

People's Participation In Democracy

We studied the way the political system operates in India in the previous chapter. We learnt that the country adopted parliamentary democracy, a political system in which people's participation is supreme. But people's participation has taken different forms in different democratic countries.

In this chapter we shall study how the people contribute to a democracy. We shall study the role played by elections, pressure groups and the media to ensure people's participation in democracy. We shall also see how Indian political parties represent the interests of different social classes. We shall try to understand electoral politics in independent India.

15.1 Elections: what and why?

Most democratic countries today are representative democracies in which people vote to elect their representatives. The political party that has the majority of elected representatives forms the government. Most democratic countries specify a minimum age for people to become eligible to cast their vote in an election. The more the number of people who vote in an election, the more representative and democratic is the government that is formed. So a basic parameter of a democracy is the extent of people's participation in elections to form a government.

Initially, the Indian constitution specified that any individual who attained the age of 21 years was eligible to vote in local body elections, state assembly elections and Lok Sabha elections. The constitution was amended in 1989 to lower the voting age to 18 years to enable the youth of the country to participate in the electoral process. But do all eligible voters exercise their franchise in elections?

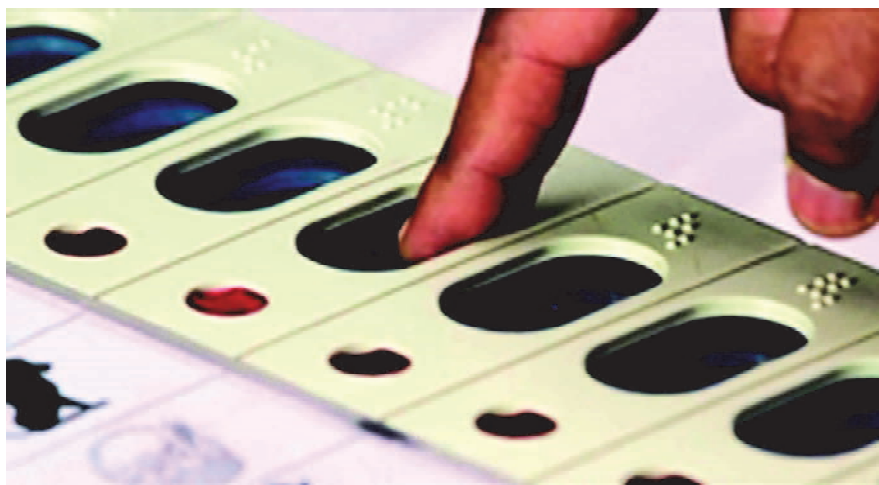


Figure 15.1: An electronic voting machine. Find out how it works

Voting Process

Recall what you read in chapter 12 about the Election Commission. We shall now consider some issues relating to election. The Election Commission, in consultation with the state governments appoints state and district level election officers. In every state there is one Chief Election Officer and in every district a district election officer. All these officials function under the direction of the Election Commission.

Electoral Rolls (Voter List): In every state there is a common voters' register for elections to the Parliament, state Legislature and panchayati raj institutions. No citizen can be excluded from this list on the basis of caste, religion, ethnicity or gender. Every Indian who is above 18 years of age has the right to get his or her name in the Voter Register. A voter can be disqualified for mental derangement, criminal record or corrupt practices.

Electoral Process: The electoral process commences with the notification issued by the President or the Governor of a state. The Election Commission announces the election plan. The candidates wishing to be elected are given about eight days to file their nomination. The Election officer examines the nomination papers after the expiry of the last date for filing nomination. In case error or discrepancy is found in the nomination papers, nomination may be rejected. After this candidates are allowed two days to withdraw their nomination if they so desire. After this the election officer announces the final list of candidates and allocates symbols for non-party candidates and candidates of un-recognised parties. At least fourteen days of campaigning is allowed after the last date for withdrawal of nomination. The Election Commission ensures that all candidates comply with the 'Electoral Code of Conduct'.

Election campaign ends 48 hours before the date of voting. After voting the 'ballot boxes' or Electronic Voting Machines are kept in a secure place. Counting is done on a pre-determined date. Candidate getting the maximum number of votes is declared as the winner by the election officer.

