

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT?

What is the need of a government?

Government is needed to make decisions and to get things done. The government takes decision on various matters; like how and where to build roads, schools and railway lines, how to improve the public healthcare system, how to improve the supply of drinking water, etc.

The government needs to take decisions on various social issues. For example; government formulates programmes on helping the poor people. Government takes decision when there is some conflict between two social groups.

The government is also required to protect the boundaries of the country. It also needs to maintain cordial relations with other countries.

The government has to ensure that all its citizens get enough to eat. In case of a natural disaster, the government carries out relief operations to help affected people.

The government also needs to maintain the rules and regulations so that everyone can live in harmony.

- **Levels of Government**

- There are different levels of government. Different levels of the government are as follows:
- **Centre Level or National Level:** This is the topmost level of government. The Central Government looks after topics of national interest. The Prime Minister is the head of the Central Government. The Central Government operates from the national capital New Delhi.
- **State Level:** Different states have their own level of government. The State Government is headed by the Chief Minister of that state. The State Government looks after the state subjects.
- **District Level:** At the district level, the governance is in the hands of government officials who are known as civil servants. The government officials look after implementation of various programmes.
- **Village Level:** At the village level, the government is headed by the Sarpanch. The government at the village level is called the Gram Panchayat. It looks after topics of local interest.
- While the Central Government is called the national government, all other levels are called local levels of government.

- **Laws and the Government**

- Government can only function by implementing and enforcing certain laws. For example; the government has made laws regarding maintenance of smooth traffic. These laws help all road users to use the road without getting disturbed by other road users.
- If someone feels that the law of the land is not being obeyed in a particular situation, he can go to the court with his/her grievances. The court needs to hear the case and announce decisions as per the law of the land. After the decision of the court, the government officials need to ensure that law is properly enforced.

- **Types of Government**

- There are two main types of government, viz. monarchy and democracy.
- **Monarchy:** When the head of the government is a king, this is called a monarchy. The king enjoys supreme power. Power is transferred from one king to another on the basis of inheritance. This means that the son or daughter of a king becomes the next king or queen. In this system, people have no say in selection of government. Monarchy is still being practiced in a handful of countries, e.g. Bhutan and Saudi Arabia.
- **Democracy:** In a democratic government, the rulers are elected by people. Democracy is defined as the government by the people, for the people and of the people. In this system, power is transferred from one ruler to another on the basis of people's choice.

- In the modern context, most of the countries follow representational democracy. In this system, people elect their representatives through popular elections. After the elections, a new government is formed on the basis of people's choice. To understand this, let us understand the formation of Central Government in India.
- **Universal Adult Franchise:** In modern times, universal adult franchise is the norm in most of the countries. Universal adult franchise means that all adult citizens of the country have the right to vote. This means, that poor and rich, men and women, Hindus or Muslims or Christians or Sikhs or Buddhists; everyone has equal voting right. Vote of each person carries equal weight irrespective of the economic status, caste, gender or religion. In most of the countries, universal adult franchise could become a reality only after many years of struggle.

• **THANK YOU**