

# CIVICS

## Chapter 4: Key Elements of a Democratic Government



## Key Elements of a Democratic Government

In a democracy, all people are considered to be equal before the law. They enjoy various fundamental rights and also the right to vote. People in many countries had to fight to establish democratic governments in their own country.

South Africa was one such country where people organized massive protests to establish the principles of democracy. Thousands of people lost their lives in this struggle to establish democracy. Earlier, South Africa was governed by the laws of apartheid. According to these laws, people were discriminated against on the basis of the colour of their skin. While the whites enjoyed all the rights and facilities, blacks were discriminated against. The children of the blacks could not study in the schools of the whites. Further, the hospitals meant for the white people were fully equipped while those for the blacks had only basic facilities. The latter also did not have the right to vote. The African National Congress was the organisation which led the struggle against the policy of apartheid in South Africa. Nelson Mandela was its well known leader who fought and inspired many people to fight against the policy of apartheid.



Nelson Mandela fought fearlessly against the policy of apartheid practised by the then government of South Africa.

### Participation of People in a Democracy

---

People participate in a democracy in the following ways:

- Regular elections are held in democratic countries. People participate in these elections and choose their representatives by voting.
- These representatives then take decisions on behalf of the people keeping in mind the aspirations and the interests of the people who elect them.

- In India, the government is elected for a period of five years. Hence, if the members of the government do not fulfill their promises, the people may not choose them in next elections. In this way, the power of the government is limited by regular elections.
- Apart from participating in elections, there are other ways in which people participate in a democracy. People participate in a democracy by taking part in the policies of the government and criticising them, if required.
- People can organise dharnas, rallies, organise campaigns etc. against the unjust policies of the government.
- Many mediums of communications like the television, newspapers and magazines also play an important role in discussing the policies of the government.
- People can also organise social movements and challenge the policies and the functions of the government. People of marginalised communities like the dalits, tribals, women etc often participate in a democracy in such a manner.



In India, people participate in the democracy through the process of elections.

### Need to Resolve Conflict

---

- Conflicts are bound to arise in a democratic country. Conflicts occur when people belonging to different religions, cultures, regions or economic backgrounds do not get along with each other.
- Conflicts may also occur when people of a particular community are discriminated against. People may resort to violent ways to resolve the conflict. This in turn may create fear and tension among the other people who live in the same areas.
- Sometimes religious processions and celebrations can create conflicts. The show of power and strength of one community can spark tension and a feeling of ill will in other communities. An incident of stone pelting may further complicate the situation giving rise to conflicts.

- Rivers may also become the source of conflict between two states. The sharing of river water which flows through one or more states may create conflict.



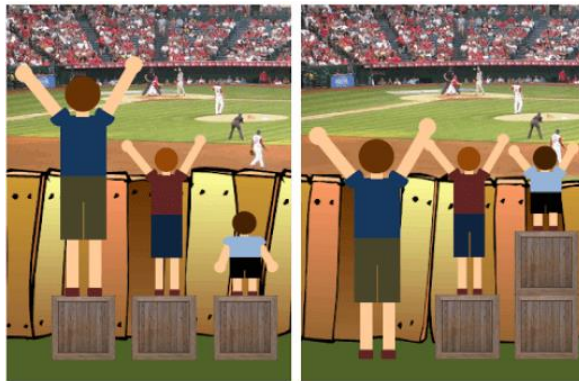
**The states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are involved  
in a dispute over the water of the River Cauvery**

- For example, the states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are involved in a conflict over the issue of sharing the water of the river Cauvery. The water in Krishnasagar dam in Karnataka is used for supplying water to Bengaluru.
- The Mettur dam in Tamil Nadu is used for growing crops in some regions. Since both the dams are built on the same river, a conflict has arisen between both the states.
- This is because the dam located downstream in Tamil Nadu can be filled only if water is released from the upstream dam located in Karnataka.
- Under such situations, the Central Government has to step in resolve the issue in a manner which is acceptable to the governments of both the states.

### **Yet There Are People Who Are Not Fully Benefited by Democracy**

Democracy gives people the power to make the government accountable. However, not all people can use the power that democracy provides. There are economically weaker sections that cannot take part in the protest because they are daily wage earners and cannot miss even a day's work. Sometimes, the minority and the Dalits are not properly represented in the parliament. There is still an imbalance in the ratio of female leaders to male leaders. So, the needs of the female citizens are not fully met by these male leaders.