NOTA: Electronic Voting Machines have been introduced to ensure efficiency and transparency in election. The names and symbols of all candidates appears on the machine along with a press button. In addition there is another button called 'NOTA' . this can be used by a voter in case he or she does not want to vote for any of the candidates. It is given at the bottom of the list of voters on the machine.

Secret Ballot: The person for whom anyone votes remains a secret whether in the electronic voting machine or ballot paper voting so that the voter is not harassed by any candidate for voting against him or her. This is called 'Secret Ballot'.

Right to Recall: this is applicable in local self government institutions. Under this provision if half of the elected representatives and two thirds of the local voters if they so desire can remove a Panch, Sarpanch, corporator etc from their posts. This is also applicable to Chhattisgarh.

15.2 Electoral behaviour in India

15.2.1 How many people cast their votes?

Let us study the behaviour of the Indian voter by examining the Lok Sabha elections from 1952 to 2004. On the basis of the figures given in Table 15.1, find out the level of participation of Indian voters in elections. Which classes showed higher participation?

A political party is a formal (officially recognised) organization that subscribes to a particular ideology. Each party formulates its policies and programmes for the country, based on its ideology. The Election Commission registers all political parties that participate in the elections.

Table 15.1: People's participation in Lok Sabha elections from 1952 to 2004

Year	Male	Female	Votes cast (%)	Votes cast (in crores)	Registered voters (in crores)
1952	-	-	61.2	10.60	17.93
1957	-	-	62.2	12.06	19.71
1962	63.31	46.63	55.42	11.99	22.03
1967	66.73	55.48	61.33	15.27	24.20
1971	60.73	49.11	55.29	15.13	26.44
1977	65.63	54.91	60.49	19.43	30.04
1980	62.16	51.22	56.92	20.28	32.52
1984	68.18	58.60	63.56	24.12	37.38
1989	66.13	57.32	61.95	30.91	47.41
1991	61.58	51.35	56.93	28.27	49.37
1996	62.06	53.41	57.94	34.33	56.20
1998	65.72	57.88	58.97	37.54	55.67
1999	63.97	55.65	59.99	37.17	56.59
2004	61.66	53.30	57.65	38.99	64.02

Source: *eci.nic.in*

In 1952, crore people voted in the general elections while in 2004, the number of people who voted was crore.

In which election was the percentage of votes cast the highest and in which election was it the lowest?

Why do you think the number of registered voters show such a sharp increase in 1989?

Compare the number of male and female voters in the table. Why do you think there is such a big difference in their numbers?

What do you think could be the reasons for the differences in voting percentage in the elections? Analyse the reasons for this variation on the basis of what you read in the last chapter.

The table shows that the voting percentage in 1952 was 61.2 percent. It was highest in 1984 at 63.56 percent and lowest in 1971 at 55.29 percent. The average voting percentage during this period (1952-2004) was 59.49 percent. This shows that the voting percentage does not fluctuate significantly in Indian elections. The male voting percentage averages around 64 percent while the female voting percentage averages 54.57 percent. Despite being given equal voting rights under the constitution, the voting percentage of women is around 10 percent less than for men. This shows that women's participation in elections is lower than male participation.

To sum up, we can say that around 60 percent of the people in our country cast their votes in the general elections, with the participation of women being lower than men. The voting percentage has not increased despite the efforts of the Election Commission and other government and non-government organisations to encourage more people to cast their votes. Hence, there has always been a big difference between the number of people who actually cast their votes and the total number of registered voters. Also, people's participation in elections has been uneven, with more people voting in some elections and less people in some other elections.



Figure 15.2: Women outside a polling booth after casting their votes. Note their voter's identity cards and the indelible ink mark on their index finger

We see that there has been a steady but sharp increase in the number of registered voters during this period. In 1952, the number of registered voters was 10.60 crore while the number increased almost four-fold to 38.99 crore in 2004.

15.2.2 What are the factors that influence voters?

Voters are influenced by many factors at the time they cast their votes. On the one hand, the interests of the nation and national policies play an important role in influencing their decision. At the same time, narrower interests such as caste, religion, regionalism, language and the pressure of powerful local people also influence their voting behaviour. Another common feature seen in elections is that many candidates try to influence voters with money, liquor and other incentives rather than their policies and programmes.

