the functioning of different ministers;

- guides the framing of the policies and programmes for the State and gives approvals of the Bills that are introduced by the Ministers in the State Legislature;

- is the sole link of communication between the Council of Ministers and the Governor. The Chief Minister communicates the decisions of the Council of Ministers relating to administration as well as proposals for the legislation to the Governor; and

- submits any matter on which decision has been taken by a Minister for consideration of the Council of Ministers, if the Governor desires him/her to do so.

19.2.3 Position of the Chief Minister

The Chief Minister is the real executive head of the State. It is he/she who formulates the policies and guides the Council of Ministers to implement them. He/She is the most powerful functionary, especially when one political party has an absolute

Notes

majority in the Legislative Assembly. But if he/she heads a coalition government, his/her role gets restricted by the pulls and pressures of other partners of the coalition. At times, he/she is pressurized by a few independent Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), if the majority in the House is thin.

ACTIVITY 19.2

When no political party gets a clear majority, the Legislative Assembly elections, more than one political party and even independent M.L.As can come together to make a majority in the House. This government is known as a **coalition government**. Sometimes, political parties form an alliance before elections and contest the elections together. If they win a majority, the government formed by them is also known as a coalition government.

In view of the above understanding you have to do the following

1. Name two States where coalition governments are functioning at present and note down the names of major political parties which are partners in the coalition.

2. Identify the States where alliances among political parties were formed before elections and they fought and won the majority together.

INTEXT QUESTION 19.2

1.. Identify which of the following statements is right and which is wrong:

   (i)   The Governor presides over the meetings of the Council of Ministers.
                                                                  Right/Wrong

   (ii) The Chief Minister is the sole link between the Governor and the Council of Ministers.   Right/Wrong

   (iii) The Chief Minister can be asked by Governor to place any matter for the consideration of the Council of Ministers.   Right/Wrong

   (iv) The Governor is the real head of the government in the State.
                                                                  Right/Wrong

   (v)   The Chief Minister can be asked by the Governor to place a matter which has been decided by a Minister for the consideration of the Council of Minister.   Right/Wrong

2. Consider the following case:

   "Quite a few serious corruption charges have been levelled against the Chief Minister of a State. The media has come out with strong evidences against this

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Chief Minister. In view of this case answer the following questions with justifications:

(i) Should the Governor send a report to the President recommending imposition of President's Rule?

(ii) Should the Constitution be amended for giving right to the people to call back (right to recall) corrupt elected representatives ?

(iii) Should the government continue in the interest of democracy, because the government is democratically elected and has the mandate received during last elections to rule over the State?

19.3 STATE LEGISLATURE

Every State has its Legislature. You are seeing below the building of the State Legislature of Karnataka. Let us understand how the State Legislatures are constituted. In some of the States the Legislature is *bicameral* i.e. has two houses. In most of the States it is *unicameral* i.e. has only one house. The Governor is an integral part of the State Legislature. The *unicameral* legislature has the Legislative Assembly and the *bicameral* has the Legislative Assembly being its Lower House and the Legislative Council the Upper House. At present only Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh have *bicameral* legislatures and the remaining 23 States have *unicameral* legislatures.

Figure 19.2 *Vidhan Saudha (Vidhan Sabha) Bangaluru*

19.3.1 Composition of Legislative Assembly

The Legislative Assembly, i.e. *Vidhan Sabha* is the real legislature even in those States that have bicameral legislatures. According to the Constitution of India, a State

Legislative Assembly shall not have more than 500 members and not less than 60 members. However, very small States like Goa, Sikkim and Mizoram have been allowed to have less than 60 members. Seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly.If the Governor feels that the Anglo-Indian Community is not adequately represented, he/she may nominate one person of that community in the State Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly is an elected body. Its members, M. L. As. are elected by the people based on the principle of universal adult franchise. There are certain qualifications prescribed by the Constitution for being elected as an M. L. A. The candidate must:

- be a citizen of India;

- have attained the age of 25 years;

- have his/her name in the voters' list;

- not hold any office of profit; and

- not be a government servant.

? Do you know

What is Universal Adult Franchise?: All adults men/women who have completed the age of 18 and above have the right to vote and participate in the electoral process, without any discrimination based on race, caste, religion, place of birth or sex.

The tenure of the *Vidhan Sabha* is of five years. However, the Governor may dissolve the Assembly earlier on the advice of the Chief Minister. Similarly the Assembly may be suspended or dissolved when President's Rule is imposed in a State. During a national Emergency, the Parliament may extend the term of Legislative Assemblies for a period not exceeding one year at a time.

19.3.2 Composition of the Legislative Council

The upper chamber of the State Legislature i.e. the Legislative Council or *Vidhan Parishad* shall not have more than one third of the total membership of the State Legislative Assembly but not less than 40. The Legislative Council in Jammu & Kashmir has 36 members as an exception. The members of the Legislative Council are partly elected indirectly and partly nominated.

The composition of the Legislative Council is as follows:

- One-third members are elected by the members of local bodies i.e. Municipalities, District Boards and others in the State;

- Another one-third members are elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly;

- One-twelfth members are elected by the electorate consisting of graduates of the State of not less than three years standing;

- Another one-twelfth are elected by the electorate consisting of teachers having teaching experience of at least three years in the educational institutions within the State, but these institutions must not be lower in standard than secondary schools; and

- The remaining one-sixth members are nominated by the Governor of the State.

The *Vidhan Parishad* is a permanent house, and hence it is not dissolved. Members are elected/nominated for a period of six years. One-third of its members retire after every two years. The retiring members are eligible for re-election. The qualifications for becoming members of the Legislative Council are similar to those for the members of the Legislative Assembly. However, the minimum age in case of Legislative Assembly is 25 years whereas for the Council it is 30 years.

The State Legislature meets twice a year at least and the interval between two sessions cannot be more than six months. The members of *Vidhan Sabha* and *Vidhan Parishad* elect their respective Presiding Officers, as well as Speaker and Deputy Speakers, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

The business of the two houses is conducted by their respective Presiding Officers who also maintain discipline and order in the houses.

19.3.3 Functions of the State Legislature

The State Legislature performs the following categories of functions:

(a) **Legislative Functions**: The Assembly has the sole right to legislate. All the laws must be passed by it. Where there is a *bicameral* legislature, the ordinary Bills can be introduced in any of the Houses. A Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly is sent to the Legislative Council which has to pass it or to return it with recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. If the Legislative Assembly passes that Bill once again either with recommendations of the Council or without those, it shall be deemed to have been passed by both the Houses. As regards, Money Bills, these can be introduced only in the Legislative Assembly. After the Assembly passes the Money Bill, it goes to the Legislative Council which has to pass it or return the Bill to the Assembly with its recommendations within 14 days of the receipt of the Bill. Even if the Assembly rejects the recommendations of the Council, it will be deemed to have been passed by both the Houses. Once the Bill is passed by the Legislature, it is sent to the Governor for his/her assent. He/She cannot withhold the assent on the Money Bill but can send back an ordinary bill for reconsideration or can reserve any of the bills for consideration by the President.

(b) **Control over the Executive:** The State Legislature keeps control over the executive. The Council of Ministers is responsible to *Vidhan Sabha* collectively.

Notes

It remains in office so long as it enjoys the confidence of the House. The Council of Ministers is removed, if the *Vidhan Sabha* adopts a motion of no-confidence against it. Moreover, The State Legislature keeps checks on the government by asking questions and supplementary questions, moving adjournment motions and calling attention notices.

(c) **Electoral Functions:** The elected members of the Legislative Assembly are members of the Electoral College for the election of the President of India. The members of the *Vidhan Sabha* also elect the members of the *Rajya Sabha* from their respective States. Moreover, they elect one-third members of the Legislative Council of their own State.

(d) **Functions related to Constitutional Amendments:** There are important functions of the State Legislature related to the amendment of the Constitution. A constitutional amendment requires the support of a special majority of each House of the Parliament as well as ratification by not less than half of the States where the State Legislatures ratify the amendments.

19.4 IMPACT OF STATE GOVERNMENT ON CITIZENS AND THEIR DAILY LIFE

Have you ever realized how the policies and programmes of the State government which are often debated in the State legislatures impact our daily lives? All States run many schemes and projects which impact all of us directly or indirectly. A critical part of these are the welfare projects implemented by various State governments. Many times States also adapt Union Governments welfare schemes and implement them.

For example, in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan innovative efforts are being made for education of out-of-school children through residential bridge courses. This includes mentally challenged, hearing/visually impaired and physically challenged children. These efforts have enabled these children to join mainstream schools. The educational practices followed include education through play, and use of computer aided learning processes. As part of the Centre's Mid-Day Meal Scheme, in Uttar Pradesh, hot cooked meals are being provided to children in more than 95,000 government primary schools. Elected village Pradhans are responsible for implementing the scheme in schools. The State tries to provide a varied menu including wheat, rice, vegetables, soya and pulses (*dal)*

Maharashtra is implementing a School Sanitation and Hygiene Education programme, within which school children are leading the change. The children who are called *swachhata doots* are bringing awareness on sanitation and hygiene in schools, families and communities. This programme is run by Maharashtra State Government as part of Union Government's Total Sanitation Campaign.

Government of Nagaland is leading the way in sharing with the community the management and control of government institutions in social sectors such as education, health and electricity.

? Do you know

With the enactment of the Nagaland Communitisation of Public Institution and Services (Act No. 2) 2002 (Nagaland Communitisation of Elementary Education Institutions and Services Rule, 2002) on April 15, 2002, the education department began working towards communitisation of elementary education.

The word 'communitisation' was coined by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Nagaland in 2001 to explain the concept of Government sharing management and control of Government institutions with the community.

In many ways , communitisation of elementary education is in keeping with the tradition and spirit of the Naga community. Education has always been a priority for the Naga community., traditionally the *morong* or meeting hall of the village served as space for education, and the entire community took interest in it.

The State government began the process of communitising all elementary schools in 2002.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.3

Answer the following Questions:

(i)   Which are the three States which have a bicameral legislature.

(ii)   What would happen if a Money Bill passed by the Assembly and sent to the Legislative Council is not returned within 14 days?

(iii) How much time is given to the Vidhan Parishad for passing an ordinary bill?

(iv)   What are the two main ways in which the Legislative Assembly keeps its control over the Council of Ministers?

(v)   What are the two electoral functions of the State Legislative Assembly?

19.5 HIGH COURT AND THE SUBORDINATE COURTS

You must have heard about the High Court of your State. According to the Constitution, there has to be a High Court for every State. A High Court may have more than one State under its jurisdiction. We have an example of Guwahati High Court that acts as a common High Court for the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. Mostly, the Union Territories come under the jurisdiction of the High Court of their neighbouring States.

Figure 19.3 *High Court, Guwahati*

19.5.1 Constitution of the High Court

Each High Court has a Chief Justice and Judges. The number of Judges in each High Court is determined by the President from time to time. There is no uniformly fixed number of Judges in all the High Courts. The Chief Justice and Judges of High Courts are appointed by the President. For appointment of the Chief Justice of the High Court, the President consults the Chief Justice of Supreme Court, whereas for the Judges, he/she also consults the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court. The Governor of the concerned State is also consulted for appointment of the Judges of the High Court. Judges can be transferred from one High Court to the other by the President on the advice of the Chief Justice of India.

In order to be appointed as a Judge of a High Court, the person concerned should possess the following qualifications. He/She:

- should be a citizen of India;

- should have held a judicial office in the territory of India for at least 10 years; or

- should have been an advocate in one or more High Courts for at least ten years continuously without break.

The Judges of High Court hold office till they attain the age of 65 years. However, a Chief Justice or a Judge can resign. A Judge can be removed from office through an impeachment process by parliament on grounds of proved misbehavior or incapacity. The Chief Justice and Judges are paid salaries and are also entitled to such privileges and allowances as determined by Parliament. After retirement, they may practice as advocates either in Supreme Court or in any High Court except the High Court(s) in which they have served as Judges.

19.5.2 Jurisdiction of High Court

The jurisdiction of the High Court extends up to the territorial limits of the concerned State/States or Union Territories. The High Court has original and appellate jurisdictions. Under the original jurisdiction certain types of cases may be brought directly before a High Court. The High Court exercises original jurisdiction for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights and other legal rights. In this respect High Court has the power to issue writs. These writs go a long way in protecting the rights of the individual against encroachment by the legislature, the executive or any other authority. The High Court may also hear election petitions under its original jurisdiction challenging election of a member of State Legislature.

? Do you know

> Writs are the directions or orders which are issued by the Supreme Court or the High Courts for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights. The courts thus are the guarantors of these rights.

Under appellate jurisdiction, High Courts hear appeals against the judgments of the subordinate courts at the district level. In civil cases, an appeal may be filed before the High Court against the judgment of a District Judge. In criminal matters, appeal may be made before a High Court against the judgment of a Sessions Court, where the sentence of imprisonment exceeds seven years. Death sentence awarded by a lower court has to be confirmed by the High Court. The High Court exercises powers of control and superintendence over all subordinate courts falling within its jurisdiction. The High Court is a Court of Record. Hence, all the subordinate courts follow the judgments of the High Court. High Courts may also punish for contempt or disrespect of the Court.

19.5.3 Subordinate or Lower Courts

There are subordinate courts at district and sub-divisional levels. There is a Distict and Sessions Judge in each district. Under him/her there is a hierarchy of judicial officers. The organisation and working of subordinate courts in India are more or less uniform throughout the country as given below:

Subordinate Courts

| Civil Courts | Criminal Courts | Revenue Courts |
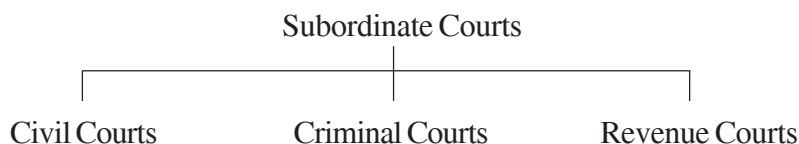
As seen in the illustration, these subordinate courts hear civil cases, criminal cases and revenue cases.

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Civil Cases: These cases filed in civil courts pertain to disputes between two or more persons regarding property, breach of agreement or contract, divorce or disputes between landlords and tenants. All these cases are settled by civil courts. In such civil cases, the court does not award any punishment as violation of law is not involved.

Criminal Cases: Such cases relate to theft, robbery, rape, pick-pocketing, physical murder etc. These cases are filed in the criminal courts by the police, on behalf of the State, against the accused. In such cases, if the court finds the accused guilty, he/she is awarded punishment.

Revenue Courts Board of Revenue exists at the State level, Under it are the Courts of Commissioner, Collector, Tehsildars and Assistant Tehsildars. The Board of Revenue hears the final appeals against all the lower revenue courts under it. All States do not have a Board of Revenue. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra have Revenue Tribunals, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir have Financial Commissioners instead of the Board.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.4

1. Fill in the blanks:

    (a) Guwahati High Court acts as a High Court of .... States of North-East India.

    (b) The Chief Justice of a High Court is appointed by .... in consultation with ....

    (c) The High Court has .... jurisdiction and .... jurisdiction.

    (d) There are three kinds of subordinate courts: (i) .... (ii) .... and (iii) ....

2. Gather information about the names of the Chief Justice and the Judges of the High Court of your State or any one State. Find out from the list how many Lady Judges are there? You may find very few or even none. Write down the reasons for this situation.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

● India is a federal system, that is why, it has governments both at the union level and at state level. At both the level governments are organized and they function based on the principles of Parliamentary System

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- The Governor is the Head of the State. He/She is appointed by the President of India. Constitutionally, he has extensive executive, legislative, financial and discretionary powers. But in practice he/she exercises those powers except the discretionary ones, at the advice of the Council of Ministers.

- The real executive in the State is the Council of ministers headed by the Chief Minister. It, therefore, has rightly been stated that the Chief Minister is the real head of the state government.

- Most of the States in India have unicameral legislatures while some of them have bicameral legislature. The two houses of the State Legislature are: Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. The States with unicameral legislature have only Legislative Assemblies. The primary function of the State Legislature is law-making. In addition to this, the State Legislative Assembly also controls the Council of Ministers.

- High Courts are at the top of the state level judiciary. These courts have original and appellate jurisdictions. Besides, there are Subordinate Courts that decide civil, criminal and revenue cases.

 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. How is the Governor appointed? What are the powers and functions of the Governor?

2. How is the Council of Ministers constituted? Explain the powers and the position of the Chief Minister.

3. Examine the organization, powers and functions of the State Legislature.

4. Explain the jurisdictions of the High Court.

5. What kinds of cases are considered in the subordinate courts.

 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

19.1

1.   (i)   (b)

     (ii)   (d)

     (iii) (b)

2.   (i)   Wrong

     (ii)   Right

Notes

(iii) Right

(iv) Wrong

(v) Right\

3. Write the answer based on your understanding. You may refer to Section 19.1.2(d)

19.2

1. (i) Wrong

   (ii) Right

   (iii) Wrong

   (iv) Wrong

   (v) Right

2. Write the answer based on your understanding of the role of the Governor in the Indian democracy. You can find out more about similar cases from elders or your teachers.

19.3

1. (i) Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka

   (ii) Bill will be deemed to have been passed by both Houses

   (iii) One month

   (iv) By asking questions and supplementary questions, moving adjournment motion and calling attention notices, and by passing a no-confidence motion, in which case the Council of Ministers resigns

   (v) The elected members constitute the Electoral College that elects the President of India. The members of Vidhan sabha elect members of Rajya Sabha from their respective States.

19.4

1. (a) seven

   (b) the President of India, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

   (c) Original, Appellate

   (d) (i) Civil Courts, (ii) Criminal Courts, (iii) Revenue Courts

2. Answer the question by gathering the needed information.

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20

GOVERNANCE AT THE UNION LEVEL

We quite often discuss about the President of India, the Prime Minister, Ministers, bureaucrats, politicians and others. These interactions happen in our homes, at our offices, tea-stalls, canteens and even on street corners. Have you ever pondered over it and wondered why do we discuss these people so often? It is because being key functionaries of the government their views and actions, in one way or the other, affect us. The government plays a critical role in shaping the development and quality of life of the people of a country. That is why, we want to know more about them. Since our country is a federation, we have governments at the union and the state levels, besides having local governments at the grassroot level, villages, cities and towns. Both the Union and the State governments are organized and function based on the principles of parliamentary system of government. Accordingly, the Constitution of India has made elaborate provisions for the structure and functioning of all the three branches of the government, executive, legislature and judiciary. The President and the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at its head constitute the executive branch of the Union government. The Parliament is the legislative branch and the Supreme Court constitutes the judicial branch. In this lesson, we shall discuss the structure and functioning of these branches of the government.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

● explain the process of election, tenure and powers, and the functions of the President of India;

● analyse the appointment of the Prime Minister and the composition, powers and functions of the Council of Ministers;

● examine the powers and position of the Prime Ministers as well as his/her relationship with the Council of Ministers;

- explain the composition, powers and functions of the Parliament and compare the position of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha; and

- appreciate the role of the Supreme Court of India by explaining its organisation and jurisdictions, its power of Judicial Review and the impact of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and judicial activism on our day to day life.

20.1 THE PRESIDENT

The illustration below is showing the Republic Day Parade. We celebrate 26 January as Republic Day every year. India is known as a Republic. Do you know why? It is because our Head of the State, the President of India is elected. It is not so in Great Britain where the Head of State happens to be either the King or the Queen. The office there is hereditary.

Figure 20.1 *Republic Day Parade*

20.1.1 Process of Election of the President

The President is indirectly elected by an Electoral College which consists of the elected members of both the Houses of Parliament as well as of State Legislative Assemblies. Moreover, the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of the Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry (earlier known as Pondicherry) also participate in this election. The voting is by secret ballot. She/he is elected according to the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.
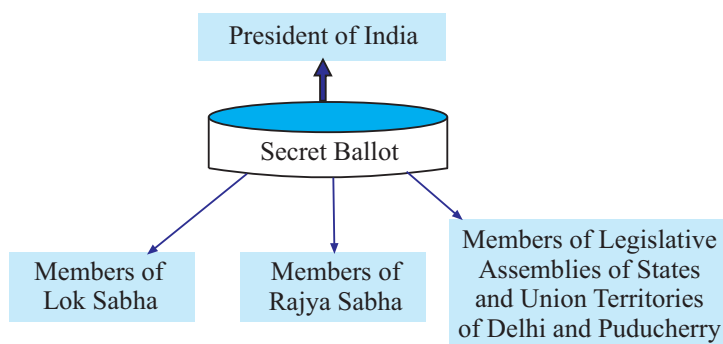
Notes

Figure 20.2 *Process of Election of the President*

Qualifications for election as President

In order to be qualified for election as President, a person must:

(i)   be a citizen of India;

(ii)   have completed the age of 35 years;

(iii) be qualified for being elected as a member of the House of the People (Lok Sabha); and

(iv)   not hold any office of profit under the government of India, any State government or under any local authority or any other authority of the said government.

Term of Office

The President is elected for a term of five years, but even after the expiry of the term, he/she may continue to hold office until his/her successor enters the office. There is a provision for the re-election of a person who is holding or who has held the office as President. A vacancy in the office of the President may be caused in any of the following ways:

(i)   in the event of his/her death;

(ii)   if he/she resigns;

(iii) if he/she is removed from office by impeachment. Impeachment (a resolution to remove the President for his/her unconstitutional act need) to be adopted by a special majority of votes in both the Houses of Parliament.

As provided in the Constitution, in the event of the occurrence of any vacancy in the office of the President, the Vice President acts as President until the date on which a new President is elected and enters upon his/her office. But the Vice-President can act as the President for not more than six months.

The emoluments, allowances and privileges of the President are determined by a law passed by the Parliament. The President used to get a monthly pay of Rs. 10,000 as per the Constitution. It was raised to Rs. 50,000 in 1998 and again to Rs. 1,50,000 in 2008. He/She also has other perks and allowances and lives in an official residence popularly known as Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi.

Figure 20.3 *Rashtrapati Bhavan*

Do you know

(i) Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the first President of India and held the office for two consecutive terms.

(ii) Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil is the first woman to be elected as the President of India. She is the 12th President of India.

(iii) Till date only two Presidents who died in office were Dr. Zakir Hussain and Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Mr. V. V. Giri and Mr. B. D. Jatti who also died in office were Acting Presidents.

20.1.2 Powers of the President

As we have seen earlier, the President is Head of the State. It is the highest public office in the country. All executive actions of the government of India are carried out in his/her name. The President has the following powers:

Notes

(a) **Executive Powers:** The Constitution of India vests the executive powers of the Union in the President. He/She appoints the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority party or group of parties having majority in the lower house, the Lok Sabha. He/She also appoints other members of the Council of Ministers on the recommendations of the Prime Minister. Since the President is the formal head of the administration, all executive actions of the Union must be expressed to be taken in the name of the President. The executive power of the President includes the power of appointment of Governors in the States, the Attorney General of India, the Comptroller and the Auditor General of India, the Ambassadors and High Commissioners as well as the Administrators of the Union Territories. He/She also appoints the Chairman and Members of the Union Public Service Commission as well as the Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts. Moreover, the President is the supreme commander of the Armed Forces and appoints the Chiefs of the three wings, Army, Airforce and Navy.

The President has the power to remove: (a) a Minister; (ii) the Attorney General of India (iii) Governors of the States; (iv) the Chairman and Members of the Union Public Service Commission (on the report of the Supreme Court) (v) the Chief Justice And Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts and (vi) the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners on an address of parliament. All diplomatic work is conducted and all international treaties and agreements are negotiated and concluded in his/her name.

(b) **Legislative Powers:** The President is an integral part of the Parliament and in this capacity he/she enjoys many legislative powers. The President addresses the Parliament every year at the commencement of the first session and after each general election to the Lok Sabha. He/She summons and prorogues the sessions of Parliament and can dissolve the Lok Sabha on the advice of the Council of Ministers. Without his/her assent no bill can become a law or an Act. If the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha fail to agree on the passage of any bill, the President can call a joint session to resolve the issue. Whenever Parliament is not in session, the President on the request of the Prime Minister, can issue an ordinance, which has the force of a law.

(c) **Financial Powers:** In addition to the above mentioned executive and legislative powers, the President enjoys certain financial powers. No money bill can be introduced in the Lok Sabha without his/her prior recommendation. In other words, all the money bills are initiated in the Lok Sabha only with the assent of the President. You must have heard about the Budget. It is a document which contains the details of annual income and expenditure of the Indian government. The President gives his consent for it to be laid before the Lok Sabha before the beginning of every financial year.

Notes

? Do you know

What do the words, 'summon', 'prorogue' 'dissolve' and 'ordinance' used while discussing legislative powers mean?

Summons the Parliament – The President gives a formal notice to the Members of Parliament that the Lok Sabha/the Rajya Sabha will begin its meetings on a particular date and continue to do so up to a particular date.

Prorogues the Parliament – The President issues a formal notice to the Members of Parliament that the Lok Sabha/the Rajya Sabha will discontinue its meetings on a particular date.

Dissolves the Lok Sabha – When the President dissolves the Lok Sabha, it means that the House ceases to exist till it is reconstituted after the next elections.

Ordinance – If there is immediate need of a law when the Parliament is not in session, it is done through an Ordinance which is issued by the President on the advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. It has all the effectiveness of a law. But as soon as the Parliament comes in to session, the ordinance has to be approved by it. In any case, if it is not approved by the Parliament within six weeks, the ordinance comes to an end.

(d) Judicial Powers: The President of India, as Head of the State, possesses certain special judicial prerogatives. He/She has the power to grant pardon or reduce sentence of a person convicted of offence. For example, he/she can suspend, commit or reprieve the sentence of a criminal convicted by a court of law, or even by a military court.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.1

1. How is the President of India elected?
2. Fill in the blanks:
   (i) The President is Head ....
   (ii) In order to be qualified for election as President, a person must:
   (a) .... (b) .... (c) ....
   (iii) In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President, ... shall act as the President of India
   (iv) The four major categories of powers of the President are (a) ....
   (b) .... (c) .... and (d) ....
3. How many times does the President convene the sessions of Parliament in a year? What are the names of the sessions? (Gather this information through books on Indian Constitution, or through Internet, or by consulting your teachers, classmates and friends.)

Notes

20.1.3 The President and Emergency Provisions

We have discussed so far the powers of the President of India that are exercised during normal period. Over and above these powers, he/she has important powers that are exercised during abnormal situations. These are known as emergency powers. The Constitution has made provisions for these powers to meet three specific extraordinary or abnormal situations arising in the country. These situations may be: (a) war or external aggression or armed rebellion; (b) failure of the constitutional machinery in any State; and (c) Deep financial crisis.

(i) War, External Aggression or Armed rebellion: A 'proclamation of emergency' is made by the President, if he/she is satisfied that the security of India or any part thereof is threatened by war, external aggression or armed rebellion. However, the President issues such a proclamation, only when a decision of the Union Cabinet, (the Prime Minister and the Ministers of the Cabinet rank,) to that effect is communicated to him/her in writing. Every proclamation is to be laid before two Houses of Parliament and if it is not approved within one month, it automatically ceases to operate. With the proclamation of emergency, the Union government can give directions to the State governments in respect of their executive powers and the Parliament may assume legislative powers of State legislatures. The President may also order the suspension of the enforcement of fundamental rights.

ACTIVITY 20.1

In 1975, an emergency was declared by the President because of the threat to internal security when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister. It has continued to be very controversial, and even now many people consider it as a **black** period in the history of democratic India. Collect information about the reasons for declaration of that emergency from books or through internet, your teachers and other informed adults**.**

(a) Based on the collected information, do you think the declaration was justified? Please provide at least two reasons.

(b) Based on your conversation with an adult who has been through this emergency, write at least 2 ways in which the emergency impacted the lives of ordinary citizens.

(ii) The second type of emergency relates to the situation in State. It may be proclaimed when the constitutional machinery of any State breaks down. If the President is satisfied on the basis of the report of the Governor or otherwise that the State cannot be administered in accordance with the provisions of the

Constitution, he/she can proclaim emergency. This is known as *President's Rule*. Such a proclamation must be approved by both the Houses of Parliament within two months. If the Parliament's approval is not obtained, it ceases to operate at the expiry of two months. After Parliament's approval it may continue for not more than six months at a time and by no means for more than three years. During this period the concerned State Assembly is either dissolved or remains suspended. The Governor of the State performs all the executive functions in the name of the President. The Parliament assumes legislative powers for that particular State.

ACTIVITY 20.2

Collect information about any one time that the President's Rule was imposed in the State to which you belong? If President's Rule has never been imposed in your State, collect information about any other State. For getting information consult books or your teachers/tutors or internet. **Write 2 -3 reasons for imposition of President's Rule. Did the government that was dismissed come back to power after elections?**

(iii) The third type of emergency, which is called 'financial emergency' is declared when a situation arises whereby the financial stability or credit of India or of any part of the country is threatened. Like the other two emergencies, this proclamation also must be approved by Parliament within two months. Once it is approved by the Parliament, it may continue indefinitely until it is revoked. In this situation, the President can reduce the salaries of all the government officials including the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts. The financial emergency has not been proclaimed in India so far.

? Do you know

(i) The first category of emergency was declared in India for the first time in 1962 due to conflict and war between China and India; the second time it was done on account of Indo-Pak War in 1965. The third national emergency was declared in 1971 when India helped Eastern Pakistan to become an independent nation known as Bangladesh and for the 4th time, in 1975 when the Cabinet headed by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi recommended to the President on account of 'internal disturbances'.

(ii) The imposition of the second category of emergency is considered to have provided extra-ordinary power to the Union government. The first such

emergency was proclaimed in 1951 in the State of Punjab, and then in Kerala in 1959. With the passage of time, this power has been used with increasing frequency. It has been alleged that President's Rule has been used to dislodge the State governments of parties other than the party in power at the Centre. Article 356 deals with this type of emergency, which includes the imposition of President's Rule over a State of India. When a State is under President's Rule, the elected State government is suspended, and administration is conducted directly by the Governor of the State. Article 356 is controversial because some people consider it undemocratic, as its provides too much power to the Centre over the State governments. After the landmark case of *S. R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994), the misuse of Article 356 was curtailed by the Supreme Court, which established strict guidelines for imposing President's Rule.

20.1.4 Position of the President

Have you observed that when the functioning of Union government is discussed either in the Parliament or in the newspapers or on television, the roles of the Prime Minister and the Ministers are often discussed? But we have seen earlier that the Constitution vests all executive powers in the President. He/She also has extensive emergency powers. Does this mean that the President is all powerful? No! In reality, the President is a nominal executive or a constitutional Head of the State. No doubt the government is run in his/her name, but according to the Indian Constitution, the President has to exercise his/her powers on the aid and advise of the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. And that is not a simple advice, but is binding. This indicates that the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers are the real rulers in the government. All decisions are taken by the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. The President has the right to be informed of those decisions. Similarly, the emergency provisions also do not grant any real powers to the President.

"Under the Constitution of India the President occupies the same position as the King/Queen under the British Constitution. He is head of the state but not the executive. He represents the nation but does not rule the nation. He is the symbol of the nation. His place in the administration is that of a ceremonial head on whose seal the nation's decisions are made known."

— Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (in the Constituent Assembly)

In the light of the above statement, some constitutional experts believe that the President can be compared with a 'rubber stamp'. But this conclusion is also not

true. The President has been given the task of preserving, protecting and defending the Constitution. He/She is the custodian of the democratic process as enshrined in the Constitution. In uncertain political situations, the President can play a decisive role in the formation of government. There have been some occasions when the President has asserted his/her position. However, in practice the President acts as a nominal or constitutional head. It has rightly been stated that in our constitutional system the President enjoys the highest honour, dignity and prestige but not the real authority.

? Do you know

Some Facts about the Vice President:

As we have seen earlier, the Vice President acts as the President, if a vacancy is caused because of resignation or removal or death of the President. According to the Constitution, the Vice President functions as ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha. Being ex-officio Chairman means that he/she is the Chairman in the capacity of being the Vice President. He/She is elected by an electoral college which consists of the members of both Houses of the Parliament. He/She is elected according to the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferrable vote, and the voting is by secret ballot. The qualifications for being a Vice President are the same as prescribed for the office of the President. His/Her main function is to preside over the meetings of Rajya Sabha, as is done by the Speaker in the Lok Sabha.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.2

(i) How is the second category of emergency proclaimed? What is its impact on the State?

(ii) What is the role of the Cabinet headed by the Prime minister in the proclamation of emergency?

(iii) Do you agree that during the period of coalition governments the position of the President is very effective? Give reasons.

(iv) Which of the following statements are true and which are false?

   (a) President is the real head of government.

   (b) The President is just a 'rubber stamp'.

   (c) The President neither rules nor reigns.

   (d) The President preserves, protects and defends the Constitution.

Notes

20.2 THE PRIME MINISTER

Do you know who was the first Prime Minister of India? Yes, it was Chacha Nehru, that is, Jawahar Lal Nehru. How do you think he felt when taking up this important post? Remember that India at that time had just gained Independence from British rule. What were the challenges he faced? Let us see, from his own words (written in his book *The Discovery of India*): "India is not a poor country. She is abundantly supplied with everything that makes a country rich, and yet her people are very poor…. India has the resources as well as the intelligence, skill and capacity to advance rapidly." He added, "We must aim at equality…. Not only must equal opportunities be given to all, but special opportunities for educational, economic and cultural growth must be given to backward groups so as to enable them to catch up with those ahead of them. Any such attempt to open the doors of opportunity to all in India will release enormous energy and ability to transform the country with amazing speed." Nehru felt a great sense of responsibility to take the country forward because, as Prime Minister, he had a major role to play.

If you listen to the news on television or radio, you will find even today that we hear about the Prime Minister, much more frequently than any other office under the Union government. In fact, the Prime Minister is the most important functionary at the Centre. If you go through the Constitution, you may get a different impression, because all the powers are mentioned as powers of the President. But one provision turns the situation. According to the Constitution, there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall act according to that advice. In fact, the President is bound to exercise all the powers exactly according to the advice of the Council of Ministers, which is headed by the Prime Minister. It is the Prime Minister who is the real head of the Union executive.

The Prime Minster is appointed by the President, but the President has to invite only that person to be the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority in the Lok Sabha. Earlier the person to be invited used to be the leader of only one political party commanding absolute majority in the Lok Sabha. But with the initiation of the phase of coalitions, he/she may be the leader of a group of more than one political party. In the changed situation, the President invites the person who is the leader elected by the political party that has the largest number of seats in the Lok Sabha and who receives the support of other political parties to manage the needed majority. Besides being the leader of the majority in Lok Sabha, to be the Prime Minister, the person has to be a Member of Parliament. If he/she is not a Member at the time of appointment, he/she has to acquire it within six months from the state of his appointment as PM.

? **Do you know**

The government which is formed by members of the legislature belonging to more than one political party is known as **coalition government**. The phase of coalition governments in India began after the 1967 general elections when coalition governments, primarily of anti-Congress political parties, were formed in a number of States. At the Centre, this phase began with the formation of Janata Party government after the 1977 elections. The following coalition governments have been formed (identified here by the Prime Ministers' names):

First - Morarji Desai	1977-1979	Second - Chowdhary Charan Singh	1979-1980
Third - V. P. Singh	1989-1990	Fourth - Chandrashekhar	1990-1991
Fifth - A. B. Vajpayee	1996-1996	Sixth - H. D. Deve Gowda	1996-1997
Seventh- I. K. Gujral	1997-1998	Eighth - A. B. Vajpayee	1998-1999
Ninth - A. B. Vajpayee	1999-2004	Tenth - Man Mohan Singh	2004-2009
Eleventh - Man Mohan Singh	2009-…		

(NDA) and (UPA) are the main coalitions of political parties headed by BJP and Congress respectively.

20.2.1 Functions of the Prime Minister

Is it not interesting to note that the Constitution does not make any specific provision for the powers of the Prime Minister, though he/she is the most powerful functionary of the Union government? The only provision in the Constitution is that the President shall exercise his/her powers on the aid and advise of the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head, and that advice will be binding. But in practice, it is the Prime Minister who makes and unmakes the Council of Ministers. It is on his/her recommendations that the President appoints the members of the Council of Ministers and distributes portfolios among them. He/She presides over the meetings of the Cabinet and communicates its decisions to the President. The Prime Minister acts as the link between the President and the Council of Ministers. If, due to any reason, he/she submits his/her resignation, the entire Council of Ministers stands dissolved. As and when the necessity arises, he/she may recommend to the President that the Lok Sabha be dissolved and fresh general elections be held. In fact, the Prime Minister is not only the leader of the majority party, or the leader of the Parliament but he/she is also the leader of the nation. His/Her office is the office of power, while that of the President is the office of honour, respect and dignity. The Prime Minister is the Ex-officio Chairman of the Planning Commission as well as of the National Development Council. He/She represents the nation at the international conferences as the head of the government.

