

Revision Notes

Class – 6 Social Science Political Science

Chapter 3 - What Is a Government?

- We always hear the term ‘government.’ But do we know what it means? Is it a manner to rule over the people? Is it a means to bind people by rule of law? Is it a means to protect and defend the country?

- **Definition of a Government**

Here is a big shocker - even big philosophers and political analysts differ in their definition of the government.

John Locke had said once that government is a complex machinery that protects the ‘natural rights’ - the right to life, property and to live freely - of the people.

- ❖ Montesquieu on the other hand was not a believer of natural rights. He thought that when human beings lived without a society without forming any group, they felt unsafe and remained timid. As they formed society, they became fearless because now they were in a big group. Once the societies and the groups became fearless, there was a chance of war among the groups and even among themselves within the group. This led to the formation of the government so that human beings could then be protected and law and order could prevail.
- ❖ Rousseau’s idea of government is also quite progressive. According to him, it is true that natural rights of human beings should not be revoked by anyone. But the machinery upon which people have entrusted the responsibility of protecting their rights is fraud & harmful. According to him, the government should be made up of all the people living in the nation-state.
- ❖ So, what then can be the definition of a government in a modern world? It is a mixture of all above philosophies. A government is there to perform its basic duties necessary to make the nation keep moving forward. It functions as the gatekeeper of the rights of the people. However, in modern world, it is not

practically possible for all the people to take part in the governance directly. So what they do is, they elect people to power who, on their behalf, would then later form the government.

- **The Jobs of the Government**

Generally speaking, the primary job of a government is to run the country. Now there are various aspects to running a country.

- ❖ The government also looks after the development of the country. It decides where to build roads, hospitals or a school. It makes sure that the facilities like electricity, water etc reach the maximum number of people in the country.
- ❖ The government takes care of the economy of the country. It controls the inflation (excessive price rise) and it makes sure that the factories, manufacturing units & industries remain healthy so that the country advances financially. It is also responsible for controlling the banking system of the country.
- ❖ The government, with the help of armed forces, makes sure that the borders of the nation are protected from any foreign attacks. It also maintains amicable relationships with its neighbouring countries through diplomacy and other policies.
- ❖ The government in a welfare state then makes sure that the people of the country have food to eat. It makes special arrangements for poor people. In times of disasters, the government helps the people with necessary aids.
- ❖ The government also has the judicial arm - the court to resolve quarrels between the citizens of the country.

- **Levels of the Government**

- ❖ A country is a huge area. Millions of people live in a country. It is not possible for a centralised government to govern, protect and develop all the parts of the huge country. To solve this problem, leaders have come up with different levels of the government.

- ❖ We have various state governments to look after affairs of the states, to protect and defend the people living in the states. Then there are focused local governments which emphasises on developing a particular area of the state & helping the people of that area. The duty of central government is to develop, govern, and protect the whole country in a general manner.
- ❖ This kind of decentralised form of government is known the federal government. In India, we also see such a type of government.
- India has states like Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra etc. These states also have their respective state governments. These states also consist of municipalities and Panchayats - these are the local form of governments.

- **How Does Government Make Sure That Its Rules Are Followed?**

So, government generally formulates rules to manage the economy, build roads, stop people from encroaching on the properties of others. But why do people listen to governments?

People listen to governments because the government's legislative arm creates laws so that there remains an order and peace in society. For example, as your book says, every person who wants to drive a motor vehicle has to first obtain driver's licence. Without driver's licence, it is illegal to drive a vehicle and it is punishable. This rule is also enforced with the help of laws concerning motor vehicles.

There are certain laws that prevent others from entering the property of others without permission. The citizens, themselves can use such laws to protect themselves.

- **Types of Governments**

- ❖ There are many types of governments. The most popular type of government that we see around us is the democratic government. In a democratic government, people elect the leaders who would govern the nation on their behalf. The merit of democratic government is that the people have a say in the way the government functions.

- ❖ In the olden days, there was monarchy where the King had the sovereign power. People would also not elect the King. Generally, the rule was dynastic in nature. Most of time, King had little regard for the desires and expectations of the people.
- ❖ Again, in many countries, we see dictatorial governments where one man or one government has every power. That man or that government stifles freedom of the people & does everything to make sure that the power remains with the man or the government.

- **India Is a Democracy**

India is also a democracy. The people of India take part in the election where they choose people who would then represent them in the assembly. This kind of democracy is known as representative democracy because here, instead of directly participating in the governance, the people choose their representatives who would do that work.

But India was not democracy from beginning. Before the British came, India was ruled by Kings and dynasties. When the British came, India became the subject of British rule. It is the sacrifice of the freedom fighters that has helped India gain democracy. In India any adult - be it, man or woman - has the right to vote. This is known as the Universal Adult Franchise - a major criterion for any country to call itself democratic