But political analysts point out that whenever the voters feel that there is some grave danger facing the nation or fundamental changes are needed, they forget their sectarian interests when they cast their votes. For example, when the declaration of the emergency posed a danger to Indian democracy, the people cast a decisive vote against the emergency in the 1977 election. In the same way, the Congress party won an unprecedented majority in the 1984 elections because of the sympathy wave following the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

It is generally seen that voters are sensitive to issues such as the performance of the ruling government, the credentials and credibility of the candidates and the promises that the parties make in their election manifesto. Television, social media and newspapers also exert their powerful influence on voters.

Thus, we can see that many factors influence the behaviour of the Indian voter. These factors differ from region to region and from time to time. But what is important in a democratic system is that people participate in the elections. It is also important for them to weigh the electoral issues carefully before casting their vote.

Among the factors listed above that influence voter behaviour, which factors are important in influencing voters in your area? Discuss with the help of your teacher.

How does caste influence voters? Discuss with the help of your teacher.

Fill in the following table on the basis of your discussions:

Factors that influence local elections	Factors that influence Vidhan Sabha elections	Factors that influence Lok Sabha elections

15.3 Representation in Indian political organisations

Representation in political organisations is a fundamental aspect of people's participation. Representation tells us the level of people's participation in political organizations that represent the interests of different classes in society. It also tells us whether all classes are actually represented in these organisations or not.

The Indian constitution stipulates a three-tiered government system. At the central government level, people choose their Lok Sabha representatives through general elections. The people also choose their representatives to the state government and the local government through elections. Let us try and understand how the different social classes are represented in the Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and local government.

15.3.1 Representation of women in the Lok Sabha:

Table 15.2 will help you to study women's representation in the Lok Sabha.

What should be the percentage of women members in an ideal Lok Sabha?

How many women members should the Lok Sabha have to achieve this ideal?

Table 15.2: Participation of women in the Lok Sabha

Year	No of women candidates	% of women candidates	No of women members	% of women members
1951	-	-	-	-
1957	45	3.0	22	4.5
1962	66	3.3	31	6.3
1967	68	2.9	29	5.6
1971	61	2.2	21	5.6
1977	70	2.9	19	3.5
1980	143	3.1	28	5.3
1984	171	3.1	42	7.9
1989	198	3.2	29	5.5
1991	330	3.8	37	7.3
1996	599	4.3	40	7.4
1998	274	5.8	43	7.9
1999	284	6.1	49	9.0
2004	355	6.5	45	8.3
2009	556	6.9	59	10.9
2014	668	8.0	66	11.4

How many women members does the current Lok Sabha have?

The number of women members and their percentage representation in the Lok Sabha has been increasing over the years. Check whether this statement is true or false.

Which election saw the lowest number of women members elected? Why do you think their number was so low? Give reasons.

The number of women candidates as a percentage of the total number of candidates indicates the political participation of women. If there are 10 candidates in an election constituency and if all 10 candidates are male, we can say that women are not politically active in that constituency. If more than half the candidates are women, we can say that women's participation is strong. Currently, the percentage of women candidates who contest elections averages 8 percent. That means, for every 92 male candidates there are only 8 women candidates. This number fluctuates from election to election.



Figure 15.3: A rally demanding 33 percent reservation for women in state assemblies