Figure 20.4 *Members of the Union Council of Ministers after Taking Oath (2009)*

20.2.2 The Union Council of Ministers

As you have noted above, the Constitution of India states that, "There shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall, in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice, provided that the President may require the Council of Ministers to reconsider such advice, either generally or otherwise, and the President shall act in accordance with the advice tendered after such consideration."

The members of the Council of Ministers are appointed by the President on the recommendations of the Prime Minster. The Council of Ministers has three categories of Ministers – Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers. These Ministers work as a team under the leadership of the Prime Minister. The Ministers hold office during the pleasure of the President, but they cannot be removed so long as they have the support of the majority in the Lok Sabha, In fact, according to the Constitution, Ministers are collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha. If the Lok Sabha passes a 'no-confidence motion', the entire Council of Ministers including PM has to resign. A **no-confidence motion** is a legislative motion brought by the members of the Lok Sabha, expressing lack of trust in the Council of Ministers. That is why, it is said that the ministers swim and sink together.

Regarding the functions of the Council of Ministers, these are the same as those of the Prime Minister. The proceedings of the Cabinet or Council of Ministers are kept secret. The Council of Ministers is a large body of Ministers. We have seen during recent years, the top category, known as the Ministers of Cabinet rank are about 20 to 25 and they hold the charge of important departments. Then there is a group of ministers, called Ministers of State, some of them hold independent charges of ministries while others are attached to Cabinet Ministers. Yet another category of ministers known as Deputy Ministers are attached to Cabinet Ministers or Ministers of State. The Cabinet meeting is attended only by the Ministers of Cabinet rank, but if need be the Ministers of State also may be invited to attend such meetings.

20.2.3 Position of the Prime Minister

In the background of the above discussion, it is obvious that the Prime Minister occupies a key position in the Union government. He/She is the 'principal spokesperson' and defender of the policies of the government in the Parliament. The Council of Ministers functions as his/her team. The nation looks to him/her for needed policies and programmes and required actions. All international agreements and treaties with other countries are concluded with the consent of the Prime Minister. He/She has a special status both in the government and in the Parliament. The Prime Minister chooses his team (Council of Ministers) very carefully and gets willing co-operation from them. However, it is true that in a coalition government the Prime Minister has to seek help from like-minded political parties. The experience of the last ten to twelve years has shown that in such a scenario he/she has to be very vigilant and diplomatic. He/She has to take major decisions regarding defence and security of the country. He/She has to formulate policies not only for providing better living conditions but also to maintain peace, friendly relations with the neighbouring countries. It is because of the facts mentioned above that the Prime Minister is keystone of the cabinet arch.

ACTIVITY 20.3

Go through the newspapers of the last week or two, or recollect some of the discussions held on TV about the political, social and economic situations in the country. Think and write down the answers of the following:

(i)   What are the two major problems that have been the subject of discussion in newspapers or/and on TV?

(ii)   Are you satisfied with the views expressed by the Prime Minister/Ministers or the spokesperson of the government on those problems? Give reasons.

(iii) What according to you should the Prime Minister do to solve those problems?

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.3

1. Fill in the blanks:

    (a) The Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister is the ....

    (b) The President should invite the person who is elected as .... of the .... to become the Prime Minister.

(c) The Prime Minister is the .... head of the ....

(d) The Ministers are appointed by the President on the recommendations of the ....

2. Answer the following questions:

   (a) How are the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers dislodged before the completion of their term?

   (b) Who acts as a link between the Council of Ministers and the President?

   (c) What are the three categories of the Ministers in the Council of Ministers?

   (d) Who presides over the meetings of the Cabinet?

ACTIVITY 20.4

The Prime Minister of a country must have many leadership qualities. What do you think are the qualities of a good leader? Check whether you think the present Prime Minister of India has these qualities. Also observe which leadership qualities do you have?

Qualities of a good leader	Tick mark ( ) against the qualities of the present PM	Tick mark ( ) against the qualities you have

20.3 THE UNION PARLIAMENT

Do you recognise the institution in the illustration given below? Yes, it is the Parliament House. The legislative branch of the Union government is called the Parliament that consists of the President and two Houses known as the House of the People (Lok Sabha) and the Council of States (Rajya Sabha). It is important to appreciate that making the President a part of the Parliament is in conformity with the principles and traditions of the parliamentary form of government. We shall now discuss the composition, powers and functions of both the Houses of the Parliament.

Figure 20.5 *Parliament House, India*

20.3.1 Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha or the House of the People is the lower house. It is the people's representative body. The members of the Lok Sabha are directly elected by the people of India. The number of its members cannot exceed 550. Out of these, 530 are directly elected by the people of the States, and the remaining 20 members are elected from the Union Territories. All the citizens who are 18 years of age and above have the right to vote and elect the members of the Lok Sabha. According to the Constitution if there is no member of the Anglo-Indian Community in the Lok Sabha, the President can nominate two persons of this community as members. When the elections are announced, each State and Union Territory is divided into various territorial constituencies based on population. These are known as Parliamentary Constituencies. One representative to Lok Sabha is elected from each of the constituencies

The term of the Lok Sabha is *five* years. However, it can be dissolved even earlier by the President. During an emergency, its term can be extended for a period of one year. Those who want to be a member of the Lok Sabha must (i) be a citizen of India, (ii) be of at least of 25 years of age, and (iii) not hold an office of profit under the central, state or local governments. He/She should possess such other qualifications as may be specified by law made by Parliament from time to time.

20.3.2 Rajya Sabha

Rajya Sabha (the Council of States) is the upper house of Parliament. The maximum number of members of this house cannot exceed 250. Out of these, 238 members represent the States and Union Territories and 12 are nominated by the President of India. The nominated members are distinguished persons in the field of literature, art, science and social service. The elected representatives are elected by the State Legislative Assemblies according to the system of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote. The number of members from each State depends on the population of that State.

The Rajya Sabha is not subject to dissolution. The members of the Rajya Sabha are elected for 6 years. But there is an arrangement according to which one-third of the members retire every two years and new members are elected. The retiring member can be re-elected. To be eligible to be a member of the Rajya Sabha, a person must (a) be a citizen of India, and (b) be at least 30 years of age. Other qualifications are the same as those for the members of the Lok Sabha. The sessions of the Parliament are summoned by the President. There should not be a gap of more than six months between the two sessions. The President has the right to prorogue the sessions. Lok Sabha can be dissolved by the President but not the Rajya Sabha, as it is a permanent house of the Parliament.

20.3.3 Presiding Officers

Lok Sabha is presided over by the Speaker and in his/her absence by the Deputy Speaker. Members of the Lok Sabha elect the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker from among themselves. He/She maintains order and discipline in the lower house as well as supervises its proceedings. He/She decides who will speak and for how long. He/She normally does not cast his/her vote but can vote in case of a tie. The Speaker decides whether a bill is an ordinary or a money bill and his/her decision is final. Besides, he/she is the custodian of the rights and privileges of the members. In case of a joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, presides over such meetings.

Figure 20.6 *Session of Lok Sabha*

Rajya Sabha is presided over by the Vice President of India who is its ex-officio Chairman. The Chairman (Vice-President) is not a member of the Rajya Sabha. He/She is elected by an electoral college consisting of the members of both the Houses of Parliament. During his/her absence, the House is presided over by the Deputy Chairman. Like the Speaker of Lok Sabha, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha also does not normally vote but in case of a tie, he/she may exercise the casting of vote.

20.3.4 Functions of Parliament

The Parliament is the supreme legislative body. It performs functions that may be categorized as follows:

(i) Legislative Functions: Parliament is a law making body. It legislates on the subjects mentioned in the Union List and the Concurrent List by the Constitution. If there is a clash between the Union government and the State government regarding any concurrent subject, the central law will prevail. Besides, if there is any subject not mentioned in any list, known as residuary subjects, it comes under the jurisdiction of the Parliament. An ordinary bill can be introduced in any of the two houses. If a bill is passed by the Lok Sabha, it is sent to Rajya Sabha which may pass the same or may suggest amendments in the bill. If the disagreement between the two Houses continues, it has to be resolved in a joint sitting of the two Houses. In the joint sitting, Lok Sabha has an upper hand with 550 members over the Rajya Sabha which has only a maximum of 250 members. Till date there have been only three 'joint sittings' of both the Houses. Once the bill is passed by both the Houses, it is sent to the President for his/her assent and with his/her assent it becomes a law or an act.

(ii) Executive Functions: In a parliamentary system, there is a close relationship between the legislature and the executive. As discussed above, the real executive i.e. the Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha which can dislodge a ministry by passing a no confidence motion against it. In 1999 Atal Bihari Vjpayee's government lost the confidence motion in the Lok Sabha and it resigned.

However, both the Houses of Parliament maintain their control over the Council of Ministers through several other ways such as:

(a) *By asking questions and supplementary questions*: The first hour of every working day of Parliament relates to Question Hour in which the Ministers have to answer the questions raised by the members.

(b) *By discussing and passing motions*: Calling Attention Motion, Adjournment Motion or Censure Motion can be moved and policies of the government can be debated and criticized.

(c) By expressing lack of confidence: The Lok Sabha can express its lack of confidence in the executive by disapproving the budget or money bill or even an ordinary bill.

(iii) Financial Functions: The Parliament of India has been entrusted with the performance of important financial functions. It is the custodian of the public money. It controls the entire purse of the Union government. It sanctions, from time to time, money to the government to enable it to run the administration effectively and successfully. The Parliament may pass, reduce or reject the demands for grants presented to it by the government. No taxes can be collected and no expenditure can be made without the approval of the Parliament. There are, however, certain limitations on the Rajya Sabha. These are: (a) a money bill cannot be introduced in the Rajya Sabha. It has no power either to reject or amend a money bill. It can only make recommendations on the money bill. If the Rajya Sabha along with its recommendations (if any) does not return it to Lok Sabha within 14 days, the bill is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses. As regards the Annual Budget (Annual Financial Statement), it is presented in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha may only discuss it but can not stop it from becoming law.

(iv) Judicial Functions: The Parliament is empowered to prescribe the number of Judges of the Supreme Court by law. It is also authorized to establish a common High Court for two or more States as well as to constitute a High Court even for a Union Territory. A Chief Justice or Judge of the Supreme Court or of any High Court can be removed from his/her office by the President only after an impeachment process by both the Houses of Parliament.

(v) Miscellaneous Functions: The Parliament has the power to remove the President and the Vice President by a special majority of votes. This process is called as Impeachment. It has the power to amend the Constitution. Certain parts of the Constitution can be amended by a simple majority and certain others require two-thirds majority. Some other parts of the Constitution can be amended with special majority of the Parliament and the approval of the Legislatures of half of the States.

20.3.5 Comparative Position of Both the Houses of Parliament

In a parliamentary system the lower house always plays a more important role. Accordingly, in our country also, the Lok Sabha is more powerful and effective. The following points are important for understanding the comparative position of both the Houses:

(i) Lok Sabha is directly elected and the true representative of the people of India. Rajya Sabha on the other hand is indirectly elected. Moreover, Rajya Sabha is a permanent body, whereas the Lok Sabha is elected for a definite period

of 5 years. Its tenure can be increased and it can be dissolved even earlier than the expiry of the term.

(ii) In case of an ordinary bill, both the Houses have equal powers. But if the differences between both houses continue and a joint session is convened, the Lok Sabha gets an upper hand, as its membership is more than double of that of the Rajya Sabha.

(iii) In respect of having control over the Council of Ministers, once again the Lok Sabha is more effective. Rajya Sabha can have some control by debating on the policies and programmes and criticizing the government. But only the Lok Sabha has the power to pass a no-confidence motion which if done, the Council of Minister resigns.

(iv) With regard to the constitutional amendments, election of the President and the Vice-President and impeachment or removal of President, Vice President, Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have almost similar powers.

(v) Whereas in financial matters, the Lok Sabha has an upper hand, it is only Rajya Sabha that may create a new All India Service and declare a subject in the State List to be of national importance.

In view of the above comparison, Lok Sabha is definitely more powerful than the Rajya Sabha. But it will not be appropriate to state that the Rajya Sabha is not only the second chamber, but also a secondary chamber. We have seen how important a role Rajya Sabha also plays and there are certain functions which only Rajya Sabha can perform.

20.3.6 Impact of Union Government on Citizens and their Daily Life

The Union government formulates and implements many national level programs and schemes which have an impact upon our quality of life. These programs include many in education and childcare, such as the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), providing anganwadis for child nutrition and care, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for universalizing elementary education, and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), for universalization of secondary education. Some other Union government programs are the National Rural Health Mission, Total Sanitation Campaign, and MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), Indira Awas Yojana etc.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.4

1. Answer the following questions:

   (i) What is the maximum strength of the Lok Sabha?

   (ii)   What is the tenure of the members of Rajya Sabha?

   (iii)   Which house of Parliament is a permanent body?

   (iv)   Who is the Chairman of Rajya Sabha?

   (v)   What are the functions of the Speaker of Lok Sabha?

   (vi)   What are the qualifications for being a candidate in the Lok Sabha elections?

2. Fill in the blanks:

   (i)   An Ordinary Bill can be introduced in ....

   (ii)   If the differences between both the Houses continue, the President convenes a .... session of Parliament.

   (iii)   A money bill can be introduced only in the ....

   (iv)   For having a control over the Council of Ministers, both Houses can (i) .... and (ii) move .... motions.

3. Which of the following statements is true and which is false:

   (i)   Ordinary bill cannot be introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

   (ii)   Money bill can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha.

   (iii)   No bill can become a law unless it is signed by the President.

   (iv)   In the joint session convened on account of the differences between two houses on a bill, Lok Sabha has an upper hand over the Rajya Sabha.

4. What qualities would you like to see in Members/Ministers when they participate in the proceedings of the Houses of Parliament?

ACTIVITY 20.5

Go through recent newspapers, and magazines. Also watch the debates being telecast through Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Channels or other News Channels and based on your observation answer the following questions:

(i)   Identify one Member of Parliament (M.P) whose participation in the Parliament you liked the most. Give 2 reasons.

(ii)   Have you observed unruly behavior of any MP in the Parliament. Identify atleast two such behaviours. How does it affect the functioning of the Parliament?.

20.4 THE SUPREME COURT

We have mentioned in the beginning of this lesson that the Supreme Court represents the Union judiciary. But the structure and functioning of the judicial branch is different

from those of the executive and the legislative branches. Do you have some idea or experience of judicial actions? You may have heard at some point of time that a case that began in the lower court was considered by the courts at the district level, then by the High Court and ultimately by the Supreme Court. This happens because India has a unified judiciary. It means that there is a hierarchy of Courts, at the highest level of which is the Supreme Court, then at the state level there are High Courts and at the district and still lower levels there are subordinate courts.

Figure 20.7 *The Supreme Court of India*

As provided in the Constitution, the Supreme Court of India consists of the Chief Justice and other Judges whose number is prescribed by the Parliament from time to time. In 1950 there was a Chief Justice and there were 7 Judges. But the number of Judges continued increasing as per the need. The Supreme Court, at present, consists of the Chief Justice and 30 Judges.

The Chief Justice and other Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President of India.

For appointing the Chief Justice of India, the other Judges of the Supreme or High Courts may be consulted. Usually, the senior-most Judge in the Supreme Court is appointed as the Chief Justice. For the appointment of other Judges of the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice has to be consulted. Usually, the Chief Justice himself consults a *collegium* of the four senior-most Judges, and all of them need to agree for any candidate to be recommended for the appointment of a judge.

A person can be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court only if he/she:

(i)   is a citizen of India;

(ii)   must have been at least a Judge of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession for at least five years; or

(iii) must have been an advocate of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession for at least ten years; or

(iv) is, in the opinion of the President, a distinguished jurist.

Judges of the Supreme Court hold office till they attain the age of 65 years. But they may be removed from office by an order of the President, passed after an address by each House of Parliament supported by a special majority on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. This is known as impeachment procedure. No Chief Justice or Judge of the Supreme Court has been impeached so far. A Judge who has served in the Supreme Court is barred from pleading in any court within the territory of India after retirement.

20.4.1 The Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has three types of jurisdiction — Original, Appellate and Advisory.

(i)   Original Jurisdiction: The Supreme Court alone has the authority to hear directly certain cases. These are :

(a)   Disputes between the Union government and one or more State governments,

(b)   Disputes between two or more States,

(c)   Disputes between the Government of India and one or more States on the one side and one or more States on the other side.

(ii)   Appellate Jurisdiction: The power of a superior or higher court to hear and decide appeals against the judgment of the lower court is called appellate jurisdiction. The Supreme Court is a court of appeal for constitutional, civil and criminal cases. It can hear appeals against the judgments of the High Courts. It also has the power to review its own judgment. It may in its own discretion grant special lease to appeal against any judgment or order delivered or passed by any court or tribunal within the territory of India.

Moreover, an Appeal may come to the Supreme Court in any criminal case, if the High Court certifies that the case is fit for appeal to the Supreme Court. The special appellate power has become a handy weapon in the hands of the Court to review the decisions pertaining to elections and Labour and Industrial Tribunals.

(iii)   Advisory Jurisdiction: The Supreme Court has a special advisory jurisdiction in matters which may specifically be referred to it by the President of India. If at any time, it appears to the President that a question of law or fact has arisen or is likely to arise, which is of such public importance that it is urgent to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court on it, he/she may refer it to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court may, after such hearing as it thinks fit,

report to the President its opinion thereon. The report or the opinion of the Supreme Court is of course, not binding on the President. Similarly, there is no compulsion for the Court to give its advice.

The Supreme Court is a *court of record*. The records of the Supreme Court, in matters of interpretation of the law or of the constitution, have to be accepted when produced before the lower courts. Besides the above mentioned jurisdictions there are a few more special functions of the Supreme Court of India. These are:

(i) **Guardian of the Constitution:** As the interpreter of the Constitution, the Supreme Court has the power to protect and defend the Constitution. If the Court finds that any law or executive order is against the Constitution, the same can be declared unconstitutional or invalid. Similarly the Supreme Court also acts as the custodian and protector of Fundamental Rights. If any citizen feels that his/her fundamental rights have been infringed, he/she may move to the Supreme Court directly for the protection of his/her fundamental rights. The Right to Constitutional Remedies empowers the Supreme Court to act as the guardian of the Constitution.

(ii) **Judicial Review:** The Supreme Court of India has the power to examine the validity of laws or executive orders. The Supreme Court has the powers to interpret the Constitution, and through this it has assumed the power of judicial review.

? Do you know

Judicial Review is a process through which the judiciary examines the constitutionality of a legislative act or executive order. If on examination it is found that there has been a violation of the Constitution, the judiciary declares it to be null and void or unconstitutional.

20.4.2 Judicial Activism

Judicial activism has been defined as 'innovative interpretation' of the Constitution by the Court. This has often been criticized as the judiciary taking over the powers of the legislature. But in India it has enjoyed support from the public, because it has concentrated on giving the disadvantaged the access to justice. It uses the instrument of **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)**. With public interest litigation, any person can bring a petition about a problem before the court, and not just the person affected by the problem. PIL has often been used on behalf of people who are poor or disadvantaged and do not have the means to approach the court. With judicial activism and PIL, courts have given judgments on pollution, the need for a uniform civil code, eviction of unauthorized buildings, stopping child labour in dangerous occupations, and other issues.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.5

1. Fill in the blanks:

    (i) India has a .... judiciary.

    (ii) The Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by ....

    (iii) A Judge of the Supreme Court can be removed through the process of ....

    (iv) The ultimate power of interpreting the Indian Constitution lies with the ....

2. Which of the following statements is true and which one false?

    (i) The Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the Chief Justice of India

    (ii) The Supreme Court has a Chief Justice and 30 Judges.

    (iii) Judges of Supreme Court hold office till they attain the age of 65 years.

    (iv) Judicial activism has concentrated on giving the disadvantaged the access to justice.

    (v) The President of India must accept the advice given by the Supreme Court on the matter that was referred to it by the President for advice.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT?

- The structure and functioning of Union government is based on the principles and conventions of the parliamentary form of government. The President and the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister constitute the executive, the two houses of Parliament constitute the legislature and the Supreme Court is the highest judiciary.

- The Constitution vests executive powers in the President who is the Head of the State. He/She is indirectly elected by an Electoral College consisting of the elected members of both the Houses of the Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies. His/Her term of office is for five years, though he/she can be removed even before through impeachment. He/She has executive, legislative, financial and judicial powers, as well as emergency powers.

- The Prime Minister is the real executive head of the Union government. He is appointed by the President who also appoints other members of the Council of Ministers on the recommendations of the Prime Minister. The President exercises

his/her powers on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister, and their advice is binding. The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha. It means that if they lose the confidence of the Lok Sabha, the Council of Ministers is dislodged with the resignation of the Prime Minister.

● The Parliament which consists of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, is the legislative body. The Lok Sabha is directly elected by the citizens, whereas the Rajya Sabha is elected indirectly. The Lok Sabha has a term of five years, while the Rajya Sabha is a permanent body which is never dissolved. Besides making laws and passing annual budget, the Parliament controls the government in its day-to-day functioning. It participates in the election of the President and elects the Vice President of India.

● The Supreme Court is at the apex of the unified judiciary of India. The Chief Justice and other Judges are appointed by the President. It has Original, Appellate and Advisory Jurisdictions. It is also a court of record. It functions as the guardian of the Constitution. Its judicial activism, especially through Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has often been used on behalf of people who are poor or disadvantaged and do not have the means to approach the court.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

(i) How is the President of India elected? How can he/she be removed from office?

(ii) What are the powers and functions of the President of India? In spite of so much powers given by the Constitution, why is it said that President does not rule but represents the nation?

(iii) Examine and evaluate the role of the Prime Minister in India.

(iv) Is it appropriate to say that 'Rajya Sabha is not only the second chamber but also a secondary chamber'? Justify your answer.

(v) How is the Supreme Court constituted? What is its jurisdiction?

(vi) Is judicial activism a boon or a bane of Indian democracy? Justify your answer with three reasons.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

20.1

1. The President is indirectly elected by an Electoral College which consists of the elected members of the two Houses of the Parliament as well as of the State

Legislative Assemblies. Moreover, the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of the Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry (earlier known as Pondicherry) also participate in this election. The voting is by secret ballot. He/She is elected according to the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

2.   (i)   of the State

(ii)   (a) be a citizen of India (b) have completed the age of 35 years (c) be qualified for being elected as a Member of Lok Sabha (d) not hold any office of profit

(iii)   the Vice President of India

(iv)   (a) Executive Powers (b) Legislative Powers (c) Financial Powers (d) Judicial Powers

3.   Gather this information through books on Indian Constitution, or through Internet, or by consulting your teachers, classmates and friends.

20.2

1.   The second type of emergency is proclaimed when the constitutional machinery of any State breaks down and the President is satisfied on the basis of the report of the Governor or otherwise that the State cannot be administered in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. During this period the concerned State Assembly is either dissolved or remains suspended. The Governor of the State performs all the executive functions in the name of the President.

2.   The Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister plays an important role in the proclamation of emergency. The President can issue a proclamation only when such a decision has been communicated to him/her in writing by the Union Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister.

4.   Write your answer on the basis of your understanding.

5.   (a) false (b) true (c) true (d) true

20.3

1.   (a)   real executive

(b)   leader, majority

(c)   real, government

(d)   Prime Minister

2.   (a)   If Lok Sabha passes a no-confidence motion against the Council of Ministers

(b)   the Prime Minister

Notes

   (c)   Cabinet Minister, Minister of State, Deputy Minister

   (d)   the Prime Minister

20.4

1.   (i)   550

   (ii)   6 years

   (iii) Rajya Sabha

   (iv) the Vice President of India

   (v)   to preside over the sessions, maintain order and discipline, to allow members to speak, to decide if a bill is a money bill and to preside over the joint session of Parliament

   (vi) (i) a citizen of India (ii) of at least 25 years of age (iii) not hold an office of profit

2.   (a)   any House of Parliament

   (b)   joint

   (c)   Lok Sabha

   (d)   (i) ask questions and supplementary questions, (ii) adjournment motion and calling attention

3.   (a) false (b)   true   (c)   true   (d)   true

4. Answer based on your own understanding of what the good qualities should be.

20.5

1.   (i)   unified

   (ii)   the President of India

   (iii) impeachment

   (iv) the Supreme Court

2.   (i)   false

   (ii)   true

   (iii) true

   (iv) true

   (v)   true

21

POLITICAL PARTIES AND PRESSURE GROUPS

You might have already read that democracy is a government of the people, for the people and by the people. A democratic government is considered a people's government run by the people themselves. In practice in most of the countries the democratic governments are run by the representatives elected by the people. You might be thinking how the people get themselves represented in the government. People elect their representatives through the process of elections. In elections candidates generally are nominated by organizations known as political parties. Yes some of the candidates contest elections as independents also. However, participation of the people does not begin and end with elections only. People also participate in the process of governance through groups known as pressure groups or interest groups. In this lesson, we shall discuss political parties and pressure groups, especially in the context of our country. You will like to know more about political parties and pressure groups.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

● explain the meaning of a political party;

● elaborate the main characteristics of political parties;

● classify the types of political parties in India;

● discuss the functions and role of political parties in a democratic government in India;

● distinguish between national and regional political parties of India;

● highlight briefly the major policies of national political parties;

● differentiate between political parties and pressure/interest groups;

- assess the role of pressure/interest group; and

- analyse the impact of political parties on our daily lives.

21.1 POLITICAL PARTIES: MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS

21.1.1 Why Do We Need Political Parties?

In the present day democratic countries, political parties are considered as essential components for the formation and working of the government. Of course, in some countries like Libya, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, there are governments without parties. These countries are not democratic and political parties are banned there. We can therefore infer that democracies function successfully in countries which have competitive party systems. Political parties actually help the institutions and processes of a government democratic. They enable people to participate in elections and other processes of governance, educate them and facilitate them to make policy choices. If political parties are necessary to make the working of the representative government possible, you may well ask as to what is the meaning of a political party? What are its main characteristics? What are their roles in a democratic government?

22.1.2 Meaning of a Political Party

A political party is generally described as an organized body of people who share common principles and cherish certain common goals regarding the political system. A political party operates and seeks political power through constitutional means to translate its policies into practice. It is a body of like-minded people having similar views on matters of public concern. Gilchrist defines a political party as "an organized group of citizens who profess or share the same political views and who by acting as a political unit, try to control the government". Another definition given by Gettell is: "a political party consists of a group of citizens, more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who, by the use of their voting power, aim to control the government and carry out their general policies". From these definitions it is clear that political parties are organized bodies and are primarily concerned with the acquisition and retention of power.
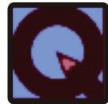
21.1.3 Characteristics

From the above mentioned definitions of political parties, following can be identified as their main characteristics:

- a political party is an organized group of people;

- the organized group of people believe in common principles and common goals;

- its objectives revolve around seeking political power through collective efforts;

- it employs constitutional and peaceful methods in seeking control over the government through elections; and

- while in power, it translates its declared objectives into governmental policies.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 21.1

1. Answer the following questions by selecting the right option out of the four stated below:

   (a) Which of the following is the characteristic of a political party?

       (i)   Group of people organized for betterment of their locality.

       (ii) Group of people sharing similar religious views.

       (iii) Group of people having common principles and views on public matters.

       (iv) Group of people attending an election meeting.

   (b) Why do we need political parties in a democracy?

       (i)   To help legislature making laws.

       (ii) To help executives administering the country.

       (iii) To help judiciary delivering judgments.

       (iv) To help people choosing their representatives.

   (c) Which of the following is not a democracy?

       (i)   Libya   (ii) Indonesia

       (iii) India   (iv) Sri Lanka

21.2 POLITICAL PARTIES: FUNCTIONS AND ROLE

You have already read about that political parties are essential for the proper functioning of representative democracy. They perform vital functions in every political system. It is important to know who places candidates before the electorate when there are elections in the country? Do you know who carries out campaigns during elections? Have you ever realized how a government is formed and who is nominated as the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister? All these relate to the functions of political parties and their role in a democratic polity. The functions performed by the political parties, especially in the context of India, are asunder:

- they nominate candidates during elections;

- they campaign to obtain support for their candidates in the elections;

- they place objectives and programmes before the voters through their manifestos;

- those securing the majority in elections form the government and enact and implement the policies;

- Those not in power form opposition and keep a constant check on the government;

- they form opposition when they are in minority in the legislature and constantly put pressure on the government for proper governance;

- they educate people and help in formulating and shaping public opinion;

- they articulate peoples' demands and convey them to the government; and

- they provide a linkage between people and governmental institutions.

In India political parties have been performing the above-mentioned functions quite effectively since independence. They have made representative governments in India both possible and successful for over past six decades. They provide effective links between the citizens and the governments on the one hand, and the electorates and their representatives on the other. They try to cater to people's demands on public matters, and mobilize political participation. Elections without parties would have almost been impossible. In fact, democracy needs strong and sustainable political parties with the capacity to represent citizens and provide policy choices that demonstrate their ability to govern for the public good.

The experience of functioning of political parties in India during the last six decades indicates that by and large they have been instrumental in shaping public opinion, creating political awareness, and imparting political education to the people. They successfully form the governments where they receive the mandate of the people and implement their respective policies and programmes both at the Centre and in the States. They have contributed towards making the institutions and processes of government truly democratic. We can, therefore, say that democracy in India has been strengthened by a competitive and multi-party system.

ACTIVITY 21.1

Try to find in your State:

- Which political party/parties have formed the present government?

- To which political party does the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly belong?

- Name five political parties that have put up their candidates in the last election.

You can get the above information from newspapers, your parents or friends.

21.3 POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA: THEIR EVOLUTION AND GROWTH

The establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885 in India is generally considered as the beginning of the formation of parties. To begin with, the Indian National Congress which led national movement was an umbrella organization representing interests of all sections of society. The formative phase of the Indian National Congress was dominated by the Moderates like Dada Bhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and others as well as the Extremists like 'Lal-Bal-Pal' – referring to Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. After the First World War, the Indian National Congress steered the path of India's independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. There also emerged some other political parties during this period like the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India, the Hindu Mahasabha, etc.

After independence in 1947, the Indian National Congress transferred itself into a political party in the sense of contesting elections and forming government. It remained a dominant political party up to 1967, as it continued to win elections held in 1952, 1957, 1962 and 1967 at the Centre as well as in almost all the States. This period is known as 'one party dominant system' in view of the Congress winning majorities whereas the large number of other political parties contesting elections winning only few seats.

Since 1967 the party system in India has been in constant flux. In 1971 although the Congress won a majority in the Lok Sabha, in many states various other political parties formed governments mostly in coaltions. After 1977, it appeared that India had moved towards a 'two party system' – the two parties being the Indian National Congress and the Janata Party. But it was only for a very short period. The Janata Party which was in fact a coalition of various factions like the Congress O, the Jana Sangh, the Socialists, the Bharatiya Lok Dal, and the Congress for Democracy split into different factions. The Janata split once again gave advantage to the Congress which returned to power at the Centre in 1980 and remained there until 1989. However, the Congress has not been able to regain its dominant position ever since 1989. Indian party system witnesses a coalition system of government from 1989 onwards. Since 1999 two broad coalitions have come up – one, known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the second, known as the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), led by the Congress Party. At present in India in fact there is a multi-party system as very large number of parties participate in political process.
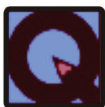
INTEXT QUESTIONS 21.2

Answer the following questions by selecting the right option out of the four stated below each item.

(a) Which one of the following is a correct statement?

   (i)   India is a 'one party system'.

 (ii) Political parties in India came into in existence even before independence.

(iii) Political parties in India emerged only after independence.

(iv) The Congress did not get majority in Lok Sabha in 1989.

(b) Which of the following is not the function of political parties in a democratic system:

   (i)   Political parties work secretly to bring a change in the system.

 (ii) They shape public opinion.

(iii) They attempt to acquire political power.

(iv) They form opposition if not in majority in the legislature.

(c) Since when the coalitional governments in India have come to stay at the national level?

   (i) 1952   (ii) 1989

 (iii) 1977   (iv) 1967

21.4 PARTY SYSTEMS IN INDIA: NATURE, TYPES, POLICIES

You have read above that in the earlier years of independence the Indian National Congress dominated the party system. But the same has not continued and there had been periods of non-Congress governments both at the Centre and in the States. In general, the party system in India has not been a fixed one like a single party system or a dominant one-party system or a two-party system or a multi-party system. The features found in any of the above party systems may be found in India's party system. For many years now, the party system has not been a single-party dominant system as it used to be the case till 1967. It is not now a one-party dominant system. The Indian party system is not a bi-party system, that existed for a short period between 1977 and 1980. It is more a less a multi-party system because the national political parties depend largely on the support of regional political parties to stay in power at the Centre as well as in some States. Various political parties join hands to form coalition governments as single parties are finding difficult to get majorities by themselves.

21.4.1 Dominant Features of India's Party System

In view of the above, the party system in India displays the following major characteristics:

- India has a multi-party system with a large number of political parties competing to attain power at the Centre as well as in the States.

- the contemporary party system in India has witnessed the emergence of a bi-nodal party system existing at both national and state/region levels. The bi-nodal tendencies operating at two poles are led by the Congress and the BJP both at the center and in the states.

- political parties are not hegemonic but competitive, though many a time we see a particular party aligning with one national political party and then shifting to another on the eve of general elections.

- the regional political parties have come to play a vital role in the formation of governments at the Centre. At the Centre, these regional parties support one national political party or the other and seek substantive favours, ministerial berths at the Centre and other financial package for their respective States.

- election is now fought not among parties but coalition of parties. Nature of competition, alliance and players is varied from state to state.

- coalitional politics has been a new feature of our party system. We have reached a situation where there is no single party government, except in some of the States. There are, as you can see around, neither permanent ruling parties nor permanent opposition parties.

- as a result of coalitional politics, ideologies of the political parties have taken a back seat. Administration is run through Common Minimum Programme, which reflects that pragmatism has become the 'ruling mantra'. We have seen political situations where the Telugu Desam Party supported the BJP led NDA in 1999 and CPI(M) backed the Congress led UPA in 2004 without formally joining the government.

- parties are keen on focusing on the single emotive issue/s to garner votes. The emotive issues in some of the earlier elections were: *Garibi Hatao* of the 1970s, 'Indira is India' of the 1980s, 'Taking into the 21st Century' under Rajiv in mid-1980s, BJP' India Shining of 1999, Congress' 'Feel Good' in 2004 and 'Aam Aadmi' in 2009.

- parties now look for short term electoral gains rather than build lasting social coalitions.

ACTIVITY 21.2

Through discussions or reading newspapers, try to find out :

(i)   Which Political Party of your region has played a vital role in the formation of the government at the Centre and when?

(ii) Which National Political Party/Coalition enjoyed the status of being the ruling party at the Centre and when?

(iii) Which are the major Regional Political Parties in your state? When did they enjoy the status of being the ruling party in your state?

21.5 INDIAN POLITICAL PARTIES: TYPES

Political parties in India are classified by the Election Commission for the allocation of symbols. The Commission classifies parties into three main heads: National Parties, State Parties, and Registered (unrecognized) Parties.

The Election Commission grants political parties the status of national parties on three grounds:

1. It should be a recognized political party in four or more states.

2. It should have won at least 4 per cent of the seats in the last Lok Sabha elections or 3.33 per cent of the seats in the assembly elections from the state.

