

# WE AND OUR WORLD

(A Book of Social Sciences)

(Class-VII)



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# Components of Environment

**Environment** in its true sense can be defined as all that surrounds us. Environment is our basic life support system. It provides the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the land where we live. It also includes plants, animals and a large variety of man-made things which are necessary for our living. Thus, environment has both **natural** and **man-made elements**. The natural environment can be further bifurcated into two groups, i.e. the **Physical environment** and the **Biological environment**. The Physical environment includes all non-living things like land, water and air. The Biological environment includes all living things, such as plants and animals. Man is the most important component of the biological environment who satisfies all the required needs from both parts (groups) of the environment.



Our environment, We care

The two components of the natural environment, that is the physical and the biological, are largely interdependent and cannot be separated. Any major change in the physical environment is bound to bring a change in the accompanying biological environment. The change can be sudden or gradual. For example, the development of soil takes years together and cannot be visualised through our senses. On the other hand, some changes are very sudden, like the changes brought about by the occurrence of an earthquake or volcano, etc.

## FOUR SPHERES OF ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment can be broadly divided into four spheres, i.e. **Lithosphere**, **Atmosphere**, **Hydrosphere** and **Biosphere**. Each of these is unique in its own way and supports others in sustaining life forms on our planet called the **Mother Earth**. Let us understand the importance of each sphere of the natural environment.

### **Lithosphere**

The literal meaning of 'lithosphere' is the 'sphere of rocks'. The earth's solid layer is called **lithosphere**.



Four spheres of environment

The lithosphere is about 100 km in thickness. The uppermost part of the lithosphere is composed of rocks rich in silica and aluminium called **sial**. Below the sial layer, the rocks are mainly rich in silica and magnesium and are called **sima**, which is generally found below the bottom of the ocean basins.

Thus, lithosphere is that part of the earth which provides us land over which we live. It provides soil for the plants and is also a source of all the mineral wealth.

## Atmosphere

The literal meaning of 'atmosphere' is the 'sphere of air'. The **atmosphere** is composed of a mixture of gases which forms an envelope around the earth. It is a gaseous envelope extending about 1,600 km above the earth's surface. Of the total mass of the atmosphere, 99 per cent exists within 32 km of height from the earth's surface.

Among the four major elements of environment, atmosphere is the most dynamic in nature where changes occur not only from one season to another but also within a short period of time say, a few hours. These sudden changes produce changes in atmospheric conditions which affect our life both directly and indirectly.

## Hydrosphere

**Hydrosphere** refers to the 'sphere of water' which is present in oceans, rivers, lakes and other water bodies on the earth's surface. The planet earth is often called the **Water Planet** or the **Blue Planet** because of abundance of water on its surface. The water bodies that include rivers, lakes, seas and oceans cover 71 per cent of the earth's surface.

The distribution of water is not uniform in both the Northern and the Southern Hemispheres. It is estimated that 43 per cent of the total area covered by water lies in the Northern Hemisphere whereas the remaining 53 per cent lies in the Southern Hemisphere. Oceans hold 96.5 per cent water on the earth. Rest of the water is available in the form of ice, water vapours, underground water, rivers and lakes.

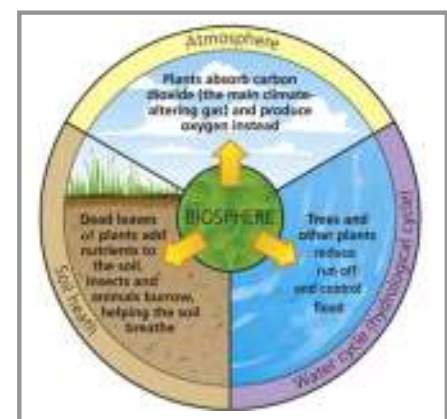


The sea

## Biosphere

The word 'biosphere' literally means the 'sphere of life'. **Biosphere** is the narrow zone of contact between all the three spheres of environment where all kinds of life exist.

Most of the living organisms like plants, animals and microbes present on the earth are found on or near the earth's surface of the land, water and air. Human beings are an important part of the biosphere. They are capable of changing it.



Biosphere

The earth is full of diversities. There is diversity in land, soil, plants and animals. This process of diversification has occurred largely over long period of time resulting in the emergence of new species of plants and animals. These changes create biodiversity on the earth.