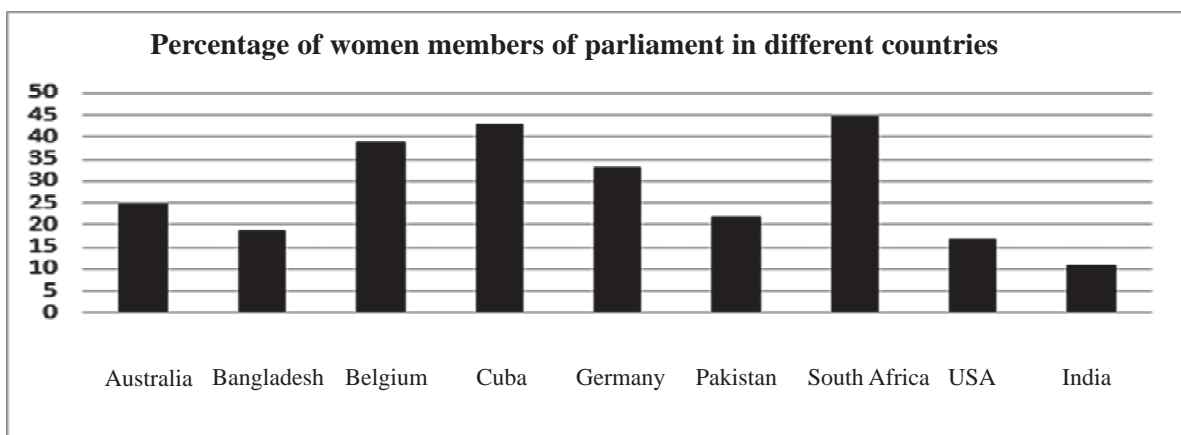
What do you think are the reasons why political parties have so few women candidates?

Seeing the current situation, do you think it is right to reserve 33 percent seats in the Lok Sabha for women?

If the percentage of women members reaches 50 percent, how do you think this will affect politics and society?

Study the following graph and state which country has the most women members in parliament and which has the least.

Which country in South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan) has the most women members in parliament?



15.3.2 Women's representation in local bodies

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments created a third level of government in local bodies. These local bodies had 33 percent reservation of seats for women members. Thus, large numbers of women were elected as members of these bodies. In many states, the number of reserved seats was raised to 50 percent.

15.3.3 Representation of scheduled castes and tribes in the Lok Sabha

The socially, educationally and economically deprived classes of society are listed as 'scheduled castes and tribes' in the constitution. Seats have been reserved for these communities in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in proportion to their percentage in the country's population. Thus, 84 seats were reserved for scheduled castes and 47 for scheduled tribes in the 16th Lok Sabha. Similarly, seats have been reserved for these classes in the state assemblies in proportion to their percentage in the state's population. Seats have also been reserved in local governments i.e. the panchayats and urban bodies.

15.4 Pressure groups

Let us try and understand what a pressure group is and the role it plays in a modern democracy from the following incident:

In 1984, the Karnataka government set up a company called Karnataka Pulpwood Ltd (KPL) and granted it a 40-year lease on 30,000 hectares of land. This land was part of the village commons - the pasture land where the villagers traditionally graze their cattle and other farm animals. The company began planting eucalyptus on this land to get pulp for making paper. But the farmers got together to launch a movement to save their common lands. They were supported by many well-known writers and environmentalists from the state.

The farmers presented a memorandum to the state government and its chief minister but when there was no response, they filed a petition in the Supreme Court. The apex court passed an order to retain the status quo as it existed before the lease was granted. But the villagers did not get their common lands back in spite of the court's order. So they launched a *satyagraha* in a village called Kunsur in 1987 that came to known as the *Kitikho-Hachiko* (uproot and plant) *satyagraha*. During the *satyagraha*, the farmers uprooted the eucalyptus saplings and in their place planted fruit and fodder plant saplings that were useful to the villagers.

The activists then won the support of 70 state legislators, who put pressure on the government to shut down KPL. The movement forced the government to bow to the wishes of the villagers and the company was shut down in 1991.

In this example, the movement launched by the villagers and intellectuals acted as a pressure group to force the government to change its policies. So we can say that a pressure group helps to protect the interests and rights of specific a social group by putting pressure on the government to change its policies. These groups use constitutional methods such as presenting memorandums to the government and filing petitions in the courts, along with propaganda, strikes and demonstrations, to achieve their objectives.

So a movement is a pressure group. It is usually an informal organization. There are many other kinds of pressure groups that are formal organizations, such as the chambers of commerce and industry.

These chambers are organizations of merchants and industrialists that place their demands before the government and seek to influence government policies in their favour. There are many such organisations to protect the interests of professional groups like doctors, lawyers, teachers etc.

There are also organisations that do not represent any special interest group. They put pressure on the government on issues of public concern, such as the environment, education, health and foreign policy. They publish books and conduct research studies on these subjects and discuss their findings with government officials, ministers and people's representatives to try and influence them. Their experts are usually nominated on committees appointed by the government to look into these issues.

