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INDEX

PART A BASICS OF POLITY.....	11
1.Democracy.....	12
2.Power Sharing.....	14
3.Ethical Foundations of Political Life.....	15
Freedom.....	15
Equality.....	17
Justice.....	21
Rights.....	23
Secularism.....	25
4.From the Rulers to the Ruled: Types of Governments.....	28
Monarchy.....	29
Theocracy.....	30
Dictatorship.....	30
Oligarchy.....	30
5.Constitutional Design.....	31
Why do we need a Constitution.....	31
A good constitution.....	32
Constitutionalism.....	32
6.Parliamentary System.....	35
Features of Parliamentary Government in India (CSE 2013).....	35
Features of Presidential Government.....	36
Merits of Parliamentary System.....	36
Demerits of the Parliamentary System.....	37
7.Federalism.....	40
Federalism in India.....	41
Federal Features of the Indian Constitution.....	41
Unitary Features of the Indian Constitution.....	42
8.Journey from Colonial Rule to Constitutional Democracy.....	44
Company Rule (1773–1858).....	44
The Regulating Act of 1773.....	44
Amending Act of 1781 (Act of Settlement).....	44
Pitt's India Act of 1784.....	45
Charter Act of 1793.....	45
Charter Act of 1813.....	45
Charter Act of 1833.....	46
Charter Act of 1853.....	46
The Crown Rule (1858-1947).....	47
Government of India Act of 1858 (“Act for the Good Government of India”).....	47
Indian Councils Act of 1861.....	47
Indian Councils Act of 1892.....	48
Indian Councils Act of 1909.....	48
Government of India Act of 1919.....	49
Government of India Act of 1935.....	51
Indian Independence Act of 1947.....	52



PART B THE GREAT INDIAN CONSTITUTION.....	54
9.Ink of Independence: The Constitution Story.....	55
Making of the Indian Constitution.....	55
Objective Resolution (1946):.....	57
10.Pillars of the Republic: Core Features of the Indian Constitution.....	65
Features of the Indian Constitution.....	65
Criticism of the Indian Constitution:.....	68
11.The Preamble.....	69
Key Words In The Preamble.....	70
Preamble Amendments: Scope and Limitations Under Article 368.....	72
12.Union and Its Territory.....	73
Article 1 - Name and territory of the Union.....	73
Article 2 - Admission or establishment of new States.....	74
Article 3 - Formation of new States and alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing States.....	74
Article 4.....	75
100th Constitutional Amendment Act (2015).....	76
Formation and Development of States and Union Territories.....	76
Reorganisation of States on Linguistic Basis.....	77
New States and Union Territories Created After 1956.....	78
13.Citizenship.....	81
Two Features of citizenship.....	81
Concept of Single Citizenship in India.....	82
Uniform Citizenship Rights and Permitted Exceptions in India.....	82
Constitutional Provisions on Citizenship.....	82
Citizenship Act (1955).....	83
Citizenship for Migrants under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.....	86
National Register of Citizens (NRC).....	87
National Population Register (NPR).....	88
14.Fundamental Rights.....	89
Article 12 - Definition of State.....	91
Article 14 - Equality before law.....	93
Article 15 - Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.....	95
Article 16 - Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.....	96
Article 17 - Abolition of untouchability.....	97
Article 18 - Abolition of titles.....	98
Article 19 - Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc.....	99
Article 20 - Protection in respect of conviction for offences.....	102
Article 21 - Protection of life and personal liberty.....	103
Article 21A - Right to education.....	104
Article 22 - Protection against arrest and detention in certain cases.....	104
Article 23 - Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour.....	106
Article 24. Prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc.....	106
Article 25 - Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of Religion.....	108
Article 26 - Freedom to manage religious affairs.....	108
Article 27 - Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion.....	109
Article 28 - Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational	

institutions.....	109
Article 29 - Protection of Interests of Minorities.....	110
Article 30 - Right of Minorities to Establish and Administer Educational Institutions.....	110
Article 32 - Right To Constitutional Remedies.....	111
Article 33 - Power of Parliament to modify the rights conferred by this Part in their application to Forces, etc.....	114
Article 34 - Restriction on rights conferred by this Part while martial law is in force in any area.....	115
Article 35 - Legislation to give effect to the provisions of this Part.....	116
Right to Property.....	117
15. Directive Principles of State Policy.....	119
Directive Principles of State Policy.....	119
Features of the Directive Principles of State Policy.....	119
Classification of the Directive Principles.....	120
New Directive Principles.....	122
Criticism of the Directive Principles of State Policy.....	123
Conflict Between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles.....	125
Directives Outside Part IV.....	126
16. Fundamental Duties- Article 51A (Part IVA).....	127
Swaran Singh Committee Recommendations (1976).....	127
Verma Committee Observations on Fundamental Duties (1999).....	130
17. Amendment of the Constitution.....	131
Procedure for Amendment (Article 368).....	131
Types of Amendments.....	132
18. Basic structure of the Constitution.....	135
19. President of India.....	139
Article 54 - Election of President.....	139
Article 55 - Manner of Election of President [CSE 2018].....	139
Article 56 - Term of the President's Office.....	140
Article 58 - Qualifications for Election as President.....	141
Article 59 - Conditions of the President's Office.....	141
Article 60 - Oath or Affirmation by the President.....	142
Article 61 - Impeachment of the President.....	142
Powers and Functions of the President of India.....	143
Article 111 - Veto Power of the President.....	146
Article 123 - Ordinance-Making Power of the President.....	148
Article 72 - Pardoning Power of the President.....	150
President's Situational Discretion [CSE 2014].....	152
20. Vice President.....	153
Election of the Vice-President.....	153
Article 71- Judicial Review of Election.....	154
Article 67- Term of Office.....	154
Article 68- Vacancy in the Office of Vice-President.....	154
Article 69- Oath or Affirmation.....	155
Powers and Functions of the Vice-President.....	155
21. Prime Minister.....	157
22. Central Council of Ministers.....	162

Responsibilities of Ministers.....	163
Nature of Advice and Judicial Interpretation.....	164
Council Of Ministers Vs Cabinet.....	164
Article 74 – Council of Ministers to Aid and Advise the President.....	165
Article 77 – Conduct of Business.....	165
Article 88 – Rights of Ministers in Parliament.....	165
Significance in the Parliamentary System.....	165
23. Cabinet Committees.....	166
Constitutional Status.....	166
Types of Cabinet Committees.....	166
Groups of Ministers (GoMs).....	168
24. Temple of Democracy: The Indian Parliament.....	170
Article 80 - Composition of Rajya Sabha.....	171
Article 81 - Composition of Lok Sabha.....	171
Article 81 - Territorial constituency.....	171
Article 82 - Readjustment after each census.....	172
Article 84 - Qualification for membership of Parliament [CSE 2017].....	173
Article 99 - Oath or affirmation by members.....	173
Article 101 - Vacation of seats.....	173
Article 102 - Disqualifications for membership.....	174
Article 103 - Decision on questions as to disqualifications of members.....	174
Article 85 - Sessions of Parliament, prorogation and dissolution.....	175
Article 86 - Right of President to address and send messages to Houses.....	176
Article 87 - Special address by the President.....	176
Voting in House.....	178
Presiding officers of House.....	180
Article 93 - The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of the People.....	182
Article 94 - Vacation and resignation of, and removal from, the offices of Speaker and Deputy Speaker... 182	
Article 96 - The Speaker or the Deputy Speaker not to preside while a resolution for his removal from office is under consideration.....	182
Article 97 - Salaries and allowances of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman and the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.....	184
Article 98 - Secretariat of Parliament.....	185
Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and its Members.....	186
Legislative Procedure in Indian Parliament.....	187
Article 108 - Joint sitting of both Houses in certain cases.....	191
Article 110 - Definition of Money Bills.....	192
Article 111 - Assent to Bills.....	193
Financial Bills.....	194
Budget.....	194
Article 112 - Annual financial statement.....	195
Article 113. Procedure in Parliament with respect to estimates.....	195
Article 114 - Appropriation Bills.....	196
Article 115 - Supplementary, additional or excess grants.....	196
Article 116 - Votes on account, votes of credit and exceptional grants.....	196
Devices of Parliamentary proceedings.....	199



Multifunctional Role of Parliament.....	202
25. Parliamentary Committees.....	209
Financial Committees.....	210
Public Accounts Committee (PAC).....	210
Estimate committee.....	211
Committee on Public Undertakings (CPU).....	212
Departmental Related Standing Committees.....	213
Committee on Petitions.....	216
Committee of Privileges.....	217
Ethics Committee.....	217
Committee on Government Assurances.....	217
Committee on Subordinate Legislation.....	218
Committee on Papers Laid on the Table.....	218
Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).....	218
Committee on Empowerment of Women.....	218
Joint Committee on Offices of Profit.....	219
Business Advisory Committee.....	219
Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.....	219
Rules Committee.....	220
Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House.....	220
General Purposes Committee.....	220
House Committee.....	221
Library Committee.....	221
Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament.....	221
Consultative Committees.....	221
26. Parliamentary Group.....	223
Composition of the Indian Parliamentary Group.....	223
27. Supreme Court.....	224
Comparative Note: India, USA, and UK.....	224
Collegium System: Evolution and Meaning.....	226
The Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.....	228
Acting, Ad hoc, and Retired Judges of the Supreme Court.....	229
Jurisdiction And Powers Of Supreme Court Of India.....	229
Key Doctrines Used in Constitutional Interpretation.....	234
Constitutional Provisions Ensuring Judicial Independence.....	236
Judicial Review.....	239
Judicial Activism.....	240
Judicial Activism, Restraint & Overreach.....	240
28. Tribunals.....	242
Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT).....	242
29. Consumer Commissions.....	244
National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC).....	244
State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (SCDRC).....	244
District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (DCDRC).....	245
30. Governor.....	246
Article 153. Governors of States.....	246