The Government of India has passed the Wildlife Protection Act in 1972 to protect and conserve this biodiversity. Under this Act poaching and hunting are prohibited. Violation of this Act is a punishable crime under law. It is not only the duty of the government to protect and preserve wildlife but all of us are responsible.



### Do You Know?

Some critically endangered species of animals in India are Forest Owlet, Ganges Shark, Tiger Toad, Flying Frog, Leatherback Turtle, etc. Presently, there are 102 National Parks and 515 Wildlife Sanctuaries in India.

Human beings, as an important part of the environment, are well-equipped to exploit, consume or utilise different plant and animal species existing on the earth's surface. It is the need of the present times that we should live in harmony with our surroundings. This will allow the earth to sustain all forms of life on it and to produce newer ones in the course of time.



### Keywords

- **biodiversity:** it is a variety of life on earth comprising of plants, animals and micro-organisms.
- **microbes:** very small organisms.
- **national park:** a well demarcated reserved area for the protection of wildlife. It does not allow any human activity.
- **ocean:** vast expanse of saline water on the earth's surface.
- **wildlife sanctuary:** a geographical area meant for the conservation of biodiversity. Limited human activities are permitted.



## Something To Know

### A. Tick (✓) the correct option.

1. Which one is not a part of biological environment?

(a) plants

(b) water

(c) animals

(d) human beings

2. Volcanoes erupt due to—

(a) internal disturbance of the earth.

(b) external disturbance of the earth.

(c) climate change.

(d) man-made changes on the earth.

3. Which one brings a sudden change in the environment?

(a) formation of a river

(b) rainfall

(c) growth of a plant

(d) formation of a mountain

4. Identify by the term that stands for the topmost layer of the earth comprising of loose material—

(a) minerals

(b) soil

(c) sial

(d) sima

5. In which year was the Wildlife Protection Act passed in India?

(a) 1971

(b) 1972

(c) 1973

(d) 1974

### B. Give a single term for each of the following sentences.

1. A situation or condition in which an organism lives.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The only planet in our solar system where life exists.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The uppermost part of the lithosphere which is rich in silica and aluminium.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The sphere of air that envelops the earth.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Mass of water on the earth's surface.

\_\_\_\_\_

**C. Match the following:**

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Physical environment includes             | a. Atmosphere        |
| 2. It is the most dynamic in nature          | b. Human beings      |
| 3. A narrow zone supporting life             | c. Non-living things |
| 4. They are capable of modifying environment | d. Biosphere         |
| 5. Rocks rich in silica and magnesium        | e. Sima              |

**D. Answer the following questions in brief.**

1. Name the major components of the environment.
2. What is meant by Sima and Sial?
3. Mention the distribution of water in the Northern and Southern hemispheres.
4. Give the literal meaning of four spheres of environment.
5. What is the atmosphere composed of?

**E. Answer the following questions.**

1. Differentiate between the physical and the biological environment.
2. Why is the earth called the 'Blue Planet'?
3. Define biosphere. Why is it important for us?
4. Explain with the help of an example how physical and biological components of the environment are interdependent.
5. Explain two ways in which human beings are disturbing the natural environment.



**Value Based Question**

On 25 April 2015, a massive earthquake of 7.8 magnitude struck 77 km north-west of Nepal's capital, Kathmandu. It was the most powerful earthquake to have hit Nepal since 1934. It led to heavy loss of life and property. During this earthquake four men were trapped under the 10 feet rubble. They were rescued by NASA technology, FINDER (Finding Individuals for Disaster and Emergency Response) which sensed their heartbeats. This was the first time when this technology was used in a real-life situation. This is indeed a big step towards disaster management. But this, in no way, reduces our responsibilities as human beings.

- Under the circumstances, what best can we do after the disaster?
- Suggest any five ways in which we can help the victims of a disaster.



## Map Skill

On an outline map of the world, show the given National Parks.

- (a) Gir National Park—India
- (b) Jim Corbett National Park—India
- (c) Yellowstone National Park—USA
- (d) Serengeti National Park—Tanzania
- (e) Fiord land National Park—New Zealand



## Something To Do

1. Hold a class discussion on good and bad environment.
2. Prepare a coloured diagram showing different spheres of the environment.
3. Prepare 20 flash cards showing the wildlife species of India (flora and fauna both). Based on this, hold a quiz in the class showing one flash card at a time. For every card, ask the questions like—
  - (a) Who has seen it live and where?
  - (b) If not, where can we see it live?