In addition to all these organisations, there are also professional lobbyists whose services are hired by groups who want to influence government policies on specific issues. So democratic systems have different kinds of pressure groups, ranging from social movements to commercial lobbyists.

What methods did the farmers of Karnataka use to fight for their demands?

Have you come across any pressure group in your area that has opposed any government project? Give examples.

Pressure groups and Political parties: Political parties are people's organisations. They also try to influence government policies and projects. So, in a way, they act as pressure groups. But is it correct to label them as pressure groups? Political parties differ from pressure groups in one important respect. Their main objective is to come to power to form a government. A pressure group, on the other hand, does not seek power but only seeks to influence the government to fulfill its objective.

On the basis of the earlier discussion, we can list the following characteristics of pressure group:

1. A pressure group does not seek power.
2. A pressure group is formed when people get together to pursue common objectives, rights, viewpoint or professional interest.
3. A pressure group seeks to influence policy makers to achieve its objectives.
4. A pressure group uses various methods to achieve its objectives, including media communication, demonstrations, workshops and meetings, publications, lobbying etc.

15.4.1 The role of a pressure group in a democracy

A pressure group that represents the interests of a specific class or group may not appear to be the best thing for a democracy, which tries to protect the rights and interests of every member of society. Such a pressure group may also appear to use its power to achieve its own purposes without taking responsibility for its actions. So, in a way, a pressure group is not answerable to the people, unlike a political party that has to face the electorate every time there is an election. It is also possible that a pressure group is supported by very few people but has enough money and resources to alter public opinion through propaganda to achieve its narrow agenda.

However, despite such shortcomings, pressure groups and social movements strengthen democracy. People should have the right and opportunity to put pressure on a government, using all possible legal and constitutional options. Such pressure on the government is a positive feature that keeps a demo-

cratic system healthy. And if many such special interest groups representing different classes in society are active, no single group can establish its dominance in a democracy.

There are also instances of governments being influenced by a few wealthy and powerful people for their own selfish interests. Public pressure and movements play an important role in countering such unethical pressure. They also make the government aware of the needs and aspirations of the common people. The government also gets to know what people belonging to different sections of society want. It can then try to strike a balance by seeking a consensus between conflicting interests.

15.4.2 Democracy and organisations

A democratic constitution usually has a provision that gives people the right to form their own organisations. The Indian constitution considers this to be a fundamental right. Citizens form different kinds of organisations to fulfil their needs or fight for their collective rights such as clubs, self-help groups, cooperative societies, language, caste or religious associations, and occupation-based groups like trade unions, advocacy groups, lawyers' associations, etc.

The number of such groups formed in a country and their freedom to pursue their activities are an indicator of the health of democracy in that country. Such groups make people active in a democracy and strengthen community life.

The government's role is limited to seeing that these organisations function within the law and do not pursue activities that harm the public good. That is why such organisations need to be officially registered. However, there is no need to register an informal organization. For example, there are neighbourhood youth sports or festival committees that need not be registered. But if such an organization buys property or wishes to pursue an activity that comes within the ambit of any law, then it must register itself.

We shall now have a look at some important types of organisations.

15.4.3 Trade unions

India has a long history of trade unions set up to fight for the rights of workers. Many of them were formed during the years of the freedom struggle. They collectively negotiated with factory owners on issues that affected the welfare of workers, such as wages, hours of work and working conditions. Workers also formed their own self-help and mutual-aid organisations.

The Congress party took an initiative to bring these diverse groups together under one umbrella when it established the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1920. After independence, various political parties also formed their own central trade union wings. The following is a list of the main trade unions:

1. All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)
2. Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)
3. Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)
4. United Trade Union Congress (UTUC)
5. Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)
6. Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)

These organisations not only negotiate with factory owners for workers' rights but also act as pressure groups to influence government policies concerning workers.

15.4.4 Professional associations

The number of professional associations and their activities grew rapidly after independence. Most professions formed their own organisations. So we find all types and classes of occupational groups in India - lawyers, government employees, doctors, teachers, engineers, etc. Among the prominent occupational groups are the All India Medical Council, All India Bar Association, All India Teachers' Federation, All India Posts and Telegraphs Union, etc. Though the primary objective of these organisations is to seek the welfare of the professionals they represent, they also take an interest in political activities. They try to influence policy formulation in their own favour.