Article 154. Executive power of State.-.....	246
Article 155. Appointment of Governor.....	246
Article 156. Term of office of Governor.....	247
Article.157. Qualifications for appointment as Governor.-.....	247
Article.158. Conditions of Governor's office.-.....	248
Article.159. Oath or affirmation by the Governor.....	248
Article.163. Council of Ministers to aid and advise Governor.-.....	250
31.Chief Minister.....	255
Article.164. Other provisions as to Ministers.-.....	255
Article.167. Duties of Chief Minister as respects the furnishing of information to Governor, etc.-.....	258
32.State Council Of Ministers.....	259
Article.163. Council of Ministers to aid and advise Governor.-.....	260
Article.164. Other provisions as to Ministers.-.....	260
Article.166. Conduct of Business of the Government of a State.-.....	260
Article.167. Duties of Chief Minister as respects the furnishing of information to Governor, etc.-.....	260
Article.177. Rights of Ministers and Advocate-General as respects the Houses.....	261
33.State Legislature.....	264
Article.168. Constitution of Legislatures in States.....	264
Article.169. Abolition or creation of Legislative Councils in States.....	264
Article.170. Composition of the Legislative Assemblies.....	264
Reservation of seats for SCs and STs.....	265
Article.171. Composition of the Legislative Councils.....	265
Article.172. Duration of State Legislatures.....	265
Article.173. Qualification for membership of the State Legislature.....	266
Article.188. Oath or affirmation by members.....	266
Article 190. Vacation of seats.....	266
Article.191. Disqualifications for membership.....	267
Article:192. Decision on questions as to disqualifications of members.....	267
Article.194. Powers, privileges, etc., of the Houses of Legislatures and of the members and committees thereof.....	268
178. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.-.....	269
Article.179. Vacation and resignation of, and removal from, the offices of Speaker and Deputy Speaker..	269
Article 180 .Power of the Deputy Speaker or other person to perform the duties of the office of, or to act as, Speaker.....	270
Article.181. Removal of The Speaker or the Deputy Speaker.....	270
Article.182. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Legislative Council.-.....	270
Article 183. Vacation and resignation of, and removal from, the offices of Chairman and Deputy Chairman.....	270
Article.184 - Power of the Deputy Chairman or other person to perform the duties of the office of, or to act as, Chairman.....	271
Article 186 Salaries and Allowances.....	271
Article 187 Secretariat of State Legislature.....	271
34.High Court.....	280
Appointment of High Court Judges.....	280
Qualifications, Oath, and Salaries of High Court Judges.....	280
Tenure of High Court Judges (Article 217).....	281

Removal of High Court Judges (Articles 217 & 218 + Judges Enquiry Act, 1968).....	281
Transfer of High Court Judges (Article 222).....	282
Acting, Additional, and Retired Judges of High Courts.....	282
Jurisdiction and Powers of High Court.....	283
Court of Record.....	286
Power of Judicial Review.....	287
Independence of High Court.....	288
35. Subordinate Courts.....	289
Structure and Jurisdiction of Subordinate Courts.....	289
36. Family Court.....	290
Family Courts Act, 1984.....	290
Key Amendments – Family Courts (Amendment) Act, 2022.....	291
37. Gram Nyayalaya.....	293
Salient Features of Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008.....	293
Concerns About Gram Nyayalayas.....	295
38. Lok Adalat.....	296
National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).....	296
Lok Adalats.....	297
Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs).....	299
Commercial Courts.....	300
39. Centre State Relation [Part XI].....	301
Legislative Relations [Article 245 – 255].....	301
Centre’s Control Over State Legislation.....	303
Administrative Relation: (Article-256 -263).....	303
Financial Relations [article 268 –293].....	305
Committees – for Centre- State relation.....	308
40. Inter State Relation.....	310
Article 262 -Adjudication of interstate water disputes.....	310
Inter-State Councils.....	310
Public Acts, Records And Judicial Proceedings [Article 261].....	311
Inter-State Trade And Commerce.....	312
Zonal Council.....	312
North-Eastern Council.....	313
41. Panchayati Raj.....	314
Evolution of Panchayati Raj.....	314
Constitutional Status: 73rd Amendment Act, 1992.....	317
Salient Features of the 73rd Amendment.....	319
Powers and Functions of Panchayats.....	321
Finances of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).....	321
Panchayati Raj in Scheduled Areas- PESA.....	322
Challenges and Issues.....	323
42. Municipalities.....	326
Evolution of Urban Local Bodies.....	326
Constitutional Status.....	327
Committees and Commissions on Urban Local Governments.....	327
Salient Features of 74th Amendment Act, 1992.....	327

Composition of Municipalities (Article 243R to 243S).....	328
State Election Commission (Article 243ZA).....	330
District Planning Committee (DPC) – Article 243ZD.....	330
Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) (Article 243ZE).....	330
Powers and Functions of Municipalities (Article 243W).....	331
Finances of Municipalities.....	331
18 functional items in Twelfth Schedule.....	332
Types of Urban Local Governments in India.....	333
Municipal Personnel.....	336
Municipal Revenue.....	337
Central Council of Local Government.....	338
Challenges and Issues Faced by Municipalities.....	338
43. Union Territories.....	339
Evolution of Union Territories in India.....	339
Constitutional Provisions with respect to Union Territories.....	339
Administration of Union Territories.....	339
High Court for Union Territories.....	339
Classification of Union Territories.....	340
Union Territory Of Jammu And Kashmir.....	341
Special Provisions For Delhi.....	342
Merger of Dadra and Nagar Haveli with Daman and Diu as Union Territories Act, 2019.....	343
Advisory Committees of Union Territories.....	343
44. Scheduled & Tribal area.....	344
Fifth Schedule Feature.....	344
Sixth Schedule.....	345
45. Emergency Provisions.....	347
Article 352. Proclamation of Emergency.....	347
This type of Emergency has been proclaimed three times so far– in.....	348
President’s Rule.....	348
Consequences of President’s Rule.....	349
Financial Emergency.....	349
Criticism of Emergency Provisions:.....	350
46. Constitutional Bodies.....	351
Election Commission of India.....	351
Union Public Service Commission.....	355
Finance Commission.....	359
Goods and Services Tax Council.....	362
National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC).....	363
Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).....	365
National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).....	367
Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities.....	368
Comptroller and Auditor General of India.....	369
Attorney General of India.....	372
Solicitor General Of India.....	373
Advocate General (AG) of States.....	373
47. Non Constitutional Bodies.....	374

Niti Aayog.....	374
National Development Council (NDC).....	376
National Human Rights Commission.....	376
State Human Rights Commission.....	379
Human Rights Courts.....	381
Central Information Commission.....	381
State Information Commission.....	382
National Commission for Women.....	382
National Commission for Protection of Child Rights.....	383
National Commission for Minorities.....	384
Central Vigilance Commission.....	385
Central Bureau of Investigation.....	386
Lokpal and Lokayuktas.....	387
Lokayuktas.....	388
National Investigation Agency.....	389
National Disaster Management Authority.....	389
State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).....	390
District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA).....	390
Enforcement Directorate (ED).....	390
Securities And Exchange Board Of India.....	391
48. Cooperative Societies.....	392
What is Cooperative Society?.....	392
Constitutional Provisions Under Part IX-B.....	394
49. Official language.....	397
Eighth Schedule Languages.....	398
Classical Languages.....	399
50. Public Service.....	402
51. Rights and Liabilities of the Government.....	407
52. Special Provisions Relating to Certain Classes.....	410
53. Special provision for some states.....	412
54. Elections.....	415
Election Process in India.....	417
Representation of the People Act, 1950 (RPA 1950).....	419
The Representation of the People Act, 1951.....	420
Delimitation Act, 2002.....	421
Rules governing Indian elections.....	422
55. Political Parties.....	424
56. Anti-Defection Law.....	425
57. Pressure groups.....	427
58. Miscellaneous.....	429
Bhartiya Naya Sanhita.....	429
Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita.....	429
Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam.....	429
Bail.....	429
Bar council of India.....	430
Law commission.....	431