3. All the candidates put by the party should have polled at least 6 per cent of the total valid votes in the elections.

A. The **National Political Parties** have areas of influence extending over the entire country. Since the last general elections held in 2009 the recognized national political parties in India are: the Indian National Congress (INC), the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Communist Party of India, Marxists (CPI-M), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

B. The **Regional Political Parties**, as recognized by the Election Commission, are those political parties which receive a certain amount of votes or seats in a State. The Election Commission grants election symbols to the political parties and the candidates who contest elections. The number of regional political parties in the country is fairly large. Some of the leading regional political parties in India include Trinamool Congress (West Bengal), Assam Gana Parishad (Assam), All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (Tamil Nadu) Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry), National Conference (Jammu and Kashmir), Samajwadi Party (Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand), Shiromani Akali Dal (Punjab), Shiv Sena (Maharashtra), Telugu Desam (Andhra Pradesh). Can you identify the name of a regional political party in your state?

Notes

ACTIVITY 21.3

Find out the names of the political parties which formed governments in 2008 in the following states:

- Delhi
- Madhya Pradesh
- Rajasthan
- Chhatisgarh

21.5 INDIAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR POLICIES

You have read that there are a number of political parties at the national as well as the state levels. Every political party pronounces its policies and programmes as commitment to the electorate. These are normally included in a document known as Manifesto. As you may be aware, Manifestoes are published by political parties during elections. We may discuss the major policies of the following political parties.

I. 1. The Indian National Congress: Founded in Bombay in 1885, the Indian National Congress (now the Congress) played a leading role in India's freedom struggle. After independence the Congress emerged as the leading party of governance and ruled at the Centre and in almost all the States till 1967. The first two decades in India's political history were dominated by the Congress and the period came to be described as the 'Congress System'. The dominance of the Congress decreased gradually. Now it depended on coalition of political parties to come to power in the Centre. The Congress is committed to democracy, secularism, and socialism. It is, in a way, a centrist political party. While it champions the policy of liberalization, privatization, globalization called "LPG" on the one hand; it also works for the welfare of the weaker sections of society. It advocates both agrarian based Indian economy and industrialization. It seeks to strengthen grassroots institutions at the local level and claims to play a vital role in international institutions, especially in the United Nations.

2. The Bharatiya Janata Party: Founded in 1980 after distancing itself from the then Janata Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party is the new incarnation of its erstwhile formation, Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). BJP is an important political party both at the Centre as well as in some of the States. The BJP stands for (a) nationalism and national integration, (b) democracy, (c) positive secularism, (d) Gandhian socialism, and (e) value–based politics. Tilted towards the right in the initial stages, the BJP is as centrist as is the Congress now. The party has formed governments in a number of States such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttrakhand. The party is trying to expand its base in South and North-East India.

Notes

3. **The Communist Parties:** The major communist parties in India are the Communist Party of India (CPI), founded in 1925 and the Communist Party of India, Marxist (CPI M) which came into being after the split in the Communist Party of India in1964. Over the years, the CPI(M) became relatively more powerful than the CPI. The CPI (M) and the CPI had been in power in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. The Communist Parties are workers' and peasants' parties. Based on the ideology of Marxism and Leninism, the Communist Parties stand for socialism, socialist ownership of industries, agrarian reforms, rural upliftment and a self-reliant economy. They are opposed to capitalism, imperialism and globalization.

4. **The Bahujan Samaj Party:** Founded in 1984 by Kanshi Ram, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) claims to be the party of the deprived sections of the Indian society, especially the poor, the landless, the unemployed and the Dalits who constitute the majority in the Indian population. It draws inspiration from the teachings of Sahu Maharaj, Jyotiba Phule, Ramaswami Naicker and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Ms. Mayawati is leading the party at present. The BSP works on the principle of '*Sarvajan Hitay, Sarvajan Sukhay*!' (Welfare and Happiness for All). It formed the government in Uttar Pradesh for two terms – once as an alliance with the BJP and later as an independent ruling party in the State.

5. **Nationalist Congress Party:** The Nationalist Congress Party is a breakaway group of the Indian National Congress. The trio who formed the party in 1999 included Sharad Pawar, P A Sangma and Tariq Anwar. The party's policies are more or less same as that of the Congress. It has major support base in Maharashtra. It has been a coalition partner of the Congress led UPA since 2004.

6. **The Rashtriya Janata Dal:** The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) is another party which came into existence after disintegration of the Janata Dal in 1997. The party was formed by Lalu Prasad Yadav. The party stands for socialist programmes and social justice for the backward castes and minorities. It had been in power in Bihar for nearly a decade. It was also a coalition partner of the Congress led UPA in 2004.

II. **Regional Political Parties:** Regional political parties have emerged to fulfill regional aspirations. They became quite popular in their respective States that they have even begun dominating state politics and capturing power in their respective States. Their enhanced political positions helped the national political parties form coalition governments at the Centre. It is because of the regional political parties that our party-system has been federalized. The Centre has begun to address their problems and respond their aspirations through accommodation. The evolving nature of our party system has strengthened the cooperative trends of our federal system.

III. **Registered (unrecognized) Parties:**

A large number of political parties are registered at the Election Commission, without having been recognized as National or State parties.

Notes

You may be surprised to know that in 2009, 363 parties contested elections. Some independents were also in the fields. Most of the political parties were registered (unrecognized) parties. The classifications of political parties in 2009 may be asunder:

- National Parties - 7 (Congress, BJP, CPM, CPI, BSP, Nationalist Congress Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal)
- State Parties - 34
- Registered (unrecognized) Parties - 322
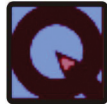
INTEXT QUESTIONS 21.3

1. State any two features of India's party system.

2. Write three major objectives of any two of the following political parties.

    (i)   Indian National Congress

    (ii) The Bharatiya Janata Party

    (iii) The Communist Party of India (Marxist)

    (iv) The Bahujan Samaj Party

3. Which of the following is a regional political party in Jammu & Kashmir?

    (i)   Indian National Lok Dal   (ii) National Conference

    (iii) Forward Bloc   (iv) Rashtriya Janata Dal

4. The Shiv Sena is a political party in

    (i)   Maharashtra   (ii) Tamil Nadu

    (iii) Bihar   (iv) Uttrakhand

ACTIVITY 21.4

Find out about the important political parties in your State/ Union Territory. What are their three major policies? What would motivate people to vote for different parties?

Name of Political Party	Major Policies	Motivation for voting

21.6 POLITICS PARTIES AND PRESSURE/INTEREST GROUPS

You might have seen demonstrations, dharnas, and such like activities in your locality, city or State by students, farmers, workers, etc. Some of these activities, you might have observed, are carried by organized groups like Students Union, Farmers Union, Trade Union, Business Association, Teachers' Associations, etc. In general, these groups try to press upon the government for formulation of policies or enactment of laws according to their interests. Yet they themselves do not contest elections. Therefore, you will agree that they are not political parties.

Then what are these? In any country, especially a democratic one, there are large number of organized groups which, directly or indirectly influence politics and government. The members of such organized groups are united in respect of some specific interests that they tend to advance. For example, the workers of a factory are organized in what is called the trade union to promote their interests. Similarly, there are other organized groups. These are called pressure groups or interest groups. What are these pressure groups or interest groups? How do they differ from each other? What role do they play in the political system of our country? Let us discuss that.

21.6.1 Pressure groups and Interest groups

You can see below the illustration depicting a rally by the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC). INTUC is an organization that can be described both as a pressure group and an interest group. Generally, interest groups and pressure groups are considered synonyms, but they are actually not. Interest groups are organized groups of people which seek to promote their specific interests. Their characteristics are: (a) they are well-organized, (b) they have certain common interests, (c) the interest that unites the members is specific and particular, (d) the members of such organized groups seek to attain, protect and

Figure 21.1 *A Rally by Indian National Trade Union Congress*

Notes

promote their interests for which they are united. A pressure group, on the other hand, is an interest group which exerts pressure on the government or the decision-makers for the fulfillment of their interests.

It is important to make a distinction between an interest group and a pressure group. Interest groups may exist without even exerting pressure on the government or the decision-makers. A group that does not exert pressure to influence or pressurize the authorities in order to achieve the desired objects, is not called a pressure group. An interest group that exerts pressure on the government to achieve its goals is called a pressure group. All pressure groups are interest groups while all interest groups may not be pressure groups. The following differences between the two groups are significant:

Interest Group	Pressure Group
Formally organized	Strictly structured
Interest-oriented	Pressure-focused
May or may not influence the policies of the government	Must influence the policies of the government
Softer in outlook	Harsher in attitude
More or less protective	Protective and promotive

21.6.2 Pressure Groups: Role and Techniques

In the democratic functioning of a polity, pressure groups play a vital role. They seek to promote, discuss, debate and mobilize public opinion on major public issues. In this process, they educate people and widen their vision, enhance their democratic participation and raise and articulate various issues. These groups try to bring changes in public policy.

To achieve their objectives and goals, the pressure groups employ various techniques and methods. These include appeals, petitions, demonstrations, picketing, lobbying, and processions. They also write in the media, distribute pamphlets, issue press releases, organize discussions and debates, put up posters and chant slogans. They may carry out satyagraha, that is, a non-violent protest. At times, pressure groups resort to strikes in order to pressurize the legislators, the executive officials, the decision-makers. Often, they resort to boycott. Have you not seen lawyers, sometimes boycotting the courts, the teachers, their classes? The pressure groups resort to such activities to influence governmental policies.

? **Do you know**

What is Lobbying?

Lobbying refers to attempts made by officials in the government, most often legislators to exert influence on the formation or implementation of public policy.

Notes

21.6.3 Political Parties and Pressure Groups

You have already read that political parties and pressure groups are not same. However, both of them play an important role in a democracy. Therefore, their relationship is markedly close and clear. For example, the trade unions help their respective political parties by providing them workers during elections. On the other, it is the political parties which advocate legislation in respect of the interests of the workers. Do you know that the National Students Union of India (NSUI) provides future leadership to the Congress while the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) does so for the Bharatiya Janata Party? While some pressure groups are linked to particular political parties, there are many which have no linkage to any political party. It is important to understand that the pressure groups are different from political parties. The distinction between the two can be stated as under:

- Pressure groups are not primarily political in nature. For example, although Rashtriya Swayamak Sangh (RSS) supports the Bharatiya Janata Party, it is, by and large, a cultural organization. The political parties are basically political.

- Pressure groups do not seek direct power; they only influence those who are in power for moulding decisions in their favour. The political parties seek power to form the government.

- Pressure groups do not contest elections; they only support political parties of their choice. Political parties nominate candidates, contest elections, and participate in election campaigns.

- Pressure groups do not necessarily have political ideologies. Political parties are always wedded to their ideologies. For example, the Congress party is wedded to the ideologies of socialism, secularism and democracy; the Communists advocate the interests of workers, peasants and other weaker sections.

- The interests of the pressure groups are usually specific and particular, whereas the political parties have policies and programmes with national and international ramifications.

21.6.4 Pressure Groups in India

Like in other democratic countries, in India too there are many interest/pressure groups. These are of various kinds. There are pressure groups based on traditional social structure. There are groups like Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Sanathan Dharma Sabha, Parsee Anjuman, and Anglo-Indian Christian Association. Then, there are the caste groups such as the Brahmin Sabha, the Nair society, and the language groups (such as the Tamil Sangh, the Anjuman-e-Terraqi-e-Urdu). You may find other types of interest groups which may include bodies such as the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) or those related to workers and peasants like All India Trade Union Congress, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, the Kisan Sabha, etc. There are, for example, the institutional groups such

as the Civil Services Association or the Non-Gazetted Officers' Union. At times, you may observe that there are groups like the All Assam Student's Union asking for the establishment of a college in rural areas.

21.6.5 Civil Society Organizations: A New Form of Mass Pressure Tactics in India

India has a very large number of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), that is, organizations established by citizens of the country, to pursue certain interests. Many of these organizations act as pressure groups on the government, to promote implementation of policies in their areas of concerns. These organizations are run by ordinary persons who feel strongly committed to certain issues. Many ordinary persons come together informally or formally to share their feelings about different issues and prevailing social injustice.

Civil Society is an interface between the state and individual. Civil Society Organizations broadly refer to the active participation and engagement of men and women in groups – associations, organizations, voluntary agencies on the issues of common concern like environmental protection, price rise, prevention of corruption, etc. The 21st century witnessed the active involvement of people through civil society organizations which could be seen in number of protest movements across country. People take up issues of gender discrimination, child labour, street children and so on, and contribute through individual and collective action. Such organizations are able to mobilize public opinion because these issues are relevant to many people in society. Some of the Civil Society Organizations include Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS, Rajasthan), People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), National Alliance of Women's Organizations (NAWO), Medico Friends Circle (MFC), and many others. Such organizations put pressure on the government for changing policies on many important issues such as corruption, human rights, livelihood of different people, environmental protection, women empowerment, educational and health issues.

Civil Society Organizations help to reach out to many people. They provide a channel for people to express their grievances and also work constructively for the change. They point out when the government is not fulfilling its promises to the nation. They attract idealistic and committed young people, even acting as a space for teaching and learning 'good citizenship'. Good citizens are vigilant and alert. Civil Society Organizations are formed by such vigilant citizens. Many of them struggle for the larger social good, often sacrificing their own comfort, time and energy. Some important leaders of Civil Society Organizations in recent times include Aruna Roy (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan), Ela Bhatt (Self-Employed Women's Association), Medha Patkar (Narmada Bachao Andolan) and Anna Hazare (India Against Corruption). All these organizations involve a large number of people who struggle to bring about changes in State policies. Many of the organizations and groups believe in following non-violent methods.

21.6.6 Pressure Tactics

As pressure groups are concerned with influencing the government, they use various tactics for the same. These are primarily constitutional and peaceful. In India one of the commonly used pressure tactics is Satyagraha, a non-violent protest. As you know it is Gandhi who introduced the idea of Satyagraha and is known all over the world for the same. Although he used these methods in the context of foreign rule, the methods are still relevant. The methods have been successfully used. For instance, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has influenced the government to improve its policies on the rights of women workers. Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan led the people's movement which got the government to bring about the law on 'Right to Information'. In the North-Eastern State of Manipur, many groups including 'Just Peace', Apunba Lup (students' organization) and Meira Paibis (women's groups) are trying to influence the government to listen to people's genuine grievances. Together, these groups are associated with Irom Sharmila, a civil rights activist known as 'the Iron Lady of Manipur' who has been on a hunger strike since

Figure 21.2 *Meira Paibis (women activists) protesting in Manipur;*

Figure 21.3 *Women of Kerala sending postcards to P.M. and President of India in support of demands made by Meira Paibis and Irom Sharmila for peace in Manipur*

Figure 21.4

November 2000. Irom Sharmila wants that the government should repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which is responsible for violence in her State and other parts of North-East India, and respect people's democratic right to life. People from all over the country are responding to her sacrifice (she has not eaten food for 11 years, and is alive only because she is being force-fed through a tube attached to her nose).

Pressure groups also use tactics of holding demonstrations, sitting on dharnas, going on strikes, organizing public meetings, presenting memorandums to legislative committees, promoting their causes through use of media and creation of public opinion.
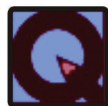
INTEXT QUESTIONS 21.4

1. What are Pressure groups? How do they differ from interest groups?

2. Write two differences between pressure groups and political parties?

3. Discuss at least three ways in which pressure groups try to influence the policies of the government. Give suitable examples.

ACTIVITY 21.5

Some characteristics of interest groups, pressure groups and political parties are given below in a jumbled form. To distinguish each one of them from the other, read them carefully and write them at the appropriate place in the given table.

● Strictly structured

● Contest elections

● Softer in outlook

● More or less protective

- Protective and promotive
- Seek power of the government
- Help in making legislation
- Interest-oriented
- Political in nature
- Formally organized
- Smoothen the process of change of power
- Pressure-focused
- Harsher in outlook
- May or may not influence the policies of the government
- Must influence the policies of the government.

Interest Groups	Pressure Groups	Political Parties

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Political parties have a definite role in any democratic system. In fact, political parties make democracy possible; they make elections possible; they help transfer power; they educate people and make government responsive.

- In India, political parties are broadly of two types; national political parties, with influence extending to the entire country; regional political parties, with influence limited to particular State(s).

- Among the national parties, we have the Congress, the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Communist Parties, the Bahujan Samaj Party, and the Rashtriya Janata Dal. The regional political parties include, among others, the Akali Dal (Punjab), the DMK and the AIADMK (Tamil Nadu), the Telugu Desam (Andhra Pradesh), the National Conference (Jammu and Kashmir), the Shiv Sena (Maharashtra), the Trinamool Congress (West Bengal).

- The regional political parties started playing a crucial role in coalition politics since 1989.

● The coalitional governments have come to stay in the country.

● Pressure groups, different as they are from political parties, exist and function to influence the policies of the decision-makers/government to attain their specific/particular interests. Their role, in modern democracies is, indeed, significant.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Why do we need Political Parties?

2. What do you mean by a Political Party?

3. List any four characteristics of Political Parties.

4. Describe any four functions of Political Parties.

5. Explain briefly the policies of the Indian National Congress.

6. Describe three features of the nature of party system in India?

7. What is a pressure group?

8. Distinguish between political parties and the pressure groups highlighting two points.

9. Give a brief account of pressure groups in India.

10. What are Civil Society Organizations? Write the names of any two contemporary Civil Society Organizations in India.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

21.1

1. (a) (iii)

   (b) (iv)

   (c) (iii)

2. Write this answer based on your own understanding of how a democracy should function

21.2

   (a) (ii)

   (b) (i)

   (c) (ii)

   (d) (iv)

21.3

1. competitive, coalitional

2. (1)   The Indian National Congress:

   (a)   democracy,

   (b)   secularism.

   (2)   The Bharatiya Janata Party: (a) nationalism and national integration,
         (b) Gandhian socialism

3. (ii)

4. (i)

21.4

1   A pressure group is an interest group which exerts pressure on the
    government or the decision-makers for the fulfillment of the interests of its
    members. Pressure groups are different from interest groups in the sense
    that the interest groups may exist without even exerting influence on the
    government or the decision-makers. But unless a group exerts such pressure
    to influence or pressurize the authorities in order to achieve the desired
    objects, it may not be called a pressure group.

2. (a)   Pressure groups are not primarily political in nature. For example,
          although Rashtriya Swayamak Sangh supports the Bharatiya Janata
          Party, it is, by and large, a cultural organization. Political parties are
          basically political in nature and orientation.

    (b)   Pressure groups do not contest elections; they only support political
          parties of their choice. Political parties nominate candidates, contest
          elections, and participate in elections campaigns.

3. Pressure groups play a vital role in the democratic functioning of a polity.
    They help promote, discuss, debate and mobilize public opinion on major
    public issues. Three ways used by pressure groups are: appeals, petitions
    and demonstrations. For instance, the Self-Employed Women's Association
    (SEWA) has influenced the government to improve its policies on the rights
    of women workers. Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan led the people's
    movement which forced the government to bring about the law on 'Right
    to Information'.

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22

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Vijaya was going through an editorial in a newspaper and exclaimed, "I am delighted to live in a successful democracy like India". Rampal, her father says, "I may not be very educated, but I am wondering, whether we really are a successful democracy, I see many people who are still begging on the streets or are malnourished." Vijaya responds by saying," That's true, but atleast we can vote to bring another government. While many countries are still struggling to have regular popular governments, democracy in India has taken firm roots."

Indians have been participating in elections regularly for over six decades. People have been electing their representatives for running governments at national and state levels and also for local governments. Voting in elections is a formal and simple form of political participation. People's participation becomes effective only when there is a respect for public opinion. Within a country there are people and groups having different points of view, some people have disagreements with certain policies or programmes of the government. A process of debate and discussion is important for a healthy democracy. The essence of democracy is the freedom to voice one's opinion even if it is critical of the government. In fact, democracy is enriched when different voices and constructive opinions influence the policies of the government. Democratic government is a government that sustains itself through public opinion which is expressed through the medium of elections. In this lesson, you will learn about elections, the electoral system, the electoral process, universal adult franchise, in addition to the importance of public opinion in a democracy.

 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- understand people's participation in democratic processes;

- explain the meaning and importance of public opinion;

- list the agencies which help formulate public opinion;

- describe the electoral system that operates in India;

- discuss the meaning of elections and their types;

- assess election malpractices and measures to check them;

- identify various electoral reforms; and

- explain the meaning of universal adult franchise and its importance.

22.1 PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

You must have observed people voting in elections. Have you voted in any election? We vote to elect our representatives who form and run the government. These representatives implement the government's policies and programmes. People's participation in the election is what makes our democracy a representative and participatory democracy. But the meaning of people's participation does not begin and end with their voting in elections. People's participation is also expressed through public debates, newspaper editorials, protest demonstrations and their active involvement in governmental programmes. Even in respect of election process, it includes participation in campaign, political discussion, working for political parties and standing as candidates.

Figure 22.1 *People's Participation in an election rally*

People's participation may be defined as, "behaviour through which people directly express their political opinions". This conceptualization is broad enough to cover the electoral and non-electoral forms of political participation. In fact, participation comprises all those actions of citizens by which they seek to influence, support or criticize the government and its policies. They do so to ensure that their representatives respond to their needs and aspirations.

Notes

 ACTIVITY 22.1

Ask the following questions to three people who are 18-years old or above and write their anwers in the table given below.

	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3
Did you vote in last election, why or why not?			
Did you participate in the election process by campaigning for a party/ candidate?			
If the elected person did not fulfill his/her promise, did you make in any public response eg. write to a newspaper, or participate in a protest rally .			

22.2 PUBLIC OPINION: MEANING, IMPORTANCE AND ITS AGENCIES

The discussion on people's participation makes it abundantly clear that there are several ways in which citizens participate in the democratic process. Public opinion is one of the most effective ways. You also must have observed that people quite often enter into discussion on political parties, leaders and candidates and express their opinions on various issues. They do so while travelling in a train or a bus, or at other public places. They also discuss policy decisions taken by the government. Many of us write letters to the editor expressing views on different issues or participate in protest rallies and discussions on radio or television . All such views take the form of public opinion and influence various aspects of democratic process, such as voting behaviour, functioning of a government and the working of administration.

22.2.1 Public Opinion: Meaning

But do the terms, 'voice of the people' and 'public opinion' mean the same? When you study these terms further, you will be able to appreciate that it is not so. In fact, the concept of public opinion has been defined in a variety of ways and definitions appear to be complex. At this stage, let us try to understand the meaning of public opinion in a simple manner. Public opinion is not the unanimous opinion of the people, nor it is the opinion of the majority. Public opinion is an organized and considered opinion of the people on any issues of public concern. Public opinion can also be defined as the complex collection of opinions of different people and the sum of all

their views. To a great extent, various definitions on public opinion include the following characteristics:

(a)   Public opinion is an aggregate of views;

(b)   views are based on reasons;

(c)   these views aim at ensuring the welfare of the whole community; and

(d)   public opinion influences the decisions of governments, functioning of political parties and running of administration.

Do you know?

Public opinion as a concept dates back to the eighteenth century. This concept came about through the process of urbanisation and other political and social forces. For the first time, it was Jeremy Bentham, the British Philosopher, who developed theories of public opinion. He said that public opinion had the power to ensure that rulers would rule for the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

22.2.2 Public Opinion: Its Importance in a Democracy

The role of public opinion, in a democracy, can hardly be ignored. You already know that democratic government draws its authority from the people and claims its legitimacy from the consent of the governed. No government can function without the support of the people. The process of development of public opinion generates thinking, promotes awareness and invites people's views on issues of public concern. Do you realize how a democratic government is formed, sustained and controlled by public opinion? The following roles of public opinion are especially important:

1.   An alert and free public opinion is a check on absolute power;

2.   it ensures a system in which no organ of the government overrules others;

3.   it promotes a process to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people;

4.   it influences government in making laws in the interest of the people;

5.   it strengthens democratic values and norms; and

6.   it protects rights, freedoms and liberty: 'eternal vigilance' is rightly called the price of liberty, i.e. every citizen needs to be vigilant in order to protect democratic values.

22.2.3 Public Opinion: Agencies for its Formulation

As we have seen above, public opinion is not the simple aggregation of views or opinions expressed by individuals or groups. In fact, public opinion is formed on the basis of such views and opinions, but as you find in the illustration, there are number of agencies that contribute to its formulation. The following are some of the important agencies which help to formulate public opinion:

Figure 22.2 *Sources of Public Opinion*

1. **Print Media:** Newspapers, periodicals, magazines and other print materials have been contributing to the formulation of public opinion since a long time. As you are very well aware, the news items, articles, news stories, letters to editors and several other published items on almost all the critical public issues update the individual views and opinions. These also assimilate and concretise varied views and opinions and help them evolve as public opinion. These media instruments also facilitate communication of public opinion to all concerned.

2. **Electronic Media:** Cinema, radio, T.V. channels and now cell phones have emerged as perhaps the most effective tools that contribute to the formulation of public opinion. Their audio-visual mode helps a great deal in assimilating views and opinions expressed even in the remotest part of the country. They help in converting views into the most representative public opinion and also in communicating it to all concerned.

3. **Political Parties** constitute an important agency for opinion formation. As you also may be experiencing, almost everyday, the political parties and their leaders feed the people with facts and ideas. We hear and see the leaders of political parties undertaking *padyatras*, *rathyatras* and workers of political parties conducting mass awareness activities about their programmes and policies. These contribute a great deal in the formulation of public opinion.

4. **Legislatures**: Legislatures, Parliament and State Legislatures in our country are the most effective institutions that make substantive contribution to the formation of public opinion. The impact of their contribution has increased manifold since the beginning of the live telecast of legislative debates. These are places where most of the discussions and debates on all the critical issues of public policy and

Notes

public welfare take place. These are watched and heard by the vast majority of population. Legislature's platform provides authentic information and ideas on which public opinion is effectively formulated.

5. **Educational Institutions:** Different educational institutions also help create public opinion. Our schools, colleges, universities and professional institutes leave on our minds permanent impact. These formal educational institutions impart political education and contribute to the formation of public opinion as well.

ACTIVITY 22.2

You may have watched the film, *Rang De Basanti*. Its story is about 5 young men whose friend gets killed in a fighter aircraft crash. The corruption in government appears to be the root cause of the incident. This event changes them from being carefree to passion-driven individuals who are determined to avenge their friend's death by using violent means.

In another film, *Lage Raho Munnabhai,* a Mumbai (Bombay) underworld don begins to see the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi. Through his interactions with the image of Gandhi, Munna Bhai begins to practice what he calls Gandhigiri (focused on satyagraha, non-violence and truth) to help ordinary people solve their problems. In both the films the lead actors were working towards a cause using different methods. Which method do you like more? Give your reasons.

Note: This question can be answered even if students have not seen the film.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.1

1. What do you mean by people's participation in the democratic process?

2. Are 'public opinion' and 'voice of the people' synonyms? Give reasons to your answer.

3. Explain the importance of Public Opinion in a democracy.

4. List any two agencies which help in the formation of public opinion? Which agency according to you has the most powerful impact on public opinion?

22.3 ELECTIONS IN INDIA

You may have seen a polling booth as shown in the illustration where citizens are lined up to cast their votes. In our country, elections take place for electing Members of the Lok Sabha or the Vidhan Sabha or the representatives of Gram Panchayat

Notes

or Municipal Bodies. You may have even participated in such election. Can you define elections? Well, election is a contest among candidates in order to seek the membership of a legislative body or a representative institution to attain a public position. Elections, to the legislatures and local government bodies are held periodically, usually after a particular period. The whole country or the entire State or the area of the concerned local body is divided into a number of constituencies. Each constituency returns one representative from a number of candidates who contest elections. The candidate who gets the largest number of votes as against the other candidates in the constituency is declared elected.

Figure 22.3 *A polling booth with voters in a queue*

? Do you know

A Constituency is a territorial area delimited separately for the Parliament, the State Legislature and the local bodies in India. Each constituency returns a single representative.

A Candidate is a prospective person seeking some position through election. He/She is either the incumbent seeking re-election or is a challenger seeking to unseat the incumbent or is simply an aspirant for an open seat.

A **Manifesto** is a document which outlines the proposed programmes and policies of the political parties.

22.3.1 Importance of Elections

You also may have experienced that elections provide opportunities to the people to participate actively in the functioning of the democratic government. These are the most important expressions of public opinion, as these enable the people to express their will. In fact, elections widen the scope of political awakening among the masses and educate them by familiarsing them with issues of public concern. Elections facilitate peaceful transfer of power from one political party or one group of political parties to another and legitimise the working of the government by justifying the authority of representatives to lead people.

Notes

ACTIVITY 22.3

Mukund Das, a politician is a two time MLA from Pratappur. He is associated with one of the prominent regional parties of Uttar Pradesh. He has 100% attendance in the Legislative Assembly. However, in terms of his active participation in the Assembly, he has never raised any question in the Assembly nor participated in debate on any issue. Out of Rs. 6 crore that he had in his MLA Development Fund, he has been able to spend only a small amount on development of roads and sewers in his locality.

Devika Sen became an MLA from Durgapur , West Bengal. She is an independent MLA not belonging to any political party. Her family owns a cloth mill in the area. She has 100% attendance in the Assembly. She has often raised questions in the Assembly relating to rights of women and on policies related to trade unions. Out of the Rs. 6 crore from her MLA Development Fund, an amount of Rs. 4 crores was spent on improving the schools in the area and another two crores on developing infrastructure like roads, community centers etc. around the cloth mills.

1. Based on the above information, write in the table below, whom would you vote for. Give reasons for your choice and suggest two ways in which the two candidates can improve their performance.

Candidate	My Vote and reasons	Suggestions for improvement
Mukund Das		1. 2.
Devika		1. 2.
Neither		–

22.3.2 Types of Elections

We all observe that elections do take place in our country quite often. But all the elections are not of the same kind. The kinds of elections that take place in India may be understood in two ways. Firstly, we have direct and indirect elections. In direct elections, people vote directly through their ballot to elect their representatives to legislative bodies (Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies) and local government institutions. We have also indirect elections, in which the elected representatives of the people vote for electing persons to occupy certain positions. The President and the Vice-President of India are indirectly elected. The members of the Rajya Sabha also are elected indirectly. Moreover, certain percentage of

members of the Legislative Councils (that are present in some of the States) are indirectly elected by the members of the concerned Legislative Assemblies.

Observed in a different way we find another three categories of elections. These are: (a) General Elections, (b) Mid-term Elections, (c) Bye-elections. The General Elections are held all over the country, for the Lok Sabha and/or for the State Legislative Assemblies. Such elections are held after the expiry of the full term of the legislature. The Lok Sabha Elections held in 2009, for example, may be described as General Elections. If the elections are held before the completion of the normal term of the legislature owing to the dissolution of legislative bodies, these are called Mid-term Elections. The Lok Sabha elections that took place in 1991, for example, were mid-term elections. Bye-elections are held in a particular constituency owing to a vacancy caused by resignation or death of the elected member, or when the election of a particular member is set aside by the judiciary. In such elections, the member is elected for the remaining period of term of the legislature. P.V. Narsimha Rao was elected to the Lok Sabha from Andhra Pradesh in a bye-election held in November 1991.

? Do you know

1. The first general elections (Parliamentary Elections) were held in our country in the year 1952. Since then there have been 15 General Elections (Lok Sabha elections) up to 2009.

2. The Lok Sabha elections of 1980, 1991, 1998 and 1999 were Mid-term Elections, held before the schedule.

3. In the history of Indian Elections, only the 1977 Lok Sabha elections were deferred for about two years on account of the proclamation of National Emergency in the country.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.2

1. Examine the importance of elections in India.
2. What do you mean by direct and indirect elections?
3. Fill in the blanks
    1. Elections held after the expiry of the full term of the legislatures are known as ....
    2. If the elections are held before the completion of the normal term of the legislature owing to the dissolution of legislative bodies, these are called ....
    3. An election held in a particular constituency owing to a vacancy caused by resignation or death of the elected member, or when the election of a particular member is set aside by the judiciary is known as ....

22.4 ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

India has earned accolades for successfully conducting so many elections. But how do all these happen? Have you ever given thought to certain questions like how are elections conducted in a vast country like India? Who supervises the process of elections? Who delimits the constituencies? Who declares the schedule of elections right from nominations to declaration of results? Who are these officials, called the returning officers, presiding officers, and polling officers? In fact, there is a huge electoral system that has been engaged in managing elections in India. Let us discuss its details.

22.4.1 Election Commission of India

The task of conducting free, fair and impartial elections is entrusted to an impartial constitutional authority which is known as the Election Commission. The Election Commission is not a legal but is a constitutional body. A legal body is one which is created by the law of Parliament or State Legislature, while a constitutional body is one which is provided in the Constitution itself. Our Constitution provides for the Election Commission of India. The Election Commission consists of a Chief Election Commissioner and the number of Election Commissioners as the President may fix in accordance with the law. At present, the Election Commission of India consists of a Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.

Figure 22.4 *Election Commission of India*

The Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners are appointed by the President of India. They have tenure of six years or up to the age of 65, whichever is earlier. They enjoy the same status and service conditions as are enjoyed by the Judges of the Supreme Court of India. The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed only by impeachment, through a procedure as applicable in the case of a Judge of the Supreme Court. The Election Commissioners can be removed by the President on the recommendations of the Chief Election Commissioner.

The main functions of the Election Commission of India are as follows:

1. Ensure free and fair elections in the country;

2. supervise, direct and control the entire election machinery; preparation of electoral roll;

3. provide recognition to political parties and register them as national and state parties;

4. allotment of symbols to political parties and the numerous independent candidates contesting the elections;

5. issuing guidelines and code of conduct for the election officials, candidates, and for the political parties during the elections;

6. redressal of election complaints received from the voters, the candidates and the political parties;

7. appointment of electoral officials; and

8. advising the President on matters relating to elections.

The Election Commission performs its role with the help of a group of officials and by observing an election procedure as discussed below:

1. Election Officials

For the conduct of elections, the Election Commission is assisted by a number of officials. At the state level, the election work is supervised, subject to overall superintendence, direction and control of the Commission, by the Chief Electoral Officer of the State. The Chief Electoral Officer of the State is appointed by the Election Commission from amongst senior civil servants proposed by the concerned State government. He/She is, in most of the States, a full time officer and has a team of supporting staff. The Election Commission utilises the State government officers for election work, by designating them as District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers, Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, and Assistant Returning Officers. They all perform their functions relating to elections in addition to their own routine responsibilities. During election time, they are available to the Commission, more or less, on a full time basis. Out of these, there are three main officials who play very important roles in the conduct of free and fair elections. They are the Returning Officer, Presiding Officer and Polling Officer.

Returning Officer: In every constituency, one Officer is designated as Returning Officer by the Commission in consultation with the concerned State government. However, an Officer can be nominated as Returning Officer for more than one constituency. He/She is the official who (a) receives and scrutinises the nomination papers of the candidates contesting elections, (b) allots election symbols on behalf of the Election Commission, (c) conducts smooth elections in the constituency(ies), (d) ensures counting of votes, and (e) declares the election results.

Presiding Officers: Every constituency has a large number of polling booths. Every booth, for 800-1000 voters, remains under the charge of an Officer who is known as Presiding Officer. He/She supervises the entire process in the polling booth and ensures that every voter gets an opportunity to cast vote freely and that there is no impersonation. After the polling is over, he/she seals all the ballot boxes and delivers them to the Returning Officer.

Polling Officer: Every Presiding Officer is assisted by three or four officials who are called the Polling Officers. These officials ensure that the elections take place smoothly at the polling booth. They check the names of the voters in the electoral roll, put indelible ink on the finger of the voter, issue ballot papers and ensure that votes are secretly cast by each voter.

Do you know

1. *Impersonation*: It is 'bogus' voting. When somebody takes on a false identity and votes instead of the real person during elections, such an illegal act is called impersonation. It can be curtailed by compulsory identification through use of voters' cards.

2. *Indelible ink*: This ink cannot be removed easily. It is put on the index finger of the right hand of the voter, so that a person does not come again to cast vote for the second time. This is done to avoid impersonation.

2. The Electoral Process in India

The election process is a considerably long process having numerous stages. It is important for you to recognize various stages of the electoral process, which are as follows:

1. Delimitation of constituencies is the first step which is undertaken by the Delimitation Commission.

2. Preparation and revision of the electoral roll constitute the next step done under the supervision of the Election Commission periodically.

3. Consequent upon the President's and Governor's notifications, the Election Commission undertakes the task of conducting elections in the country.

4. The election schedule is announced indicating the dates for filling the nomination papers, their scrutiny, withdrawals, polling, counting of the votes, and declaration of the election results.