The surface of the earth never remains the same. It constantly undergoes changes. These changes can be sudden or gradual. The sudden changes originate inside the earth, due to volcanic or earthquake activities. These forces bring radical changes and are easily visible. On the other hand, some changes are very slow and take place gradually over a very long time. This could be due to natural forces, such as carrying of soil by rain water, changes in the course of a river, winds carrying soil particles with them, etc.

Human factors can play an equally important role in changing the surface of the earth. The examples are cutting down of forests, construction of roads, bridges and railway lines, large-scale mining, building of dams, etc. In this Chapter, we will study about the processes that are involved in bringing gradual changes upon the earth's surface.

### EXTERNAL PROCESS

Any process working on the earth's surface and bringing changes on it, is known as **external process**. The external process may lower the level of land by wearing away rock particles. It can also raise the level of land where the soil particles are deposited. External processes include changes on account of weathering and gradation.



#### **Do You Know?**

**Geomorphology** is the science of study of landforms.

### **Weathering**

The term **weathering** refers to the process that breaks rocks into smaller particles. It includes erosion and deposition. They disintegrate as they are exposed to all types of weather changes. The effect of weathering can also be seen on stone monuments and buildings where pieces of stones get flaked off and iron railings get rusted.



Weathering



## Do You Know?

**Gradation** means levelling of land. It occurs in two ways –agradation and degradation. **Agradation** means adding of sediments and raising the level of land. **Degradation** means breaking and wearing away of sediments and lowering the level of land.

## Erosion

**Erosion** or **Denudation** refers to gradual wearing and carrying away of all those loose particles of disintegrated rocks which lie exposed on the earth's surface by the weathering and agents of gradation, i.e. running water, wind, moving ice and sea waves.

## Deposition

**Deposition** refers to the laying down of sediments which have been carried from distant parts of the earth's surface by various agents of gradation. The continuous process of deposition results in the formation of soil at other places.

The rate at which erosion takes place depends upon the temperature of a place, vegetation cover, rainfall, slope of the land, type of soil and changes in land use.

## AGENTS OF GRADATION

### Running Water

It is an important agent of gradation. A river, like any living form, has a 'life cycle'. It takes birth in a mountain or a hill, becomes larger where it is met by a number of tributaries, flows over plains and finally ends when it reaches the sea.

In its early stage, the river is young. It flows over steep mountains where its rate of erosion is maximum. Due to down cutting work of a river, it forms striking youthful features like 'I' shaped and 'V' shaped valleys, waterfalls, etc. As the river enters into the plains, it comes to the stage of maturity. Here, the volume of water increases and the slope of land decreases, resulting in slow speed of the river. During this stage, the river is said to flow through **meanders**.

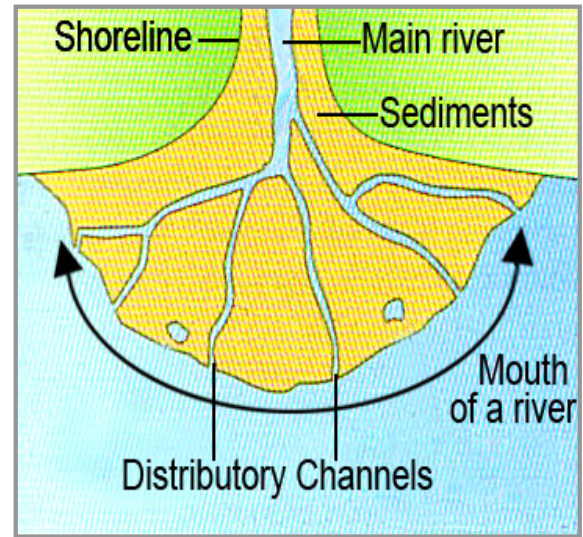


Meander

Before meeting the sea, the river becomes large and sluggish and gets divided into several distributaries. It now comes to its old stage. The river, thus, deposits silt, sand and sediments over a large area near its mouth. This large deposition helps in the formation of a **delta**. The delta of Ganga and Brahmaputra is the largest in the world.

## Glacier

It is believed that a million years ago, the climatic condition of the earth's surface was much cooler than what it is now. The earth's surface was covered by ice but later, the temperature began to rise gradually. This rise in temperature resulted in melting of the ice. The mass of moving ice is called a **Glacier**. In India, the glaciers are found on high altitudes of the Himalayas where temperature is below freezing point.