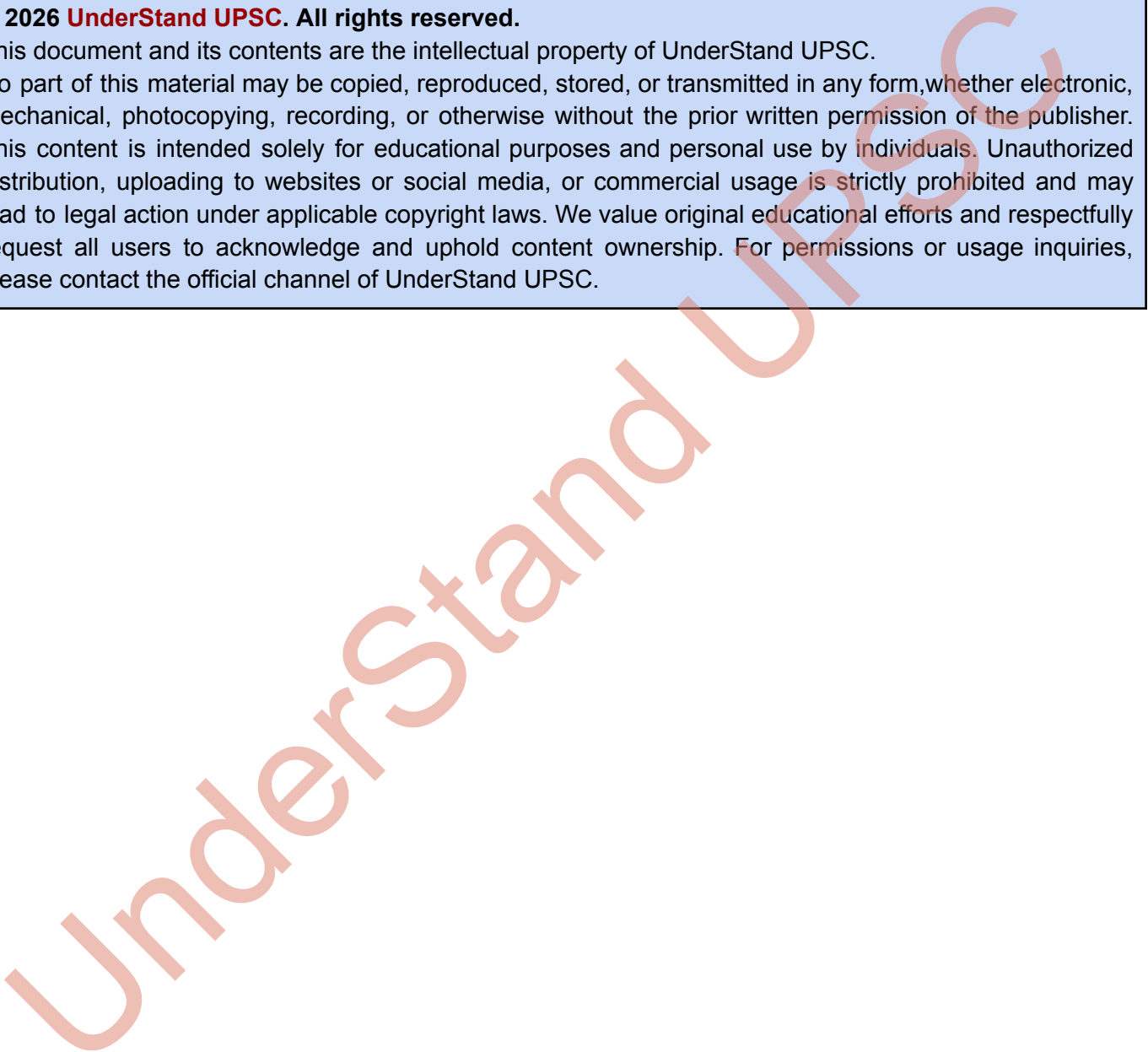
Home Guards [CSE 2023].....	431
59.Important Doctrines Of Constitutional Interpretation.....	432
60.Important Amendments To Constitution.....	442
61.Parts of the Constitution [CSE 2024].....	445
62.Schedules of the Constitution.....	447

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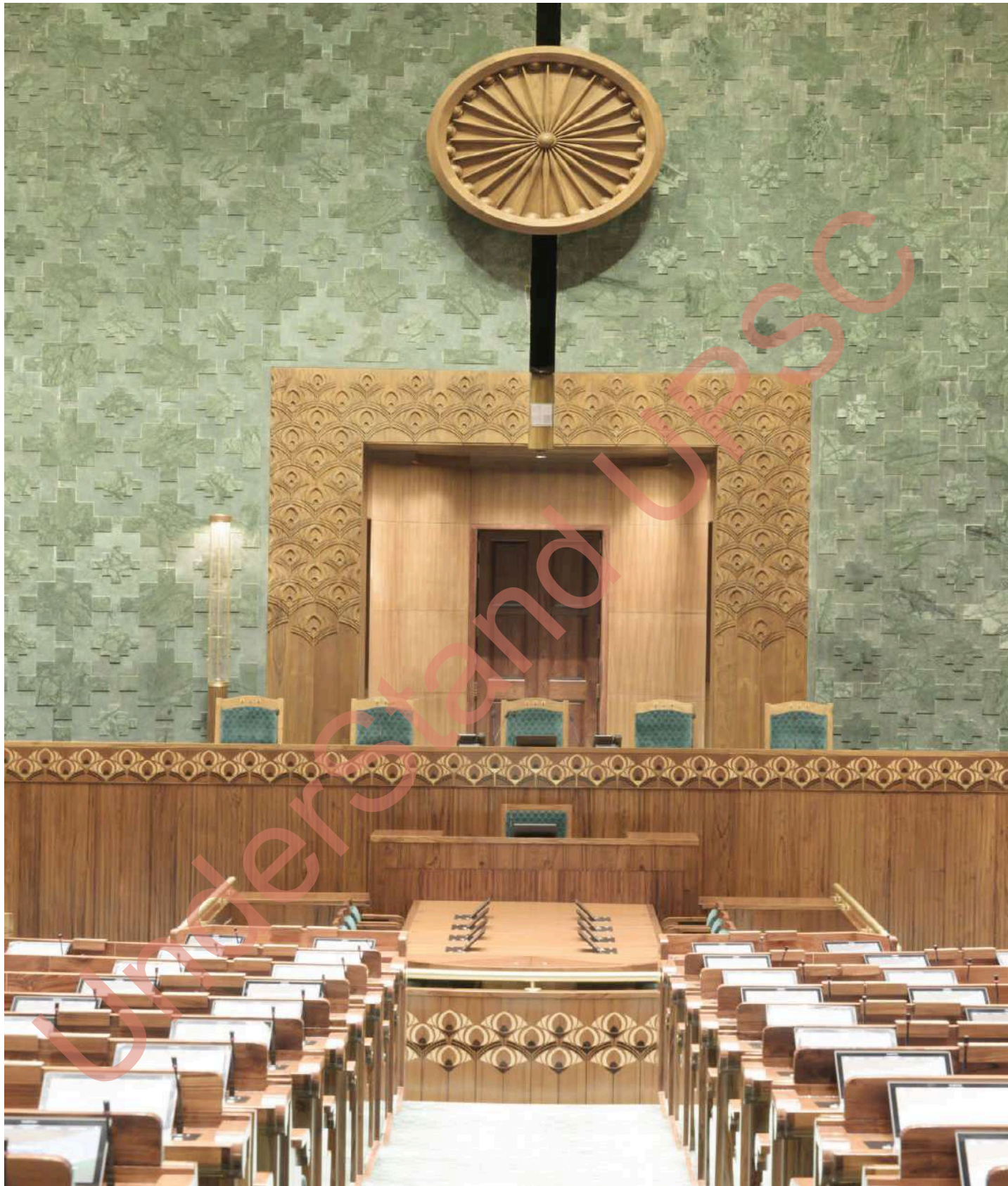
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PART A BASICS OF POLITY



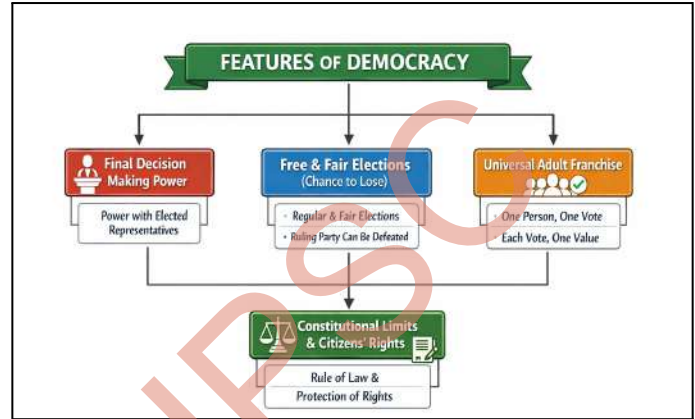
Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which rulers are elected by the people (NCERT)

This basic idea helps us distinguish democracy from non-democratic forms like military rule in Myanmar, dictatorships like **Pinochet's in Chile**, or monarchies like in **Saudi Arabia**, where rulers are not chosen by the people.

Democracy

- Democracy, as famously defined by Abraham Lincoln, is “**government of the people, for the people, and by the people.**”
- The term comes from the Greek word **demokratia**, meaning “**Rule of the people**”-from *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power).
- In a democracy, **power rests with the people.**



Arguments for Democracy

1. **Democracy is a better form of government** because it is **more accountable and responsive** to the needs of the people.

Example: Government rollback of the **Farm Laws (2021)** after widespread protests shows responsiveness to public pressure.

2. In a democracy, leaders are answerable to the public, and mechanisms like free press, opposition parties, and regular elections ensure that the government cannot ignore people’s problems for long.
- Example:** **COVID-19 vaccine distribution decisions** involved experts and state governments, reducing mistakes.

3. Democracy's superior virtue lies in the fact that it calls into activity the intelligence and character of ordinary men and women. **(CSE 2017)**
- Example:** **Debates around Article 370 (2019)** in Jammu & Kashmir.