5. Allotment of election symbols to the candidates, and the political parties is done by the Election Commission.

6. The candidates and the political parties are given time for election campaigns by the Election Commission.

7. Re-poll, if necessary, in a constituency or in a part of the constituency, is done only on the orders of the Election Commission.

8. Countermanding of election is done when a duly nominated candidate belonging to a recognized political party dies any time after the last date of withdrawals of the nomination papers and the commencement of the polling. The countermanding orders are issued by the Election Commission.

9. The election disputes such as improper rejection of nomination papers of the candidate(s), use of unfair or corrupt means during the elections, bribing and intimidating of voters, or the use of official machinery are probed by the judiciary, i.e. the High Court, and through appeals by the Supreme Court.

22.4.2 Polling and After

You must have noticed that the polling day, at every polling booth is a day full of activities. On the day of the polling, the voters go to their respective polling booths, and wait in a queue, for their turn. On entering the polling room, the voter discloses his/her identity to the first polling officer, and then to the second one. After that, another polling officer puts indelible ink on the first finger of left hand in the case of a male voter, and on the right hand in case of the female voter. This is done to avoid bogus or false voting or impersonation. Impersonation, you must be aware is an offence, punishable by law. After the identification of the voter is done by the officials, the voter is given a ballot paper or is shown the electronic voting machine (EVM) containing the names of the candidates along with their respective election symbols. Does not the EVM look like the one shown in the illustration?

Figure 22.5 *Voting in a Polling Booth*

Figure 22.6 *Electronic Voting Machine*

If a ballot paper is given, the elector casts his/her vote by marking the ballot paper with a rubber stamp on or near the symbol of the candidate of his/her choice, inside a screened compartment in the polling station. The voter then folds the ballot paper and inserts it in a common ballot box which is kept in full view of the Presiding Officer and polling agents of the candidates.

But if the electronic voting machine is used, the voter uses the machine to indicate his/her choice of candidate. Secrecy is maintained so that nobody gets to know for whom the voter has voted. After the polling, boxes or EVMs are sealed and sent to the counting centres. The votes are counted and the candidate who obtains the largest number of votes is declared elected. The candidate who fails to poll even one-sixth of the total votes cast in the constituency, forfeits his/her security deposits. If any candidate suspects corrupt practices used by the other candidates, he/she can file an election petition in the High Court. If the court is satisfied that corrupt means were used, the election is set aside. An appeal can be made in the Supreme Court against the decision of the High Court.

? Do you know

Ballot paper is a piece of paper which indicates the names of the candidates together with their election symbols. It is used to record the choices made by voters.

The **Secret Ballot** is a voting method in which the voters' choices are made confidential, in an election or in a referendum. The method is a means of achieving the objective of secrecy.

Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) is a simple electronic device used in place of ballot papers and boxes which were used earlier in conventional voting system. It was first used in 1982 in the bye-election to Parur Assembly Constituency of Kerala for a limited number of polling stations (50 polling stations). During the General Elections of 2004 in india, elections were conducted using a total of 10.75 lacs EVMs

INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.3

1. How is the Election Commission constituted?
2. What according to you are the two most critical functions of the Election Commission?
3. Who are the main election officials from state level to the level of polling booth?

Notes

4. If you are assigned the task of acting as a Returning Officer, what main functions will you perform and how will you ensure free, fare and peaceful poll in the constituency?

5. What are the five major stages of electoral process in India?

22.5 PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

The discussion so far has enabled us to appreciate the significance of elections ensuring people's participation in the democratic process. But over the years, it has been found that the election system in India needs improvement to make India a truly participatory democracy. We shall now discuss the most notable factor that has contributed to ensure people's participation in elections. The discussion will also focus on those issues that are considered concerns of Indian elections as well as on suggested electoral reforms.

22.5.1 Universal Adult Franchise

Elections play an important role primarily because of the system of universal adult franchise adopted in India just after its independence. It is interesting to observe that in Great Britain, the universal adult franchise was granted in 1928, nearly 300 years after the process of democratization began. In Switzerland, the Home of Democracy, it was also granted as late as in 1972. In India, however, universal adult franchise became a part of the electoral process right from the beginning of our establishment as a democracy, that is, after Independence. What does Universal Adult Franchise mean?

Let us begin with the literal meaning of the concept of universal adult franchise in this context. 'Universal' means commonly applicable to all persons, without any discrimination; 'adult' means a person who is a major and not a minor; 'franchise' means individual's right to cast his/her vote. Universal adult franchise thus means, a system in which all adults, men and women, without any discrimination, have a right to vote in the elections. But all adults do not include those who are legally barred from voting.

Do you know

1. New Zealand was the first country to grant universal franchise in 1893, and Finland was the first European Country to do so, in 1906.

2. Universal Adult Franchise was introduced in Germany in 1919, Sweden in 1920, and France in 1945.

The concept of universal adult franchise is based on the principle of political equality: one person, one vote; none has more than one vote. It helps ensure liberty of the people and helps secure protection of rights. It is educative in so far as it widens the scope of people's participation.

The right to vote is linked with age of the person. The minimum age required for voting differs from country to country. In most countries of our times, the voting age is 18 years, as in India, China, United States of America, Great Britain and Russia. In countries like Iran, the minimum age for a voter is 15, while in Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, it is 16 years, and in Indonesia, North Korea and Sudan, it is 17 years. In Japan and Tunisia, it is 20 years, while in South Korea, it is 19 years. In countries such as Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Singapore, the voting age is 21 years, but in Uzbekistan, a voter has to have a minimum age of 25 years.

Notes

22.5.2 Electoral Reforms

As we have seen, the electoral system in India based on universal adult franchise has helped our voters not only in choosing their representatives, but also in facilitating smooth and peaceful change of governments, replacing one political party or a set of political parties by another. We have also observed that our elections, held so far, have largely been free and fair. People have participated in the election processes actively. Accordingly, elections have become an important part of our democratic life. And yet, there are certain critical problems that have been adversely affecting not only the quality of electoral process but also the functioning of democratic system. These definitely call for electoral reforms.

In fact, the electoral reforms have been engaging the attention of the Parliament, the Government, the Election Commission, the Press and the people for a long time. Some measures were implemented in the past to remove glaring lacunae in the law. Based on the experiences in the recent past, the need has been felt for some steps to be taken quickly for amendment of certain provisions of law. There are issues like (a) rigging of the elections - fake and bogus voting, impersonation, (b) violence during elections, (c) adverse role of money and muscle power, (d) intimidation of voters especially the people of weaker sections, (e) misuse of governmental machinery, (f) booth capturing and criminalization in both elections and politics, that demand immediate attention
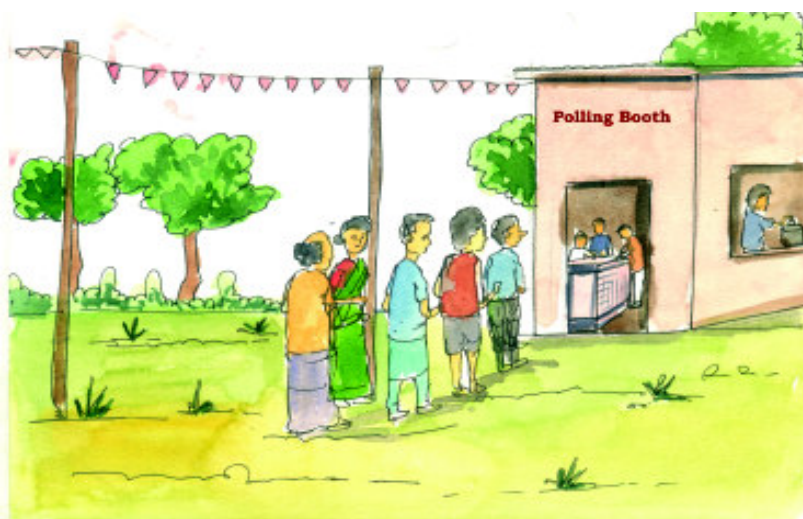

Figure 22.7 *Free and Fair Election*

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These negative developments have been discussed at different levels and actions are on for electoral reforms. Indeed, a lot of electoral reforms have already been introduced. But no system of election can ever be perfect. In actual practice, there always come up flaws and limitations in the electoral practices. We have to keep searching some mechanism to make elections truly free, fair and impartial. Numerous suggestions for electoral reforms have come from scholars, political parties, government sponsored committees, and various independent sources.

A tentative list of **suggested electoral reforms** is as follows:

1. Democratization of electoral system be made from time to time so as to keep the electoral system in pace with changing times;

2. change from the on-going system (*plurality system*) to some form of proportional representation system to be introduced to reduce the votes-seats imbalance (see box below);

3. the functioning of political parties to be regulated in order to ensure that they function in a transparent and democratic manner. There is a need to audit their expenditure incurred during the elections;

4. electoral laws to be made more stringent and there must be provisions for harsher punishment;

5. state funding of elections to be introduced so as to reduce and curb election expenses;

6. special provision to be made to ensure at least one third representation of women in Parliament and State legislatures;

7. the role of money and muscle power to be curbed during the elections;

8. criminalization of politics to be stopped in the elections;

9. candidates with any criminal record to be barred from contesting elections; and

10. complete ban to be imposed on the use of caste and religious appeal in election campaigns.

? **Do you know**

1. The **Plurality System** refers to an election won by the candidate having maximum votes. This voting system is used at present to elect members of the legislative assembly in single-member and multi-member constituencies.

2. The **Proportional Representation** is an electoral device to ensure representation of all sections of the people more or less in proportion to their voting strength. Under this system any group, whether it is a political party or interest group will secure representation in proportion to the popular votes it obtains.

People's Participation in the Democratic Process

The Election Commission has taken several new initiatives in the recent past, a reference to some of which has already been made above. Notable among these are: (i) a scheme for use of State owned Electronic Media for broadcast/telecast by political parties, (ii) restrictions on Opinion and Exit Polls (because these polls might influence voters), (iii) checking criminalisation of politics, (iv) computerisation of electoral rolls, (v) providing electors with Identity Cards, (vi) simplifying the procedure for maintenance of accounts and filing of the same by candidates and (vii) a variety of measures for strict compliance of Model Code of Conduct for providing a level playing field to contestants during the elections. As our electoral system has worked well even under certain adverse conditions, hopes are ripe that democracy in our country is going to stay and continue to be better. Our people are committed to democratic values and there are chances that the governments would come up to people's expectations.

ACTIVITY 22.4

Given below is a short interview sheet. Conduct this interview with the adults in your family or neighborhood to find out what they feel about voting.

1. Name :   Age :

2. When did you vote for the first time?

3. How did you decide on the candidate you voted for?

4. Have you ever seen the manifesto of a political party? Did it help you to take your decision?

INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.4

1. Universal adult franchise ensures that the vote of every Indian citizen is equally valuable. Do you think that this has been able to reduce inequalities related to class, caste, gender and religion . Justify your view point.

2. Mention any three problems that are confronted by the electoral system in India.

3. Mention any two electoral reforms you think are important to improve our electoral system.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT?

● In a large country like ours, representative democracy is desirable. Representative government works through representation and representation through elections. Elections, therefore, are the basis of democracy.

- Elections require electorate and electoral processes. Electorate means citizens exercising franchise. In modern democracy, universal adult franchise (all adult citizens without any discrimination, have the right to vote) is essential.

- Single member constituency system is more common than multi-member constituency. Voting is through secret ballot.

- Usually the elections are direct for popular legislative assemblies, though indirect election system is used for certain offices such as the President and the Vice-President of India.

- The electoral process moves through various stages: filling up the nomination papers for election by the candidates, scrutiny of the nomination papers, withdrawals from elections, election campaign, results, etc.

- In India, there is a provision for independent and impartial Election Commission to conduct and supervise elections.

- In the context of a number of lacunae in the on-going electoral process, there is a need for electoral reforms.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What do you mean by people's participation in the democratic process? Do you think, casting votes in elections is the be-all and end-all of people's participation? Give reasons.

2. Define Public Opinion and discuss its importance in a democracy.

3. Give any four agencies which help to formulate public opinion. Which agency according to you has the most powerful impact on public opinion?

4. Examine the role of elections in Indian democratic system. Discuss the types of elections that are held in the country.

5. What are the major functions of the Election Commission of India? What are the major stages of election process?

6. What is meant by Universal Adult Franchise? Explain its significance.

7. In India where we see many inequalities related to class, caste, gender, religion, how successful do you think is universal adult franchise?

8. Discuss any four major problems confronted by the electoral system in India.

9. Do you think there is an urgent need to effect electoral reforms in India? What are the major recommendations for bringing about election reforms?

10. Make an Action Plan for the Election Commission, for bringing about reforms in the process of electoral campaigning. The Plan should help promote effective dissemination of information among the general public, about political parties and candidates.

Notes

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

22.1

1. People's participation includes voting in elections, it is also expressed through public debates, newspaper editorials, protest demonstrations and their active involvement in governmental programmes. Even in respect of election process, it includes participation in campaign, political discussion, working for political parties and standing as candidates.

2. 'Voice of the people' and 'public opinion' do not mean the same. Public opinion is not the unanimous opinion of the people, nor is it the opinion of the majority. Public opinion is an organized and considered opinion of the people on any issue of public concern. Public opinion can also be defined as the complex collection of opinions of many different people and the sum of all their views.

3. Public opinion plays an important role in a democracy. A democratic government draws its authority from the people and claims its legitimacy from the consent of the governed. No government can function without the support of the people. The process of development of public opinion generates thinking, promotes awareness and invites people's views on issues of public concern. An alert and free public opinion is a check on absolute power and it promotes a process to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people. It also influences government in making laws in the interest of the people.

4. Two agencies which help in the formation of public opinion are Print media and electronic media.

   Write the answer to the second part based on your understanding and experience.

22.2

1. Elections provide opportunities to the people to participate actively in the functioning of the democratic government. These are the most important expression of public opinion, as these enable the people to express their will. Elections also widen the scope of political awakening among the masses and educate them by familiarizing them with issues of public concern. They facilitate peaceful transfer of power from one political party or one group of political parties to another and legitimise the working of the government by justifying the authority of representatives lead people.

2. In direct elections, people vote directly through their ballot to elect their representatives to legislative bodies (Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies) and local government institutions. In indirect elections, the elected representatives of the people vote for electing persons to occupy certain positions. The President

and the Vice-President of India are indirectly elected. The members of the Rajya Sabha also are elected indirectly.

3. (a) General Elections, (b) Mid-term Elections, (c) Bye Election

22.3

1. The Election Commission consists of a Chief Election Commissioner and such number of Election Commissioners as the President may fix in accordance with the law. At present, the Election Commission of India consists of a Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.

2. The two important functions of the election commission are

    (i) Ensuring free and fair elections in the country;

    (ii) supervision, direction and control of the entire election machinery.

3. For the conduct of elections, the Election Commission is assisted by a number of officials. The main election officers are the Chief Electoral Officer of the State, District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers, Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, and Polling officers.

4. The following are the main functions performed by a returning officer:

    (a) receives and scrutinizes the nomination papers of the candidates contesting elections, (b) allots election symbols on behalf of the Election Commission, (c) conducts smooth elections in the constituency(ies), (d) ensures counting of votes, and (e) declares the election results.

5. The five major stages of electoral process in India are:

    (i) Delimitation of constituencies is the first step which is undertaken by the Delimitation Commission;

    (ii) preparation and revision of the electoral roll constitute the next step done under the supervision of the Election Commission periodically;

    (iii) consequent upon the President's and Governor's notifications, the Election Commission undertakes the task of conducting elections in the country;

    (iv) the election schedule is announced indicating the dates for filling the nomination papers, their scrutiny, withdrawals, polling, counting of the votes, and declaration of the election results;

    (v) allotment of election symbols to the candidates and the political parties is done by the Election Commission.

22.4

1. Universal adult franchise means a system in which all adults, men and women, without any discrimination, have a right to vote in the elections. In many ways

Universal Adult Franchise has provided opportunities to people to participate in election processes despite differences of class, caste, gender and religion. It has enriched our democracy by giving equal opportunity to all persons. Today, people of all castes and classes have an opportunity to vote. However, we cannot say that the inequalities in our society have completely gone, persons belonging to different castes, classes and gender is still discriminated. Real equality can only be brought in once there is a change in the attitude and behavior of ordinary citizens and they stop discrimination at all levels in their personal lives as well at the societal level.

2. Three problems confronting the electoral system in India are:

    (a) rigging of the elections - fake and bogus voting, impersonation;

    (b) violence during elections;and

    (c) adverse role of money and muscle power.

3.   (i)   The functioning of political parties to be regulated in order to ensure that they function in a transparent and democratic manner. There is a need to audit their expenditure incurred during the elections;

    (ii) electoral laws to be made more stringent and there must be provisions for harsher punishment.

MODULE-4

CONTEMPORARY INDIA: ISSUES AND GOALS

23. Challenges to Indian Democracy
24. National Integration and Secularism
25. Socio-economic Development and Empowerment of Disadvantaged groups
26. Environmental Degradation and Disaster Management
27. Peace and Security

23

CHALLENGES TO INDIAN DEMOCRACY

We are proud to be the largest democracy in the world. For more than sixty-five years we have witnessed the conduct of successful elections, peaceful changes of government at the Centre and in the States, people exercising freedom of expression, movement and religion. India has also been developing and transforming economically and socially. At the same time we, quite often, listen complains about prevalent inequalities, injustice or non-fulfillment of expectations of certain sections of the society. These people do not feel themselves participative in the democratic process. You may ask why it is so. You have already read in earlier unit that democracy means 'government of the people, for the people, and by the people'. It means democracy is not limited to just a process of election, but also fulfilling social and economic aspirations of the people. In India we keep on debating these various aspects of democracy and its achievements and challenges. For a better understanding of the same, we discuss this in this lesson.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- understand the meaning of democracy in its different aspects;
- appreciate the introduction and development of democracy in India;
- identify major problems and challenges being faced by Indian democracy;
- recognize the corrective measures for improving the Indian democratic system; and
- explain the roles of citizens in making an efficient and successful democracy.

23.1 UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRACY

Let us begin with understanding the meaning of democracy and the conditions that are essential for its successful functioning. This will help us in appreciating the challenges to Indian democracy.
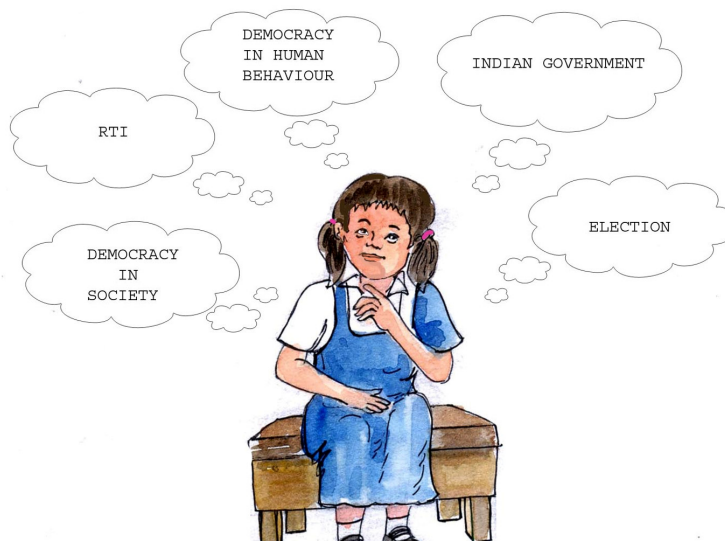
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Figure 23.1 *What exactly is Democracy?*

23.1.1 Meaning of Democracy

Long back, former President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln said, "Democracy is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people." The term 'democracy' comes from the Greek word *demokratia* which means "rule of the people". It was coined from two words: *demos* that means "people" and *Kratos* which refers to "power". That is, in a democracy the power rests with the people. This meaning is based on the experiences of the governments that existed in some of the Greek city-states, notably Athens. And, today also, democracy is defined as a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections. When you examine the definitions of democracy, as suggested above, you will find that most of those definitions define democracy as a form of government which is run by the elected representatives.

This statement defines democracy in the political context, but should democracy be defined only in the political context? Does this concept not have equal, if not more, relevance, in the social context or even in relation to self in our daily life?

ACTIVITY 23.1

Democracy has been defined in many ways. Bryce believes that "Democracy really means nothing more or less than the rule of the whole people, expressing their Sovereign will by their votes".

MacIver observes, "Democracy is not a way of governing, whether by majority or otherwise, but primarily a way of determining, who shall govern, and broadly to what ends".

Which aspect of democracy is reflected in these definitions, political, social or self?

You have seen above that in the present age democracy is just not limited to political democracy. It means more than a mere form of government. In its comprehensive form, democracy means, or ought to mean, (i) a form of government, (ii) a type of state, (iii) a pattern of social system, (iv) a design of economic order, and (v) a way of life and culture. Therefore, when we say that India is a democracy, we mean not only that its political institutions and processes are democratic but also that the Indian society and every Indian citizen is democratic, reflecting basic democratic values of equality, liberty, fraternity, secularism and justice in the social environment and individual behaviour.

ACTIVITY 23.2

Anil, a post-graduate student, lives in a joint family. His grandfather has fixed the marriage of one of his sisters who is 13 years old. The groom is 18 years old and is studying in class XII. Neither Anil nor his parents who are officers in the State government are in favour of this decision. But no one is able to assert the opinion, nor does his grandfather consult any one of them. Do you think there is democracy in Anil's family? **Which of the following statements do you consider are relevant and which are not relevant in this case and why?**

1. The decision in respect of the marriage of his sister at the age of 13 is undesirable, illegal and unethical.

2. The decision has been taken by the head of the family alone without consulting the girl whose life is going to be affected or other members of the family. The decision was taken as is being done traditionally since ages. This indicates that the social condition is undemocratic.

3. The individual behavior of other members of the family is undemocratic, as they have not expressed their opinion, even though they do not approve the decision.

23.1.2 Essential Conditions For Democracy

A system can be termed as a genuine and comprehensive democracy only when it fulfills both political and socio-economic aspects of people's participation and satisfaction. Let us identify those. There may be two major categories: (a) political conditions, and (b) social and economic conditions – the fulfillment of the first leads to political democracy and the second as social democracy.

Obviously, the first and the foremost, are political conditions of democracy. It is essential that for a system to be democratic, we must adopt a Constitution and laws that vest supreme power in the people. The human rights and

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fundamental rights, such as equality, liberty of thought and expression, belief, movement, communication and association must be protected by the Constitution. The democratic system has to have universal adult franchise as the basis of electing representatives at various levels of the government. Moreover, opportunities for political participation of all the citizens not only in elections at regular interval, but also in other aspects of the political process have to be made available. There has to be a responsible government in which the executive is answerable to the legislature, the legislature to the people and the Judiciary to remain independent. Political institutions like political parties and interest and pressure groups (associations, various non-governmental organizations) must be functional for expressing popular needs, demands and grievances. A democratic system is strengthened if it maintains an enlightened public opinion in its various forms through free press and other communication processes. Political democracy is thus one which incorporates all the above political traits. Can you think of a few more essentials of democracy, especially in the context of the ideas discussed in the previous lessons?

You may also be interested in knowing the social and economic conditions of democracy. A democratic system has to ensure that the social development is in tune with democratic values and norms reflecting equality of social status and opportunities for development, social security and social welfare. Citizens must avail opportunities of universal and compulsory education. They must also be enabled to utilize means of economic development. The fruits of economic development must reach all and especially to the poor and the deprived sections of the society. Socio-economic development of the people strengths social democracy.

ACTIVITY 23.3

Think over the situation in India and identify at least two political and socio-economic conditions that are present and two that are not present in Indian democracy. List the same in the table shared below. One example has already been done for you.

Condition	Category	Present/Absent
Equal pay for equal work	Socio-economic	Absent
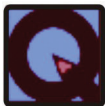
INTEXT QUESTIONS 23.1

1. What do you mean by political democracy?

2. Do you think, the definition of democracy is incomplete unless it is defined in social and individual contexts as well? Give reasons for your answer.

3. Write at least two essential conditions of political and social democracy.

23.2 CHALLENGES TO INDIAN DEMOCRACY

Since independence India has been functioning as a responsible democracy. The same has been appreciated by international community. It has successfully adapted to the challenging situations. There have been free and fair periodic elections for all political offices from the panchayats to the President. There has been smooth transfer of political power from one political party or set of political parties to others, both at national and state levels on many occasions. You will find many examples in our neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Myanmar and even Bangladesh where transfer of power has been done through military coups.

The legislative, executive and judicial organs have been functioning properly. The Parliament and the State Legislatures control the Executives effectively through the means like question hours, etc. More importantly, some significant enactments like the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005, Right to Education 2009 and other welfare means have empowered the people. The mass media, including print and electronic, have full autonomy and play a key role in formulating and influencing public opinion. Significant social change has taken place in almost all walks of life and the nation is moving ahead on course of socio-economic development.

India is a very large country full of diversities – linguistically, culturally, religiously. At the time of independence it was economically underdeveloped. There were enormous regional disparities, widespread poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and shortage of almost all public welfare means. Citizens had enormous expectations from independence. As mentioned above, India has changed a lot. Yet, there are various challenges that the country faces in terms of fulfillment of expectations of various sections of society. The challenges come both from prevailing domestic and international conditions as well as lack of adequate prerequisites for a smooth functioning of democracy. These are discussed below.

23.2.1 Illiteracy

Illiteracy among people was a matter of grave concern for the successful functioning of democracy in India on the eve of independence and it still

continues to be a major challenge. The level of education of citizens is a key to both the successful functioning of democracy and socio-economic development of the country. And perhaps, more importantly, it is an essential condition for human dignity. But the state of formal literacy was almost dismal when India achieved independence. The literacy rate in 1951 was mere 18.33 per cent and female literacy was negligible with 8.9 percent. It was, therefore, feared by many that the citizens would not be able to play their roles effectively and exercise their right to vote meaningfully which is an individual's expression of the power of the people.

As you also know, this apprehension, however, has been proved wrong by the Indian electorate over the years. In spite of a substantial number of them being illiterates, they have demonstrated maturity in the exercise of their right to vote on more than one occasion thus resulting peaceful transfer of political power since independence. The Indian National Congress under the leadership of Ms. Indira Gandhi was very popular and powerful during the early part of 1970s. But in 1977's general election, the people of India rejected her primarily because of the misuse of power during emergency in 1975-1977 and provided an opportunity to the first non-Congress government at the Centre in form of the Janata Party. After that there have been changes in the governments both at the Centre and in the States almost regularly.

Figure 23.2 *Chirdren Getting Education*

Literacy is necessary not simply for enabling citizens to participate in elections and exercise their right to vote effectively, it has other important implications as well. Literacy enables citizens to be aware of various issues, problems, demands, and interests in the country. It also makes them conscious of the principles of liberty and equality of all and ensures that the representatives elected by them truly represent all the interests in the society. Universal literacy is therefore a must for the successful functioning of Indian democracy. Although according to 2011 Census, the literacy rate has risen to 74.04 per cent, the female

literacy rate is still lagging at 65.46 per cent. This means that over one-fourth of the country's population is still illiterate while among women nearly one out of three is not literate. If the children have access to basic education, the problem of illiteracy can be checked. Recently, the Right to Education is provided as a fundamental right. We hope that this will help the cause of educating the children universally.

23.2.2 Poverty

It is generally said that for a hungry person right to vote does not have any meaning. For him/her the first requirement is food. Therefore, poverty is considered as the greatest bane of democracy. It is, in fact, the root cause of all kinds of deprivations and inequalities. It is the state of denial of opportunities to people to lead a healthy and fulfilling life. Of course, India inherited poverty from the long exploitative British colonial rule, but it continues to be one of the gravest problems today. Even now a considerable proportion of Indian population lives below poverty line, called 'BPL'. **The poverty line means an income level below which human beings cannot provide for their basic necessities of food, much less for clothes and shelter**. The governmental definition of poverty line during the 1960s sought to measure the extent of poverty on the amount of income required to purchase a barest minimum desirable food having nutritional standards of caloric intake by a person. According to it, in Indian conditions, a person in rural areas needs an average of 2400 calories per day and in urban areas an average of 2100 calories per day in order to keep himself above the poverty line.

During the 1990s non-food items like clothes, employment, shelter, education, etc. got included in the definition of poverty.

Figure 23.3 *Poverty in the neighbourhood of affluence*

Poverty in the contemporary phase is linked with systemic deprivation of rights. It is also associated with the notion of Human Development Index (HDI) as championed by Mabud-ul-Haq and Amartya Sen. Viewed from the HDI perspective, the definition of poverty also includes socio-economic-political and human rights issues under its ambit.

? Do you know

Based on the current criteria, the Planning Commission estimated the poverty ratio to be 28.3 per cent in rural areas, 25.7 per cent in urban areas and 27.5 per cent for the country as a whole in 2004-05. India was ranked 134 out of 182 countries of the world by Human Development Report 2009 of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The persisting phenomenon of poverty is attributed to many factors, one of which is mass unemployment and under-employment. A large number of people in rural areas do not have regular and adequate work. In urban areas also the number of educated unemployed is very high. The growing population is regarded as a reason for poverty, though population is considered as the greatest resource in the country. In fact, the process of economic development has not been able to ensure social justice and gap between rich and poor has not been bridged. Because of all this, poverty continues to remain a great challenge to Indian democracy.

23.2.3 Gender Discrimination

Discrimination against girls and women exists in every walk of life. You must have had such experiences of prevailing gender inequality in our society and polity. But we know that gender equality is one of the basic principles of democracy. The Constitution of India enjoins upon the State to ensure that men and women are treated as equals and there is no discrimination against women. Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties as well as the Directive Principles of State Policy make these intensions very clear.

Figure 23.4 *Daughter doing Household Chores and Son going to School*

But the discrimination against females continues to be a fact of life. It is clearly reflected in the sex ratio, child sex ratio and maternal mortality rate. The number of females in comparison to males has been declining ever since 1901. In 1901, the sex ratio was 972 females per 1000 males. It came down to 927 females per 1000 males in 1991. According to 2011 Census it is 940 females per 1000 males which is still very unfavourable to females. In some of the States, the 2011 Census reported a very low sex ratio of 877 females per 1000 males (Haryana), the lowest being 618 in Daman & Diu and 866 in the NCT of Delhi.

The child sex ratio is a matter of greater concern. According to 2011 Census, the child sex ratio (0-6 years) in India is only 914 female children per 1000 male children. This is lower than the 2001 Census which reported child sex ratio of 927 female children per 1000 male children. It has been declining because of several factors, like the prevailing preference for male child, discriminatory treatment against the girl child right after birth, and the increasing incidence of female infanticides and female foeticides. By using technology, people are forcing mothers to get the fetus of a female child aborted. The infant mortality rate among girl children is high, as compared to that among boy children. The maternal mortality ratio as per the Sample Registration System 2004-06 is 254 per lakh live births, which is considered very high.

ACTIVITY 23.4

Sonu Khatun is a native of Assam. She is one of the increasing number of bridges getting married in Haryana. Haryana has an unfavourable sex ratio between men and women. The Red Cross Society of India which campaigns against the female infanticide and foeticide in the country in one of its reports in 2010 pointed out that at least 100 brides were brought into Bhiwani, one of the 21 districts of Haryana.

(Adapted from the print edition (International) *The Economist,* 4 March, 2010)

Read the case stated above and answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think Sona Khatun from Assam got married in Haryana?

2. Identify at least three States where the sex ratio is very low.

Besides these demographic indicators, gender discrimination is very much apparent in the context of economic and social development. The female literacy rate in India in 2011 is 65.46 percent, whereas the male literacy rate is 82.14 per cent. Females are discriminated in respect of both employment and their representation in public life. No doubt, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional

Amendments, 1993 providing 33 per cent reservation of seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions, Municipalities and Municipal Corporations have facilitated the course of political empowerment of women. However, traditionally women have been subordinated in the society, which restricts their participation in every field. This has been true for women belonging to more or less all classes and communities. Women Reservation Bill (providing 33 per cent of reservation of women in Parliament) has yet to be passed despite a very low ratio of women in both the Houses of the Parliament.

The Women Reservation Bill was meant to increase the proportion of women in Parliament to provide opportunities for equal political participation. While most parties agree on the need for such a Bill, none of them has given it a priority.

? Do you know

The Bihar Panchayat Amendment Bill, 2006 has extended reservation for women in the three-tier Panchayati Raj system to 50 per cent. Elections in the state have seen 54 per cent of the seats being won by women panchayat members. The State now boasts 2 lakh women panchayat members. Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal also have 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayats.

23.2.4 Casteism, Communalism, Religious Fundamentalism

The Indian democracy faces serious challenges also from casteism, communalism and religious fundamentalism. They weaken the functioning and stability of democratic system.

(a) **Casteism:** The caste system which presumably originated in the division of labour in the ancient society has become a more or less rigid group classification, based on birth. Have you ever experienced the role of caste in your life and society? You will agree that the most detrimental and inhuman aspect of the caste system is the practice of untouchability which is continuing in spite of the constitutional ban imposed on it. This has led to segregation of so called low castes or 'Dalits', depriving them of education and other social benefits. The Dalits have been typically performing menial labour and some of the hardest physical work in society. Casteism has played a negative role even in the democratic political processes. In fact, casteism has become notorious as a strategy of exploitation of caste consciousness for narrow political gains. The caste system acts against the roots of democracy. The democratic facilities - like fundamental rights relating to equality, freedom of speech, expression and association, participation in the electoral process, free media and press, and even legislative forums - are misused for maintaining casteist identity.

Casteism has also been contributing towards continuation of socio-economic inequalities. It is true that India has been an unequal society from times immemorial. The Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the backward classes have suffered down the ages from socio-economic deprivations. There are enormous inequalities in our society which are posing serious challenge to Indian democracy.

What is more alarming is the mixing of caste and politics resulting into 'politicization of caste' and 'casteization of politics' in contemporary Indian polity which has become a grave challenge to our democracy. Despite the era of liberalization and globalization caste consciousness has not been eroded in our society and castes are being increasingly used as vote bank politics.

(b) **Communalism:** Communalism and religious fundamentalism have acquired a very dangerous form and alarming proportion in India. They disrupt the pattern of co-existence in our multi-religious society. Communalism is an affront to India's nationalist identity and a tragic setback to its evolving secular culture. It is subversive of our democratic political stability and destroyer of our glorious heritage of humanism and composite culture. Quite often, communalism is wrongly used as a synonym for religion or conservatism. Adherence to a religion or attachment to a religious community is not communalism.
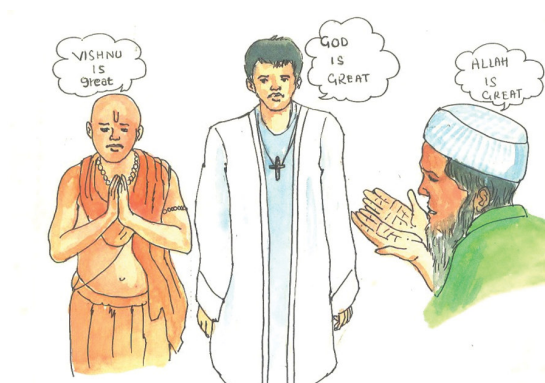

Figure 23.5 *My Religion is the Greatest*

Although conservatism represents social backwardness, it does not mean communalism either. As a matter of fact, communalism is an ideology of political allegiance to a religious community. It uses one religious community against other communities and perceives other religious communities as its enemies. It is opposed to secularism and even humanism. One of the manifestations of communalism is communal riots. In recent past also, communalism has proved to be a great threat to our social and political life on several occasions. Can you recollect some communal incidents that have occurred in the recent past?

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(c) Religious Fundamentalism

Religious fundamentalism also reinforces communalists in exploiting both religion and politics. In fact, fundamentalism acts as an ideology which advocates a return to orthodoxy and a strict compliance to the fundamental tenets of religion. Religious fundamentalists vehemently oppose progressive reforms in order to establish their exclusive control on their respective communities.

23.2.5 Regionalism

Indian democracy has also been struggling with regionalism which is primarily an outcome of regional disparities and imbalances in development. We all know that India is a plural country with diversities of religions, languages, communities, tribes and cultures. A number of cultural and linguistic groups are concentrated in certain territorial segments. Although development process in the country aims at growth and development of all regions, the regional disparities and imbalances in terms of differences in per capita income, literacy rates, state of health and educational infrastructure and services, population situation and levels of industrial and agricultural development continue to exist. Existence and continuation of regional inequalities both among States and within a State create a feeling of neglect, deprivation and discrimination. This situation has led to regionalism manifested in demands for creation of new States, autonomy or more powers to States or even secession from the country.

