

Revision Notes
Class 8 Social Science - Civics
Chapter 4 - Understanding Laws

Introduction

Law is nothing more than a system of rules that a society or the government develops in order to establish harmony in society. Laws help in the smooth functioning of society. In a democracy, the parliament is responsible for making this set of rules. Their function is to regulate the actions of the members and impose penalties in case of any violation. These laws cannot discriminate between individuals. Violation of these laws can lead to serious punishment.

Do Laws Apply to All?

- Laws are equally applicable to all the citizens residing within the territory of the country. No discrimination can be made on the basis of the religion, caste, or gender of the person.
- The rule means that all individuals are equal before the law and no individual can be above the law. This rule not only applies to the citizens of the country but also to the government officials or any other government employee. Any crime or violation of the law has punishment as well as a process for establishing the guilt of the person.
- It is thought that it was the British colonialists who created the rule of law in India. According to many historians, the colonial laws were arbitrary in nature. Indians criticized them and protested against these laws made by the Britishers.
- This nationalism also needed greater equality and wanted a change of law that they were obliged to obey, to laws including concepts of justice.
- By the nineteenth century, the Indian legal profession also started developing and demanded respect in colonial courts. Therefore the Indians played an important role in the evolution of the legal system of India.

How did the new laws come about?

- The parliament played a vital role in making laws.
- The role of parliament is to judge the problems that are faced by the citizens.
- Domestic violence acts in order to ensure the protection of women were implemented to protect women from being mistreated and wounded by their husbands or any male member of the family.
- The domestic violence issue was brought to the parliament where it became a law that was implemented in 2005.
- Citizens played a vital role in helping parliament to maintain their laws.
- The voice of citizens was heard through newspapers, editorials, television news, biography stories, meetings, etc., which helped the parliament in making new and transparent laws for each problem faced by the people.

Unpopular and controversial laws

- In democratic India, people can express their feelings and willingness to accept the laws that are made by the parliament.
- Sometimes a law made by the constitution can be legal and valid but becomes unpopular and unsatisfactory to people as they feel that the purpose behind making this law can be harmful or unfair.
- People used to criticize the law by holding public meetings, reporting in television news for newspapers, etc.
- When a vast number of people feel that the law which is passed by the parliament is wrong or unacceptable, then they force the parliament to change it.
- Law is equal for each and every community or group. If it favors one community and disrespects the other, it will create a difference in opinion and disputation.

- If a law is not in regard to the constitution, the court has the ability to declare it null and void or modify it.
- In India, the role of citizens is:
 - i. To elect their own representatives.
 - ii. To properly make use of newspapers and media.
 - iii. Watch out for the work done by the elected ministers.
 - iv. Find out fault by their actions if required.

Conclusion

- The parliament of a country plays a significant role in the formation of laws. All the people in the country are treated equally before the law.
- As a citizen of the country, it is our duty to be involved and recognize about the different laws by the parliament. This helps them to function as representatives properly.
- The citizens have the right to approach the court regarding laws that seem unjust. The court carries the power to modify or declare them null and void if they do not adhere to the Indian constitution.
- The laws cannot discriminate between the citizens on any basis and no one is placed above the law. If a law turns out to be unpopular and people find it unacceptable, they can approach the parliament to modify it or take it back.

Important Questions and Answers

1. What is the sedition act?

Ans: The Sedition Act permitted the government to detain or arrest anyone without a fair prosecution in the court who was seen criticizing or disputing the British authority. Under this act, individuals were detained without being notified of the reason for their arrest and were kept in jails without a trial.

2. Describe the phrase “An equal relationships are violence-free”.

Ans: According to the domestic violence act of 2005, the phrase “equal relationships are violence-free” depicts that women and men have equal rights and privileges and they stand equal in every manner. For example- if a boy is going to school to get educated, then a girl also has an equal right to go to school, acquire knowledge, have freedom. similarly in a relationship, if one person is getting more advantages and tortures the other partner making himself superior, then conflict arises. If both the partners are treated equally then the relationship will be violence-free.

3. What is the meaning of “rule of law”?

Ans: Rule of law is a legal saying where absolutely no one is above the law, and government decisions are made by applying legal principles. This law was made to prevent autocracy and to protect the rights of the citizens of the country. People in the country should follow and obey the clearly mentioned laws of the nation. It is important for people who do not respect laws and commit maximum crimes.

4. When did the domestic violence act establish?

Ans: For the protection of women, the domestic violence act 2005 is enacted by the parliament of India to safeguard women from domestic violence. It came into force on 26th October 2006.

5. Name five British laws that are still applicable in India?

Ans: British laws that are still applicable in India today are:

- i. Khaki dressing of the government officials and on-duty special police force.
- ii. Indian police act 1851 was framed by the Britishers to introduce a police force to tackle any revolt which took place against the Government of India.
- iii. Indian evidence act 1872, which says that the evidence found in the crime scene is presented to the court in advance.

- iv.** Foreigners act 1946 is an act where the individual is said to be a foreigner if he is from outside India. And if they illegally reside in India more than the permissible time, then they must be jailed.
- v.** Indian penal code 1860 specifies the definition of the crimes and punishments for the criminals of India.