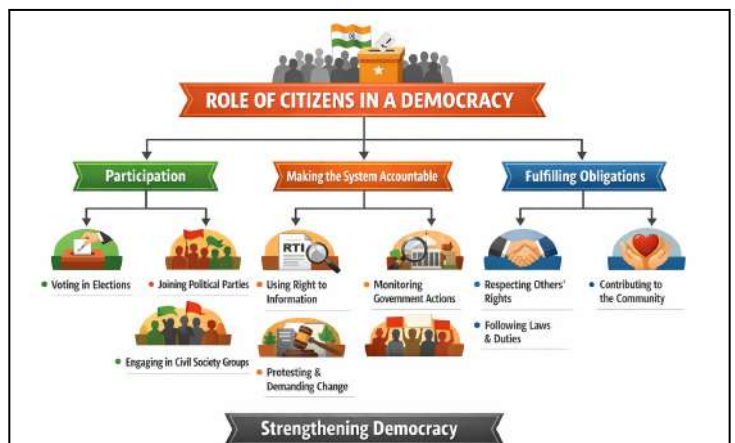
4. Democracy leads to better decisions because it is based on consultation and discussion. Though it takes time, involving many people helps identify mistakes and avoids rash or irresponsible decisions, improving decision-making quality.
- Example:** The passage of the **Goods and Services Tax (GST) Act, 2017**, involved extensive consultation with states and experts to avoid major errors.

5. Democracy helps resolve differences and conflicts peacefully, which is vital in a diverse country like India. It allows all groups to be heard and prevents domination by any one group, helping people live together in harmony.

Example: Women’s reservation in **Panchayati Raj (19th Amendment)** empowers ordinary citizens and promotes inclusivity.

6. Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens. It is based on political equality, where everyone rich or poor, educated or not has the same status. In a democracy, people are not ruled; they are the rulers themselves.

Example: The **Right to Information Act (2005)** empowers citizens to hold the government accountable, reflecting their equality and dignity.



7. Democracy is better than other forms of government because it allows us to correct its own mistakes.

Example: Public dissent over the **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA, 2019)** led to legal scrutiny and policy discussions.

Arguments against democracy

1. Leaders keep changing in a democracy. This leads to instability.

Example: In countries like **Italy**, governments have changed frequently, leading to policy inconsistency.

2. Democracy is all about political competition and power play. There is less scope for morality.

Example: During elections in India, instances of **vote-buying or hate speeches** are sometimes reported to win power.

3. So many people have to be consulted in a democracy that it leads to delays.

Example: Large infrastructure projects (like dams or highways) in India often get **delayed** due to **multiple approvals and public consultations**.

4. Elected leaders do not know the best interest of the people. It leads to bad decisions.

Example: Populist policies (like **freebies without long-term planning**) may win votes but harm economic stability.

5. Democracy might lead to corruption because it is based on electoral competition.

Example: Candidates spending huge money in elections may later try to **recover costs through corrupt practices**.

Democracy can take different forms. In small communities like villages, direct decision-making by all members, such as in a Gram Sabha, is possible. What matters is the principle of equal participation and consultation.



No country is a perfect democracy. The features we discussed are just the minimum conditions. Achieving an ideal democracy requires constant effort to strengthen democratic decision-making. What citizens do matters as much as what rulers do. This is both the strength and weakness of democracy-it depends on active participation by all citizens, unlike monarchy or dictatorship, which discourage public involvement. Therefore, understanding democracy means focusing on democratic politics and citizen engagement.

Power Sharing

Power sharing means distributing power among different groups in society to avoid conflict and ensure smooth governance.

It is a key feature of democracy, preventing one group from dominating others. Power sharing helps maintain unity in diverse societies by respecting differences (e.g., language, religion, ethnicity).

It can take various forms: among organs of government (legislature, executive, judiciary), among different levels (central, state, local), and among social groups (ethnic, linguistic, or religious communities).

Examples like **Belgium and Sri Lanka** show how power sharing (or its absence) impacts peace and stability.

Forms of Power Sharing in Modern Democracies

Among Organs of Government (Horizontal Division):

- Power is shared among legislature, executive, and judiciary.
- Each organ checks the other (e.g., judiciary can review laws, Parliament holds ministers accountable).
- This ensures no organ has unlimited power – a system of checks and balances.
- **Example:** India – Parliament makes laws, the executive implements, and the judiciary reviews constitutionality.

Among Different Levels of Government (Vertical Division):

- Power is shared between Union, State, and local governments (e.g., municipalities, panchayats).
- The Constitution clearly defines their powers – called federal division of power.
- Followed in India and Belgium, but not in Sri Lanka.
- **Example:** India – States have their own legislatures and governments; municipalities/panchayats handle local issues.

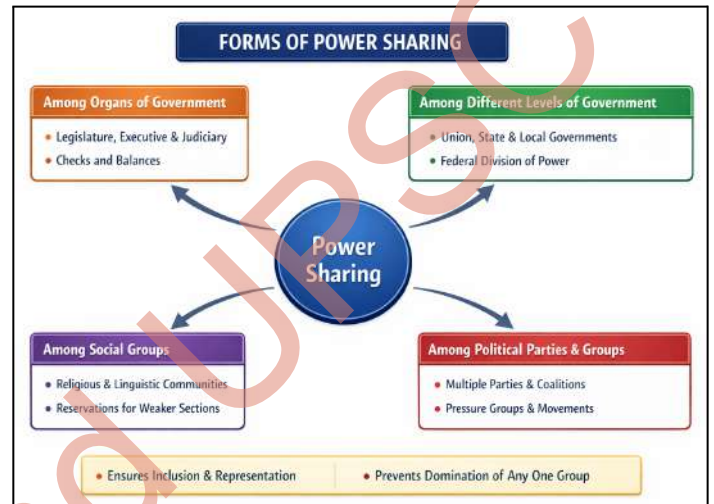
Among Social Groups:

- Power shared among religious and linguistic communities (e.g., Belgium's community government).
- In India, reservation for weaker sections and women ensures representation and inclusion.
- Helps avoid alienation of minority groups from governance.
- **Example:** India – Reservation of seats in legislatures for SCs/STs and representation for minorities ensures social inclusion.

Among Political Parties, Pressure Groups & Movements:

- In democracies, multiple parties compete and sometimes form coalitions, ensuring shared power.
- Interest groups (e.g., farmers, traders) also influence decisions through lobbying or participation in committees.

Power sharing is essential in a democracy as it ensures inclusive governance, respects diversity, and prevents concentration of power. It upholds the ethical principle of equal participation in political decision-making.



Ethical Foundations of Political Life

- Ethical foundations of political life refer to the moral values that shape the principles and purpose of governance. They provide a framework for evaluating political actions, laws, and institutions in terms of right and wrong.
- Core ideas like rights, liberty, equality, and secularism reflect these ethical standards in public/political life. These foundations help ensure that political power is exercised responsibly and in the interest of all citizens. They also promote trust, justice, and harmony within a diverse and democratic society.

Freedom

1. Freedom is commonly understood as the absence of external constraints, where individuals can act **autonomously** and make **independent decisions** without coercion.
2. However, freedom also means creating conditions for people to develop their creativity, capabilities, and potential, enabling self-expression and personal growth.
3. Both aspects, absence of constraints and presence of enabling conditions are essential to a free society, which allows individuals to flourish with **minimal social restrictions**.
4. Since total absence of constraints is **not possible in society**, we must evaluate which social constraints are justified and which should be removed.
5. This requires examining the relationship between the individual and society, to identify which features support freedom and which hinder it.
6. A free society promotes the full development of individual talents in fields like sports, science, art, and music, and enables people to make choices using reason and judgement.

Swaraj

- Swaraj, a concept in Indian political thought, combines **Swa (Self) and Raj (Rule)**, meaning both rule of the self and rule over self.
- During India's freedom struggle, Swaraj referred to freedom as a constitutional and political demand, and also as a social-collective value, inspiring Tilak's famous call: "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it."
- **Mahatma Gandhi**, in Hind Swaraj, emphasized rule over the self, stating, "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves."
- Swaraj means more than freedom; it is liberation through **self-respect, self-responsibility, and self-realisation**, freeing oneself from institutions of dehumanisation.
- Understanding the real 'Self' and its relation to community and society is central to achieving Swaraj.
- Gandhiji believed this path would liberate both individual and collective potential, guided by justice, a vision still highly relevant in the **twenty-first century**.

The Sources of Constraints:

- Constraints on freedom can arise from domination and external controls, often imposed by force or through government laws backed by authority.
- Examples include colonial rule and apartheid in South Africa, where rulers exercised power over subjects.
- While government may be necessary, a democratic government allows citizens to retain some control over rulers, making it an important protector of freedom.
- Social constraints can also stem from inequality, such as that caused by the caste system or extreme economic disparity.
- A quote from Subhas Chandra Bose emphasizes the importance of removing these deeper social and economic constraints to ensure true freedom.

Why Do We Need Constraints?":

- A world without constraints would descend into chaos, as people have conflicting ideas, ambitions, and compete for scarce resources, often leading to disputes and even violence over both serious and trivial matters.
- Mechanisms are needed in every society to control violence and settle disputes, enabling people to live freely with minimum constraints, while respecting each other's views.
- A truly free society allows individuals to hold their views, pursue choices, and create their own rules of living but even this requires some constraints, especially the willingness to respect differences.
- Sometimes, people see opposing beliefs as unacceptable, leading to coercion or harassment; in such cases, legal and political restraints are needed to protect freedom and allow for peaceful debate.

Liberalism

- In common usage, 'liberal' often means tolerant, and as a political ideology, liberalism emphasizes the right to hold and express opinions, even if others disagree.
- Liberals support individual liberty over collective norms, such as the idea that marriage decisions should rest with the individual, not the family or community.
- Liberalism often shows suspicion of political authority and prioritizes individual freedom over values like equality.
- Historically, it supported the free market and minimal state intervention, but modern liberalism recognizes the role of the welfare state and supports steps to reduce social and economic inequality.

