

Chapter-3

The Story of Indian Democracy

Democracy is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

It is of two types:

1. Direct: Usually the group is small (tribes, trade, union, small country) and all the people collectively take equal part in the decision making process.

2. Representative: We elect the representatives who take the decisions for us and govern the country.

• We have representatives at 4 levels:

1. Parliament Central Government

2. Legislative Assembly State Government

3. Municipality and Municipal Corporation-Cities' Self Governing Bodies. .

4. Panchayati Raj—Village

• USA—There are two political parties—Democrats and Republicans. They have no system of Prime Ministership, instead they directly elect their President who is the head of powers.

• India—There are many political parties due to many religions and cultures.

Core Values of Democracy

• Democracy is not a modern term, it has been there for a long long ago.

• Examples of democratic behaviour have been shown in traditional plays and stories and in the epics, folklores.

• It is a combination of modern and traditional ideas.

• Democracy is a combination of modern ideas taken from the colonial rule and traditional ideas taken from folktales and epics.

• Western ideas—Taken from books and other country's examples.

• Indian National Congress—»Most powerful party had sessions in various places.

Karachi Session 1931 was crucial because the concept of Poorna Swaraj came into

being. Also known as Karachi Resolution in which ideas were put together and later put into the constitution, fundamental rights were taken from these ideas.

Fundamental Rights

1. All religions are equal: Everyone has the right to choose his/her religion.
2. Everyone should be free to elect, and vote for his/her representatives. Women can also work and can exercise their rights.
3. Right to Freedoms—Justice to all.

Constituent Assembly and Drafting of Constitution

- The Constituent Assembly formed to draft the constitution, had members from all walks of life.
- 1945-46 Constituent Assembly was formed, people from all sections, religions, castes, language, element group, region were part of it.
- B R Ambedkar was the head of assembly.
- There were a lot of debates on various issues e.g. When Panchayati Raj was suggested B R Ambedkar was against it because there would be more divisions among castes.
- But Panchayati Raj was formed in 1992.

Constitution

- It is a written document which constitutes the nations tenants (rules and regulation) that the government has to follow for the welfare of the people.
 - Preamble is introduction to constitution which gives us an idea of what the constitution consists of
1. Socialist – Equal wealth
 2. Secular – Equal importance to all religions
 3. Republic-President is head of state, not mandatary.
 4. Liberty-freedom
 5. Equity-Ownership interest of shareholders in a corporation.
 6. Democratic – Govt elected by the people, for the people, of the people
 7. Fraternity-brotherhood

8. All laws that are implemented are given in the Constitution.
9. Laws are written down, it is forced and you have no choice but to follow it.
10. Justice-Fairness, not always given
11. People are supposed to follow laws but justice is not always fair.
12. The constitution is a document that has all the laws and the do's and don'ts which the government has to follow.
13. Laws are implemented by authorities who have been given power and authority to implement the laws. (Traffic police, BSF have their own responsibilities).
14. Constitution/government has the responsibility to take care of the suppressed classes, ST'S, SC' S, minority, differently aided, women, OBC
15. We have 3 courts.
16. District Courts-district level
17. High Court-state level
18. Supreme Court-highest judicial body
19. If justice is not given to the person in district or high court, one can go to the Supreme Court. If justice is still not given, he/she can appeal to the president (Only if it is important).
20. Usually high courts are in the capital of states.
21. Laws are made according to the procedures or regulations given in the constitution.
22. It is in the court and by laws that the competitive interests are taken care of.

Panchayati Raj

- Village level-Village panchayat, all members above the age of 18 vote for panchayat.
- The head of the village Panchayat is Sarpanch
- All members of village panchayat vote for block
- All members of block vote for zila parishad
- Known as self governing body (also municipality and municipal corporation)
- Also known as three tier systems
- Ambedkar was against Panchayati Raj

- In 1992, 73rd and 74th amendments were made, in which Panchayati Raj became part of the constitution.
- 73rd amendments, Panchayati Raj became a self governing bodies along with municipality and municipal corporation.
- Elections are to be held every five years. Members of panchayat should include members from SC, ST.
- 74th amendment, 33% seats have been reserved for women, but of which 17% are for ST and SC women. In 1994, first panchayati elections were held.

Powers and Duties of Panchayat

Four duties of panchayat:

1. To prepare plans and schemes for economic development
2. To levy and collect taxes, duties and revenues from villages
3. To promote schemes and plans to take care of social justice
4. To help in the devolution of governmental responsibilities, especially that of finances to local authorities.

Social Responsibility

- Take care of registration of births, deaths, burial grounds, promotion of cattle facilities, family planning, child care.
- Economic-construction of roads, buildings, wells, tanks, ponds, schools, college, small scale industry, irrigation facilities.
- Money from the taxes/duties go to the panchayat and they use it for the village.
- Social justice – women are protected, taken care of SC/ST, proper social justice is important, carrying out what the government suggests.

Tribal Political Systems

- The government was thinking of making Panchayati Raj apart from the constitution but did not include source tribal areas. (Especially north-east) as they already had their, political system that was well developed.
e.g, in Meghalaya the khasis, Garos and Jaintias. In the khasi tribes the political organisation is at three levels (village, clan, state)

- Panchayati Raj (village, bloc, district)
- They have a council called Durbar Kur.
- Clan is like a big family (can't marry in own clan)
- The head is called the clan head, just like the Sarpanch of the Panchayat.
- Tribal society is supposed to be an egalitarian society but it is not so. There are inequalities in the tribal societies like all women are suppressed and are not given importance.

Democratisation And Inequality

- In spite of democracy, there is still inequality, as it is seen in travels, religion, race, culture, caste, language etc.
- Differentiation is shown to people in particular groups, communities, castes etc.
- Gram Sabha members are often contended by a small group.

Political Party

- An organisation with certain aims, ideologies and manifestos.
- Aim of achieving government power and using that power to pursue a specific programme.
- Based on certain understanding of society and how it ought to be

Interest Groups

- Different interest groups will work towards influencing political parties.
- When certain groups feel that their interests are not being taken up they may move to form an alternative party.
- Or they form pressure groups who lobby with the government.
- Interest groups are organised to pursue specific interests in the political arena, operating primarily by lobbying the members of legislative bodies.

Pressure Group

- All groups will not have the same access or the same ability to pressurise the government.

- Some argue that the concept of pressure groups underestimate the power that dominate social groups such as class or caste or gender in a society.
- They feel it would be more accurate to suggest that dominate class or classes control the state.
- Social movements and pressure groups also continue to play an important role in democracy.