It is true that regionalism and sub-regionalism are unavoidable in a vast and plural country like India. It is not always correct to consider every attempt to support or defend regional or sub-regional interests as divisive, fissiparous and unpatriotic. The problem begins when these interests are politicized and regional movements are promoted for ulterior political motives. Such unhealthy regional or sub-regional patriotism is cancerous and disruptive. The continuing regional imbalances have given rise to militant movements in certain parts of our country. Separatist demands in Jammu and Kashmir or by ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam) in Assam or by different groups in the North-Eastern region are matters of grave concern for Indian polity.

23.2.6 Corruption

Corruption in public life has been a major concern in India. In 2011, India was ranked 95th of 183 countries defined as corrupt in Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index* (CPI). In fact, corruption is rampant in all walks of life, be it land and property, health, education, commerce and industry, agriculture, transport, police, armed forces, even religious institutions or so-called places of spiritual pursuits. Corruption continues to exist in covert and overt ways at all three levels - political, bureaucratic and corporate sector. One can see the nexus between the politicians, the bureaucrats and the industrialists which has resulted into corruption and corrupt practices. The tentacles of corruption have affected all organs of government, including the judiciary.

Figure 23.6 *Campaign Against Corruption*

Above all, corruption in electoral processes and bribing of voters who participate in elections at different levels has now become a common practice. Have you or your friends observed this happening during elections in the recent past? In recent years, various scams have been coming out in our country in quick succession. In fact, corruption is a sign of political instability and institutional decay, challenging seriously the validity and propriety of governance. We as citizens should take a vow not to indulge in corrupt practices at any level and contribute in eliminating corruption from our country.

23.2.7 Criminalization of Politics

In recent years, criminalization of politics in India has become a debatable issue. There have been allegations that there are some elements in politics who do not have faith in democratic values and practices. They indulge in violence and take refuge in other unhealthy, undemocratic methods to win elections. Undoubtedly, this is not a healthy trend in politics and there is an urgent need to apply serious check on such tendencies.

Criminalization of politics is the very negation of democratic values and has no place in a democratic set up. Democracy can be strengthened by adopting and promoting democratic values and shunning criminal activities.

Recently, the judiciary, while taking a serious note of criminal tendencies in politics, has showed signs of adopting remedial measures to apply a serious check on such elements. The Central government and many State governments have been taking steps to address this issue effectively. This is a matter of great satisfaction and a healthy sign for the successful functioning of democracy in our country. We, as awakened citizens and as voters of the largest democracy in the world, can also contribute by discouraging such persons who have a criminal background, from contesting elections.

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23.2.8 Political Violence

Violence has been with us for long, but use of violence for political end is dangerous for the existence of any system. In India we have been witnessing various forms of violence. Communal violence, caste violence and political violence in general have attained serious proportion. Communal riots are engineered by vested interests for political, religious and economic reasons. Caste violence in various shapes has been increasing. Despite agricultural development, abolition of *zamindari system*, and developments like green revolution and white revolution, there are still powerful feudal elements in the society. A serious conflict of interests has emerged between higher and middle castes and this has led to aggressive competition for political power which many a time leads to violence.

Figure 23.7 *Protest becoming Violent*

Another aspect of caste violence is the backlash of the higher castes against the growing awareness and assertion of their rights by the Dalits and lower castes, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the backward castes. During elections, violence is being adopted either to mobilize voters or to prevent them from exercising their right to vote. Moreover, violence has been associated with demands for separate States, reorganization of States or adjustment of State boundaries. Violence has also been used quite frequently during industrial strikes, farmers' movements, and students' agitations.
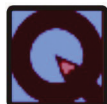
INTEXT QUESTIONS 23.2

1. How do illiteracy, inequality and poverty adversely affect the functioning of Indian democracy?

2. Do you agree that the portrayal of women by popular entertainment channels or films depict gender discrimination? Justify with examples.

3. Explain with two examples as how do casteism or communalism impact our day to day lives and influence Indian democracy?

4. If regionalism and sub-regionalism are inseparable part of Indian democracy, why are they considered as challenges?

5. What are the reasons for criminalization of politics in India?

6. What are the reasons of increase of political violence in India?

23.3 CORRECTIVE MEASURES

It is thus clear that democracy in India faces certain serious challenges. These are causes of serious concern to all. In fact, the leadership of the freedom movement and especially the framers of the Indian Constitution themselves were very much aware of these issues. They made a number of constitutional provisions to address the same. Since independence governments have taken various measures to respond to many of these challenges. There have been significant improvements in some of these. However, lots still have to be done. For that, efforts have been going on. There is need for collaboration among governmental agencies, political parties, civil society and citizens in general. Certain significant corrective measures that have been adopted and can be initiated are as follows:

23.3.1 Universal Literacy 'Education for All'

The significance and necessity of education for efficient functioning of democracy was appreciated by the framers of the Indian Constitution. Which is why, free and compulsory education to all children up to the fourteen years of age continued to remain constitutional commitment in India. Various governments at national and state levels have been making efforts to attain this goal. As a follow up of the National Policy on Education 1986, a National Literacy Mission was set up in 1988 to plan and implement programmes for the removal of illiteracy under the platform, **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**. But the goal of universal literacy is yet to be attained. Currently a nation-wide programme known as *Saakshar Bharat* is being implemented. It aims at developing functional literacy and numeracy to non-literate and non-numerate adults in the age group of fifteen and above, to enable them to continue their learning beyond basic literacy and acquire equivalence to formal educational system. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Figure 23.8

is a flagship programme for universalization of elementary education for children between 6-14 years of age. Further, the Parliament of India in 2009 passed the *Right to Education Act* through which education has become a fundamental right for all children of age group 6-14 years.

23.3.2 Poverty Alleviation

From the 1970s, a number of programmes have been implemented for alleviation of poverty in India. These programmes fall into two broad categories: (i) There are programmes to lift beneficiaries above poverty line by providing them with productive assets or skills or both, so that they can employ themselves usefully and earn greater income. (ii) Programmes are also being implemented to provide temporary wage employment for the poor and the landless.

? Do you know

In 1999, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) was conceived as a holistic programme of micro enterprise development in rural areas with emphasis on organizing the rural poor into self-help groups (SHGs), capacity-building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure support, technology, credit and marketing linkages. This programme has impacted many rural poor, for example, in Mathur, a village of the Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu, 100 women from eight self-help groups were trained in fruit processing by a non-government organization (NGO). They availed assistance under SGSY to run a fruit processing unit registered under the name of Sathyamurthi Mahalir Mandram in May 2000. The unit produces fruit squash, jam, ready-to-serve beverages, pickle, etc. Apart from raising the economic status of the group members, this venture has made the members more aware and they are actively involved in the government schemes, camps and campaigns. They have made significant representations for ensuring provision of basic facilities in their village and by bringing overall development of the area.

Similarly, the Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) is a programme for the creation of rural economic infrastructure with employment generation as a secondary objective. The programme is implemented by the village panchayats and since its inception it has generated 27 crore men-days of employment each year. The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) covers 1,778 drought-prone, desert, tribal and hill area blocks. The programme was designed to provide employment in the form of manual work in the lean agricultural season. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) is being implemented to enhance the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage-employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

23.3.3 Elimination of Gender Discrimination

It is now being recognized that the goals of democracy "of the people, for the people and by the people" cannot be fully realized if the female population are not included in all ways in the processes of socio-economic and political development. That is why, besides constitutional provisions, several laws have been enacted, policies have been made and implemented, and institutional reforms have been carried out for the development of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments of Indian Constitution in 1993 are the milestones in the process of political empowerment of women. These Amendments have reserved one-third of the seats in the Panchayati Raj Institutions, Municipalities and Municipal Corporations. Another significant development has been the adoption of the National Policy for Empowerment of Women in 2001, the overarching goal of which is to "bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women." But a lot needs to be done to attain this goal.

? **Do you know**

Goal and Objectives of National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001

The goal of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Specifically, the objectives of this Policy include:

(i)   creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential;

(ii) equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation;

(iii) equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office, etc.;

(iv) strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; and

(v) elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.

23.3.4 Removal of Regional Imbalance

Redressing regional imbalances has indeed been a vital objective of the planning process in India. Efforts are on to reduce regional disparities. Besides, the State-specific efforts for reducing intra-State regional disparities, a number of Centrally Sponsored Programmes have been in operation for the last two to three decades for taking care of specific aspects of backwardness of such regions.

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Are you aware of any such programme being implemented in your area? Some of the major programmes are: (i) the Tribal Development Programme, (ii) the Hill Area Development Programme, (iii) the Border Area Development Programme, (iv) the Western Ghat Development Programme, (v) the Drought Prone Area Programme and (vi) the Desert Development Programme.

For the development of North-East states, a certain percentage is earmarked from the budget for each developmental scheme or programme in the region.

While the development of the backward regions is a national responsibility, the State and the local leadership also have significant role to play. Unless the local leadership – political, bureaucratic and intellectual – resolves to usher in development based on sharing the benefits on egalitarian basis with the masses, results will be hard to come by. Resources are not the real constraints; it is the way resources are spent that remains the fundamental concern.

23.3.5 Administrative and Judicial Reforms

The success of all the above stated corrective measures primarily depends on the efficient functioning of administration and independence and righteousness of the judicial system. But on both counts, a lot needs to be done. The performance of public administration in India has come under close scrutiny in the last few years. Rampant corruption, inefficiencies, wastages and irresponsiveness to the needs of citizens are some of the commonly acknowledged problems afflicting the administration. No doubt, the Indian judiciary has remained independent and neutral; there are serious problems of (i) slow disposal of cases leading to delays as well as accumulation of backlog, and (ii) very low rate of prosecution in criminal cases.

Administrative reforms have continuously been on the agenda of the government ever since independence. A number of Commissions and Committees have been set up in this regard. But bureaucratic reluctance to change has prevented the reforms to take place in full measure. The recommendations of various Commissions and Committees focus around the need (i) to make administration accountable and citizen friendly, (ii) to build its capacity for quality governance, (iii) to orient administration for promoting peoples' participation, decentralization and devolution of powers, (iv) to make administrative decision-making process transparent, (v) to improve the performance and integrity of the public services, (vi) to reinforce ethics in administration, and (vii) to inculcate readiness for e-governance.

Judicial reform also has been a critical concern since long. Various recommendations have been made on many occasions. The major issues that need consideration in this regard are : (a) Simplification of Rules and Procedures, (b) Repealing Out-dated Laws, (c) Increase in the Judge Population Ratio, (d) Time-bound filling of Vacant Posts in Judiciary, (d) Transparency in Appointment, Promotion and Transfer of Judges, (e) Judicial Accountability; and (f) Transparency of Court Proceedings.

Notes

23.3.6 Sustainable Development (Economic, Social, Environmental)

Indian democracy can adequately respond to all the challenges when it moves forward on the path of sustainable development. A model of development without taking into account the basic needs of millions, today as well as in the future, cannot be conducive for the survival of democracy. Development has to be human-centred and directed towards improvement of quality of life of all the people. It has to be focused on removal of poverty, ignorance, discrimination, disease and unemployment. The development process has to aim at sustained economic, social and environmental development.

? **Do you know**

Sustainable development is a pattern of using resources that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for future generations to come. The term was used by the Bruntland Commission (1987) which coined what has become the most often-quoted definition of sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
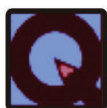
INTEXT QUESTIONS 23.3

1. Describe the measures undertaken to achieve the goals of universal literacy, poverty alleviation and removal of gender discrimination?

2. Discuss the steps needed for solving the problem of regional imbalances in India?

3. What needs to be done to reform administration and judiciary in India?

4. What is sustainable development? How will it strengthen Indian democracy?

23.4 ROLE OF CITIZENS IN A DEMOCARCY

As citizens of India, do we really appreciate the role of a citizen in a democracy? Why is this role so important? Generally, it is believed that the government rules the people who have to respect the political authority and obey it. They are there to be governed. But don't you think that this is not so in a democracy? The people who are citizens in a democratic system like India cannot and ought not remain passive and treat themselves as governed. In fact, a democracy can be successful and vibrant only when citizens imbibe and reflect in their mindset, thinking and behaviour the basic values like equality, freedom, secularism, social justice, accountability and respect for all. They have to appreciate the opportunities for their desired roles and play proactive roles to actualize the goals of democracy.

Notes

23.4.1 Appreciation of Opportunities for Citizens' Role

The opportunities as democratic citizens are available in all democracies, but they vary from one democratic system to another. Indian democracy in the modern sense began after a long period of colonial rule. Although the democratic system started just after independence in 1947, its socio-cultural settings were and still are not in tune with the democratic culture. India is a vast multi-cultural, multi-lingual, truly plural society, which in many respects still carries the characteristics of traditionalism. At the same time it is trying to absorb the values of modern democracy. Even now many think that the government has to rule and do everything, and if things are not happening in an expected manner, it is only the government which is to be blamed. As you know, the democratic government in our country is run by the representatives chosen by us. In that sense, every citizen is responsible for how the governments functions at different levels: national, state and local. And hence, every citizen has to play a critical role and use every opportunity for doing so. As Indian citizens are we doing it? Let us consider. Major opportunities for roles of citizens may be as follows:

(a) Participation

The key role of citizens in a democracy is to participate in public life. The most commonly observed opportunity of participation is exercising the right to vote during elections. And in order to vote wisely it is necessary that each citizen listens to and knows the views of different parties and candidates, and then makes his or her own decision on whom to vote for. It is also learnt that in many cases the percentage of voting is still low. The Election Commission is doing its best to educate the people about importance of participation in elections.

Participation in a democratic polity, however, is not confined simply to participation in elections only. A vital form of participation comes through membership of political parties and more importantly, active membership in independent non-governmental organizations, that are known as "civil society organizations." These organizations represent a variety of interests of different groups such as women, students, farmers, workers, doctors, teachers, business owners, religious believers, human rights activists. Such organizations and people's movements help to bring political awareness about different issues among the people.

(b) Making the System Accountable

Participation in the political process is not enough. Citizens have to make the democratic system responsive and responsible. The Constitution makes the executive responsible to the legislature, but citizens are needed to ensure that the Parliamentarians, Members of State Legislatures and their representatives in Panchayati Raj and Municipal Institutions are accountable. The instruments created by the Right to Information Act, 2005 in our country enable citizens to play their role effectively. Citizens have an obligation to become informed

about public issues, to watch carefully how their political leaders and representatives use their powers, and to express their own opinions and interests. When citizens find that the government is not living up to its promises; they can point it out through media, make recommendations and demands accountability from the government. If the government still fails to fulfill promises, citizens may protest, carry out peaceful satyagraha, civil disobedience or non-cooperation campaigns to make the government accountable.

(c) Fulfilling Obligations

We should realize that citizenship is more than voting or making the system accountable. Many people tend to regard democracy as a system where literally everything is allowed. And every person has the freedom to do whatever one desires. This often leads to a complete chaos that devastates the order of the society rather than improving it. In that way it leads to the opposite effects of democracy. A citizen has to accept that freedom is never absolute. If you have a right to do certain things, you have also the responsibility to ensure that your actions do not infringe upon the rights of others.

23.5 PROACTIVE ROLE TO ACTUALIZE CORRECTIVE MEASURES

For a successful working of democracy, citizens' participation is a must. The corrective measures to meet the challenges can be actualized only when citizens play a proactive role. The citizens must respect the law and reject violence. Every citizen must respect the rights of his or her fellow citizens, and their dignity as human beings. No one should denounce a political opponent as evil, just because of holding different views. People should question the decisions of the government, but not reject the government's authority. Every group has the right to practice its culture and to have some control over its own affairs, but each group should accept that it is a part of a plural society and democratic state.

When you express your opinion, you should also listen to the views of other people, even people you disagree with. Everyone has a right to be heard. When you make demands, you should understand that in a democracy, it is impossible for everyone to achieve everything one wants. Democracy requires mutual cooperation. Groups with different interests and opinions must be willing to sit down with one another and negotiate. If one group is always excluded and fails to be heard, it may turn against democracy in anger and frustration. Everyone who is willing to participate peacefully and respect the rights of others should have some say in the way the country is governed.

It is also important that citizens must assert their opinion, as in a democracy not asserting your opinion also means that you are agreeing with the decision which you may consider improper. You have seen in Activity 23.2, how members of Anil's family did not assert their opinion against the decision of the head of the family.

ACTIVITY 23.5

Now that you have understood the roles a democratic citizen plays, you will find it interesting to explore how democratic you yourself are?

Below are given some statements in a table, write whether the statements are right or wrong.

S.No.	Statement	Right/Wrong
1.	Right To Information Act, 2005 is an effective tool to be used by the citizens to make the government accountable.	
2.	Everyone in your society is treated equal, whether he/she belongs to any economic or social strata.	
3.	In your family, women and girls are not always considered equal to men and boys.	
4.	You believe that you should never act in a way that affects the rights of others.	
5.	The system of reservations for females, members of SCs/STs and minorities is not good for Indian democracy.	
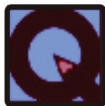
INTEXT QUESTIONS 23.4

1. What do you mean by participation of citizens in the democratic process?

2. What are the various forums or tools available to a common citizen for making the government accountable?

3. Fill in the Blanks:

   (a) If you have a right to do certain things, you have also .... to ensure that your actions do not infringe upon the .... of others.

   (b) Citizens must respect the .... and reject ....

   (c) Every group has the right to practice its .... and to have some .... over its own affairs.

   (d) When a citizen expresses his/her .... he/she should also listen to the .... of other people.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Democracy is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections. However, it is defined not only in the political context, but also in social context or even in relation to self.

- A system can be termed as a genuine and comprehensive democracy, a successfully functioning democracy, only when it fulfils certain political, social and economic conditions. Based on the fulfillment of these conditions one can broadly witness two types of democracy in a given set up – Political Democracy and Social Democracy.

- Indian Democracy over the years has been able to articulate many of these essential conditions. It is confronting a number of challenges that at times bring out the distortions which have crept in and also indicate the possible threats to its future. Illiteracy, social and economic inequality, poverty, gender discrimination, casteism, communalism and religious fundamentalism, regionalism, corruption, criminalization, political violence and militancy are the major challenges that need to be addressed.

- The corrective measures that are needed to meet the challenges to Indian democracy are focussed around the issues and concerns like universal literacy i.e. education for all, poverty alleviation, elimination of gender discrimination, removal of regional imbalances, administrative and judicial reforms and sustained economic, social and environmental development.

- However, Indian democracy can be successful and vibrant only when its citizens imbibe and reflect in their behavior the basic democratic values like equality, freedom, social justice, accountability and respect for all. Their mindset, thinking and behavior are expected to be in tune with the essential conditions of democracy. They have to appreciate the opportunities for their desired roles like participation, making the system accountable, fulfilling obligations, and playing proactive roles to actualize the goals of democracy.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Define democracy. Why democracy cannot be defined only in political context?

2. Describe the essential conditions for a successful democracy.

3. What are the major challenges the Indian democracy faces? How these challenges are opportunities to make India an effective democratic system.

Notes

Notes

4. Examine the trends of protest and violence in India. Why do some protests turn into violent movements?

5. What are the significant corrective measures that are required to meet the challenges to Indian democracy?

6. Discuss the expected roles of citizens in Indian democracy, especially in the context of the experiences of Indian society and government.

7. What are the qualities that need to be reflected in an individual to be an Indian citizen in true sense?

8. Write some qualities of a good citizen.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

23.1

1. Democracy is defined as a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and is exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections. In essence, democracy is a form of government which is run by the elected representatives of the people.

2. The definition of democracy is incomplete unless it is defined in social and individual contexts as well. In the present age, it means more than a mere form of government. In its comprehensive form, democracy means, (i) a form of government, (ii) a type of state, (iii) a pattern of social system, (iv) a design of economic order, and (v) a way of life and culture. Therefore, when we say Indian democracy, we mean not only that its political institutions and processes are democratic but also that the Indian society and every Indian citizen is democratic, reflecting basic democratic values of equality, liberty, fraternity, secularism and justice in social sphere and individual behaviour.

3. A system can be termed as a genuine democracy only when it fulfils (a) political conditions as follows: (i) having a Constitution that vests supreme power in the people and protects fundamental rights, such as equality, liberty of thought and expression, belief, movement, communication and association; (ii) having universal adult franchise as the basis of electing representatives; and (iii) having a responsible government in which the executive is answerable to the legislature and the legislature to the people; and (b) social and economic conditions as follows: (i) the system ensuring social development that is in tune with democratic values and norms reflecting equality of social status, social security and social welfare; and (ii) the system facilitating a situation where the fruits of economic development reach all and especially the poor and deprived sections of the society.

23.2

1. Illiteracy, inequality and poverty adversely affect the functioning of Indian democracy. (i) Illiterate citizens are not able to play their roles effectively and exercise meaningfully their right to vote which is an individual expression of the power of the people. Literacy enables citizens to be aware of various issues, problems, demands, and interests in the country, be conscious of the principles of liberty and equality of all and ensure that the representatives elected by them truly represent all the interests in the society. (ii) Poverty is perhaps the greatest bane of democracy. It is the root cause of all kinds of deprivations and inequalities and is the state of denial of opportunities to people to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.

2. Yes, the popular entertainment channels and films generally depict gender discrimination. In fact, the serials on television channels are reinforcing the prevailing patriarchal system showing females playing traditional roles of mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. It is true that a few of them question the traditional roles, but those also somehow reflect gender discrimination.

3. Caste System: The most detrimental and inhuman example of the prevailing caste system is the practice of untouchability which is continuing in different covert and overt ways in spite of the constitutional ban imposed on it. The Dalits still bear the brunt of discrimination and deprivation. This has led to segregation of so called low castes, depriving them of education and other social benefits. The second example relates to politicization of caste system. Casteism has become notorious as a strategy of exploitation of caste consciousness for narrow political gains. The caste system acts against the roots of democracy. Communalism: It disrupts quite often the smooth process of co-existence in a multi-religious Indian society. Communal riots happening in the country since independence have been dangerous for peace order and social harmony. Secondly the misuse of religion by fundamentalist people during elections and even in other situations has always been proved to be counter-productive.

4. Although development process in the country aims at growth and development of all regions, the regional disparities and imbalances continue to exist. Existence and continuation of regional inequalities in terms of differences in per capita income, literacy rates, state of health and educational infrastructure and services, population situation and levels of industrial and agricultural development both among States and within a State create a feeling of neglect, deprivation and discrimination.

5. The influence of muscle power in Indian politics has been a fact of life for a long time. Political parties and candidates do not hesitate in seeking the help of criminal elements to dominate the election scene in India. Earlier in the 1960's, the criminals were content by covertly helping the politician win the election so that they could in turn get protection from him. But the

roles have now been reversed. It is the politicians who now bank on the support of the criminals for protection.

6. One of the major reasons of increase of political violence has been the emergence of serious conflict of interests between higher and middle castes as an outcome of agricultural development, abolition of *zamindari system*, and developments like green revolution and white revolution. These have led to aggressive competition for political power which many a time leads to violence. Another reason is the backlash of the higher castes against the growing awareness and assertion of their rights by the lower castes, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the lowest backward castes. Moreover, violence has been associated with demands for separate States, re-organization of States or adjustment of State boundaries. As we observe, the Telangana Movement in Andhra Pradesh and Bodo Movement in Assam often turned violent. Violence has also been used quite frequently during industrial strikes, farmers' movements, students' agitations, and a number of other civil disobedience campaigns.

23.3

1. To attain the goal of universal literacy a nation-wide programme known as **Saakshar Bharat** is being implemented. Moreover, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a flagship programme for the universalization of elementary education for children between 6-14 years of age. Besides, the Parliament of India in 2009 passed *Right to Education Act* through which education has become a fundamental right of all children in the age group of 6-14 years. For poverty alleviation, two kinds of programmes are being implemented: (i) Programmes to lift beneficiaries above poverty line by providing them with productive assets or skills or both so that they can employ themselves usefully and earn greater income, and (ii) Programmes to provide temporary wage employment for the poor and the landless. Public Distribution System (PDS) contributes towards meeting people's basic food needs, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) provides rural households below the poverty line with credit to purchase income-generating assets, the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), provides more than 700 million person days of work a year. Moreover, TRYSEM (Training Rural Youth for Self Employment) was started to provide technical skills to the rural youth and to help them to get employment.

2. Besides the State-specific efforts for reducing intra-State regional disparities, a number of Centrally Sponsored Programmes have been in operation for the last two to three decades for taking care of specific aspects of backwardness of such regions. Some of the major programmes are: (i) the Tribal Development Programme, (ii) the Hill Area Development Programme, (iii) the Border Area Development Programme, (iv) the Western Ghat Development Programme, (v) the Drought Prone Area Programme, and (vi) the Desert Development Programme.

Notes

3. For administrative reforms, the following recommendations need to be implemented: (i) to make administration accountable and citizen friendly, (ii) to build its capacity for quality governance, (iii) to orient administration for promoting peoples' participation, decentralization and devolution of powers, (iv) to make administrative decision-making process transparent, (v) to improve the performance and integrity of the public services, (vi) to reinforce ethics in administration, and (vii) to inculcate readiness for e-governance.

    For judicial reforms, the steps that are to be taken are as follows: (a) Simplification of Rules and Procedures, (b) Repealing Out-dated Laws, (c) Increase in the Judge Population Ratio, (d) Time-bound filling of Vacant Posts in Judiciary, (d) Transparency in Appointment, Promotion and Transfer of Judges, (e) Judicial Accountability, and (f) Transparency of Court Proceedings.

4. Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for the future generations. When the development is human-centred and directed towards improvement of quality of life of all the people, it has to be focused on removal of poverty, ignorance, discrimination, disease and unemployment. All these steps will strengthen Indian democracy.

23.4

1. Participation in a democratic polity is not confined simply to participation in elections. A vital form of participation comes through membership of political parties and more importantly, active membership in independent non-governmental organizations, that are known as "civil society organizations." Civil Society Organizations represent a variety of interests of different groups: women, students, farmers, workers, doctors, teachers, business owners, religious believers and human rights activists.

2. Citizens have to make the democratic system responsive and responsible. They are needed to ensure that the Parliamentarians, Members of State Legislatures and their representatives in Panchayati Raj and Municipal Institutions are accountable. The instruments created by Right to Information Act, 2005 in our country enable citizens to play their role effectively. Citizens must watch carefully how their political leaders and representatives use their powers, and to express their own opinions and interests.

3. Fill in the Blanks: (a) responsibility, rights; (b) law, violence; (c) culture, control; (d) opinion, views.

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24

NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND SECULARISM

You must have learnt and recited our national anthem, 'Jana-gana-mana'. You would have also solemnly recited it with others on several occasions, especially while celebrating national events, such as Independence Day and Republic Day. At times there may be a curiosity in you to know what core ideas does the national anthem communicate? And why does it contain so many names of regions, mountains and rivers of the country and also why does it make a reference to the sea? You will agree that while reciting the national anthem we shower our love for the country, pay respect and wish her victory. At the same time while mentioning various regions, mountains and rivers, we respectfully acknowledge the unity of our country in its diversity. You must be coming across news items and articles in newspapers, or discussions on television, focusing on the need to maintain the unity and integrity of our nation. In fact, national unity and integrity, i.e. national integration has been one of the most important priorities of our country. In the course of analyzing the issues related to unity and integrity of the country, Secularism is mentioned as the fundamental characteristic of our nation. It is said that secularism is one of the most essential conditions of national integration. In this lesson, you shall learn various aspects of national integration and secularism.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

● understand the meaning and the importance of national integration;

● appreciate how national movement against British Rule helped in national integration;

● analyse how the provisions in the Indian Constitution promote national integration;

● identify the challenges to national integration in our country;

- understand the implications of secularism; and

- appreciate the role of a learner as a citizen of India and an agent of change in promoting national integration and secularism in our country.

24.1 NATIONAL INTEGRATION

24.1.1 National Integration: Its Meaning and Importance

Before we begin a discussion on national integration, it will be better to understand its meaning. This term has two words: nation and integration. What do we mean by the term nation? A nation is a country with a unified socio-economic and political structure. It denotes a body of people who have a feeling of oneness, built on the basis of common history, society, culture and values. This feeling of oneness binds the people together in to a nation. In general terms it is this feeling which is known as national integration. National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though the individuals belong to different communities, castes, religions, cultures and regions and speak different languages, all of them recognize the fact that they are one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation.

? Do you know

National integration means "creating a mental outlook which will promote and inspire every person to place loyalty to the country above group loyalties and the welfare of the country above narrow sectarian interests."

– Dorothy Simpson

As we all know, India is a nation having great diversities. The people who inhabit this nation belong to different races, communities and castes. They reside in different geographical regions and speak different languages. They believe in and practice different religions and have varied life styles. But with all these diversities, they all are Indians and they feel like that. They may have many religious identities such as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, or Zoroastrians. They may also be identified as Punjabis, Tamils, Malayalis, Bengalis, Manipuri, and so on, or South or North or North-East Indians. But their national identity is supreme.

? Do you know

Pandit Nehru had once said, "Political integration has already taken place but what I am after is something much deeper than that, an emotional integration of Indian people so that the two may be welded into one strong national unity, maintaining at the same time all our wonderful diversities."

National integration is essential for any nation with socio-cultural, religious, linguistic and geographical diversities. And for a country like ours, it is still more necessary. As we know, India is a very large country. We have the second largest population in the world. A unique feature of our country is that all the major religions of the world are practiced here such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism. Can you identify religions from the symbols shown in the illustration below? There are more than one thousand languages that people of India speak. There are also great varieties in costume, food habits, and social customs. Geographically, our land is diverse and there are amazing differences in climate. Despite all these differences India is one political entity. We have to co-exist with each other peacefully, respect the culture and religion of our fellow Indians. This is possible only when national integration is realised in true sense of the term. National integration is necessary also for the security and development of the nation.

Figure 24.1 *Symbols of Religions*

ACTIVITY 24.1

It is claimed that cricket is like a religion in India. You also must have experienced that almost the whole nation is glued to the TV when the game of cricket is in progress. Our cricket players hail from all parts of India and belong to diverse socio-cultural and economic settings, but they play as a single unit for the country. People of all the regions remain completely engrossed with it. They celebrate every victory of the Indian Team and express their disgust, whenever it is defeated. Can there be a better example of national integration? Based on this experience, collect the views of at least 5 young persons who are easily available such as your classmates or young persons in your neighbourhood on the following questions:

1.   Why do Indians behave like the way it is stated above?

2. Why do the people almost worship every great cricketer of India, even though the player does not belong to their own region, state, community, caste, or religion?

3. What are the other occasions when every person thinks and behaves like an Indian and not as a Bihari or Maharashtrian or Telugu or Brahmin or Dalit?

    Analyse the responses and appreciate the importance of national integration

INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.1

1. Fill in the blanks:

    (a)   A nation is a country ....

    (b)   National integration is the awareness of a .... amongst the citizens of a country.

    (c)   This kind of integration is very important in the building of ....

    (d)   In India all the major religions of the world such as .... are practiced.

2. Why is national integration needed?

24.1.2 National Movement and National Integration

You may recollect occasions when you read or you were told that India existed even in ancient times. Yes, India which we see today has been there since ancient times. But then it had been only a geographical entity, because it was divided into a large number of princely states. There were cultural similarities in those states, but it was not one united and integrated nation like it is today. It was for the first time during the British rule that India became administratively united. The British rulers annexed several princely states and established indirect rule on others. India became one geographical entity, but the feeling and sentiments of nationhood was not present among the people. The major strategy of the British rulers was based on 'divide and rule'. They promoted communal division, especially among Hindus and Muslims. Their neglect of economic development of the people created many divides in the country.

It was during the national freedom movement that the feelings and sentiments of nationhood emerged and the need for national integration was realized. During that movement people belonging to different regions, religions, cultures, communities, castes and creeds joined hands to drive out the British power from the soil of India. Especially under the banner of the Indian National Congress, established in 1885 people from all the sections came together and compelled the British rulers to quit India. Since the British rulers had adopted the policy of 'divide and rule', the freedom movement was focused on forging unity in the people of the country. The leadership

of the movement laid emphasis on equality, liberty, secularism, socio-economic development. When India became independent all these formed the main objectives of the new nation.

ACTIVITY 24.2

As you may be aware, people of every part of India participated in the freedom struggle and many of them sacrificed their lives. Many of those freedom fighters must be from the State to which you belong. Prepare a **list of freedom fighters** who belonged to your State. You may consult the elders in your family, neighbourhood, teachers and others.

24.1.3 National Integration and the Indian Constitution

But when India got independence on 15 August 1947, the country was faced with many problems. The national integration faced great challenges. You must be aware that the partition of the country created two nations, India and Pakistan. The partition caused the worst kind of communal violence. A large number of people who were living in an area for generations had to move to the other area as refugees. You may have watched such scenes in some films and documentaries and serials on the television. Besides, the Indian political leaders were faced with complex issues related to integration of Princely States. There were other factors also that had the potential to generate problems for the unity of the country.

? Do you know

On the eve of independence, India was divided into two sets of territories - the first was the territory known as the **British India**, on which the British rulers had direct control, and the second being 562 independent **Princely States**, having indirect control of the British government. When independence was declared, Princely States were given the option to join either of the two nations, India or Pakistan. A few Princely States joined Pakistan, but the rest merged with India. However, there were exceptions like Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, and Junagadh, who wished to remain independent. There were problems with States of Manipur and Tripura also.

In the above stated background, the Constitution of India lays great emphasis on national integration. Its Preamble includes unity and integrity of the nation as a major objective. It also stipulates that every citizen has the fundamental duty to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India. The Constitution reflects respect for diversity of the country, but it tries to ensure that the unity and integrity is maintained. Which is why, it has made provisions for a centralized federation and

opted for a strong central government. You may have noticed this while studying the Lessons on Central government and State governments.

? Do you know

Many provisions under Fundamental Duties reinforce national integration. The following are important:

It shall be the duty of every citizen of India –

- to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
- to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
- to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and respect religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities;
- to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- to value and preserve the rich heritage of our culture;
- to safeguard public property and to reject violence;
- to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of achievement.
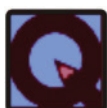
INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.2

1. Fill in the blanks:

   (a) During the British rule India became geographically united, but it was not a .... and .... nation.

   (b) It was during the freedom movement that the feelings and sentiments of .... emerged.

   (c) During the freedom struggle people belonging to different .... joined hands to drive out the British power from India.

   (d) The Indian National Congress was formed in ....

2. Do you think that the Constitution of India lays great emphasis on national integration? How?

24.1.4 Challenges to National Integration

As we noticed in the above paragraphs, just after independence India faced a number of challenges to national integration. Although various efforts have been made to solve those problems, the challenges are continuing. The most important challenges are as follows:

A. Communalism

Communalism has been one of the most complex problems that India has been facing. This is generated when individuals belonging to one religion develop excessive affinity to their religion and hatred towards other religions. This kind of feeling promotes religious fundamentalism and fanaticism and proves to be dangerous for the unity and integrity of the country. It is more so for a country like India where people practise all the major religions of the world. But India has been suffering from communalism since independence. As we know, we faced worst kind of communal riots on the eve of independence, and even after. There have been many communal riots in various parts of the country, inflicting immense sufferings on the people.

ACTIVITY 24.3

Identify at least three major communal riots that took place in India after independence. Try to gather the details of those riots through books, magazines or internet.

Have you watched a movie or heard the name of a movie that is based on the communal riot occurred in India? If not, some of your elders or friends must have seen such a movie. Try to gather the details of that movie through those who saw it. You may also get such information through internet.

Prepare a brief write-up on each of the above, explaining what do you think about communal riots.

B. Regionalism

Regionalism is another obstacle in the way of national integration. On many occasions it encourages people to promote regional interests even at the cost of national priorities. One may think that raising the problems of a particular region is needed to attract the attention of the decision makers and to compel them to fulfill justified regional demands. This thinking is reasonable, because such demands may be based on genuine grievances of the regions and States that have been denied fair shares of projects and industries in the overall structure of development. Those may also be related to the continued neglect of a particular region.