Harm Principle:

- To decide when constraints on freedom are justified, John Stuart Mill's 'harm principle' from **On Liberty** essay is central:
- **Mill makes a distinction between:**
 - **Self-regarding actions:** Affect only the individual - no interference is justified.
 - **Other-regarding actions:** Affect or harm others -may justify external interference.
- The state or authority should only intervene in other-regarding actions that cause serious harm to others; freedom must be preserved in most cases as it's crucial for a dignified human life.
- For minor harm, such as playing loud music, Mill suggests social disapproval, not legal punishment (e.g., ignoring the person or showing disapproval politely).
- Legal constraints should be used only when actions cause serious harm to definite individuals; otherwise, society must tolerate inconvenience in the interest of protecting freedom.
- People should tolerate different ways of life and views, as long as they don't harm others. Tolerance should not extend to views/actions that endanger people or spread hatred, as hate campaigns seriously harm others' freedom.
- Constraints on such harmful actions are justified, but they must not be so harsh that they destroy freedom itself.
- **Example:** Life imprisonment for a hate campaign is excessive; instead, restrictions on movement or public meetings may be justified if warnings are ignored.
- The Indian Constitution refers to such **constraints as 'reasonable restrictions'**, which must be: Defensible by reason, **Not excessive, Proportionate** to the harm.
- Imposing too many restrictions or making it a habit is harmful to the overall condition of freedom in society.

Negative and Positive Liberty

- **Negative liberty** is "freedom from" external interference, protecting individual autonomy, while **positive liberty** is "freedom to" develop one's capabilities with enabling conditions like education

and health. Ideally, both coexist, though positive liberty can be misused to justify coercion.

John Stuart Mill's Four Arguments for Freedom of Expression

No Idea is Completely False

- Even wrong ideas may contain some element of truth.
- If we suppress them, we lose that partial truth.

Truth Emerges from Debate

- Truth does not emerge on its own; it is discovered through the clash of ideas.
- Debate and disagreement help refine what we call truth.

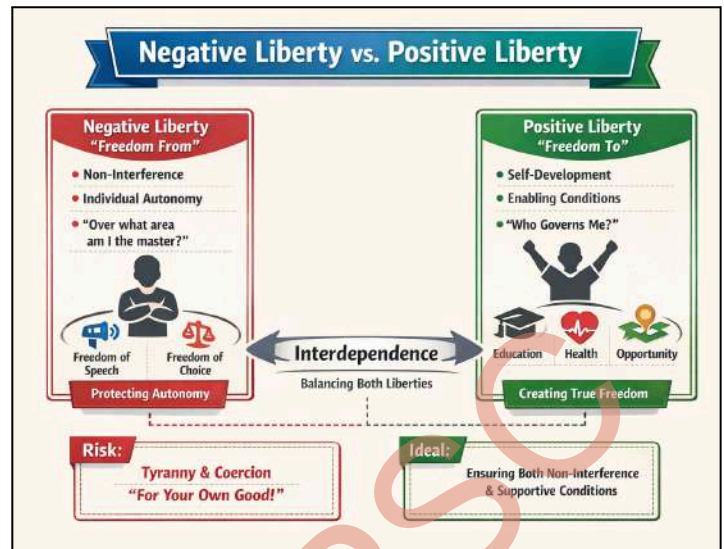
Prevents Truth from Becoming a Cliché

- Even true ideas can become stale or dogmatic if not challenged.
- Constant questioning keeps ideas alive, meaningful, and trusted.

What Seems False May Be True

- History shows that many ideas once rejected were later accepted as true.
- Silencing today's "false" views might stop us from discovering future truths

Freedom is essential for the development of individual dignity and societal progress. However, it must be balanced with reasonable constraints to prevent harm and uphold justice.



Without laws, there would be chaos, anarchy, and a potential for individuals to infringe upon the rights and freedoms of others. Law, therefore, acts as a guarantor of liberty, ensuring that individuals can exercise their freedoms within a structured and ordered society. So if there are no laws, there is no liberty. **(CSE 2018)**

Equality

- Equality is a deep moral and political ideal rooted in religion and the belief in shared humanity.
- It means equal worth and respect for all, regardless of gender, race, caste, nationality, or religion.
- Has inspired struggles against oppression, from the French Revolution to anti-colonial and Dalit/women's movements.
- One of the implications of equality in society is the absence of privileges. **(CSE 2017)**
- Society is marked by unequal wealth, opportunities, work conditions, and power.
- Raises concern: Are these inequalities natural and permanent, due to differences in talent and contribution, or are they due to social position and rules?

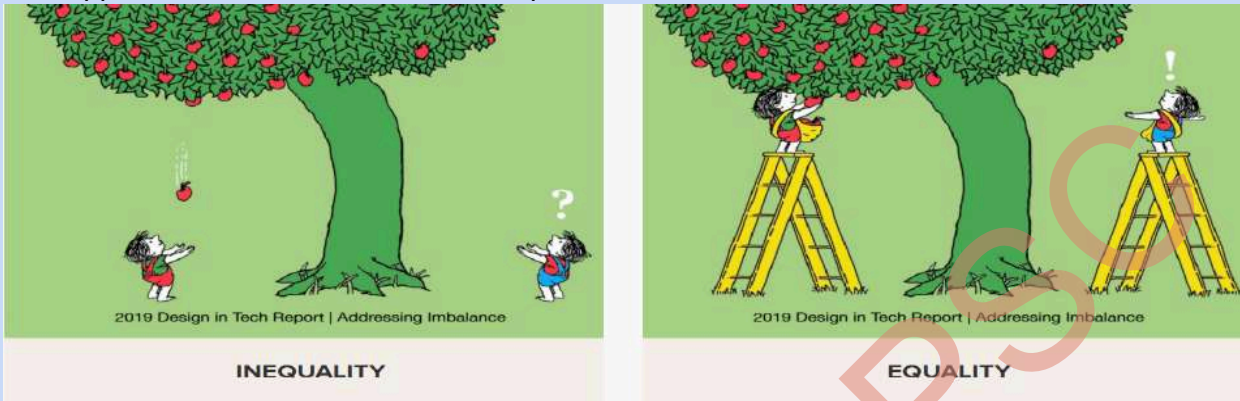
Equality: Respecting Differences, Rejecting Discrimination

- **Unacceptable Distinctions:** Discrimination based on race, colour, caste, religion, or gender violates the principle of equality.
- **Core of Equality:** All humans deserve equal respect due to shared humanity.
- **Equal Respect ≠ Identical Treatment:** Societies may treat people differently based on roles and responsibilities.
- **Functional Differences:** Status differences like those of prime ministers or army generals are acceptable if not abused.
- **Unjust Inequalities:** Inequalities like a slum child being denied education or food are unfair.
- **Acceptable Differences:** Variations in success due to personal ambition and effort are seen as fair.
- **True Meaning of Equality:** It means ensuring equal opportunity and fair treatment, not uniformity.

- Can also mention the concept of equity and the difference between equity and equality for better understanding.

Difference between Equality and Equity

- **Equality** means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities.
- **Equity** recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.



Equality of Opportunities

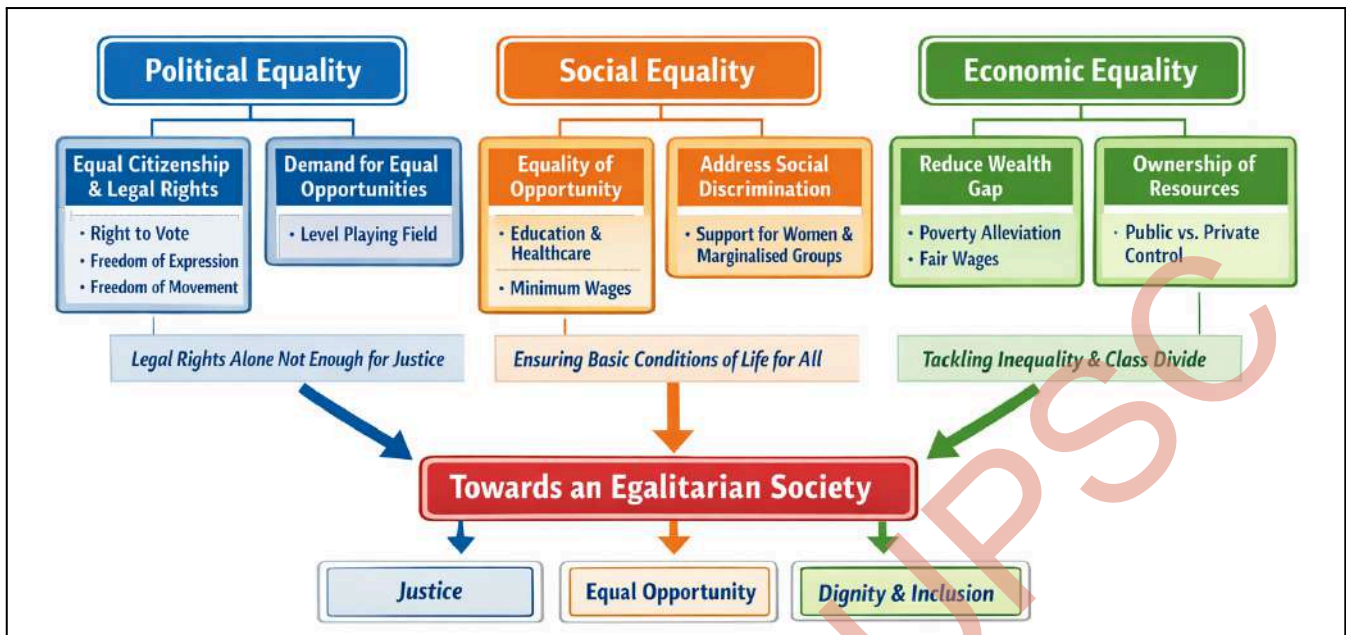
- Equality means all humans deserve the same rights and opportunities to develop their skills and talents, and pursue goals and ambitions.
- People may differ in choices, preferences, talents, and skills, leading to varying levels of success.
 - **Example:** Some may become ace cricketers or successful lawyers, but this does not mean society is unequal.
- The real issue is not inequality of **status, wealth, or privilege**.
- But inequality in access to basic goods like education, health care, and safe housing, which makes a society unequal and unjust.