### **Equality and Justice**

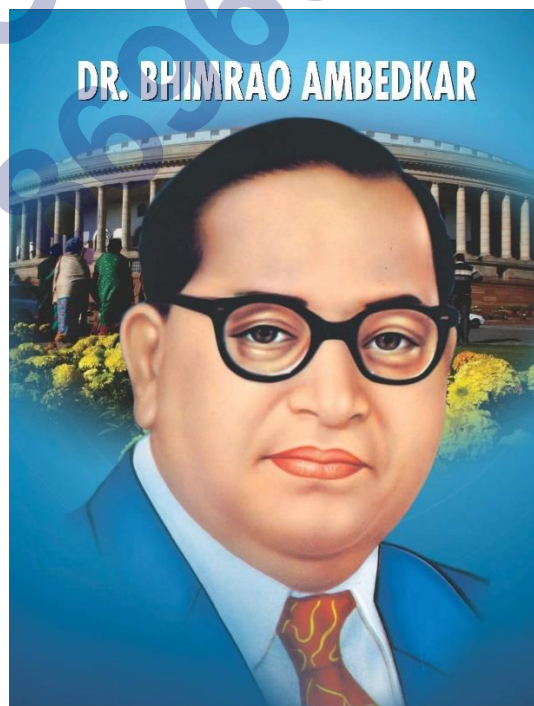


Equality

Justice

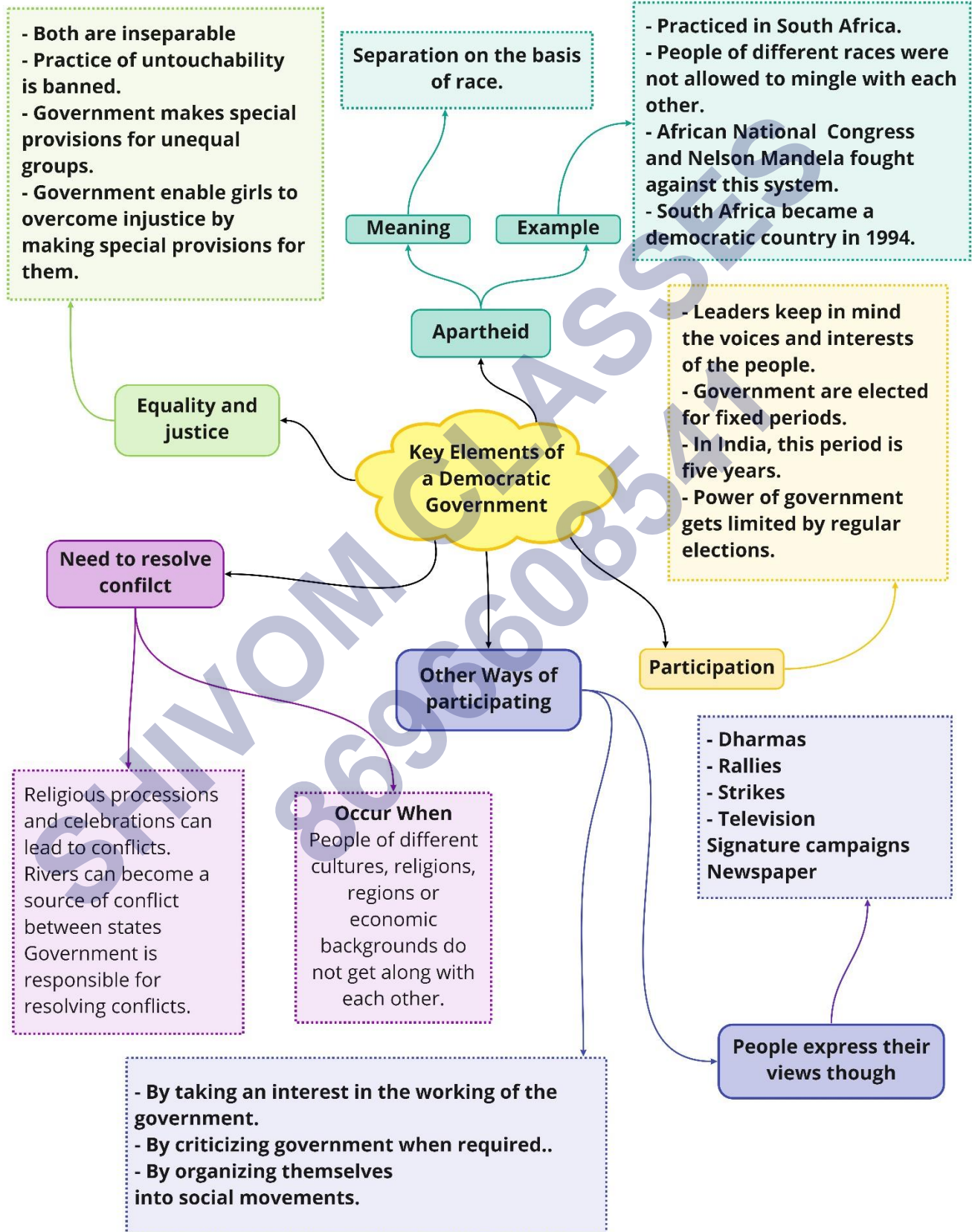
Equality and justice are the key features of any democratic government. In India, the government guarantees equality and justice to its citizens in the following way:

- The practice of untouchability has been abolished and declared to be a crime punishable by law.
- It was largely due to the efforts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and other eminent personalities that discrimination based on caste was abolished. They realised that the principle of equality could be achieved only when people are treated equally.
- The government provides some special privileges to the discriminated community in order to promote justice and equality. For example, the girl child in the Indian society is discriminated against. Therefore, governments in many states have lowered or completely waived off the school or college fees for girls.



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar vehemently opposed the practice of untouchability in India.

Class : 6th Social Studies (Political Science)  
Chapter - 4 : Key Elements of a Democratic Government



## Important Questions

### Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1. Apartheid is discrimination on the ground of:

- (a) Race
- (b) Wealth
- (c) Religion

Question 2. King is related to:

- (a) Democratic
- (b) Monarch
- (c) Both (a) and (b)

Question 3. Which is the official language of South Africa?

- (a) Zulu
- (b) English
- (c) Sanskrit

Question 4. Which of the following party fought against the system of apartheid?

- (a) The African Party
- (b) The African National Congress
- (c) Both (a) and (b)

Question 5. Dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu is related to:

- (a) Distribution of Mines
- (b) Distribution of water
- (c) Distribution of land

Question 6. The Indian \_\_\_\_\_ lays down the basic rules that have to be followed by everyone:

- (a) Constitution
- (b) Parliament
- (c) Court
- (d) Law

Question 7. It is condition in which all citizens are guaranteed descent standard of life:

- (a) Social justice

- (b) Economic justice
- (c) Technological justice
- (d) Political justice

Question 8. Conflicts occur when people of \_\_\_\_\_ cultures, religions, regions or economic backgrounds do not get along with each other:

- (a) Two
- (b) Different
- (c) Same
- (d) Three

Question 9. If government wants to be continued in power:

- (a) Court have to pass a special resolution
- (b) They have to be re-elected by the people
- (c) They have to pass a bill in the court
- (d) Court have to pass a ordinary resolution

Question 10. The jurisdiction covering the Andaman and Nicobar islands falls under the supervision of \_\_\_\_\_:

- (a) A circuit bench of the Bombay High Court at Port Blair
- (b) A circuit bench of the Madras High Court at Port Blair
- (c) A circuit bench of the Kolkata High Court at Port Blair
- (d) A circuit bench of Supreme Court of India at Port Blair

Question 11. Mettur and Krishna Sagar dam is situated on which river:

- (a) Kaveri
- (b) Tungabhadra
- (c) Godavari
- (d) Krishna

Question 12. The government is a system which governs the organization of the:

- (a) Society
- (b) State
- (c) Country
- (d) Minorities



Question 13. Nelson Mandela was the leader of:

- (a) African National Congress
- (b) Asian National Congress
- (c) Australian National Congress
- (d) American National Congress

Question 14. The right to vote enables people to elect their:

- (a) Law
- (b) Parliament
- (c) Constitution
- (d) Representatives

Question 15. Which dam is used by Karnataka for irrigation?

- (a) Krishna Sagar Dam
- (b) Hirakud Dam
- (c) Bhakra Nangal Dam
- (d) Mottur Dam

### Fill in the blanks :

1. African people were divided into white, \_\_\_\_\_, Indian and coloured races.
2. Apartheid means separation on the basis of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Non-whites were not allowed to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ led the struggle against apartheid.
5. Through \_\_\_\_\_ in elections people elect leaders to represent them.
6. Elected representatives take decisions on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The earlier practice of untouchability is now banned by \_\_\_\_\_.

### Write true (T) or false (F) :

1. Nelson Mandela fought the apartheid system for several years.
2. Religious processions and celebrations can sometimes lead to conflicts.
3. In 1984 South Africa became a democratic country.
4. In our society there is a general tendency to value and care for the girl child more than the boy child.
5. The key idea of a democratic government is its commitment to equality and justice. .

### Very Short Questions :

1. Name the river on which Krishnasagar dam and Mettur dam are situated.
2. Who was the well-known leader of The African National Congress?
3. What is “Zulu”?
4. Name the person who fought against untouchability.
5. What ‘Apartheid’ means?
6. Where Hector lived?
7. Who was Hector and what did he want?
8. Who is responsible for helping to resolve conflicts?
9. When South Africa became a democratic country?
10. List the various races that live in South Africa.