In spite of over six decades of planned development, all regions in our country have not been developed in the desired manner. Along with other factors, the lack of expected socio-economic development results in demands for creation of new States. Do you know how many times in India various States have been reorganized because of the agitations based on regional aspirations? But when regionalism ignores national interests or encourages people to have negative feelings towards the interests of other regions, it becomes harmful. On many occasions regional protests and demonstrations are based on political considerations. Aggressive regionalism is still more dangerous, as it leads to separatism. We have been experiencing such feelings in certain parts of States of Assam and Jammu and Kashmir.

Figure 24.2 *Darjeeling Movement*

ACTIVITY 24.4

Regional movements have resulted in the creation of new States by dividing the existing States. A major reorganization occurred through the States Reorganisation Act 1956. Since then many new States have been created, the latest being the States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. Each of these three States has been created by dividing the existing States. Currently, agitation is going on for creation of a new State by dividing Andhra Pradesh. Based on this information you have to do the following:

● *Identify the three States by dividing which the States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand have been created.*

● *Identify the name of the proposed State for the creation of which the agitation is on in Andhra Pradesh.*

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C. Linguism

All of us know that India is a multilingual country. People of India speak nearly 2000 languages and dialects. This plurality has been negatively used on many occasions, particularly in the early decades after independence. Every country needs to have a common official language, but it has not been an easy task for India. When a recommendation was made in the Constituent Assembly to recognise Hindi as the official language of India, it was opposed by representatives of almost all the non-Hindi speaking areas. A compromise had to be made there. While the Constituent Assembly declared Hindi as the official language, it was provided that English would continue to be used for official purposes of the Union government for a period of 15 years.

When the Official Language Commission set up in 1955 recommended in favour of replacing English by Hindi as official language, there were wide-spread protests in all the non-Hindi speaking regions. Such protests and demonstrations were seen once again in 1963, when the Official Language Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha. As a compromise the Act of 1963 allowed the continued use of English for official purposes without any time limit.

? Do you know

During those conflicting years in order to satisfy various language groups and to promote national integration, a Three Language Formula was evolved. *The formula includes the study of a modern Indian language, preferably a South Indian language, in addition to Hindi and English in Hindi speaking States and of Hindi in addition to the regional language and English in the non-Hindi speaking areas.* Although efforts have been made to assimilate it in the school curriculum of the country, it is yet to be fully implemented.

Although the demand for language based States was met comprehensively when the States were reorganized on linguistic basis in 1956, fresh movements are going on in some parts of the country. Such movements generate many challenges for national integration

D. Extremism

The extremist movements going on in different parts of the country are yet another challenge to national integration. You must have heard about Naxalite movement or Maoist movement. These movements quite often use violence, create fear in public life, cause loss of lives of government personnel and people and destroy public property. Mostly the youth participate in such movements. The basic reason for taking up arms by the youth is the continuing state of socio-economic deprivations. Moreover, the day-to-day humiliation, denial of justice, human rights violations,

various kinds of exploitation and political marginalization prompt them to join the Naxalite movement. But the extremist activities have been threat to law and order and peaceful living of the people residing in the affected areas.

Figure 24.3 *Naxalites in Jungle*

24.1.5 Factors Promoting National Integration

Although the above stated challenges do exist, there are certain important factors that provide sound base for national integration. These are:

A. Constitutional Provisions

As we have seen, the Indian Constitution has made provisions for promoting and ensuring national integration. It has accepted socialism, secularism, democracy, liberty, equality, justice and fraternity as the goals of Indian political system. Citizens have been empowered with fundamental rights and their fundamental duties have also been prescribed. The Directive Principles of State Policy directs the State to promote equitable economic development, eliminate social discrimination, and promotion of international peace and security. And above all, the provisions related to various institutions and processes have been geared towards national integration.

B. Governmental Initiatives

The governments have also been making efforts to promote national integration. A National Integration Council has been set up to consider issues related to national integration and recommend suitable measures to be taken. A Single Planning Commission prepares plans for economic development of the entire country and one Election Commission conducts elections.

C. National Festivals and Symbols

National festivals also act as an important unifying force. Independence Day, Republic Day, and Gandhi Jayanti are festivals that are celebrated by all Indians and in all parts of the country, regardless of language, religion or culture. We also observe the National Integration Day on 19 November every year and take a pledge. This day is also known as "Qaumi Ekta Divas". Moreover, our National Symbols like the

National Flag, the National Anthem, and the National Emblem also help to remind us that we all have one identity. For this reason we stress on the importance of showing proper respect to these symbols. These act as strong unifying forces both in times of celebration and adversity. They remind us of our common nationality.

Do you know

The Text of the **National Integration Pledge:** "I solemnly pledge to work with dedication to preserve and strengthen the freedom and integrity of the nation. I further affirm that I shall never resort to violence and that all differences and disputes related to religion, language, region or other political or economic grievances should be settled by peaceful and constitutional means".

D. All India Services and Other Factors

Moreover, the All Indian Services (IAS, IFS, IPS and others), unified judicial system, postal and communications networks, including radio and television, and the internet promote the unity and integrity of the Indian nation. You may be aware that the members of the All India Services are recruited centrally, but they work in States. Many of them, after having long experiences at the state level come to work in the Central government and be a part of policy decision-making for the entire country. Postal and communication network definitely binds the nation. You also may have listened to radio broadcasting national events or watched those events on television. Is it not true that people of all parts of the country do so?

ACTIVITY 24.5

Certain events like Kalpana Chawla going into space along with other space scientists or Indian Teams winning world cup bind the entire nation together. There are some sportspersons who are national heroes. Similarly there are some personalities who are respected throughout India. You have to collect views of at least 5 persons, may be your friends, classmates, members of your family, teachers or others, on the following:

1.   Who is the Indian personality the people throughout India respect the most?

2.   Who is the sportsperson whom the most young people of the whole country consider their role model?

3.   Which are the national events that are watched on television by people of the entire country or about which people listen to on radio?

4.   Names of at least two food items that are liked by people of all parts of India.

Analyse the collected information and about how the feeling of unity can be promoted among the people of India.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.3

1. What is communalism?

2. Do you agree that regionalism may be justified? State reasons.

3. Why do non-Hindi speaking States oppose Hindi as the Official language?

4. Why is extremism a threat to national integration?

24.2 SECULARISM

Communalism has been one of the most disturbing problems. It has continued to be a threat to national integration. It is true that traditionally, the Indian society has been non-communal. Since centuries it has been absorbing and assimilating many religions and cultures. But it was during the British rule that communalism was used as a tool to divide Indians. The colonial rulers created situations to convince Indians that primarily they were members of different religious communities and they must think and act differently. The Constitution makers had sensed the negative potential of communalism. That is why, the Constitution declares India to be a secular State. Although the original Constitution had many provisions to promote secularism, the continued reappearance of communalism demanded reassertion. Consequentially, it was made one of the basic pillars of Indian democracy and the word 'secular' was inserted into the Preamble of the Constitution by the Forty-Second Amendment in 1976.

24.2.1 Meaning of Secularism

What does secularism mean? You may come across with the some people who will say, "I am secular, because I do not believe in any religion". You may also find some politicians who say that what is reflected in the Constitution is not true but "pseudo-secularism". Pseudo-secularism means false secularism. However, it is necessary to understand that secularism does not mean being irreligious or anti-religious. The term pseudo-secularism is used only for political purposes. In fact, secularism implies equality of all religions and religious tolerance. It may be appreciated in two contexts: state context and individual context. In the state context it means that India does not have an official state religion. The government must not favour or discriminate against any religion. It must treat all religions with equal respect. All citizens, irrespective of their religious beliefs are equal in the eyes of law. No religious instruction is imparted in government or government-aided schools. But the general information about all established world religions may be imparted, without giving any importance to any one religion or the others. In the individual context, it means *sarva dharma samabhava*, equal respect for all religions. Every person has the right to preach, practice and propagate any religion they choose. Every citizen must treat all religions

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with the same respect as he/she has for his/her religion. No religion permits individuals to ignore or hate others.

Figure 24.4 *Freedom to choose religion*
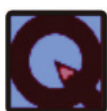
24.2.2 Secularism in the Constitution

As we have seen above, various provisions of the Constitution ensure India to be a secular State. The Indian constitution through its Preamble and particularly through its chapters on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles has created a secular state based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination. Along with the principles of social and economic democracy, secularism has been held to be one of the 'Basic Structures' of Indian Constitution. It has been reflected in the Constitution primarily as a value in the sense that it extends support to our plural society. Secularism aims at promoting cohesion among different communities living in India.

24.2.3 Secularism: Its Significance

Despite the constitutional provisions and safeguards it is unfortunate that all Indians are yet to be truly secular. We have to experience communal riots at regular intervals. Even a very insignificant reason leads to communal tension and violence. But secularism is essential not simply for maintaining communal harmony and peace, but for the very existence of our nation. If you look around yourself, you may find that your friends, classmates, neighbours or nearby residents believe and practice religions that are different from your religion. They belong to various castes. How can you interact with them and be a good friend, classmate or neighbour, if you do not respect their religion and they do not do the same. We all know that India has a plural society. It is therefore essential that all the people develop respect towards one another and practice peaceful co-existence.

? Do you know

India is a land of the great diversities and infinite varieties. It is a country with at least 18 major languages and over 400 important dialects. It is a land that has given rise to four of the world's major religions. It is home to the world's second largest Muslim population. It welcomed Christianity long before Europe embraced it. India has always offered refuge to people fleeing from religious persecution. It is a society with over 4,000 ethnic communities or castes or endogamous groups. India is thus a multi-religious, multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic and multi-regional civilization without a parallel. Therefore, secularism is the only way out where every religion and religious community will get the needed space to survive and respect each other.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.4

1. What is the meaning of secularism?

2. What are the provisions in the Constitution that are focused on secularism?

3. What is the role of a citizen in strengthening India as a secular state?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT?

- A nation is a country with a unified socio-economic and political structure. It denotes a body of people who have a feeling of oneness, built on the basis of common history, society, culture and values. This feeling of oneness binds the people together in to a nation.

- India is a nation having great diversities. The people who inhabit this nation belong to different races, communities and castes. They reside in different geographical regions and speak different languages. They believe in and practice different religions and have varied life styles. But with all these diversities, they all are Indians and they feel like that.

- National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though the individuals belong to different communities, castes, religions, cultures and regions and speak different languages, all of them recognize the fact that they are one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation.

- It was during the national freedom movement that the feelings and sentiments of nationhood emerged and the need for national integration was realized. During

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that movement people belonging to different regions, religions, cultures, communities, castes and creeds joined hands to drive out the British power from the soil of India. Simultaneously they laid emphasis on equality, liberty, secularism, socio-economic development, that formed the main objectives of the new independent nation that emerged after independence.

● The Constitution of India lays great emphasis on national integration. Its Preamble includes unity and integrity of the nation as a major objective. It also stipulates that every citizen has the fundamental duty to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

● India has been facing many challenges in its efforts to maintain and strengthen national integration. The most critical among those are: communalism, regionalism, linguism and extremism.

● However, there are many factors that promote national integration. The Indian Constitution has made provisions for ensuring and promoting national integration. The governments have also been making efforts to promote national integration. A National Integration Council has been set up to consider issues related to national integration and recommend suitable measures to be taken. One Planning Commission prepares plans for economic development of the entire country and one Election Commission conducts elections. National festivals also act as an important unifying force. National Symbols like the National Flag, the National Anthem, and the National Emblem also help to remind us that we are all one identity.

● Secularism implies equality of all religions and religious tolerance. It means that India does not have an official state religion. Every person has the right to preach, practice and propagate any religion they choose. The government must not favour or discriminate against any religion. It must treat all religions with equal respect. And every citizen must practice the principle of "sarva dahrma samabhava" (Equal respect for all religions)

● The Indian Constitution through its Preamble and particularly through its chapters on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles has created a secular state based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

● Secularism is essential not simply for maintaining communal harmony and peace, but for the very existence of the nation.

TERMINAL EXCERCISES

1. Define national integration and discuss the contribution made by the national freedom movement to the emergence of national integration.

2. How does the Indian Constitution reflect and promotes national integration?

3. What are the major challenges to national integration in India?

4. What are the factors that promote and strengthen national integration?

5. Define secularism and analyse its importance for the Indian political system.

6. Given below are two statements of renowned freedom fighters:

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "I am a Hindu and swear by my religion, I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it. The State would look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on, but not your or my religion. That is everybody's personal concern!!"

Maulana Azad, one of the closest colleague of Mahatma Gandhi had said, "I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of the fact that I have inherited Islam's glorious traditions of the last thirteen hundred years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of that legacy.... I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, an essential part of the indivisible unity of Indian nationhood, a vital factor in its total make-up without which its noble edifice will remain incomplete."

In the light of the above two statements, explain the role of Indian citizens for strengthening secularism and national integration in India?

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

24.1

1. (a) with a unified socio-economic and political structure

    (b) a common identity

    (c) a strong and prosperous nation

    (d) Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism

2. National integration is essential for any nation with socio-cultural, religious, linguistic and geographical diversities. And for a country like India, it is still more necessary. India is a very large country. A unique feature of our country is that all the major religions of the world are practiced here. There are more than one thousand languages. Despite all these differences India is one political entity. We have to co-exist with each other peacefully. This is possible only when national integration is realised in true sense of the term.

24.2

1. (a) united integrated

    (b) nationhood

(c) regions, religions, cultures, communities

(d) 1885

2. Constitution of India lays great emphasis on national integration. Its Preamble includes unity and integrity of the nation as a major objective. It also states that every citizen has the fundamental duty to uphold and protect the unity and integrity of India. It has made provisions for a centralized federation and opted for a strong central government.

24.3

1. Communalism is generated when individuals belonging to one religion develop excessive affinity to their religion and hatred towards other religions. This kind of feeling promotes religious fundamentalism and fanaticism and proves to be dangerous for the unity and integrity of the country.

2. Regionalism may be reasonable if the demands are based on genuine grievances of the regions that have been denied fair shares of projects and industries in the overall structure of development. Those may also be related to the continued neglect of a particular region. In spite of over six decades of planned development, all regions in our country have not been developed in the desired manner.

3. Because most of the people do not know Hindi. However, there are non-Hindi speaking States where Hindi is being promoted. It is necessary that Hindi-speaking States also promote non-Hindi languages like Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya or Bengali or Assamese in their respective areas.

4. Because these movements use violence, create fear in public life, cause loss of lives of government personnel and people and destroy public property. Mostly the youth participate in such movements. The basic reason for taking up arms by the youth is the continuing state of socio-economic deprivations and exploitation. But the extremist activities have been threat to law and order and peaceful living of the people residing in the affected areas.

24.4

1. Secularism implies equality of all religions and religious tolerance. In the state context it means that India does not have an official state religion. The government must not favour or discriminate against any religion. It must treat all religions with equal respect. In the individual context, it means *sarva dharma samabhava*, equal respect for all religions. Every person has the right to preach, practice and propagate any religion they choose.

2. The Indian Constitution through its Preamble and particularly through its chapters on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles has created a secular state based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

3. Every citizen must treat all religions with the same respect as he/she has for his/her religion. No religion permits individuals to ignore or hate others. If citizens look around themselves, they may find that their friends, classmates, neighbours or nearby residents believe and practice religions that are different from their religion. They belong to various castes. How can they interact with them and be a good friend, classmate or neighbour, if they do not respect their religion and they do not do the same. It is, therefore, essential that all the people develop respect towards one another and practice peaceful co-existence.

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25

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOP-MENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

We quite often read about different concerns of socio-economic development like poverty, unemployment, development of roads and bridges and facilities like hospitals, educational institutions in newspapers, magazines and other periodicals. During elections in particular these are discussed by political leaders, political parties, electorates and media. Whenever there are discussions on development and particularly on socio-economic development, the issue of empowerment of disadvantaged groups in our society is referred to. You may have also come across these terms in your study materials or somewhere else. What do these terms mean? Why and how should we understand the relationships between socio-economic development and empowerment of disadvantaged groups? The present lesson will make an attempt to discuss these issues.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- analyze the concepts of socio-economic development, human development, regional development and sustainable development;

- explain various factors responsible for regional imbalances and socio-economic disparities in India;

- highlight the issues related to empowerment of disadvantaged groups like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women;

● evaluate various policies and programmes related to groups like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, women and children; and

● appreciate various policies/programmes related to different sectors like education, health and nutrition.

25.1 MEANING OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What does socio-economic development mean? In order to understand this concept, let us begin by defining development. Generally, development is defined as a state in which things are improving. But it is defined in different ways in various contexts, social, political, biological, science and technology, language and literature. In the socio-economic context, development means the improvement of people's lifestyles through improved education, incomes, skills development and employment. It is the process of economic and social transformation based on cultural and environmental factors.

ACTIVITY 25.1

You may have read in different materials or heard in discussions in the media the use of concepts like economic development, social development, developments in the human body and developments in science and technology.

Can you prepare a list of some other terms using the word 'development' as mentioned above? Try to write at least eight terms.

Socio-economic development, therefore, is the process of social and economic development in a society. It is measured with indicators, such as gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. For better understanding of socio-economic development, we may understand the meaning of social and economic development separately.

Social development is a process which results in the transformation of social institutions in a manner which improves the capacity of the society to fulfill its aspirations. It implies a qualitative change in the way the society shapes itself and carries out its activities, such as through more

Figure 25.1: *Social Development Components*

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progressive attitudes and behavior by the population, the adoption of more effective processes or more advanced technology. As you see in the illustration below, there is a close relation among environments, ways of living and technology.

Economic development is the development of economic wealth of countries or regions for the well-being of their inhabitants. Economic growth is often assumed to indicate the level of economic development. The term "economic growth" refers to the increase (or growth) of a specific measures such as real national income, gross domestic product, or per capita income. The term economic development on the other hand, implies much more. It is the process by which a nation improves the economic, political, and social wellbeing of its people.

> **?** **Do you know**
>
> **Gross Domestic Product** (**GDP**): The gross domestic product or gross domestic income (GDI) is one of the measures of national income and output for a given country's economy. It is the total value of all final goods and services produced in a particular economy within a country's borders in a given year.
>
> **National Income**: The income earned by a country's people, including labour and capital investment. It is the total value of all income in a nation (wages and profits, interests, rents and pension payments) during a given period, (usually one year).
>
> **Per Capita Income**: The total national income divided by the number of people in the nation. This is what each citizen is to receive if the yearly national income is divided equally among all.

Socio-economic development, thus, is a process of improvement in a variety of ways. It has to influence all aspects of human life in a country. But do you think the concept of socio-economic development takes care of all aspects of development? Its major indicator, the GDP is a specific measure of economic welfare that does not take into account important aspects such as leisure time, environmental quality, freedom, social justice, or gender equality. Another indicator, the per capita income also does not indicate the level of income equality among people. These indicators do not ensure that the benefits of development have been equally distributed and have reached particularly to the disadvantaged groups of society. Which is why, a new concept of **human development** is being used. It is focused on the overall quality of life that people enjoy in a country, the opportunities they have and the freedoms they enjoy.

25.2 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

As we have seen, when we talk about economic development, the focus is on income only. For a long time the general notion about development was accumulation of wealth or economic assets. But **human development focuses on expanding and**

widening of people's choices as well as raising the levels of wellbeing. It covers almost all aspects of human life and people's choices like economic, social, political, cultural, educational, physical, biological, mental and emotional. Income is only one of the many components of development. Human development places people at the centre of development and emphasizes that the purpose of development is to enlarge all human choices, and not just income. It regards economic growth as essential but emphasizes the need to pay attention to its quality and distribution.

? Do you know

The concept of human development was introduced by Dr. Mahbub ul Haq, a Pakistani economist who described it as development that enlarges people's choices and improves their lives. The Indian Noble Laureate Professor Amartya Sen has also made contributions to the evolution of this concept and defined it as development that increases freedoms.

The Human Development Index (HDI) was developed in 1990 by a group of economists including Dr. Mahbub ul Haq and Professor Amartya Sen. It has been used since then by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its annual Human Development Report.

You may now understand that if the socio-economic development of a country is modeled along human development framework, it can provide better understanding of development and its impact on the quality of life of the people. We may appreciate it in a better manner when we try to understand the Human Development Index (HDI) developed as a means of measuring human development. The basic use of HDI is to measure a country's level of development.

The Human Development Index (HDI) combines three basic indicators and their dimensions as shown in Table 25.1

Table 25.1: Human Development Index: Indices and Dimensions

Sl. No.	Indices	Dimensions
1.	A Long and Healthy Life	● Life expectancy at birth, as an index of population health and longevity
2.	Knowledge and Education	● Adult Literacy Rate
		● The combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrollment ratio
3.	A Decent Standard of Living	● Gross domestic product (GDP), per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) in United States dollars (US$)

? **Do you know**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched Human Development Report in 1990, incorporating development related data in respect to the above mentioned indices. Since then this Report is published every year and the nations are ranked every year according to the level of improvements made in respect of each of the indices.

The analysis of Human Development Report published since 1990, indicates that India is always placed almost at the bottom of the table in the medium level category. Out of 177 countries included in the Report, India's rank was 128 in the
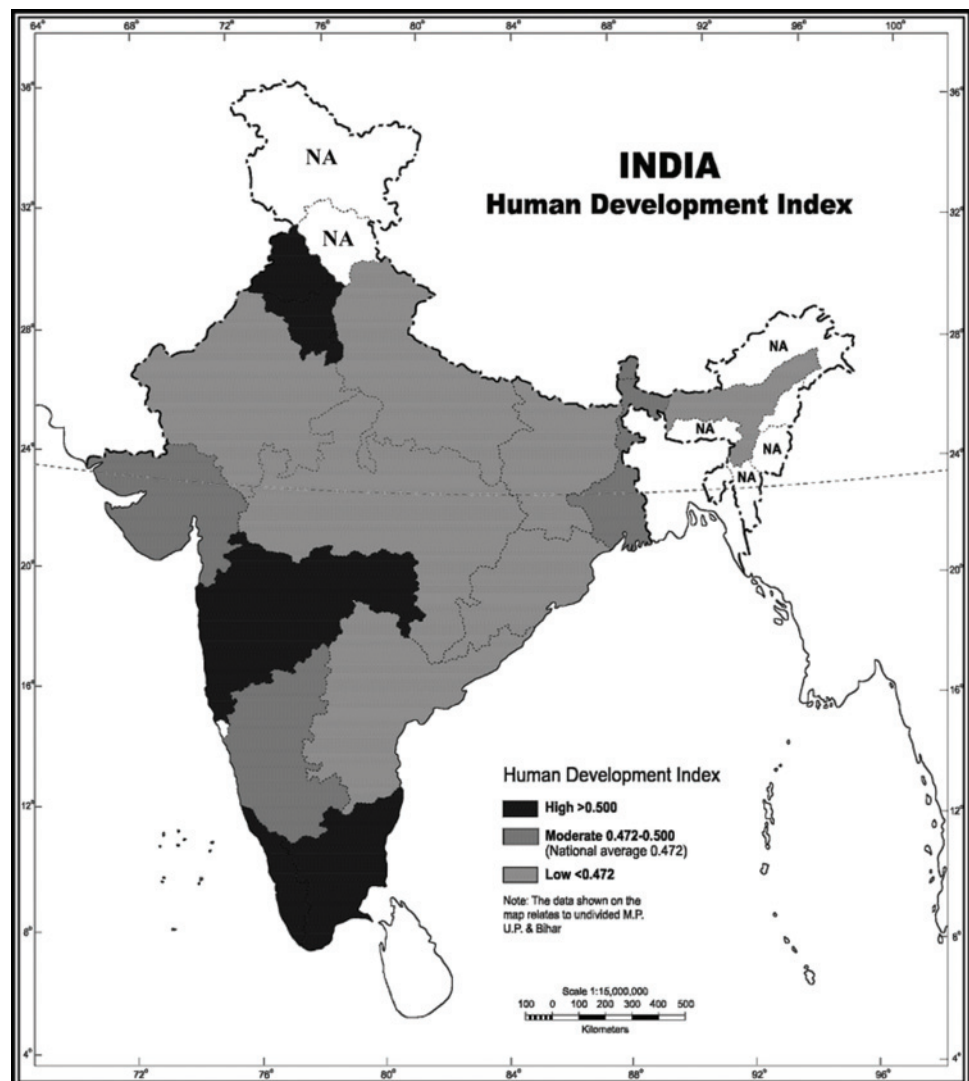
Figure 25.2: *India : State wise Human Development Index 2001*

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year 2007-08. The Government of India has also made an attempt to develop state wise Human Development Index. You may see figure 25.2 and observe the variation among the States.

ACTIVITY 25.2

Study the above mentioned Human Development Index Map of India and find answers to the following questions:

(i)   What is the situation of your State as far as HDI is concerned? Give any two reasons for such a situation.

(ii)   Identify two States of India - one having very high HDI and the second having low HDI.

(iii)   State any three factors that are responsible for high and low Human Development Index in these States.

(iv)   Suggest any three measures for improving Human Development Index in the States where HDI is very low.

25.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As we all observe and feel, we are using natural resources almost carelessly to meet our needs. It is said that a number of minerals like, coal, petrol and many more will last only for a few decades, if we go on using them at the present rate. Future

Figure 25.3: *Sustainable Development*
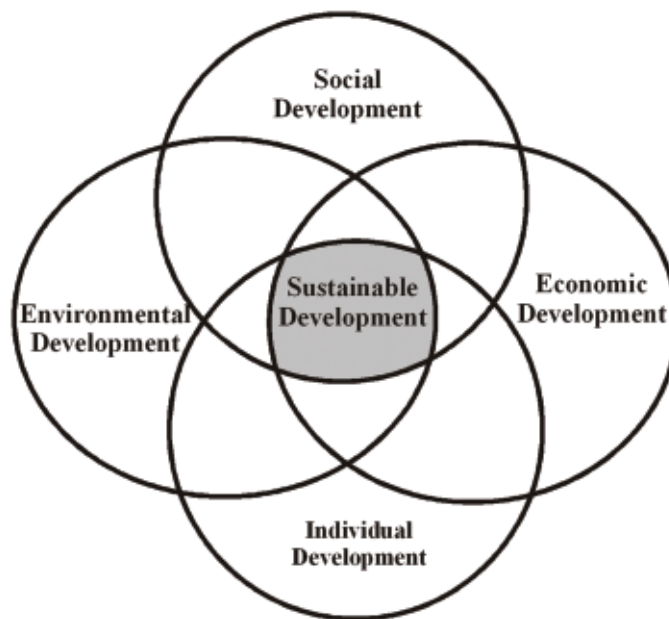
generations will not have the facility of using these resources. Is it fair for our generation to deprive the future generations of these resources? The concept of sustainable development has emerged in this context. It is a broad concept that is defined as '**development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.** Although many think that it is relevant only in the environmental context, it actually does not focus solely on environmental issues. As shown in the figure below, it includes economic development, social development, individual development and environmental development. It is a pattern of social and economic transformation, i.e. development that optimizes the economic and societal benefits available in the present, without adversely affecting the likely potential for similar benefits in the future. A primary goal of sustainable development is to achieve a reasonable and equitably distributed level of economic and social wellbeing that can be perpetuated continually for many human generations. It takes care of the needs and requirements of all sections of the society including the disadvantaged groups.

25.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

We have discussed so far various aspects of significant issues related to four concepts: development, socio-economic development, human development and sustainable development. Based on our appreciation of these, let us now try to understand the socio-economic development taking place in India. Although various efforts have been made for the development of the country right from the day the country became independent, it is since 1990 that India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies in the developing world. It is said that the economy of India is the twelfth largest in the world by market exchange rates and the fourth largest in the world by GDP, measured on purchasing power parity (PPP) basis.

This has been accompanied by increase in life expectancy and literacy rates and attainment of food security. There has been significant reduction in poverty, although official figures estimate that 27.5 per cent of Indians still lived below the national poverty line of $1 (PPP), (around 10 rupees in nominal terms) a day in 2004-2005. It is also said that India's recent economic growth has widened economic inequality across the country. Despite sustained high economic growth rate, approximately 80 per cent of its population lives on less than US $2 a day (PPP). Even though the arrival of Green Revolution brought an end to famines in India and ensured food for the entire population, 40 per cent of children under the age of three are underweight and a third of all men and women suffer from chronic energy deficiency.

? Do you know

Purchasing Power Parity (PPP): It is a method of measuring the relative purchasing power of currencies of different countries. PPP has been found more useful for comparing differences in living standards among nations. Earlier, the

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comparison was based on per capita income, but this was abandoned by most of the international organizations, because it was giving a misleading picture. It is well known that the purchasing power of different currencies varies substantially. For example, one US dollar (US$) can buy far fewer goods and services in the United States than Rs. 50 which is equivalent to one US dollar, can do in India. Therefore, by investing Indian currency equivalent to $1000, one can have a much better standard of living in India than that in USA by investing the same amount.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.1

1. Why do GDP and per capita income not effectively measure the quality of people's life?

   ....

   ....

2. How is the concept of human development different from the traditional concept of social and economic development?

   ....

   ....

3. Define Sustainable Development.

   ....

   ....

4. Why is it said that development and under-development co-exist in India? Identify the major reasons.

   ....

   ....

25.5 REGIONAL DEVEOPMENT: IMBALANCES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES IN INDIA

We have discussed above that the efforts made for socio-economic development in India have been aimed at holistic development of all the regions of the country. In fact, one of the major objectives of development planning initiated immediately after independence has been reduction of regional disparities by promoting the development of all regions. The planning and implementation processes have focused on an approach of regional development. But one of the critical problems facing

India's economy is the sharp and growing regional variations among different States and Union Territories.

There are certain differences which are already created by nature. For example, you may find in the figure below that (figure no. 25.4) some areas have plain topography, fertile alluvial soil and abundance of water like Indo-Ganga plain; whereas there are certain areas which have hilly terrains, dense forest cover and less fertile soil like North-Eastern parts of the country. These differences created by nature are called regional diversity. But there are certain differences that are human-made. These differences or inequalities are related to indicators like per capita income, agricultural growth, industrial growth, expansion of transport and communication facilities, literacy and status of health. These human-made differences or inequalities between regions are known as disparities. You may understand disparity in a better way when you observe figure no. 25.5. It is these disparities that are causes of concern. Let us analyse and try to understand the disparities in respect of the following:
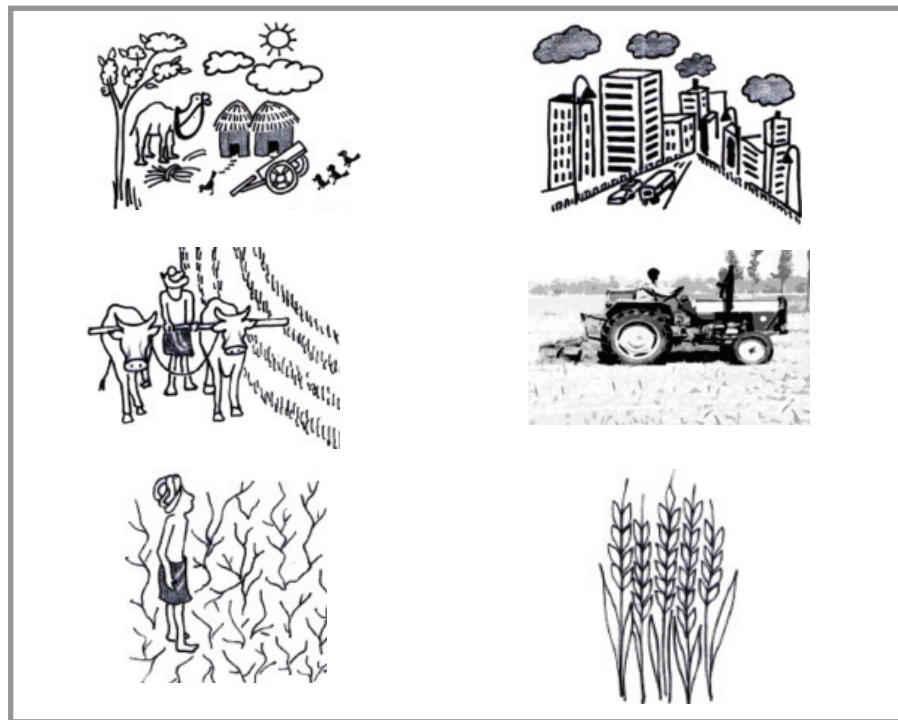
Figure 25.4 : *Diversity*

Figure 25.5 : *Disparity*

A. Disparities in India

1. **Per Capita Income:** Per capita income is the essence of the level of economic activity in the region. There are very wide regional disparities in per capita income. For the year 2005-06, national average of per capita income was Rs. 25,716. There were only eleven States which had per capita income higher than the national average. The bottom seven poorest States that had per capita income below the national average are Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. These States are home to more than half of India's population.

2. **Poverty:** State-wise poverty ratios have witnessed a decline over the years. Though poverty has declined at the macro-level, rural-urban and inter-state disparities are continuing. The poverty ratio is still relatively high in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Poverty rates in rural Orissa (43%) and rural Bihar (40%) are some of the worst in the world. On the other hand rural Haryana (5.7%) and rural Punjab (2.4%) compare well even at global level with some of the middle income countries.

3. **Industrial growth:** The initial distribution of industries in India was determined by the historical process of growth driven primarily by the interests of the British Rulers. As a result, most of the industries were concentrated at a few centers. This pattern has continued in the post-independence period as well despite all attempts made so far to expand the process of industrialization of various regions.

4. **Agricultural growth:** Regional disparities in agricultural growth have increased over the years with the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, pushing well ahead of others. The per capita average food grain production has been the highest in Punjab and the lowest in Kerala. Mizoram and Maharashtra are at the lowest level in respect of irrigated areas. States like Punjab and Haryana achieved high rate of agricultural productivity because of having extensive irrigation facilities and intensive use of fertilizers. In majority of the States agricultural growth is yet to pick up the needed pace and come up to their potential.

5. **Literacy:** It is one of the major indicators of socio-economic development but there are great disparities in this respect in various regions. According to Census 2001, the literacy rate is the highest in Kerala and the lowest in Bihar. Whereas the all-Indian average of literacy rate was 65.38 percent, it was 90.92 percent in Kerala and only 47.53 percent in Bihar. There are significant variations among rest of the States also.

6. **Transport and Communications**: Transport and communication in India are of various types. The common forms of transportation are Roadways, Railways, Airways and Waterways. When you look at the data in respect of even one of these, you may appreciate the prevailing disparities. For example, in respect of road length there are some States that are at a very advanced level, whereas there are some in which the road situation is very poor. With regard to total road length per 100 km. Kerala tops the list whereas the State of Jammu and Kashmir is at the bottom.

B. Causes of Regional Disparities

Whenever we try to identify the reasons for regional imbalance in various regions we tend to think that population growth, illiteracy and lack of basic infrastructure are responsible for under-development of certain States. But if we analyse these reasons further, we find that these factors are not only the reasons of under-development in backward States but also its outcome. For example, there has been unabated population growth, prevalence of illiteracy and lack of basic infrastructure in many under-developed States, primarily because the socio-economic development has not taken place in the way it has taken place in other forward States. It is therefore, interesting to analyse the following major causes of regional disparities:

1. **Historical perspective:** During the colonial rule in the pre-independence era, the areas which were not important from commercial or political angles, received little attention and remained under developed. Those areas still continue to be ignored by entrepreneurs. The most prominent among such areas are the tribal areas of central and north-eastern India.

2. **Geographical factors**: Topography of a region can constrain its development. The desert region of Rajasthan and difficult hilly terrains of north-eastern regions are examples of such cases.

3. **Unequal distribution and variation in use of natural resources**: As you may be aware, natural resources like coal, iron ore, oil, natural gas and others are not available in all the States. But this availability alone has not ensured the development of such States. There are certain States that have made good use of this privilege, but others like Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa have not been able to do so.

4. **Remote areas from national markets:** The distance of the region from the national markets have also affected the development of economy in those areas especially the north eastern region, making it difficult to alter their growth process.

5. **Lack of basic infrastructure**: The States that have developed infrastructure facilities like roads, electricity and transportation facilities have made speedy progress in terms of socio-economic development. The States that lack these facilities find it difficult to adequately utilize the allocated investments and also to attract private investors.

6. **Poor governance**: The most important factor that influences socio-economic development is the quality of governance. You may observe that the States that have moved forward have had the spell of good governance for most of the periods. On the other hand, almost all of the backward States are those that have not been able to develop basic infrastructure, have been struggling with law and order problems and have not been able to make optimum utilization of national resources allocated by the Planning Commission. The poor governance has also been discouraging the private investors to set up industries or pursue any other productive activities in those States.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.2

1. Differentiate between disparities and diversities with suitable examples.

   ....