Natural inequalities and social inequalities.

- Natural inequalities arise from inborn differences in capabilities and talents.
- Social inequalities are created by society through unequal opportunities or exploitation of certain groups.
 - **Example:** Societies may value intellectual work over manual work, or treat people differently based on race, colour, gender, or caste. Such social values often seem unjust.
- Long-standing inequalities may appear justifiable, as if based on natural traits, e.g., Women historically seen as the weaker sex, needing protection or black people in Africa stereotyped as child-like, justifying slavery. These views are now seen as social constructs, shaped by power differences, not true natural differences.
- Even some natural differences are no longer unchangeable due to medical and technological advances. Disabled people can function effectively with assistive devices like wheelchairs, artificial limbs, or computers.
 - **Example:** Stephen Hawking, despite severe physical disability, made major contributions to science.
- Denying disabled people help or fair reward based on their condition is widely seen as unjust.
- Therefore, the natural/social inequality distinction is not a reliable standard for assessing laws and policies.
- **Modern theorists focus instead on:**
 - Inequalities from personal choices
 - Inequalities from birth and family background
- It is the latter that concerns advocates of equality, and which they aim to minimise or eliminate

Three Dimensions of Equality

Achieving a just and equal society requires addressing three key dimensions of equality: political, social, and economic, as highlighted by various thinkers and ideologies.



1. Political Equality

- In democratic societies, political equality means granting equal citizenship, which includes basic rights like the right to vote, freedom of expression, belief, movement, and association, enabling all citizens to participate in state affairs.
- These are legal rights guaranteed by the constitution, but despite such guarantees, inequalities can persist due to unequal access to social and economic resources.
- This leads to a demand for equal opportunities or a **'Level playing field'**, showing that while political and legal equality alone may not ensure justice, they are fundamental components of an egalitarian society.

2. Social Equality

- While political equality removes legal barriers, social equality requires ensuring equality of opportunity so that all groups can **fairly compete** for available goods and services.
- This demands minimising social and economic inequalities and ensuring basic conditions of life for all, such as health care, good education, adequate nourishment, and minimum wages, without which equal competition is impossible and talent gets wasted.
- In India, customs and traditions further limit equal opportunities, especially for women, who may face inheritance discrimination, social restrictions on work and education, and exclusion from certain activities.
- The state must intervene through policies that prevent discrimination, encourage women's participation in education and professions, and ensure safety in public spaces.

3. Economic Equality

- Economic inequality exists when there are major differences in wealth, property, or income, measurable by the **rich-poor gap or poverty levels**.
- Democracies promote equal opportunities so that effort and talent can help individuals improve their conditions, despite **existing inequalities**.
- Entrenched inequalities across **generations create social divisions, resentment, and make reform difficult** due to the power of wealthy classes.
- Marx argued that private ownership of key resources causes economic and political inequality, threatening democracy.



- Marxists/Socialists believe **economic inequality** supports social inequality and advocate for public control of key resources.
- Liberals support competition as the fairest way to distribute rewards, ensuring people benefit based on talent and effort.
- They support state help only to ensure a **minimum standard of living** and **equal chances**, not full economic equality.

How Can We Promote Equality

1. Establishing Formal Equality

- The first step to equality is ending formal systems of inequality and privileges upheld by customs and laws that restrict access to opportunities and rewards based on class, caste, gender, or lineage.
- Examples include voting rights denied to the poor, restricted professions for women, the caste system limiting lower castes, and elite family-based power in many countries.
- Equality requires ending such legal protections for inequality; constitutions must prohibit discrimination and abolish untouchability, ensuring identical legal treatment regardless of caste, race, religion, or gender.

2. Equality Through Differential Treatment

- Formal equality is essential but not enough; sometimes different treatment is needed to ensure people can actually enjoy equal rights.
- Differences must be considered-e.g., disabled persons need ramps for equal building access; women in night shifts need protection to ensure safe work access. Such differential treatment enhances equality, not violates it.
- Identifying differences that block equal opportunities and crafting suitable policies is a key global concern.
- Affirmative action, including reservations in India, is one such policy tool to enhance opportunity and equality.

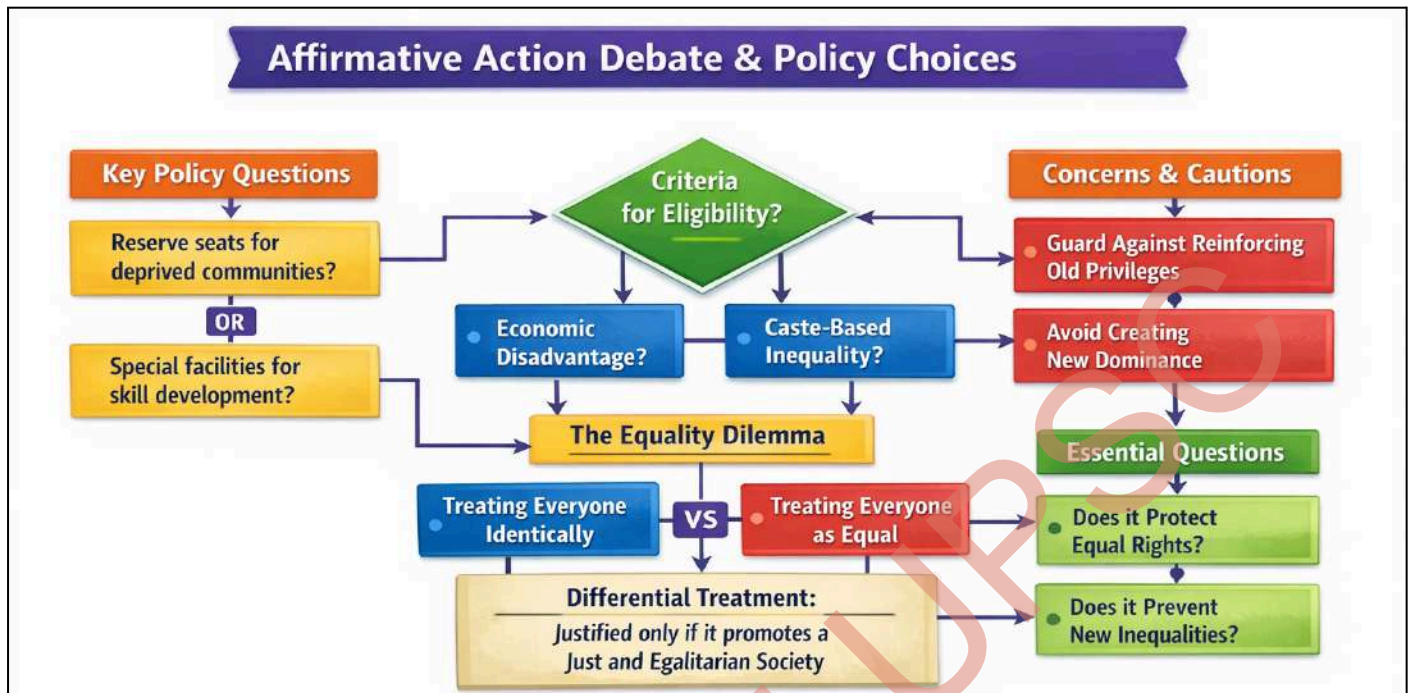
Affirmative Action

- Affirmative action goes beyond legal/formal equality, aiming to eliminate deeply rooted social inequalities through positive measures.
- It seeks to correct the **cumulative effects of past discrimination** through scholarships, hostels, reserved seats in jobs and education, etc.
- In India, reservation policies are justified as temporary support to help deprived groups overcome **historic exclusion and compete equally**.
- Critics argue such measures **Violate equal treatment**, calling them reverse discrimination that reinforces caste/race distinctions instead of removing them.
- A key debate is between equal state policy and individual **Rights-true fairness** may require special support for disadvantaged individuals to enable **fair competition**.
- A first-generation learner from an illiterate background is disadvantaged compared to one from an educated family; **dalits, women, and others** need tailored help.

Affirmative Action Debate & Policy Choices

- Debate continues on whether the state should **reserve seats** for **deprived communities** or provide **early skill development**.
- Defining **deprivation-by economic or caste-based inequality**-is crucial, with policies judged by their success in creating an **egalitarian** society.
- **Equality** requires distinguishing **identical treatment** from **equal treatment**, where **differential treatment** may promote equality but needs **justification**.
- Since systems like the **caste system** and **apartheid** used differential treatment to enforce **inequality**, liberals are wary of deviating from **identical treatment norms**.

- Differential treatment is justified only to promote **justice** and **egalitarianism**, not to create new **dominance** or privileges.