### Short Questions :

1. In Dr Ambedkar’s story did the practice of untouchability support the idea that people are equal?
2. How do people express their views and make governments understand what actions they should take?
3. Why conflicts occur?
4. What is the responsibility of police when there is fear that violence may erupt?
5. Do you think it is important for all persons to be treated equally? Why?

### Long Questions :

1. List five ways in which the non-whites were discriminated against.
2. “People participate by taking an interest in the working of the government and by criticising it when required.” Explain the statement with help of an example.
3. “Rivers too can become a source of conflict between states.” Comment.
4. What actions does the government take to ensure that all people are treated equally?
5. What are the various ways in which people participate in the process of government?

### ANSWER KEY –

### Multiple Choice Answer :

1. (a) Race
2. (b) Monarch

3. (a) Zulu
4. (b) The African National Congress
5. (b) Distribution of water
6. (a) Constitution
7. (b) Economic justice
8. (b) Different
9. (b) They have to be re-elected by the people
10. (c) A circuit bench of the Kolkata High Court at Port Blair
11. (a) Kaveri
12. (c) Country
13. (a) African National Congress
14. (d) Representatives
15. (a) Krishna Sagar Dam

### Fill in the blanks :

1. black
2. race
3. vote
4. The African National Congress
5. voting
6. people
7. law

### Write true (T) or false (F) :

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True

### Very Short Answer :

1. Cauvery River

2. Nelson Mandela
3. Zulu is Afrikaans language.
4. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
5. Apartheid means separation on the basis of race.
6. Hector lived in South Western Township also called Soweto.
7. He was non-white and wanted to learn his own language, Zulu.
8. The government is responsible for helping to resolve conflicts.
9. In 1994 South Africa became a democratic country.
10. There are black people who belong to South Africa, whites who came there to settle, and Indians who came as labourers and traders.

### Short Answer :

1. No, practice of untouchability did not support the idea that people are equal because these groups of people were denied education, transport or medical facilities and even the chance to offer prayers.
2. There are many ways in which people express their views and make governments understand what actions they should take. These include dharnas, rallies, strikes, signature campaigns etc.
3. Conflicts occur when people of different cultures, religions, regions or economic backgrounds do not get along with each other, or when some among them feel they are being discriminated against.
4. At times there is fear that violence may erupt, with people throwing stones or trying to disrupt the procession. The police is responsible for ensuring that violence does not take place.
5. Yes, it is important for all persons to be treated equally. Everybody has human rights and should be treated equally and with dignity. If anybody is tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way, it will create an atmosphere of revolt.

### Long Answer :

#### 1. Five ways in which the non-whites were discriminated against:

- Hospitals were separate and so were ambulances.
- An ambulance meant for white people would always be well equipped while one meant for black people was not.
- There were separate trains and buses. Even the bus stops were different for black and white people.

- Non-whites were not allowed to vote.
- The best land in the country was reserved for the white people, and nonwhites had to live on the worst available land.

2. People participate by taking an interest in the working of the government and by criticising it when required.

In August 2005, when a particular government increased the money people had to pay for electricity, people expressed their disapproval very sharply. They took out rallies and also organised a signature campaign. The government tried to explain and defend its decision but finally listened to the people's opinion and withdrew the increase. The government had to change its decision because it is responsible to the people.

3. Rivers too can become a source of conflict between states. A river may begin in one place, flow through another and end in a third. The sharing of river water between different places that the river goes through is becoming an issue of conflict.

**For example:** Cauvery water dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The water stored in Krishnasagar dam in Karnataka is used for irrigating a number of districts and for meeting the needs of the city of Bangalore. The water stored in Mettur dam in Tamil Nadu is used for crops grown in the delta region of that state. A conflict arises because both dams are on the same river. The downstream dam in Tamil Nadu can only be filled up if water is released from the upstream one located in Karnataka. Therefore, both states can't get as much water as they need for people in their states. This leads to conflict. The central government has to step in and see that a fair distribution is worked out for both states.

#### 4. Steps to be taken by government:

- The government should ensure that the constitutional provisions are implied in the country.
- It should make provisions to provide equal facilities to all classes of people and for promotion of education among girls and economically backwards.
- People from backward sections of the society should be given reservation in government jobs and educational institutions to help them improve their social status.
- Any act of discrimination against the untouchables should be considered as a punishable offence.

#### 5. There are various ways in which people participate in the process of government:

- Through voting in elections people elect leaders to represent them.
- By taking an interest in the working of the government and by criticising it when

required.

- People express their views through several ways such as dharnas, rallies, strikes, signature campaigns, etc.
- Newspapers, magazines and TV also play a role in discussing government issues and responsibilities.
- By organizing themselves into social movements that seek to challenge the government and its functioning. Members of the minority community dalits, adivasis, women and others are often able to participate in this manner.

SHIVOM CLASSES  
8696608541