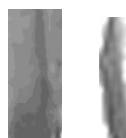
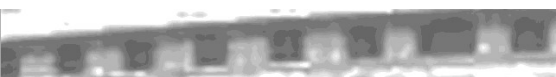


CIVICS



What is Government?

Government and its Functions

Government is a group of people who govern a country or a state and manage its affairs. Every country needs a government to make decisions and administer its affairs. Following are the functions of a government:

- All the administrative functions such as building railways, postal services, roads, public schools and hospitals are performed by the government.
- The government of a nation protects its boundaries and maintains peaceful relations with other countries.
- The government works for the upliftment of the poor section of the society. It formulates various programmes to help the poor.
- It also ensures that every section of society has food to eat and basic health care facilities.
- During natural calamities such as earthquakes and floods, the government organises various relief programmes for the people of the affected regions.
- Those people who violate any laws are punished by the courts, which are also part of the government. It thus maintains law and order in the state.
- Various decisions such as protecting the interests of the country on an international level or controlling the resources are taken by the government on behalf of the people.
- The government has the power of making and implementing laws. If any person feels that laws are not being followed by an individual or a group, he/she can approach the court and file a case.



In case of natural calamity, relief works are organised by the government.



Government appoint army personnel for protecting the borders of the country.

Levels of the Government

The government functions at various levels. They are:

- National Level: The Central Government manages the administration of the entire country and protects its boundaries.
- State level: Various State Governments look after the administration of their own state.
- Local level: Village panchayats and municipal bodies look after various affairs like education, health, cleanliness etc in their own villages or districts.

Types of Government

Following are the various types of governments:

- Monarchical form of government: In a monarchy, the ruler takes all the decisions. There is a small council of ministers to advise him on certain policies, but he has the final say in all matters of the state. His position is hereditary and he does not have to explain or defend his actions.
- Dictatorial form of government: In a dictatorial form of government, a person or a



In a monarchical form of government, the ruler has all the powers in his hands.

group of people assume power without the consent of the people. Basic fundamental rights are denied to the people in a dictatorship.

- Democratic form of government: In a democratic form of government, the ultimate power lies in the hands of the people as they vote for candidates during elections. Only those candidates who win become a part of the government. The government has to take full responsibility for the actions which are taken by it.



In a democracy, people choose their own representatives.

Types of Democracy

People in various parts of the world have fought to gain democracy. India became a democratic country after long period of struggle. Similarly many other countries in the world have struggled to establish themselves as democracies. At the same time, in many countries, people are still striving to establish a democratic rule.

The basic feature of democracy is that people elect their own leaders. It is through them, that they participate in various matters of the state. Today almost all countries are **representative democracies**. In a representative democracy, people do not directly participate in law making affairs. They choose their representatives who collectively make laws for the country.



In a democracy, every adult citizen has the right to vote.

In a democracy, there is universal adult franchise. It means that every person above a certain age has the right to vote.

In many countries, people had to fight for achieving the principle of universal adult franchise. Earlier, women, slaves and poor people did not have the right to vote. Only a few powerful, rich and aristocratic sections of society voted and made laws for the country.

In India, Gandhi along with other nationalist leaders advocated the principle of universal adult franchise and stressed that every Indian should have the right to vote.

Struggle of Women to Gain the Right to Vote

- In many countries till the first quarter of the twentieth century, women did not have the right to vote.
- In due time, women across the world organised themselves and demanded the right to vote.
- During the First World War, when men went away to battlefield to fight wars, women were called upon to do the work which was earlier done by men.
- The women who organised themselves and demanded the right to vote came to be known as suffragettes as they demanded the right to vote for all women.
- Many suffragettes were imprisoned and many organised hunger strikes. Finally, women in US and UK got the right to vote in 1920 and 1928 respectively.



Women demand the right to vote in the early years of the twentieth century.