Justice

- All cultures interpreted justice differently-ancient India linked it to dharma, China's Confucius said kings must punish wrongdoers and reward the virtuous, while Plato in Greece discussed it in The Republic.
- In **Plato's dialogue, Socrates** answers young friends who question why justice matters, noting how unjust people often seem more successful, as they lie, avoid taxes, and twist rules for gain.
- Socrates argues that if everyone was unjust, society would collapse-no one would feel secure, so it is in everyone's long-term interest to obey laws and be just.
- Justice, Socrates** explains, is not just helping friends or harming enemies, nor pursuing self-interest, but is about the well-being of all people.
- Like a doctor cares for patients, a just ruler/government ensures the well-being of people, which means giving each person their due.
- The idea of justice as giving each their due remains important but modern views link it to human dignity.
- Immanuel Kant** emphasized that human dignity requires giving all people the opportunity to develop talents and pursue goals.
- Thus, justice means due and equal consideration to all individuals.**

Equal Treatment for Equals

- Justice means giving each person their due, but applying this is complex.
- A key principle is treating equals equally - all humans share basic characteristics and deserve equal rights.
- These rights include:** Civil rights (life, liberty, property), Political rights (like voting) & Social rights (like equal opportunities)
- No discrimination should occur based on **class, caste, race, or gender**.
- People must be judged by their work and actions, not their group identity.
- Unequal pay for equal work, whether due to caste or gender, is unjust and wrong.

Proportionate Justice

- Equal treatment isn't always just; fairness may require rewards based on effort and quality. Example: Equal marks for all students despite performance would feel unfair.
- Justice means proportionate reward, provided all start from a base of equal rights. Factors like effort, skill, and risk should influence rewards.
- Workers like miners, policemen, and craftsmen may not be paid fairly in proportion to their work's value and difficulty.
- Thus, equal treatment must be balanced with the principle of proportionality.

Recognition of Special Needs

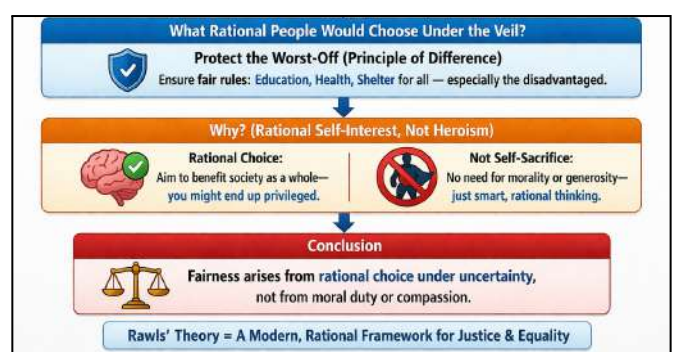
- Justice must consider special needs (e.g. disability, age, poor access to education/health), not just equal or proportionate treatment.
- This extends rather than contradicts the principle of equal treatment-unequal in certain respects may need differential treatment.
- Without this, equal treatment may worsen inequality where deprived people lack basic facilities.
- In India, caste-based discrimination + lack of access justified reservations in jobs and education for SCs/STs.
- Governments face challenges in balancing three justice principles:
 - Equal treatment for equals
 - Proportional rewards for effort/skill
 - Support for the needy to ensure minimum living standards and equal opportunity
- Emphasizing only one principle (e.g. merit) can exclude marginalised; hence, policy must harmonize all three to ensure justice.

Just Distribution

- Social justice requires more than fair laws, it involves fair distribution of goods and services within and between nations. To reduce deep inequalities, redistribution of resources may be needed for a level playing field (equal life conditions + opportunities).
- Example: In India, abolition of untouchability, access to temples/jobs, land reforms aimed at achieving social equality. Issues like reservation in jobs/education provoke strong public emotions, as they affect perceptions of future security.
- Philosopher John Rawls provides a rational theory justifying help to the least privileged, which is discussed next.

John Rawls' Theory of Justice

- People usually prefer societies where they are privileged, so they can't judge fairly when personal interests are involved.
- Rawls proposes a just society can be imagined only if one decides without knowing their future position-rich/poor, caste, gender, etc.
- This is called the **"Veil Of Ignorance"**, a thought experiment where people choose rules imagining they might be born anywhere in society.
- Under the veil, people will protect the worst-off, fearing they might end up in that position.
- So they would support fair rules ensuring education, health, and shelter for all, especially the disadvantaged.
- Rawls' idea does not **demand heroism** or **self-sacrifice-only** rational thinking in self-interest under uncertainty.
- Rational people will also want policies that benefit the whole society, in case they are born among the privileged.



- Thus, fairness arises from rational choice, not moral obligation or generosity, making Rawls' theory a strong modern **framework for justice**.

Pursuing Social Justice

- A society lacks social justice if deep, lasting gaps exist between the wealthy and the deprived, who have no real chance to improve their condition.
- Justice doesn't demand absolute equality, but large, unbridgeable differences are unjust.
- A just society ensures basic **minimum conditions**- **health, security, opportunities**-to help all people live with dignity and develop their talents. These basic conditions usually include: nutrition, housing, clean **water, education, and minimum wages**, and are the state's responsibility.
- Providing these to all is hard, especially in poor and populous countries like India.
- Even if everyone agrees on helping the poor, debates arise on how-via free market competition or state-led redistribution.

A Just society is that society in which an ascending sense of reverence and descending sense of contempt is dissolved into the creation of a compassionate society – **B.R. Ambedkar**

Free Markets (Laissez-faire) vs. State Intervention

- Free market supporters argue individuals should freely own property, make contracts, and compete; rewards would reflect merit and talent, while lesser rewards go to the incompetent.
- Many now accept some state role, like ensuring a basic standard of living, while still preferring private agencies to deliver services like health and education.
- They claim markets are neutral ,indifferent to caste, religion, or gender and give consumers choices, provided they can pay.
- But critics point out that essential services may become unavailable or low-quality in unprofitable areas (e.g., rural schools or health centres).
- Private services, though high in quality, are often too costly for the poor, favoring the wealthy and powerful, and limiting access for the disadvantaged.
- Thus, many argue that the state must intervene to ensure universal access to basic facilities.
- In democracies, debates over justice and distribution are natural and necessary-they help refine ideas and find the best way forward to ensure social justice.

Justice implies something which is not only right to do and wrong not to do; but which some individual person can claim from us as his moral right.– **J. S. Mill**

Rights

- A right is an entitlement or justified claim, due to us as citizens, individuals, and human beings.
- It must be recognized by society as a legitimate claim that must be upheld.
- Not everything that is desirable or necessary is a right.
- **Example:** Wanting to wear different clothes to school or staying out late does not make those desires right.
- Rights are claims that are necessary for living a life of dignity and respect. They are often claimed because they represent conditions for self-respect.



- Rights are claims of the citizen against the State. **(CSE 2017)**
- **Freedom of expression:** Encourages creativity (e.g., writing, dance, music), Essential for democracy, allowing free expression of beliefs and opinions.
- Activities injurious to health and well-being cannot be claimed as rights. **Example:** Banned drugs and tobacco are harmful.

The Changing Understanding of Rights

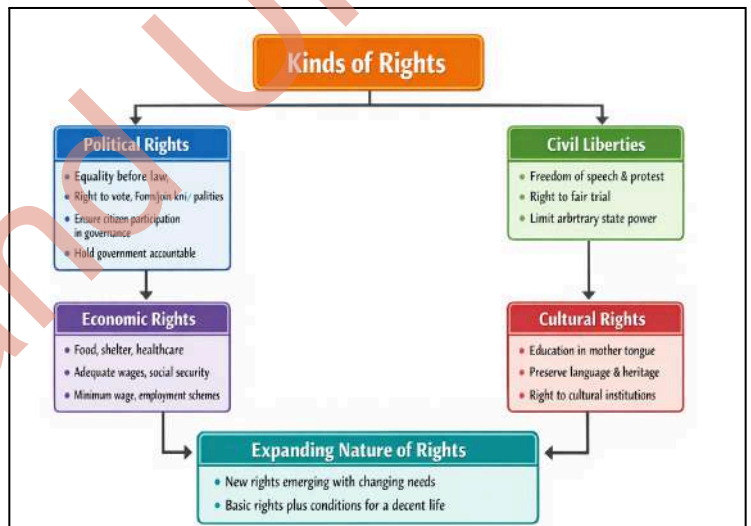
- Earlier thinkers believed rights were natural and inalienable, given by **God or nature**, such as life, liberty, and property.
- Today, rights are seen as **human-made guarantees** essential for dignity and equality, based on the belief that all people are equally valuable.
- The concept of human rights now challenges inequalities like caste, race, or gender and evolves through social struggles.
- **New Rights**-like those for clean air, livelihood, or children's welfare-have emerged in response to modern challenges, often gaining strong public support.

Legal Recognition and Role of the State in Rights

- Human rights are powerful because they appeal to our sense of morality and justice. We feel certain rights are naturally due to every person.
- However, for these rights to be protected and enforced in real life, they must be supported by law.
- Without legal recognition and government enforcement, moral claims alone often aren't enough to ensure people's rights are respected.

Kinds of Rights

Political, civil, economic, and cultural rights together ensure participation, freedom, dignity, and evolving human well-being in a democracy.



Rights and Responsibilities

Dual Nature of Rights:

- Rights place obligations not only on the state (e.g. sustainable development) but also on individuals.
- Individuals must protect common goods like clean air, forests, ozone layer, and ecological balance for present and future generations.
- Rights are correlative with Duties. **(CSE 2017)**

Respect for Others' Rights:

- One must respect others' rights while exercising their own.
- Freedom of expression must not harm others (e.g., inciting violence).
- One's personal choices (e.g., music, clothing) must not interfere with others' similar choices.
- Rights are limited by the principle of equal rights for all.

