

6th – What Is Government?



1. The Government:

- (a) Every country needs a government to make decisions and get things done. The government also takes action on many social issues, for example it has several programmes to help the poor. It does other important things such as running postal and railway services.
- (b) The government also has the job of protecting the boundaries of the country and maintaining peaceful relations with other countries. It is responsible for ensuring that all its citizens have enough to eat and have good health facilities.
- (c) When there are natural disasters like the tsunami or an earthquake it is the government that mainly organizes aid and assistance for the affected people. If there is a disputer or if someone has committed crime you find people in a court. Courts are also part of the government.
- (d) Governments do this on behalf of their people by exercising leadership, taking decision and implementing these among all the people living in their territory.

2. Levels of Government:

- (a) The government works at different levels: at the local level, of the state and at the national level.
- (b) The local level means in your village, town or locality, the state level would mean that which covers an entire state like Haryana or Assam and the national level relates to the entire country.

3. Laws and the Government :

- (a) The government makes laws and everyone who lives in the country has to follow these. This is the only way governments can functions.
- (b) Just like the government has the power to make decisions, similarly it has the power to enforce its decisions.
- (c) In additions to any actions that governments can take, there are also steps that people can take if they feel that a particular law is not being followed.

4. Types of Government :

- (a) One form of government is democracy. In a democracy the government has to explain its actions and defend its decisions to the people.
- (b) Another form of government is monarchy. The monarchy (king or queen) has the power to make decisions and run the government.
- (c) The monarch may have a small group of people to discuss matters with, but the final decision- making power remain with the monarch.
- (d) Unlike in a democracy, kings and queens do not have to explain their actions or defend the decisions they take.

5. Democratic governments

- (a) India is a democracy. This achievement is the result of a long and eventful struggle of the Indian people.
- (b) The main feature of a democracy is that the people have the power to elect their leaders. So in a sense a democracy is rule by the people. The basic idea is that people rule themselves by participating in the making of these rules.
- (c) In representative democracies people do not participate directly but, instead, choose their representatives through an election process. These representatives meet and make decisions for the entire population.
- (d) A government cannot call itself democratic unless it allows what is known as universal adult franchise. This means that all adults in the country are allowed to vote.