   ....

2. How is Colonialism one of the important factors in creating regional disparities in India?

   ....

   ....

3. Which one of following States can be grouped under economically developed States?

   (A) Bihar

   (B) Orissa

   (C) Arunachal Pradesh

   (D) Haryana

4. Why are tribal areas of Central India underdeveloped in comparison to most of the areas in the country? Write below the correct statements selecting out of the following:

   (A) The areas do not have much natural resources.

   (B) They do not have any major industries in this area.

   (C) The economic as well as human development for local people is very low.

   (D) None of the above.

25.6 DISADVANTAGED GROUPS OF THE SOCIETY

As we have been emphasizing in this lesson, the ultimate goal of socio-economic development has been to ensure that all sections of the society are enabled to be a part of the development process. All must have equal access to the outcomes of development, and equal opportunities for upward economic and social mobility. Although it is said that India has been making notable progress, this goal of reaching the development outcomes is yet to be attained by all. There are many population groups that are till today discriminated both socially and economically and are not able to participate freely and fully in the development process and reap its benefits. These are known as disadvantaged groups. Some of such groups are Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), minorities and women. According to Census of India 2001, SCs constitute 16.23% and STs

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8.2% respectively. Minorities and other backward classes also have significant share, whereas women constitute almost half of the Indian population. We shall discuss the efforts for the empowerment of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women.

25.7 EMPOWERMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES POPULATION

The urgent need for empowerment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country was realized in India on the eve of independence to reduce the regional disparities and uplift the status of these communities. Constitution of India makes a number of commitments under its various provisions for the development of these groups. Towards fulfilling the commitments, the Government of India has adopted a three-pronged strategy of (i) Social Empowerment; (ii) Economic Empowerment; and (iii) Social Justice to ensure removal of disparities, elimination of exploitation and suppression and to provide protection to these disadvantaged groups.

(a) Social Empowerment

Education being the most effective instrument for socio-economic empowerment of the disadvantaged groups, high priority continues to be accorded to improve the educational status of these groups. The following measures are important:

- With respect to elementary education, various incentives in the form of abolition of tuition fee, free supply of books, mid-day meals, and scholarships are provided. Special focus has also been on ST students in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalaya and National Talent Search Scheme.

- There are also major scholarship programmes. Post-Matric Scholarships are awarded to promote higher education beyond matriculation. Pre-Matric Scholarships are given to encourage children of scavengers and those engaged in menial works to pursue education. Upgradation of Merit Scheme is aimed at extending remedial and special coaching. Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowships for SC students provide special incentives to pursue higher studies and research.

- Coaching facilities are provided to students preparing for various competitive examinations.

- Hostel facilities are provided to both girls and boys for pursuing education from upper primary stage onwards.

(b) Economic Empowerment

Employment and income generation programmes have been launched for the economic empowerment of socially disadvantaged groups. The following apex financial organizations have been set up:

- The National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) provides financial and other support to beneficiaries for taking up various income generating activities.

- The National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) provides financial and other support to safai karamcharis for taking up various income generating activities.

- The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) supports various income and employment generating activities through loans, marketing support, training and so on.

- The Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs) finance employment oriented schemes that cover agriculture and allied activities including minor irrigation, small scale industry, transport and trade and service sector.

- The Scheduled Tribes Development Corporations (STDCs) function as channellizing agencies and extending financial and other assistance to beneficiaries. The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED) provides marketing assistance to STs for collection of minor forest produce and surplus agricultural produce.

(c) Social Justice

The Constitution of India guarantees protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Some protective legislations have also been made. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 are important.

25.8 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution

Figure 25.6 *Women Empowerment*

not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. However, there still exists a wide gap between the accepted goals and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other. The access of women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections of society to education, health and productive resources is inadequate. They remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded. But a number of programmes are being implemented and various kinds of efforts, as shown in the following figure no. 25.6, have been made to empower women. The following major steps are being undertaken for empowerment of women:

(a) Economic Empowerment

● Since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line, poverty eradication programmes are specifically addressed to their needs and problems.

● In view of the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied sectors as producers, concentrated efforts are being made to ensure that benefits of training, extension and various programmes reach them in proportion to their numbers.

● Comprehensive support in terms of labour legislation, social security and other support services is provided to women to enable them to participate in various industrial sectors, especially electronics, information technology, food processing, agro industry and textiles.

● The provision of support services for women, like child care facilities, including crèches at work places and educational institutions, homes for the aged and the disabled are being improved to create an enabling environment and to ensure their full cooperation in social, political and economic life.

(b) Social Empowerment

● Efforts are being made to ensure equal access to education for women and girls, eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupational/vocational/technical skills by women.

● A holistic approach to women's health which includes both nutrition and health services is being adopted and special attention is being given to the needs of women and girls at all stages of the life cycle.

● In view of the high risk of malnutrition and disease that women face, focused attention is being paid to meet the nutritional needs of women at all stages of the life cycle.

- Elimination of all forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs, traditions or accepted practices has been getting top most priority.

(c) Political Empowerment

Women have been enjoying right to vote and contest any elections ever since independence. They have right to participate equally in decision making at all levels of governance. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Indian Constitution have served as a breakthrough towards ensuring equal access and increased participation in political power structure by providing 33.3 % reservation of seats for women in rural and urban local bodies. This has played a central role in the process of enhancing women's participation in public life. A Bill to provide reservation of seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies is under consideration by Parliament.

ACTIVITY 25.3

Situations related to discrimination against females are stated below. State the reasons for each situation:

Sr. No.	Situations	Give Reasons
1.	In most of the families girls do not get the same opportunity and facility for education as boys. Why?	
2.	Generally, the illness of females, i.e. mothers, sisters or sisters-in-law is not taken as seriously as that of the males. Why?	
3.	Most of the household activities are done by females only. Male members do not share. Why?	
4.	Birth of a female child in a family is not celebrated like the birth of a male child. Why?	

Study the above situations carefully and answer the following:

(i) Why do you think this inequality is prevalent in our society? Give any three reasons.

(ii) Suggest any three remedial measures which will help in removing inequality.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.3

1. Which are the major socially disadvantaged groups?

   ....

   ....

2. Do you think that the steps taken so far have been empowering Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to reap the benefits of socio-economic development? Give three reasons.

   ....

   ....

3. Why are the efforts made so far have not been able to empower women in our society?

   ....

   ....

4. Do a survey of at least 5 families in your neighbourhood and collect data in respect of the following. It will be better if you do it on more families, may be 10.

   (i) Number of adult male and female members; (ii) Number of male and female children; (iii) Number of male and female children born in the last two years; (iv) Number of male and female children dead in the last two years; (v) Number of male and female children above the age of 5 attending schools or colleges/ university; (vi) Number of females working outside home in offices or in some business.

   Based on the analysis of collected data, try to find the answers to the following questions:

   (a) What is the number of male and female children and how many of them are attending schools/colleges? Are the male and female children of a family studying in the same school? And if not, what are the reasons?

   (b) Are females working outside home? If yes, where? If not, why?

   (c) Do you find the environment of gender discrimination in families? If yes, why? If not, how?

25.9 MAJOR POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We have so far tried to understand various issues related to socio-economic development and empowerment of disadvantaged groups. Now you may also like

to know about the major policies and programmes focused on socio-economic development. If we discuss all of them, it will be too exhaustive. We shall therefore discuss below some of the important policies and programmes related only to education and health. You may study the rest in your senior classes.

25.9.1 Education for All

You can very well appreciate that not only India but also the entire international community realizes the need for providing education to all. Under the leadership of UNESCO, a large number of countries met at Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990 and decided to provide Education for All by 2000. In 1992, nine highly populous countries namely China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Bangladesh, Brazil and Egypt congregated at Delhi to reinforce their commitment towards Education for All (EFA). For the last two decades India, with the help of international agencies, has adopted various measures towards achieving the goal of Education For All. The following are the most significant:

A. Universalisation of Elementary Education

The National Policy on Education 1986 envisages that free and compulsory education should be provided to all children up to the age of 14. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 made free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years. Recently Indian Parliament has enacted the Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. As a result of the efforts made by central and state governmentS, almost 95% of the country's rural population now has primary schools within one km and about 85% have upper primary schools within three km. This has resulted in:

1. Steady growth of enrolment of children of 6-14 years of age in primary and upper primary schools has gone up steadily.

2. Significant improvements have taken place in enrolment of girls and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

3. There has been significant increase in the number of primary and upper primary schools.

The Central and State governments over a period of time, evolved strategies to reduce drop-out rates and improve levels of achievements in schools. The steps taken in this direction are as follows:

● Creating parental awareness and community mobilization;

● Involvement of community and Panchayati Raj Institutions;

● Economic incentives such as free education, free books and free uniforms;

● Improvement in the content and process of schooling; and

● National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-day Meal Scheme).

The following programmes are specifically aimed at universalisation of elementary education:

(a) Sarva Siksha Abhiyan

An ambitious programme for achieving the goal of universalisation of elementary education, known as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in 2001. The goals of SSA are as follows:

(i)   Enrollment of all 6-14 age group children in school/Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) Centre/ Bridge Course by 2005;

(ii) Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010;

(iii) Universal retention by 2010;

(iv) Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

(b) National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education or Mid-day Meal Scheme:

This Programme was started and is still continuing to attain the goal of universalisation of elementary education. The objectives of Mid-day Meal Scheme are:

(i)   Improving the nutritional status of children in class I-V in Government, Local Body and Government aided schools and EGS and AIE Centers;

(ii) Encouraging poor children by helping disadvantaged sections to attend schools more regularly and help them concentrate on class room activities;

(iii) Providing nutritional support to children of primary stage in drought affected areas during summer vacation;

25.9.2 National Literacy Mission

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched in 1988. It aims at imparting functional literacy to adult non-literates in the age group 15-35 in the country. The main programmes of the NLM were the Total Literacy Campaign to impart basic literacy to the adult non-literates. It was followed by the Post Literacy Programme to reinforce the literacy skills of the neo literates. And then the Continuing Education Programme was aimed at providing facilities like rural library and reading room for the neo literates and other sections of the community. In addition, vocational training was also provided to the neo-literates and other disadvantaged sections of the society through the Jan Shikshan Sansthans.

The NLM resulted in the following major outcomes:

- It has been able to cover 597 districts in the country under various literacy programmes and nearly 124 million people are reported to have been made literate.

- The literacy rate of the country has also increased from 52.21% in 1991 to 65.37% in 2001, registering one of the highest decadal growth in literacy so far.

- However, despite these gains, nearly 34% of the non-literates in the 15+ age group in the world are in India. The gender, regional and social disparities are still continuing.

In view of the above, the Government of India has decided that an integrated approach to literacy would be followed now. This means, the **Total literacy Campaigns** and the **Post Literacy Programme** will now operate under one literacy Project. This approach would enable the enormous illiteracy problem to be tackled in a holistic manner. By treating the imparting of functional literacy as a continuum rather than as a one off benefit for the illiterate person, the inputs would be made goal-directed. Literacy campaigns would continue to run in those areas where there are large pools of residual illiteracy. At the same time, for those who have crossed the basic learning phase, programmes of consolidation, vocational skills, integration with life skills and such other aspects would be given priority.

25.9.3 Health for All

India was the first country in the world to launch a comprehensive Family Planning Programme in 1951. This was aimed at enhancing individual health and welfare in the country. But there were very few health facilities for serving the poor people living in remote rural areas. The past five decades have witnessed significant investments in developing a network of health centers all over India. However, though we have not achieved the expected infrastructure of sub-centers, primary health centers and community health centers, the government has been trying to provide health facilities to all the citizens of India.

Though India has been making a steady progress in the development in different aspects of health, a lot of progress has to be made to achieve Health for All goals. "Health for All by the Year 2000" was first enunciated at the WHO/UNICEF meeting at Alma Atta in 1978. As a signatory to this, the Government of India re-oriented priorities to emphasize primary health care, immunization, family planning and nutritional support programmes. World Leaders including India committed themselves to achieve this ambitious goal by 2000.

During 1951-2001, the population in India has increased almost three times from 36.10 crores in 1951 to 102.70 crores in 2001. Therefore, the health system is at cross roads with a wide gap between demand and supply. Looking at the distribution

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of medical facilities, we find there is highly unequal distribution and most of the facilities are concentrated around major cities and towns. To reduce this inequality in distribution, Government of India started an ambitious programme known as National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). Apart from NRHM, Government of India has also launched many programmes related to health of women and children like Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY), Balika Samridhi Yojna (BSY), and Kishori Shakti Yojna (KSY). With the success of NRHM, Government of India is planning to launch a similar programme for urban area called National Urban Health Mission (NUHM). You may see in the Box, the names of some major national health programmes that are being implemented.

	NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAMMES
1.	National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP)
2.	National Filaria Control Programme
3.	National Leprosy Eradication Programme
4.	Revised National TB Control Programme
5.	National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme
6.	National Mental Health Programme
7.	National Aids Control Programme
8.	National Cancer Control Programme
9.	Universal Immuization Programme
10.	National Programme for Prevention and Control of Deafness
11.	Pilot Programme on Prevention and Control of Diabetes, CVD and Stroke
12.	National Tobacco Control Programme
13.	National Programme for Control of Blindness

INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.4

1. Identify the target groups for Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and National Literacy Mission.

   (i) .... and (ii) ....

2. Describe any two achievements of the health sector during the last fifty years.

   (i) ....

   ....

(ii) ....

....

3. What is the latest approach adopted under National Literacy Mission?

....

....

....

4. Why has Goernment of India started National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)?

....

....

....

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Development is defined as a state in which things are improving. But it is defined in different ways in various contexts, social, political, biological, science and technology, language and literature. In the socio-economic context, development means the improvement of people's lifestyles through improved education, incomes, skills development and employment. It is the process of economic and social transformation based on cultural and environmental factors.

- There are certain differences which are already created by nature. The differences created by nature are called diversity. But there are certain differences created by human beings. The inequalities created by human beings are called disparities. In India there are certain areas that have excellent facilities whereas there are certain areas which are not so advanced in terms of the socio-economic facilities. These human-made differences between regions are known as regional disparities.

- Human development focuses on expanding and widening of people's choices as well as raising the levels of wellbeing. So it covers almost all aspects of human life i.e. economic, social, political, cultural etc. So in human development, income is only one of the many components. Human Development Index (HDI) has three components: a long and healthy life; knowledge and a descent standard of living.

- According to Human Development Report 2007-08 India's rank was 128 out of 177 countries in the world. India was placed almost at the bottom of the table in the medium level category.

- In India, there are sizeable populations who can be classified as marginal section of the society. We group them as marginal because these groups are still

discriminated both socially and economically and still are not able to participate freely and fully in the development process. Some of them are Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STS), women etc.

- Towards fulfilling the commitments, the Government of India adopted a three pronged strategy of - (i) Social Empowerment; (ii) Economic Empowerment; and (iii) Social Justice to ensure removal of disparities, elimination of exploitation and suppression and to provide protection to these disadvantaged groups.

- There are two significant programmes which were implemented in all the states of the country to improve two important social sectors of India i.e. education and health. These two programmes are Education for All and Health for All.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Why does the concept of socio-economic development not take care of all aspects of development? Give any two reasons.

2. Why are there regional imbalances and socio-economic disparities in India? Analyze any six factors responsible for this.

3. Explain any six social empowerment measures adopted by the Government of India for the disadvantaged sections of the society.

4. Describe various measures undertaken by the Government of India for reducing the drop-out rates and to improve the levels of achievements in education.

5. What is Literacy Campaign? Describe various strategies adopted for the success of the programme.

ANWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

25.1

1. The GDP is a specific measure of economic welfare that does not take into account important aspects such as leisure time, environmental quality, freedom, or social justice or gender equality and similarly the per capita income numbers also do not indicate the level of income equality among people.

2. It covers almost all aspects of human life. It places people at the centre of the concerns of development and emphasizes that the purpose of development is to enlarge all human choices, and not just income.

3. Sustainable development is defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

4. It is said because:

    (i) Indian economy is 12th largest in the world by market exchange rates and the fourth largest by GDP.

    (ii) Indian rank in HDI is 128 out of 177 countries in the year 2007-08

    (iii) 27.5% Indians still lives below powerty line.

    (iv) Approximately 80% of India's population live on less than $ 2 a day (ppp).

25.2

1. There are certain differences which are already created by nature. The differences created by nature are called diversity. But there are certain differences created by human being. The inequalities created by human being are called disparities.

2. During the pre-independence era, areas which were not important from commercial or political interests received little attention and it continued even after independence.

3. D

4. C

25.3

1. The major socially disadvantaged groups are Scheduled Castes (SCs), Schedulet Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Minorities and Women.

2. The steps taken so far have been empowering the SCs and STs. The reasons are:

    (i). Different programmes have been initiated such as mid-day meal, supply of books etc.

    (ii) Schools for SCs and STs such as Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya and special treatment in Navodaya Vidyalaya, National Talent Search Schemes, Scholarships are also provided.

    (iii) NSFDC, NSKFDC, NSTFDC, SCDC and STDC have been opened to provide financial support to SCs and STs.

    (iv) TRIFED provide marketing assistance to STs for their products.

3. The efforts made so far has not been able to empower women in our society because

    (i) The access of women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections of society to education, health and productive resource is inadequate.

    (ii) They remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded.

4. Survey has to be conducted by students themselves.

Assessment Key

Learning Objective	Assessment tool	Scoring key
To analyse the gender perspective of socio-economic development	To conduct small survey	Level -1 (Marks - 0 to 33% – Insufficient response) Learner is able to answer only one out of three items
		Level - 2 (Marks 34-55% – Improvement required) Learner is able to answer at least two items.
		Level -3 (Marks 56-75% – more or less satisfactory)
		Learner is able to answer all the three items.
		Level - 4 (Marks 76-100% – very good) Learner is able to answer all three items with all dimensions of gender implications.

25.4

1. (i) Children of school going age but not attending the school (ii) adult illiterates.

2. (i) Death rate has declined from 27.4 per thousand at the time of independence to 8.5 in 2001 (ii) infant mortality rate has been brought down from 134 per thousand live births to 71 in 2001 (iii) Life expectancy has risen from a mere 32 years in 1947 to 65 in 2001 (iv) There has been a steady progress towards elimination of leprosy, polio, neonatal tetanus, and iodine deficiency disorders. (Any two)

3. The Government of India has decided that an integrated approach to literacy would be followed now. This means, the **Total Literacy Campaign** and the **Post Literacy Programme** will now operate under one literacy Project. This approach would enable the enormous illiteracy problem to be tackled in a holistic manner.

4. There is highly unequal distribution of health facilities in the country and most of the facilities are concentrated around major cities and towns. To reduce the inequality, Government of India started an ambitious project of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM).

26

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

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If you live in a village, you would have seen the trees being cut for using the land to grow crops or to construct houses. You may have also observed that small water bodies that existed some time ago are no longer seen now. If you are a resident in a city, you must have seen trees being felled for constructing houses, multiplexes and roads. We all feel the impact of air pollution owing to emission of carbon monoxide by large number of vehicles and harmful gases from factories. We come to know by reading newspapers or listening to discussions on radio or watching on television how the rivers and even the underground water sources are being polluted and the water level is going down fast. In hilly areas, forests are being cut to meet the fast growing needs of the people. Many of us are aware that all these are adversely affecting our environment. The deterioration of environment has also led to various kinds of man-made disasters and natural calamities. You may be aware of some of these like The Bhopal Gas tragedy, Tsunamis, Landslides and London Smog, and what happened regarding their management. In this lesson, therefore, we shall study the phenomenon of environmental degradation and how it is related to natural calamities, disasters and their management.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- define the terms environment and environmental degradation;

- identify various physical and biological components of environment;

- analyse various reasons for the deterioration of environment and the variety of ways in which human beings interfere with their environment;

- infer consequences of environmental degradation;

- highlight the importance of conservation of environment;

- establish relationship between deterioration of environment and natural calamities and disasters;

- describe impacts of disaster and natural calamities on development;

- examine the role of individuals and society in protecting and maintaining the environment;

- suggest various schemes for disaster management; and

- devise various methods to manage natural calamities/disasters at local levels.

26.1   MEANAING OF ENVIRONMENT

Let us begin the discussion on environmental degradation by understanding the term 'environment' itself. What does the word 'environment' mean? Commonly environment means the surroundings in which we live. You may have read or heard terms like social environment, political environment, literary environment and school environment. But the environment which we shall discuss has a different meaning.

ACTIVITY 26.1

Based on the examples given above, can you prepare a list of any four ways in which the term **environment** is used?

In the present context, environment denotes all the elements, processes and conditions around us along with their interrelationships. It is defined as the sum total of all the conditions and circumstances and the living and non living things around an organism, which affect its life.

Let us try to understand this concept through a concrete example. You see in Fig. 26.1, a park with trees, flowers, plants, grass, butterfies, and also a couple with two children.

For the children of the couple, the environment comprises the park, trees, plants, flowers, playing equipment, air and water There are fish in the pond. But for the fish, it is not the same. For them, environment is the surroundings within the pool. The living and non living things in the pool make the environment of the fish. Therefore, for any living organism like a human being or a plant or an animal, the environment means everything, living or non living, which surrounds it. As we find, the environment of any organism has two components, living and non-living. The living component is known as **Biotic** and includes the organisms themselves, i.e. human beings, plants, animals, other organisms, their food and their interactions. The second component

Figure 26.1 *A couple playing in the park*

is the non-living, known as **Abiotic** which includes such items as sunlight, soil, air, water, land, climate etc.

ACTIVITY 26.2

For a better understanding of environment based on this categorization, prepare two lists of items that are in your surroundings. In one list of the biotic component include all the things that are living and in the other list of abiotic component those things that are non-living.

26.2 CLASSIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENT

When we consult different sources of information, we find that environments can be classified in many ways based on various factors. We have seen above that environment is referred to as social environment, political environment, literary environment and school environment. These references are based on the specific contexts, social, political, literary and school. But the environment which we are trying to understand is classified on the basis of the process of its creation or evolution. Based on this, environment falls into two main categories: **natural environment** and **human-made environment.**

Natural environment: It includes all living and non-living things that occur naturally on Earth. It comprises the nature of the living space. The living space may be land or sea, that is, it may be soil or water. It also includes the chemical constituents and physical properties of the living space, the climate, and a variety of organisms. Natural environment includes both biotic and abiotic components as these have been evolved through a natural process. The creation of these components has been done by nature, and not by any human intervention or support. It is true that human beings

live in an environment where both biotic and abiotic factors influence them and they learn to adapt themselves to these in several ways. But human beings have no role to play in the creation and evolution of natural environment.

Human-made environment: On the other hand, human-made environment includes all those things which are created by humans for their use. Human beings construct these surroundings, as these are needed for providing the required setting for human activity. These things range from the large-scale civic surroundings to personal places. For example, houses, roads, schools, hospitals, railway lines, bridges and parks are components of human-made environment.

Figure 26.2 : *Classification of Environment*

There is yet another kind of environment which plays an important role in the living conditions of human beings. This is called the social environment. Social environment includes cultural norms and values, the culture that individuals live in, and social, political, economic and religious institutions with which they interact.
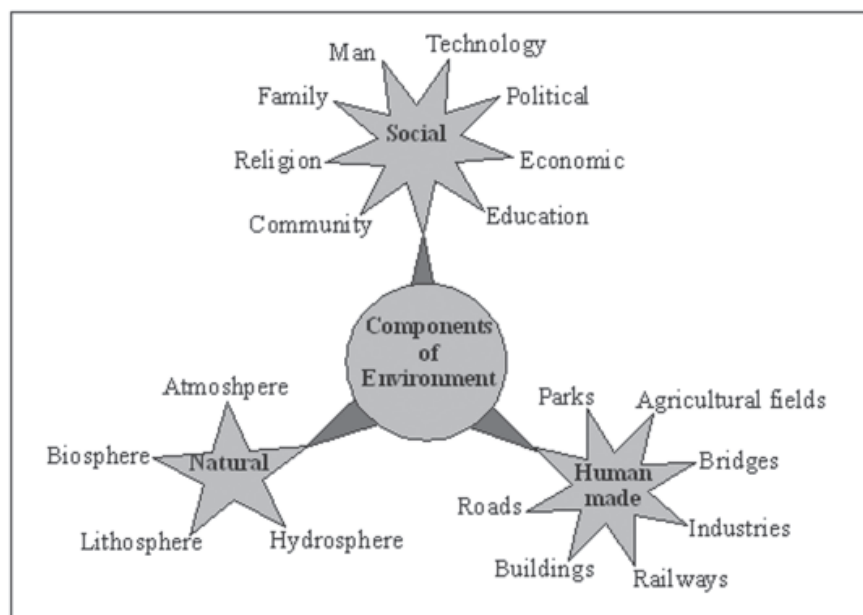

Figure 26.3 : *Components of Environment*

By now we have been able to understand that normally, the environment at any place is a combination or sum total of the natural component and the human-made component. For example, in a town or city the people and animals living in it, the land, air, water and trees are the components of the natural environment, whereas the buildings, roads, other structures like schools, hospitals and establishments for water and electricity supplies are the components of the human-made environment. As you may observe, human beings use natural environment for creating human-made environment.

26.3 THE DYNAMISM AND THE VARIETY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

As you yourself observe and find that the environment is never static. One of its most significant characteristics is its dynamism. It is continuously changing. Both the biotic and the abiotic elements in the environment are dynamic by their nature. Let us understand what is this dynamism and how it works. The environment differs from place to place and also from one time in history to another. For example, the environment of the Himalayas is different from that of the Great Indian Desert, and even there it is not the same over the years and decades. Climatic conditions change in different places in different seasons. If you observe the evolution of the environment of the same place, say over a period of 20 or 30 years, you will find that the environment of that place has changed. Some changes take place naturally, while others are caused by the activities of human beings.

Even the human-made environment has been undergoing changes over a period of time and space. There have been notable changes in human dwellings. The skyscrapers that you see today in many cities were not present about 20 years ago. A number of villages have developed into towns, cities and mega-cities. Means of transport and communications have been revolutionized. All these changes and developments show the dynamic nature of environment. Observe, think and understand the kinds of changes that have taken place within the last couple of years in the human-made environment in the city or village where you live. Aren't the changes very noticeable?

> **The environment is dynamic in nature and keeps on changing**.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.1

1. Put the following into biotic and abiotic groups:

   Plants, Water, Soil, Animals, Fire, Microbes, Topography, Bacteria.

Biotic	Abiotic

2. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

    (a) Environment can be classified into .... and ....

    (b) The classification of environment can also be made on the basis of its ....

    (c) Road, buildings and school are parts of .... environment.

    (d) Environment is dynamic because ....

3. Activity - Make a list of things around you and classify them into two categories. In the first category mention those things that are essential for your living and in the second category put those things that you can live without.

26.4   IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENT

We always say that environment is key to our welfare and survival. Have you ever thought why it is said so? The environment is our life support system. In fact, it affects and influences the growth, development, and survival of all organisms, including human beings. All kinds of our needs are met by the environment. It supplies the basic necessities for life and supports large number of life forms. We are dependent on the environment for our food, shelter, water, air, soil, energy, medicines, fibers, raw materials, and many other things. The environment maintains atmospheric composition and protects all kinds of life on earth from harmful effects of solar radiation. But in spite of all these benefits we find that the quality of environment is deteriorating and it is being degraded continuously. It is not only that the resources of the environment are being irrationally utilised, we are contributing dangerously to its pollution.

? **Do you know**

Environmental degradation is one of the **ten threats** officially cautioned by the High Level Threat Panel of the United Nations. The World Resources Institute (WRI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank made public an important report on health and the environment worldwide on May 1, 1998.

26.5 ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

What is environmental degradation? Let us understand it. It is the process by which our environment i.e., air, water and land, is progressively contaminated, over-exploited and destroyed. When the environment becomes less valuable or damaged, environmental degradation is said to occur. In specific term, environmental degradation is the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air,

water, soil and forest; the destruction of eco-systems and the extinction of wildlife. Let us recall our experiences in daily life. We are utilizing resources like water, soil, trees, coal, petrol without caring for the future. We are carelessly interfering with the eco-system and deliberately killing wild animals. In fact, there are many forms of environmental degradation. Whenever habitats are destroyed, biodiversity is lost, or natural resources are depleted, the environment is hurt.

26.6 CAUSES OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Based on the discussion so far, we now know that healthy environment is essential for the very existence of human society and other living organisms. But environmental degradation is going on unabated. We are being cautioned every now and then about the deterioration in the environment and its consequences like global warming, changing climatic conditions, impending water crisis, decreasing fertility of agricultural land and increasing health problems. There is an urgent need to take all possible steps to check environmental degradation. In order to consider the required steps to be taken for doing so, it is necessary to understand the causes of environmental degradation. The important factors are the following:

Social Factors

Growing Population: Population is the greatest resource of any country and a major contributory factor for development, and yet it is a major cause of environmental degradation. As we find, the rapid pace of population growth has led to the excessive utilization of natural resources. Huge population also leads to huge production of wastes. The resultant outcomes are loss of biodiversity, pollution of air, water and soil and increased pressure on arable land. All these have been putting great stress on the environment. If you take the case of India, it supports 17 percent of world population on just 2.4 per cent of the world land area.

Poverty: Poverty is said to be both the cause and effect of environmental degradation. You may have seen that the poor people use natural resources more than the rich. They use these for building their huts, for cooking, for their food and for meeting many other needs. In this way they deplete these resources faster as they have no opportunity of gaining access to other types of resources that are

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primarily exploited by the rich. As we know, the more the resources are utilized, the more degraded the environment becomes. And the more the environment deteriorates, the more impoverished the poor will be.

Urbanisation: You may have observed a large number of poor people from villages moving to towns, cities and mega cities to earn their livelihood. This has led to unplanned and rapid expansion of cities, creating enormous pressure on the infrastructural facilities. If you live in a city, you may be experiencing these pressures on housing, water and electric supply and sewage. You would be aware of the growing slums. Urban slums are major sources of pollution and suffer from the worst kind of unhygienic conditions. The fast pace of urbanisation has also been responsible for the depletion of forests and irrational use of other resources.

Changing Life Style: There has been a remarkable change in the style of living of people. This change is visible not only among the people living in cities and towns but also among those who live in villages. The changing life style of people has enormously increased their level of consumption. It has also resulted in the increase of human activities that are causing serious damage to environment in many ways. It has contributed to air, water, sound, vehicular and industrial pollution. The fallout of the fast increasing use of modern gadgets like refrigerators and air conditioners is the release of harmful gases in the atmosphere. This has been causing global warming which is very dangerous. In fact, due to overuse of modern gadgets, harmful gases like carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide are released which lead to global warming.

? Do you know

Chlorofluoro Carbon (CFC): It is an inert lifeless gas. But when it comes into contact with other gases, it becomes harmful. It is responsible for depletion of the ozone layer.

Economic Factors

Agricultural Development: Agricultural development is so important for a country like ours. But this has been affecting the environment adversely. Various kinds of

farming activities especially directed towards increasing agricultural production have a direct impact on environment. These activities have been contributing to soil erosion, land salination, alkalization and loss of nutrients. As we have been experiencing in India, the green revolution has led to over exploitation of land and water resources. Extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides has been a major source of contamination of water bodies and land degradation.

Industrialization: Rapid industrialization has been the foremost contributor to environmental degradation. Based on the information collected through various sources, we find that most of the industries adopt the technologies that place a heavy load on environment. These technologies lead to intensive use of resources and energy. The current pace of industrialization therefore is resulting in the depletion of natural resources like fossil fuel, minerals and timber, and contamination of water, air and land. All these are causing immense damage to eco-systems and leading to health hazards.

Economic Development: It is a fact that the pattern of economic development has also been creating environmental problems. The pace of economic development has been putting immense pressure on resources. The economy today has become consumption intensive which demands greater use of resources and promotes life styles that lead to wastage. The irrational use of resources and wastages are resulting in depletion of environment.

ACTIVITY 26.3

Some important causes of environmental degradation have been discussed above. But there are some other causes also, such as deforestation, mining activities, automobiles, industrial effluents, generation of too much waste (Garbage), dumping of hazardous radio-active wastes, spilling of oil, construction of larger dams and reservoirs.

Notes

You may collect information from different sources like books and magazines and prepare brief notes on each of the causes, explaining how these damage the environment.

26.7 IMPLICATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The degradation of environment is thus a very serious concern. And it is occurring primarily due to excessive and reckless exploitation and unscientific management of natural resources. In fact, it has emerged as a global challenge for all the countries of the world. As stated above, the pollution of air, water and soil caused by emission of harmful gases, release of industrial effluents, urban wastes and radio-active wastes and reckless use of fertilizers and pesticides is threatening the very survival of modern civilization. If you go through the facts stated in the following box, you may realize the seriousness of environmental degradation.

Think and Ponder

- About 50 percent of geographical area of India suffers from varying degrees of degradation caused by deforestation, overgrazing, agricultural mismanagement, shifting cultivation, soil erosion, soil salination, water logging, alkalinity, and acid rains.

- Over 5.3 billion tonnes of top soil is lost every year due to soil erosion. The average soil loss is estimated to be over 16 tonnes per hectares per year which translates into approximately 1 millimetre (mm) each year or 1 centimetre (cm) every decade. It takes nature about a thousand years to form one cm of soil.

- The production of cereals will drop remarkably due to global warming. Scientist around the world are getting increasingly alarmed over global warming's impact on human health. Warming climate is responsible for spread of serious infectious diseases.

- Increasing temperatures are lengthening the growing season of some crops.

- Himalayan glaciers are melting. The rivers originating in Himalayas will get dried.

- Westerly winds have been disrupted this year (2009) causing less rain during the winter season.

One of the major causes of environmental degradation is generation of solid wastes. Do you know that, all over the world people throw away 1000 million tons of solid wastes annually? If we pile up all these at sea level in the shape of a cone, a pyramid with circular base of one kilometer region, its peak would be higher than Mount

Notes

Everest. So we are creating at least one Mount Everest of rubbish materials every year. We can save our environment from degradation and at the same time create wealth in three ways: Recycling, Reusing and Reducing, as detailed in the box below:

Recycle		Reuse		Reduce consumption	
What to recycle	**Its Impact**	**What to reuse**	**How**	**What to reduce**	**How**
Organic waste such as banana peels, egg shells and leftovers of vegetables	It will enrich soil	Cans/ Tins	Use as Pencil Holder	Plastic	Use cloth bag for shopping and say no to plastic bags
Paper	Trees will be saved from being cut	Paper	Make rough pads out of remaining unused paper	Electricity	Switch off lights and fans when you leave a room
Aluminum	It will reduce need for more bauxite	Cloth	Use as Carpet Sheets	Water	Close taps when water is not being used and store only the needed amount of water

Recycle	Reuse	Reduce
Organic waste such as banana peels, egg shells and leftovers of vegetable **Enrich soil**	Cans/tins **Pencil holder**	Plastic **Use cloth bag for shopping**
Paper **save trees**	Paper **Make rough pads out of remaining unused paper**	Electricity **Switch off lights and fans when you leave a room**

Figure 26.4 : *Saving the Environment*

What can you do?

- You can use and promote eco friendly and biodegradable products.
- You can segregate your Home garbage to facilitate the recycling process.
- You can refuse products with plastic packing and depend on more traditional packing material like paper and cloth.
- You can demand eco-friendly refrigerators and air conditioning systems which do not use CFC's

26.8 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Because of the serious consequences of environmental degradation, it has been a matter of great concern. Very often it is linked with development. There is a strongly expressed point of view that the major reason of environmental degradation has been the model of development adopted by human society. The concept of sustainable development has emerged as an alternative model that will halt environmental degradation. Although sustainable development has been used in a number of contexts with different meanings, it has a particular meaning in the context of environment and development relationships.

It is defined as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In this context it is necessary to eliminate irrational use of natural resources that causes environmental depletion. Sustainability requires managing the needs of development in a way that ensures that the economy and society continue to exist without destroying the natural environment on which we depend. We can achieve the goal of sustainable development by managing the scientific use of our natural resources.

26.9 DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Environmental degradation has still more serious implications. Do you know that around the world a growing share of devastation triggered by disaster stems from environmental degradation and resource mismanagement? Disasters have become one of the greatest challenges, but they can be managed.