15.4.5 Caste and religious groups

Various religious, linguistic and caste groups have also been formed from time to time to fight for the rights of their communities. These organisations, too, have played a political role, many of them evolving into political parties, such as the Republican Party, Muslim Majlis, Jamaat-e-Ulema, Hindu Mahasabha and Shiromani Akali Dal. Also included are the All India Christian Council, Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans in India, All India Anglo Indian Association, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Sanatana Dharma and South Indian Association. In addition, many caste groups made their own associations to protect their caste interests, such as the Marwari Association, Brahman Sabha, Vaishya Sabha, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Bahujan Samaj Sangh, etc. Apart from these, many unorganized or informal caste associations can be found in educational institutions, in particular universities and college campuses. These caste associations are particularly active in local and regional politics.

15.4.6 Women's organisations as pressure groups

India has seen several movements organized by women to fight against injustice to women on issues such as bride burning, dowry, property rights, rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, sex determination tests, common civil code and reservations for women in political organisations. One of the main demands of these pressure groups is to reserve 33 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas for women. Women's organisations also played a prominent role in the passage of the Hindu Code Bill in parliament.

Write about some women's pressure groups that are active in your local area.

Visit the office of a trade union or professional association, find out about their work and tell your class about it.

Why is the right to form associations important in a democracy? Discuss in class.

15.5 Media and people's participation

Communication is to reach news and views to people using written, oral or audio-visual methods. The communication media used for the purpose include newspapers, television, radio, mobile phones, internet, social websites (Facebook, What's App, Twitter etc), magazines, cinema, etc.

15.5.1 Role of media in people's participation

Communication media have always contributed to raising people's participation in government. The technological revolution has led to the rapid development of communication media. People's reach to these communication media is also increasing. The electronic media play a key role in internationalising news, with the number of news channels increasing from day to day. Any incident occurring in any corner of the world is immediately reached to everyone by these news channels.

The news channels have naturally increased people's participation in government. They also mould public opinion. They inform people about government initiatives and programmes and share the opinions of experts with them. In this way, they help people to analyse and form their views on the government's performance.

There have been many happenings in recent times where communication media have played a key role in shaping public opinion. One well-known example is the Nirbhaya case in which some boys raped and fatally assaulted a young girl in a moving bus in Delhi.

News of this incident spread like wildfire through the communication channels and it was widely discussed. Public opinion against this merciless rape-killing led to a mass movement, with demonstrations and rallies occurring across the country and people demanding that the perpetrators be suitably punished.

One key demand of the movement was to change the existing law governing rape. The media helped build up and maintain public pressure. Eventually, the government agreed and amended the law to increase the quantum of punishment for such crimes. One significant change brought in by the new laws was that any minor aged above 16 years who is accused of assaulting a girl in such a merciless manner would also be tried and sentenced as an adult and not as a juvenile.

In a similar way, the impact of the media can be seen in the people's movement that sought the passing of the Lokpal bill in 2011. The media helped to generate critical momentum for the movement. The widespread exchange of views via the media helped consolidate public opinion, with the agitators also using the media effectively to influence the content of the proposed bill.

The media has, thus, responded to people's needs and provided them with new opportunities and alternatives to participate in government, thereby increasing people's participation in the government.

But communication media can also pose a threat to democracy. Media is usually in the hands of the government or is owned and controlled by rich corporations. They can use their media channels or publications to serve their own narrow interests. Also, people working in media usually belong to the urban middle class so they are unfamiliar with the problems of the poor and people living in rural areas. The public can then be misinformed if the media presents a wrong picture of an incident or publicizes a partisan opinion. Political parties, pressure groups and other organisations are known for using the media in this way. So it is important for people to be aware of this and not be swayed by partisan views. It is, therefore, important that media plays a positive role in disseminating news and opinions for democracy to flourish.

For discussion:

Make a list of all instances in your local area in which the media has been responsible for getting the government to listen to the demands of the people.

Is media more beneficial than it is harmful? What do you think?

Has the media influenced your life in any way? Give at least two examples.

In what way did the media influence your life and why do you feel the media is responsible for this influence?