Balancing Conflicting Rights:

- Rights may conflict, and must be balanced (e.g., **freedom of expression vs. privacy**).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Adopted by the United Nations, 10 December 1948

- Dignity & Equality**
Foundation of Freedom, Justice & Peace
- Never Again**
Response to Past Atrocities
- Rule of Law**
Protection Against Tyranny
- Global Cooperation**
Working Together for Human Rights
- International Friendship**
Building Peace Between Nations

A Common Standard for All Peoples

- Education & Awareness
- Action for Universal Rights



- **Example:** Taking someone's photo without consent infringes on their privacy.

Vigilance Against State Overreach:

- **Citizens** must monitor limitations on rights, especially in the name of national security.
- **Questions** arise about phone tapping, arrests on suspicion, torture, etc.
- Even under threat, due process (**Legal counsel, court hearing**) must be followed.

Need for Vigilance:

- Rights are not absolute, but must be protected and exercised carefully.
- Granting excessive powers to the state can lead to authoritarianism.
- Rights form the foundation of democracy; citizens must safeguard both their own and others' rights.

Rights are essential for ensuring dignity, freedom, and equality in a democratic society. They must be protected, balanced with responsibilities, and vigilantly safeguarded against misuse by individuals or the state.

Secularism

- Religion is **not anti-human**; it responds to **inevitable human suffering** like death, disease, and loss hence secularism is **not anti-religious**.
- However, religion can also cause deep inequality, especially gender and caste-based: **Example:** Dalits barred from temples; women denied entry in some temples.
- Organised religion is often **controlled by conservative factions, suppressing dissent and fostering sectarian violence**, as seen in religious fundamentalism (e.g., in parts of the US).
- So, religious domination exists not just between different religions (inter-religious) but also within a **religion (intra-religious)**.
- It promotes freedom within religions, and equality between, as well as within, religions.
- It is a normative doctrine aiming for a society free from religious domination in all forms.

Secular State:

- Since the state holds vast power, it plays a decisive role in preventing inter-community conflict.
- **A secular state:**
 - **Must not be theocratic**, i.e., ruled by religious leaders (e.g., Taliban or medieval Papal states).
 - **Must not favor any religion legally** (e.g., Anglican Church in England or Sunni Islam in Pakistan).
- Separation of religion and state is necessary but not sufficient for secularism.
- **A truly secular state must:**
 - Draw goals from non-religious sources (**like peace, freedom, equality**).
 - Ensure religious freedom and equality (**both inter- and intra-religious**).
- The form of separation between religion and state can vary depending on values and context.
- **This leads to two models of secularism: Western (e.g., USA) and Indian.**

Western Model of Secularism:

- Western secularism (especially American) is based on strict separation between religion and state mutual exclusion.
- **The state cannot:**
 - Interfere in religious matters.
 - Financially support religious institutions.
 - Reform or intervene in discriminatory religious practices (e.g., banning women priests, excommunication).
- Religion is private, and policy/law cannot have religious rationale.
- Focus is on individual liberty and equality, less on community rights or minority protection.
- This model arose from religious **homogeneity** in the West, focusing mainly on intra-religious domination.

- **No role for state-led religious reform**, since that would violate the principle of mutual exclusion.

Indian Model of Secularism:

- Indian secularism is distinct from the **Western model**; it evolved amidst deep religious diversity and inter-community interaction.
- Goes beyond church-state separation; focuses on both inter-religious and intra-religious equality.
- **Arising from Indian traditions and Western modern ideas, it opposes:**
 - Caste oppression and patriarchy in Hinduism,
 - Discrimination in Islam and Christianity,
 - Majoritarian threats to minorities.
- Ensures freedom of religion for individuals and rights of religious communities (e.g., to run schools and preserve culture).
- Allows state-supported religious reform (e.g., abolishing untouchability, banning child marriage).
- Unlike the West, the Indian state may engage with religion:
 - **Negatively** (e.g., banning religious tyranny),
 - **Positively** (e.g., supporting minority institutions).
- Indian secularism is **not just tolerance** or equal respect to all religions; it allows principled intervention, including equal disrespect for discriminatory practices in any religion.

Criticism of Indian secularism

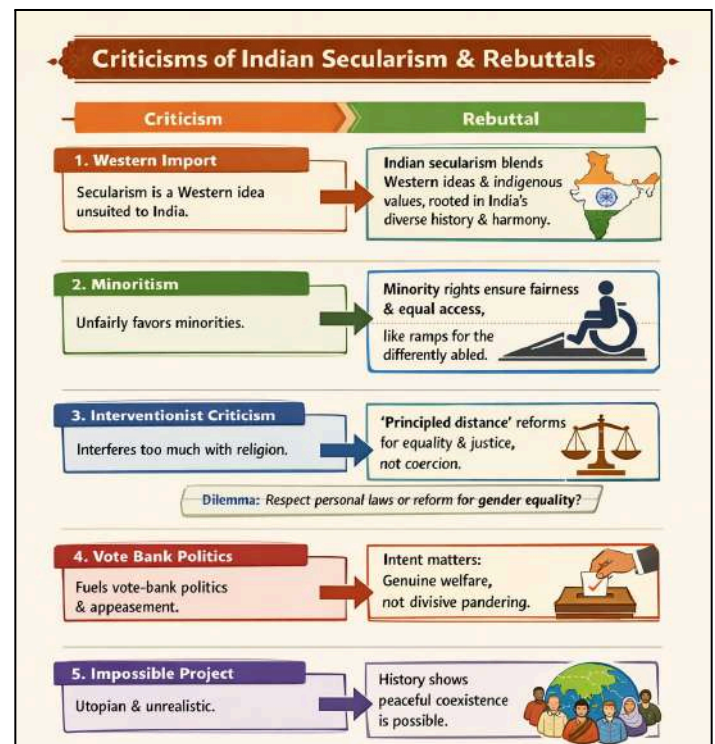
- **Western Import** – Indian secularism blends Western ideas with indigenous practices to suit local religious diversity.
- **Minoritism** – Protecting minority rights ensures fairness and equal dignity, not favoritism.
- **Interventionist Criticism** – The state engages with religion to promote justice, using principled distance.
- **Vote Bank Politics** – Secularism risks vote-bank politics only when communities are treated as uniform blocks.
- **Impossible Project** – History shows peaceful coexistence is possible; Indian secularism demonstrates equality within diversity.

Nehru on Secularism

- **Definition:** Nehru defined secularism as “**equal protection by the State to all religions**”, without favoring or adopting any one.
- **Belief:** Though personally non-religious, Nehru was not anti-religion and upheld respect for all faiths.
- **Approach:** Unlike Turkey's Ataturk, he did not support total separation, allowing state intervention for social reform (e.g., abolition of caste, dowry, sati).
- **Firm Stance:** Nehru was strongly opposed to communalism, especially majoritarian communalism.
- **Vision:** For Nehru, secularism was both a **moral principle and the foundation of national unity** and integrity.

Ataturk's Secularism vs Indian Secularism

- **Ataturk's Approach:** Turkish secularism under Ataturk involved active suppression of religion to modernize society.



- **Major Changes:** He abolished the Khalifa, banned Islamic symbols like the fez, imposed Western clothing, changed the calendar, and replaced the script.
- **No Religious Freedom:** People had no freedom to keep their traditional names, dress, or language.
- **Indian Secularism:** In contrast, India follows principled distance, allowing freedom of religion, identity, and customs unless they harm others' rights.
- **Key Difference:** Ataturk's model was **authoritarian and assimilationist**; Indian secularism is inclusive and pluralistic.

Secularism ensures equal respect and protection for all religions while preventing domination by any one. It is essential for maintaining social harmony and upholding democratic values in a diverse society like India.

Some snapshot from the NCERT

King Chandrāpīḍa wanted to build a temple to his deity, but the hut of a stubborn cobbler stood in the way. When the builders complained to the king that he did not even allow them to take measurements, the king blamed them for not asking the cobbler's permission first. The king received the cobbler, who explained that his humble hut was like a mother to him and as precious to him as the palace was to the king: "The misery people feel when their homes are forcibly taken away can be described only by a god who has fallen from his celestial car or by a king who has lost his kingdom!" Nevertheless, the cobbler expressed his readiness to let go of his hut if only the king would come and respectfully ask for his permission — which the king did, giving him adequate money as compensation. "For those who desire happiness, there should be no false pride," concludes the text, while the cobbler praised the king's commitment to dharma, even towards a lowly subject!

– From *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* by the Kashmiri scholar Kalhaṇa (12th century CE)



Fig. 9.8. A 17th-century Rajput miniature painting depicting Bhīṣma lying on a bed of arrows, teaching Yudhiṣṭhira while Kṛiṣṇa sits at the head, witnessing the moment.

In the Shānti Parva of the Mahābhārata, when Bhīṣma, the wise elder of the Kuru dynasty, lies on a bed of arrows awaiting his death, he teaches Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest Pāṇḍava, at great length on good governance, justice, and the moral responsibilities of a raja. A raja is not just a ruler; the welfare of his people is his highest priority. He must apply the law without bias to ensure fairness and equality. He must not get attached to power, as it fosters ego and corruption. He must seek guidance from wise advisors to ensure just and well-informed decisions. The raja must understand that his authority is temporary and bound by dharma.

NCERT Gyan

Many of our institutions have mottos inspired by the wisdom of our ancient texts. The Government of India's motto, for example, is Satyameva Jayate, which means "Truth alone triumphs". The Supreme Court's motto is **Yato Dharmastato Jayah**, or, "Where there is dharma, there is victory."