We may better understand disaster management by understanding the term disaster. A **disaster** is the tragedy that negatively affects society and environment. Disasters are seen as the consequence of inappropriately managed risks. These can be classified into two categories based on their origin: Natural Disasters and Human-made Disasters. A natural disaster occurs when a natural hazard (e.g., volcanic eruption or earthquake or flood) affects human life. Disasters caused by human action, such as negligence, error, or by the failure of a system are called human-made disasters. Examples of such disasters are: Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Landslides that take place in different parts of our country or Floods due to breaches in dams. Global

Warming is going to be a great disaster, and it is also the result of human interference with the natural environment.

Although the consequences of a disaster are immense, its impact can be minimized. Minimizing the adverse effects of natural and human-made disasters by adopting suitable strategies is called **disaster management**. Its process involves four phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Mitigation

Mitigation may appear to you as a technical or difficult term. It means the efforts that are made to prevent hazards from developing into disasters, or to reduce the effects of disasters to the minimum, when they occur. The mitigation phase differs from the other phases because it focuses on long-term measures for reducing or eliminating risks. Even before the phase of mitigation, there may be a phase of the identification of risks. It is better to identify the risks before you plan and make efforts to reduce the impact of disaster. For example, during rainy season, there may be the possibility of flood in a river. If the possible damage to be caused by the flood is identified, one may plan and take steps to reduce the damage.

Preparedness

In the preparedness phase, disaster managers develop plans of action for when the disaster strikes. This includes (a) communication plans with easily understandable terminology and methods; (b) proper maintenance and training of emergency services; (c) development of emergency shelters and evacuation plans; (d) getting ready and maintaining disaster supplies and equipment; and (e) developing organizations of trained volunteers among civilian populations.

Response

When a disaster occurs, actions under the response phase are taken. These include the mobilization of the necessary emergency services and also of people who respond immediately in the disaster area. This is likely to include emergency services, such as firefighters, police and ambulance crews. A well planned strategy as part of the preparedness phase enables efficient coordination of rescue.

Recovery

The aim of the recovery phase is to restore the affected area to its previous state. It differs from the response phase in its focus. Recovery efforts are primarily concerned with actions that involve rebuilding destroyed property, re-employment, and the repair of essential infrastructure.

ACTIVITY 26.4

Earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, drought, floods and cyclones are the six major disasters which take a heavy toll on the life and property all over the globe. Can you prepare a disaster management plan in respect of any one of these for all the four phases: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, based on the processes discussed above?

INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.2

1. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

    (a) When habitats are destroyed .... is lost.

    (b) Modern gadgets release .... and causes ....

    (c) Extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides have been a major source of .... and ....

    (d) One of the biggest causes of environmental degradation is generation of ....

2. What is disaster? Give any one example.

3. Activity: Garbage survey

    For waste management, it is necessary that we collect the wastes for disposing them off in three ways and take the needed steps, i.e. recycle or reuse or reduce them. In this context you have to observe what type of waste is disposed of in your house/area/colony? Carry out a weekly survey in your house/area/locality in the following format and write which of the wastes can be recycled, reused or reduced:

Day	Recycle	Reuse	Reduce
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Write in the above table the names of garbage generated in your house on each day of the week. After one week, see which type of garbage is generated the most. Try to reuse or reduce as explained in the lesson above. Do the same exercise for another week and compare the results of two weeks. You may find that the garbage under 'Reduce' has decreased substantially.

4. List the activities by which we degrade the environment.

1	Using and throwing plastic materials into drains.
2	Plucking leaves from plants or trees while standing at the bus stop.
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

●   The word environment denotes all the elements, processes and conditions around us along with their interrelationships. It is defined as the sum total of all the conditions and influences that affect the development of life of an organism. Environment has two components namely biotic and abiotic. Based on the process of creation or evolution, environment can be classified into two main categories, i.e. Natural and Human-made environment. The environment does not remain static but it keeps on changing according to place and time. Both natural and human-made environments are dynamic in nature; you must have noticed the changes in human-made environment. Environment is very vital for us. We are dependent on our environment for food, shelter, water, air, soil and energy, fibers, medicines, raw materials and so on. Inspite of such importance of environment, we are degrading it in the name of development. Social and economic factors such as growing population, poverty, urbanisation, changing life style, agricultural development, economic development and industrialization are major causes of environmental degradation. We should try to conserve our environment by observing certain simple rules and norms.

●   Disasters like floods and droughts are caused by environmental degradation and mismanagement of resources. Disasters can be divided into two categories –

natural and human made. Disaster management is a series of activities in four phases. These are mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Though natural disasters cannot be stopped but their effects can be minimized by us.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What is meant by environment? Explain it with the help of an example.

2. Classify environment on the basis of evolution. Explain them with examples from your surroundings.

3. 'Environment is dynamic in nature and keeps on changing.' Substantiate this statement with examples.

4. Discuss in brief the importance of environment.

5. Define environmental degradation. Explain the factors causing environmental degradation.

6. Suggest any three ways to save our environment from degradation.

7. List at least ten activities by which human beings have been degrading the environment.

8. Classify disasters on the basis of their origin.

9. What is meant by disaster management? How can we minimize the adverse effects of disasters?

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

26.1

1. Biotic – Plants, animals, microbes, bacteria

   Abiotic – water, soil, fire, topography

2. (a)   Natural, human made

   (b)   Creation or its evolution.

   (c)   Human made

   (d)   It changes over a period of time and space.

3. The child will write the names of biotic and abiotic components of the environment of his own area/locality.

   For example water without which nobody can live. He/she will prepare the list of other things himself/herself.

26.2

1. (a) Biodiversity

   (b) Harmful gases, global warning

   (c) Contamination of water bodies, land degradation

   (d) Solid wastes

2. A disaster is the tragedy that negatively affects society and environment. Example Bhopal gas tragedy, Tsunamis, Landshides, London Smong, floods, earthquakes (Any one)

3. The students have to conduct this survey themselves.

4. He has to write the activities himself.

Hints for Activity

26.1

Learning objective	Assessment tool	Scoring key
Identify various components of environment	Experiential learning	Level -1 (Marks -0 to 3% – insufficient response) The child will be able to answer only one way in which the environment is used.
		Level -2 (Marks 34-55% – Improvement required) The child will be able to answer two ways in which the term environment is used.
		Level -3 (Marks 56-75% – more or less satisfactory) The child will be able to tell about three ways.
		Level 4 (76-100% and above – Very good) The child will be able to tell all the four ways in which the term environment is used.

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27

PEACE AND SECURITY

Have you heard the term 'peace and security'. When there is some violent activity in a city or in any other area within a State, we are told that there is a threat to peace and security. If there is some upheaval within a country, it is said to be a threat to national peace and security. If the police force or the army is especially deployed in certain area, it is done to maintain peace and security. If there is war between nations or some terrorist activities in a nation, it is a threat to international peace and security. We are also told that international organizations like United Nations are there to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security. These two words, peace and security, are also used separately. All religions talk of peace. Individually, we are concerned about peace of mind or peace in the family or the community. We also read about the worries of families regarding the security of girls and women when they move out of home. The use of these terms in different contexts and in different ways at times confuses us. Let us therefore understand various aspects of peace and security in individual, societal, national and international contexts.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

● explain the meaning of peace and security in varied contexts;

● appreciate the traditional and new understandings of peace and security;

● underline peace and security as necessary condition for democracy and development;

● appreciate the approach and methods adopted by India to address the threats to peace and security;

● identify the steps taken by the government to deal with insurgency of militant groups; and

● assess India's contribution to International peace and security and its participation in UN.

27.1 PEACE AND SECURITY

27.1.1 Meaning

To begin with, let us understand the meaning of peace and security, the following interesting story may help you.

1. Peace

Once, a King offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture on peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all the paintings and shortlisted two, so that he could finally select one as the best painting. One picture showed a calm lake as a perfect mirror for mountains all around it. Overhead was the blue sky with white clouds, beautifully reflected in the lake. Everyone thought that it was a perfect picture of peace. The other picture also had mountains, but those were rugged and bare. Above was a stormy sky from which rain fell and in which lightening played. Down the side of the mountain a huge foaming waterfall releasing water at great force was also depicted. But behind the waterfall in a bush a bird had built a nest and was feeding her babies in perfect peace. Which painting do you think won the prize? The king chose the second picture. Do you know why? The King stated the reason, "Because peace does not mean the absence of noise, trouble, or disturbances. Peace means to be in the midst of all these and still remain calm in your heart."

Do you think that the painting selected by the King depicted peace in the true sense of the term? Peace really does not mean a state of mind or a condition with complete absence of disturbances or conflicts. In fact, complete absence of disturbances or conflicts in human world is impossible. We are trying to understand peace in societal, national and international contexts and not in the context where the humans do not exist. We may, therefore, define it as follows: Peace is a social and political condition that ensures development of individuals, society and nation. It is a state of harmony characterized by the existence of healthy relationships. It is a condition related to the social or economic welfare and equality. It is also related to a working political order that serves true interests of all. In the context of intra-national and international relations, peace is not merely the absence of war or conflict, but also the presence of socio-cultural and economic understanding and unity.

2. Security

The word security also appears in our daily conversations, in newspapers or in official discourse. The reference points of security ranges from individual, institutional, regional, national to international levels. All of us take various measures to secure our homes or areas where we live in. We know that Ministers and other VIPs are provided security individually. Security arrangements are made for key governmental

and other important institutions or certain regions that are under threat. We also hear about national and international security. This multiple usage of the word security indicates its varied meanings. In general terms, it means a secure condition or feeling free from fear. It also means the safety of an individual, an institution, a region, a nation or the world. However, in its most basic sense, security implies freedom from extremely dangerous threats. It also relates to threats that endanger core values like human rights.

3. Peace and Security

While accepting the varied perceptions of both the words, it is evident that peace and security are inseparable. Combined together, it is a condition where individuals, institutions, regions, nations and the world move ahead without any threat. In this condition regions or nations are generally more stable domestically, likely to be democratically governed and respectful to human rights. Conflict not only generates threat and fear, but also hampers economic, social, or political advancement.

ACTIVITY 27.1

Try to appreciate the following two conditions and identify which of the two is the true condition of peace and security? Give reasons for your answer:

1. A country ruled by a military dictatorship has everything in order. There appears to be peace everywhere. The ruling group enjoys all privileges. People are poor and deprived of even the basic facilities necessary for a good life. But they silently obey the dictates of the ruling group. There is no protest, no threat to the government. There is adequate security arrangement for the external threat.

2. There is a democratic country which is moving ahead on the path of socio-economic development. People are enjoying all the basic rights, liberty, equality, justice. They are freely conveying their concerns to the government. Occasionally, there are peaceful protests and demonstrations that are managed by positive response from the government. People face difficulties in their daily life and try to sort there out problems. There is absence of constant threat to the safety and security of the people and the nation.

27.1.2 Traditional and New understandings of Peace and Security

When we talk about peace end security, we mostly relate it to its *traditional notion* that has been focused since ages on the danger of military or armed conflicts or threats. And the source of the danger has been a nation threatening to take or being suspected to take military action against the other. This endangers sovereignty,

independence and territorial integrity of the nation, and also the lives of its people. As a measure of ensuring peace and security, the cause of the threat of military action is sorted out by the concerned nations through a bilateral agreement, or a long-term treaty for not taking military action against each other. The nations also take preventive measures by increasing their defence capabilities, deploying more armed forces on borders. Some also adopt balance of power approach through entering into a treaty with other nations to take joint action in the case of military attack on any one of them. As we know, the international organizations like United Nations have been created to save the humanity from the threat of war or armed conflicts.

But the *new or non-traditional notion* of peace and security is much broader and goes beyond military threats to include wide range of dangers and threats to human existence. This conceptualization includes not only regions and nations, but also individuals or communities and the human kind at large. This notion is primarily addressed to individuals. It is true that protection of people from foreign attacks is a necessary condition for peace and security, but it is not the be all and end all. In fact, peace and security is to be seen as the precondition to socio-economic development and to the maintenance of human dignity. The new notion of peace and security also includes freedom of individuals from hunger, freedom from wants, diseases and epidemics, environmental degradation, exploitation and sub-human treatment. In this background the new notion of peace and security is based on threats beyond military attacks. These threats may be from terrorism, insurgency, genocide, denial of human rights, health epidemics, narcotics trade and irrational use of natural resources.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.1

1. Fill in the blanks:

    (a) Peace really does not mean a state of mind or a condition with complete absence of ....

    (b) Peace is a state of harmony characterized by the existence of ....

    (c) Security means a secure condition or feeling untroubled by .... It also means the safety of ....

    (d) In its most basic sense, security implies freedom from ....

2. Why is peace and security considered so important?

3. What are the three basic differences between traditional and new or non-traditional concepts of peace and security?

MODULE - 4

Contemporary India: Issues and Goals

Notes

27.2 PEACE AND SECURITY FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

There is a mutual relationship between democracy and development, and peace and security. In the absence of peace and security, democracy cannot function and development cannot take place. It is necessary to have peace for holding of elections. The democratic institutions cannot function if there is no peace. Citizens can participate in the process of decision-making at different levels only when the peace prevails. Peace is still more essential for development in various areas. No development activity is possible if there is disturbance, violence or war.

On the other hand peace cannot be achieved in the absence of democracy and development. It has been observed that democracies by and large do not go for war. One can argue that regional peace is enhanced if democracy is prevalent in all the countries that constitute that region. Democracy is also better placed for eliminating conditions that generate public dissatisfaction. It is so because democratic system provides equal opportunity to all citizens to participate in the process of governance and decision-making. Development also promotes peace. It is through development that nations can ensure social and economic progress for the people and improve their quality of life. This ensures that people do not suffer from a sense of deprivation which leads them to indulge in protests and violent activities. When development activities continue in all the countries of a region, every country ensures that the peace is not disturbed, otherwise development will suffer. Development initiatives contribute to sustain peace, security and stability in the countries

Do you know

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted by 189 Members of the United Nations on 8 September 2000, identified peace and security as key conditions for successful development;

The 2005 World Summit on MDGs universally recognized that "development, peace and security, and Human Rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing".

27.3 PEACE AND SECURITY: APPROACH ADOPTED IN INDIA

Like any other country, in India also peace and security has been one of the major concerns. You also must be reading in newspapers or getting information through radio and television about external as well as internal threats to peace and security in our country. The geographical position of India and its emergence as a global power make it vulnerable to external threats. India has not only faced wars with neighbouring countries like China and Pakistan, but has also been dealing with international terrorism. It has been experiencing internal threats from insurgency and separatist

movements ever since independence. Just after two decades of its independence India experienced naxalite activities which have now assumed alarming proportion. It is in this context that the approach for ensuring peace and security began evolving quite early, in fact, during freedom movement itself. The approach has been reflected in the Constitution as well. The approach, however, has been changing over the years according to the needs and requirements.

27.3.1 Evolution of Approach to Peace and Security during freedom movement

The ideas and views about the approach to ensure peace and security began during freedom movement. The leadership clearly realized that the democratic system after independence can be functional only when a condition of peace and security is maintained. The development process can not be accelerated unless the peace prevails. Which is why, the leadership of the freedom movement expressed that independent India would make all-out efforts to maintain and promote international peace and security. They extended support to all the anti-colonial and anti-racist movements in the world and championed the cause of democracy. The consensus that emerged for adopting socialistic approach to socio-economic development, laying emphasis on social justice and secularism was aimed at creating conditions that promote security against internal threats to peace.

? Do you know

Jawaharlal Nehru said:

"But I should like to make it clear that the policy India has sought to pursue is not a negative and neutral policy. It is a positive and vital policy that flows from our struggle for freedom and from the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. **Peace is not only an absolute necessity for us in India in order to progress and develop but also of paramount importance to the world."**

Quoted from the Speech of Pt. Nehru at Columbia University (1949);

27.3.2 Peace and Security in the Constitution

The process of constitution framing was greatly influenced by the ideas that evolved during freedom movement. The Constitution, therefore, mentions peace and security in the chapter on Directive Principles of State Policy. The federal system and the establishment of rural and urban local governments ensure that the power is not centralized, because centralization generates regional and local dissatisfaction that may be a threat to internal security. In a federal system, the decisions in respect of socio-economic development are taken by the State governments that are best placed to respond to all the hopes and aspirations of the people of that State. The local governments also ensure the mass participation in the decision-making for development and take care of the needs and requirements of all.

Notes

? **Do you know**

Article 51 of the Constitution states: "The state shall endeavour to: (a) promote international peace and security; (b) maintain just and honorable relations between nations; (c) foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another; and *(d)* encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration."

India, therefore, adopted a multi-pronged approach and methods to ensure peace and security. At the international level, it adopted a policy aimed at promotion of international peace and security. It extends support to all efforts being made at the global or regional level for peace, equitable economic development, promotion of human rights and elimination of terrorism. At the national level, it is committed to ensure, liberty, equality and social justice, secularism, equitable economic development and removal of social inequalities. It also provides equal opportunities to all its citizens to participate not only in elections but also in the decision-making processes at various levels. All this is done to ensure that no section of the society feels that it is being discriminated or its interests are being ignored. Because it is these feeling of discrimination that gives birth to discontent and leads to protests and political violence which turn in to major threats to peace and security.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.2

1. Why did India need to evolve and adopt a specific approach for both international and internal peace and security?

2. What has been the contribution of freedom movement in the evolution of an approach to peace and security?

3. What is the approach for peace and security mentioned in the Indian Constitution?

4. What according to you would be the most effective methods for ensuring both internal and international peace and security?

27.4 INTERNAL THREATS TO PEACE AND SECURITY

You may have observed or experienced that whenever there is an aggressive protest and demonstration or violent activities leading to loss of lives and property, it is a threat to peace and security. But a number of such occurrences are law and order problems which are locally managed by the police. In a democracy like ours such protests, demonstrations, strikes, bandhs and other agitations do take place to draw the attention of governments or concerned authorities towards specific demands and concerns. However, India has been experiencing various types of violent activities under the garb of terrorism or insurgency or naxalite movement, which are more serious threats to peace and security.

27.4.1 Terrorism

Terrorism has been one of the greatest threats to peace and security in our country. The illustration on the terrorist attack in Mumbai on 26 November, 2008, popularly called 26/11, symbolizes one of the worst such incidences. Have you not been shocked by these kinds of terrorist attacks in several cities that have occurred almost at regular intervals in recent past? In fact, such activities have been happening since independence in various parts of the country. The terrorists who conduct violent activities are persons belonging to foreign countries or are Indian youth indoctrinated, supported and trained in neighbouring countries. At times, we are confused about defining terrorist activities. In fact, there is no consensus on the definition of terrorism. However, in general terms and in the context of India, we may define terrorism as essentially a criminal act to inflict dramatic and deadly injury on civilians and to create an atmosphere of fear, generally for a political or ideological purpose. Terrorism is a criminal act, but it is more than mere criminality. These acts are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them.

Figure 27.1 *Terrorist Attack in Mumbai*

? Do you know

In 2004, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1566 condemned terrorist acts as:

"criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature,"

Notes

As we have experienced, the terrorists conduct bomb blasts or do indiscriminate firings at the crowded public places killing and injuring hundreds of innocent people. They also hijack planes and kill innocent passengers compelling the government to accept their demands like releasing other terrorists who were captured and kept in jails. These acts also destroy public and private properties. They commit these heinous acts to create an environment of terror to intimidate people and the governments.

ACTIVITY 27.2

Gather information about terrorist attacks in different cities of India conducted since 1992 and prepare the list in the following table:

Sl. No.	Date of Terrorist Attack	Name of the City	Mode of Attack (Bomb Blasts or Firing or both)	No. of people killed and injured

27.4.2 Insurgency

An insurgency is an armed rebellion against a constituted authority, the government. Ever since independence, India has experienced violence related to insurgent movements. Broadly, these can be divided into movements with political motives and movements for social and economic justice. The most prominent militant groups are violent extremist separatists operating in Jammu and Kashmir and Assam, and different militant groups in India's northeastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Although all the members of these groups are Indians, these groups receive support from neighbouring countries. Whereas, these militant movements are going on because the groups involved in it are dissatisfied with their present state of affairs, there are certain groups, especially in Jammu and Kashmir and Assam that have political agenda. They are fighting for secession from the country. These groups have active support from the neighbouring countries and even certain international terrorist groups.

27.4.3 Naxalite Movement

The Naxalite movement has been a cause of great concern because of different kinds of complexities. It began in a village of West Bengal, but has now spread over in

about 125 districts in 12 States, influencing the lives of lakhs of people. The Naxalites quite often attack public property, the government officials, police and paramilitary forces and the people whom they consider their enemies. The Naxals are also against any development inside the forest area. The government wants to build pucca roads inside the villages and forests but the Naxals discourage any development work in the area. They know that once the development takes place then perhaps they may loose support of the people. Therefore they have been misguiding the innocent people that the government wants to take away their mineral wealth and their forests.

Figure 27.2 *Naxalites*

Unfortunately, the basic cause of the emergence and spread of this movement has been the discontent among certain sections of the society. The youth who are engaged in violent activities of the movement belong to the sections of society, mostly the scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and dalits, that have been bearing the brunt of social discrimination and economic deprivation since ages. You also may be aware or may even have some experience how the members of these sections receive discriminatory treatment in our society. Moreover, the fruits of development taking place in India are yet to reach these sections in full measure. Whatever may be the reason but the development has not been able to meet their hopes and aspirations.

? Do you know

The naxalite insurgency began in India in March 1967 when a group of revolutionaries led by Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal launched a peasants uprising at Naxalbari after a tribal youth, who had a judicial order to plough his land, was attacked by the goons of local landlords. The tribals retaliated and refused to part with the land owner's share of their produce and lifted the entire stock from his granary. It ignited a fire that spread in the State. This was brought down by use of force and simultaneously bringing in some land reforms by the State government. This was phase one of the movement. Later on, the phase two of the Naxal movement spread to 9 states that is, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra

and Uttar Pradesh; posing a challenge to the nation. In the predominantly tribal areas, naxals hold Kangaroo courts; impose levis on contractors, mine owners, businessmen and even on government officials. The movement has thrown up leaders, a legion of workers and sympathisers who believe that guerrilla warfare tactic would liberate India.

27.4.4 Strategy of the Government

The Government of India has been employing strategies and methods to deal with terrorism, insurgency and naxalite movement. It has been supporting efforts of all nations to fight terrorism and seeking their support whenever any terrorist attack takes place. Diplomatically it is trying to put international pressure on Pakistan and other neighbouring countries to extend their active cooperation in ensuring that the support to such terrorist groups does not come from them. As regards the insurgency activities aimed at political objectives, the Government of India is trying to tackle it diplomatically. India has entered into a treaty with Myanmar and very recently Bangladesh to restrain the help and support coming to insurgent movements from those countries. It is also trying to mount international pressure on Pakistan to do the same. In respect of the Naxalite movement in the initial phase the State governments treated it as a law and order problem. But it was realized that it is a more serious issue, having deep socio-economic dimensions. Efforts are being made to accelerate the pace of development in those areas and to bring the youth in to the mainstream.

ACTIVITY 27.3

Ask your friends, classmates, teachers and others who are conveniently available to express their views on the statements given below. Their number may be at least <u>five</u>. They should give reasons why do they agree or disagree with the statement:

1. The government should crush the naxalite movement, capture or kill all the naxalites, so that there is no threat to peace and security.

2. The government should formulate a national policy about naxalite movement to prevent them effectively from disturbing peace and security, accelerate development activities in those areas, so that there is no discontent among youth and to motivate the naxalites to shun violence and join the mainstream.

Write down the reasons for response in the following table. Based on the responses, prepare a brief note on how will you like to solve the problem of naxalite movement.

Notes

Statement Nos.	Reasons
Statement -1	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Statement-2	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.3

1. Fill in the blank:

   (a) India has been experiencing various types of violent activities under the garb of (i) .... (ii) .... (iii) ....

   (b) Terrorism is a criminal act to .... on civilians and to .... generally for a political or ideological purpose.

   (c) The insurgency in India is of two types: (i) movements with .... and (ii) movements for ....

2. What are the main strategies being used by the governments to deal with insurgency?

3. What steps, according to you, the governments should take to solve the problem of insurgency?

27.5 INDIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

India has been equally concerned with international peace and security. It is essential for its progress. Like any other nation, India also has its foreign policy rooted in the national interest. India has been pursuing a foreign policy in which peace and security at the international level and especially in our neighbourhood and in our region as

a whole has been a key concern. In fact, right from independence the basic objectives of Indian foreign policy have been (i) maintenance of freedom in policy formulation; (ii) promotion of international peace and security; (iii) good relationships with other nations and especially with our neighbours; (iv) support to the United Nations; (v) disarmament; opposition to colonialism, imperialism and racism; and (vi) cooperation among developing nations. To attain these objectives the foreign policy that India has been pursuing consistently is known as the policy of non-alignment, though there have been changes in it to keep it relevant in the context of changes on the international scene.

27.5.1 Policy of Non-alignment

Non-alignment has been regarded as the most important feature of India's foreign policy. India led the process of evolution of the concept of non-alignment during the period, when the world was divided between two camps: western nations led by the United States of America constituting the one camp and the communist nations led by the Soviet Union constituting the other. It was a known as period of cold war between the two camps. Cold War was intense rivalry between USA and Soviet Union without fighting a direct war to attract allies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It started soon after the Second World War and continued for forty five years. These two big countries became two opposite poles known as East and West and the world politics revolved around these two poles. In fact, the world became *bipolar*.

Non-alignment aimed at maintaining national independence in foreign affairs by not joining any of the two military alliances formed by the USA and Soviet Union. Non-alignment was neither neutrality nor non-involvement nor isolationism. It was a dynamic concept which meant not committing to any military bloc but taking an independent stand on international issues according to the merits of each case. The policy of non-alignment won many supporters in the developing countries as it provided an opportunity to them for protecting their sovereignty as also retaining their freedom of action during the tension ridden cold war period. India as the prime architect of non-alignment and as one of the leading members of the non-aligned movement has taken an active part in its growth. The Non-Aligned Movement is providing all member states, regardless of size and importance, an opportunity to participate in global decision making and world politics.

? Do you know

Among the non-aligned nations, Nehru had evolved special relationship with President Tito of Yugoslavia and Nasser of Egypt. These three are regarded as the founding fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The non-aligned movement was a group of the newly independent states who refused to accept the dictates of the former colonial masters and decided to act according to their own judgment on issues of international concern. Non-aligned Movement (NAM) has also been anti-imperialist in approach.

Figure 27.3 *Nehru, Nkrumah, Nasser and Tito (L to R); Leaders of NAM*

Since Non-aligned Movement NAM was a product of the cold war scenario and the bipolar world, many scholars questioned the relevance of NAM after the end of cold war and disintegration of the Soviet Union. However, even in the present scenario NAM has a significant role to play. First, with the disintegration of Soviet Union, the world faces a threat from unipolar world. The NAM can act as a check against US dominance. Secondly, the developed (North) and developing (South) world are divided over several economic issues. The NAM remains a very relevant forum for developing countries to engage with the developed nations in a productive dialogue. Moreover, the NAM can prove to be powerful instrument for South-South cooperation. Such a thing is essential if the developing countries are to increase their bargaining power vis-a-vis the developed world. Finally, the developing countries united under the banner of NAM have to fight for the reform of UN and change it according to the requirements of the 21st century.

27.5.2 Support to United Nations

India has always viewed United Nations (UN) as a vehicle for peace and security and for peaceful change in world politics. Being one of the 51 Original or founding Members of the United Nations, India has been extending all out support in its efforts for international peace and security and disarmament. India expects that the UN must involve countries to moderate their differences through talks or negotiations. Moreover, India has advocated active role for UN in development effort of the developing countries. It has pleaded for a common united front of these countries in the UN. It believes that the nonaligned world by virtue of its massive number could play a constructive and meaningful role in the UN by stopping the superpowers from using this world body for their own interests. Security Council, an important organ of United Nations plays a key role in the maintenance of international peace and security, that is why, a process of its reforms has been initiated and there is the possibility of expanding its permanent membership. India has a strong case for becoming a permanent member in the Security Council.

**Figure 27.4** *UN Building, New York*

ACTIVITY 27.4

Gather information about the total membership of Security Council and how many nations are its permanent members? You may ask your teachers or consult a book on United Nations or take the help of internet to get the information. Based on the information prepare a write up on (i) Why only these nations were made permanent members of the Security Council? (ii) Why should India be its permanent member?
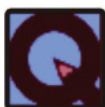
INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.4

1. What are the basic objectives of Indian Foreign Policy?
2. Why did India adopt the policy of non-alignment?
3. Fill in the blanks:
    1. India was .... of non-aligned movement.
    2. India has always viewed United Nations (UN) as a vehicle for .... in world politics.
    3. India has been extending all out support to UN in its ....and other endeavours like ....
    4. India has a strong case for becoming a .... in the Security Council.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Peace and security is very important for an individual, a society, a nation and the world. It is a condition where individuals, institutions, regions, nations and the world move ahead without any threat.

- Peace is a social and political condition that ensures development of individuals, society and the nation. It is a state of harmony characterized by the existence of healthy interpersonal or inter-group or inter-regional or inter-state or international relationships, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves the true interests of all. In the context of intra-national and international relations, peace is not merely the absence of war or conflict, but also the presence of socio-cultural and economic understanding and unity. There is a sense of tolerance in relations for the realization of true peace.

- In general terms, security means a secure condition or feeling untroubled by danger or fear. It also means the safety of an individual, an institution, a region, a nation or the world. However, in its most basic sense, security implies freedom from extremely dangerous threats. It also relates to threats that endanger core values like human rights.

- In its traditional notion, peace and security has been focused since ages on the danger of military or armed conflicts or threats. But the new notion is focused on human peace and security or global peace and security. This is primarily addressed to individuals and is to be seen as enabler, as the precondition to socio-economic development and to the maintenance of human dignity.

- Peace and security is an essential condition for democracy and development. In fact, there is a mutual relationship between democracy and development and peace and security. In the absence of peace and security democracy cannot function and development cannot take place. On the other hand peace cannot be achieved in the absence of democracy and development.

- The approach and methods for ensuring peace and security began evolving in India quite early, in fact, during freedom movement itself. The approach has been reflected in the Constitution also. The approach, however, has been changing over the years according to the needs and requirements.

- India has been experiencing various types of violent activities under the garb of terrorism or insurgency or naxalite movement, which are more serious threats to peace and security. The Government of India has been employing strategies and methods to deal with terrorism, insurgency and naxalite movement.

- India has been concerned with international peace and security. The leadership of the freedom movement announced that India would promote the policy of international peace, because it would be essential for the socio-economic development. Which is why, like any other nation, India also has its foreign policy rooted in the national interest and its place at the international level.

- Non-alignment has been regarded as the most important feature of India's foreign policy. India led the process of evolution of the concept of non-alignment during the period, when the world was divided between two camps. The Non-Aligned

Notes

Movement is providing all member states, regardless of size and importance, an opportunity to participate in global decision making and world politics.

● India has been extending all out support to United Nations in its peacekeeping operations and other endeavours like disarmament. Moreover, India has advocated active role for UN in development effort of the developing countries. Since India has emerged as the second fastest growing economy and also because of the leadership it has provided at all international forums, its contribution to UN peacekeeping, and its track record in espousing the cause of the developing world, India has a strong case for becoming a permanent member in the Security Council.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What is the meaning of the term peace and security? How is the traditional notion of the term different from the new or non-traditional notion?

2. Do you agree that there is a mutual relationship between peace and security on one hand and democracy and development on the other? Justify your answer.

3. What contribution did the national freedom movement make to evolve the strategies and methods to deal with threats to peace and security?

4. What are the major threats to peace and security in India? What are the major strategies and methods that India has been employing?

5. Examine the Indian Foreign Policy in the context of peace and security.

6. How is the policy of non-alignment relevant in the context of the changed nature of international politics?

7. How has India been extending its support to the United Nations? Why Should India be made a permanent member of the Security Council?

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

27.1

1. (a) disturbances or conflicts

    (b) healthy interpersonal or inter-group or inter-regional or inter-state or international relationships, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves the true interests of all.

(c)   by danger or fear, an individual, an institution, a region, a nation or the world.

(d)   extremely dangerous threats

2. Because it is a condition where individuals, institutions, regions, nations and the world move ahead without any threat. In this condition regions or nations are generally more stable domestically, likely to be democratically governed and respectful to human rights. Conflict not only generates threat and fear, but also hampers economic, social, or political advancement.

3. (i)   The *new or non-traditional notion* of peace and security is much broader and goes beyond military threats to include wide range of dangers and threats to human existence.

    (ii)   It includes not only regions and nations, but also individuals or communities and the human kind at large. (iii) According to new understanding, peace and security is to be seen as the precondition to socio-economic development and to the maintenance of human dignity. (iv) The new notion also includes freedom of individuals from hunger, freedom from wants, diseases and epidemics, environmental degradation, exploitation and sub-human treatment.

27.2

1. There is a mutual relationship between democracy and development and peace and security. In the absence of peace and security democracy cannot function and development cannot take place. Citizens can participate in the process of decision-making at different levels only when the peace prevails. Peace is still more essential for development in various areas. On the other hand peace cannot be achieved in the absence of democracy and development. Democracy is better placed for eliminating conditions that generate public dissatisfaction. Development also promotes peace. It is through development that nations can ensure social and economic progress for the people and improve their quality of life.

2. The ideas and views about the approach to ensure peace and security began during freedom movement. The leadership clearly realized that the democratic system after independence can be functional only when a condition of peace and security is maintained. The consensus that emerged for adopting socialistic approach to socio-economic development during freedom struggle was aimed at creating conditions that promote security against internal threats to peace.

3. The Constitution mentions peace and security in the Chapter on Directive Principles of State Policy. The federal system and the establishment of rural and urban local governments are aimed at eliminating a threat to internal security. At the international level, the Constitution adopted a policy aimed at promotion of international peace and security. It has provisions for the support to all efforts

being made at the global or regional level for peace, equitable economic development, promotion of human rights and elimination of terrorism.

4. The democratic institutions and processes must be strengthened. Efforts should continue to be made to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development in all parts of the country. People must be encouraged to participate in democratic processes and development activities. India must support all international efforts for maintaining peace and security.

27.3

1. (a) (i) terrorism, (ii) insurgency, (iii) naxalite movement

   (b) inflict dramatic and deadly injury , create an atmosphere of fear

   (c) (i) political motives (ii) social and economic justice

2. The Government of India has been supporting efforts of all nations to fight terrorism and seeking their support whenever any terrorist attack takes place. As regards the insurgency activities aimed at political objectives, the Government of India is trying to tackle it diplomatically. India has entered into a treaty with Myanmar and very recently Bangladesh to restrain the help and support coming to insurgent movements from those countries. It is also trying to mount international pressure on Pakistan to do the same. In respect of the Naxalite movement it was realized that it is a more serious issue, having deep socio-economic dimensions. Efforts are being made to accelerate the pace of development in those areas and to bring the youth in to the mainstream.

3. The government should make all efforts for all-round development of all regions of the country. All must have equal opportunity for education and employment. The democratic institutions and processes must be strengthened to provide equal opportunities to participate. Efforts needed at international level are supporting the institutions and processes that are engaged in maintaining international peace and security. Allout efforts are to be made to contain terrorism.

27.4

1. (i) Maintenance of freedom in policy formulation; (ii) promotion of international peace and security; (iii) good relationships with other nations and especially with our neighbours; (iv) support to the United Nations; (v) disarmament; opposition to colonialism, imperialism and racism; and (vi) cooperation among developing nations.

2. Non alignment aimed at maintaining national independence in foreign affairs by not joining any of the two military alliances formed by the USA and Soviet Union. Non-alignment was neither neutrality nor non-involvement nor isolationism. The policy of non-alignment provided an opportunity to developing nations for protecting their sovereignty as also retaining their freedom of action during the

tension ridden cold war period. The Non-Aligned Movement is providing all member states, regardless of size and importance, an opportunity to participate in global decision making and world politics.

3. (a) prime architect

   (b) peace and security and for peaceful change

   (c) peacekeeping operations, disarmament

   (d) permanent member

"Sincerity is the sum of all moral qualities."

-DR.B.R AMBEDKAR

For more information please visit QR code