15.6 Conclusion

We learnt about people's participation in democracy in this chapter. We saw that people's participation is essential for the success of democracy. In the case of India, we saw that our constitution provides many avenues for people's participation. But there are also ways outside the framework of the constitution, many of them informal, for people to participate in government. Pressure groups and media are two examples. It is important for governments in democratic countries to provide new opportunities for people's participation in government to strengthen democracy.

EXERCISES

1. Fill in the blanks in the following:

1. India adopted democracy.
2. In India, all adults above the age of years have the right to vote.
3. A political party is an officially organization.
4. Political parties are registered by the to participate in elections.
5. In India, elections to establish democracy are conducted by the
6. The president nominates two members of the community as members of the Lok Sabha.
7. India has, right to vote.
8. In 2011, the country with the highest percentage of women members of parliament was
9. Groups that have a close relationship with political parties are called organisations.
10. pressure groups played a key role in the passage of the Hindu Code Bill.

2. Choose the correct option from among the following multiple options:

1. In India, a person does not have the right to vote if:
 1. He/she has attained the age of 18 years.
 2. He/she is a citizen of India.
 3. He/she is declared ineligible to vote by a court.
 4. His/her name is not in the voter's list
2. Who played a key role in changing the law in the Nirbhaya case to make minors aged above 16 years liable to be tried and sentenced as adults and not as juveniles for committing heinous sex crimes?
 1. People's movement
 2. Media
 3. Government
 4. Nirbhaya's family
3. Which constitutional amendment lowered the voting age from 21 years to 18 years?
 1. 52nd
 2. 61st
 3. 86th
 4. 92nd
4. Women's representation in the Indian parliament was the highest in:
 1. 1957
 2. 1989
 3. 1999
 4. 2013
5. The number of seats reserved for scheduled tribes in the Lok Sabha is:
 1. 84
 2. 47
 3. 48
 4. 74
6. 33 percent to 50 percent seats are reserved for women in the:
 1. Local bodies
 2. Lok Sabha
 3. Parliament
 4. Panchayat
7. In which instance was the government pressurized by the highly charged media campaign to change the law to make a minor aged above 16 years liable to be tried as an adult?
 1. Nirbhaya case
 2. Language issue
 3. Women's reservation
 4. Lokpal Bill
8. The primary official medium for people's participation in a democracy is:
 1. Elections
 2. People's movements
 3. Audit of plan implementation
 4. Communication media

9. The main activity of a political party in a democracy is:
 1. Elections
 2. People's movements
 3. Attaining power
 4. Creating public opinion
10. Which option among the following comes under occupational pressure groups:
 1. Doctors', teachers', employees' and officials' groups.
 2. Scheduled tribe and scheduled caste associations.
 3. Communal and religious societies.
 4. Women's organisations.

3. Answer the following:

1. What does universal adult suffrage mean?
2. What is the main objective of political parties?
3. What is the main reason for the rise in the number of eligible voters in India?
4. Explain what is meant by voter behaviour.
5. What are the different factors that influence voter behaviour?
6. In a democracy, apart from elections, what are the channels available and the possibilities for people's participation?
7. Name at least six major political organisations in India for people's representation?
8. Explain the main differences that distinguish pressure groups from political parties.
9. Name the different communication channels.
10. On what condition can a political party form a government?
11. Give the main reason for the rise in number of eligible voters in India.
12. Explain what people's participation in democracy means.
13. What are the differences between pressure groups and political parties?
14. Why was the voting age in India lowered from 21 years to 18 years?
15. What are the reasons for people not casting their vote?
16. Why is there such a large difference between the number of registered voters and the number of people who actually cast their votes in an election?
17. Why is the voting percentage sometimes as high as 100 percent in elections to local bodies while it is around only 50 percent in Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha elections?
18. How did the Kitikho Hichiko movement in Karnataka in 1984 pressurise the government to take decisions in favour of the farmers? Describe the impact of this episode.

19. How would people's participation in a democracy be affected if there was no universal adult suffrage?
20. What are the different factors that affect voter behaviour?
21. Which pressure group has the most influence on the government and political parties?
Discuss in class.

Project Work

Find out about the 'pressure groups' in your district and state. Write a detailed report on any one of them and present it in the class.