Delta



Siachin Glacier

Like running water, moving ice also erodes loose particles or parts of rocks. It takes them along and deposits them behind, when it melts. Huge masses of ice which cover large area of a continent are called **Continental glaciers** like Antarctica and Greenland. Other glaciers which occupy small areas over the mountains are called **Mountain glaciers** like Siachin glacier and Gangotri glacier of the Himalayas in India.



### Do You Know?

The **snow line** is a line on the high mountains above which the snow never melts.

## Wind

In the regions where there is little rainfall and meagre vegetation, the land is exposed to strong winds. The loose rock particles are easily blown away by the strong wind. Thus, the wind is also an agent of gradation. The action of the wind is most common in the desert regions.



### Do You Know?

Air can neither be seen nor felt but the swift horizontal movement of air is felt and it is called **wind**.

The strong wind has the capacity to rub and scrap rocks, resulting in strange shaped rocks like mushroom rock. The carried material is then deposited at a new place whenever the speed of wind slows down. This forms various types of **sand dunes**. Sand dunes can be found in the western parts of Rajasthan in India.



Sand dunes

## Sea Waves

Along the sea shore, sea waves are the most powerful agent of gradation. The continuous striking of sea waves breaks the rocks. Such continuous erosion forms steep sided **cliffs** facing the sea. The eroded material may then be deposited along the coast forming beaches.



Cliffs

Human beings also play a crucial role in changing the face of the land. Overgrowing population and industrialisation has disturbed the natural environment to a large extent. The human activity involves

diverse land use like clearing of forests for agriculture, construction of roads and new human settlements, etc. These are a few examples which change the land surface. Human beings need to take care of all the resources for maintaining ecological balance. This can be achieved by sustainable development.

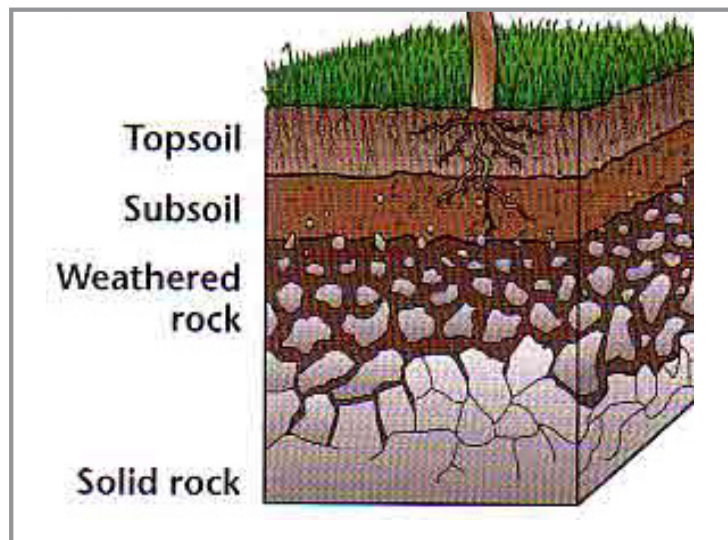
## SOIL

Soil is the loose material found on the surface of the earth. It is made of organic and inorganic particles. The organic particles are derived from dead remains of plants and animals. In the course of time, these particles get decomposed and change into a dark coloured material called **humus**. The humus present in the soil contributes to the fertility of the land. This is rapidly formed in humid areas due to heavy growth of plants and rich animal life. However, humus is low in desert soil.

The inorganic particles are derived from rocks. They include loose disintegrated particles of different sizes. The large sized particles are called **gravel**, while the smaller ones are called **sand**, **silt** and **clay**. A mixture of these particles gives rise to different types of soil as per their proportion. These are called **sandy**, **loamy** and **clayey** soils.

## Formation of Soil

It is a very slow process. It takes thousands of years to form a thin layer of soil. As mentioned earlier, the weathering process breaks the rocks into small particles. These are then carried away by water, wind, etc., and later get deposited at a new place. Such soil is called **transported soil**. But,



Soil layers

when the soil is formed by the weathering of a parent rock and remains present on the same site, it is called **residual soil**.

The soil forming process continues over a long span of time. It starts developing in layers, one over the other. These layers are called **horizons**. From bottom to top, the lowest horizon is called **bed rock**, then comes the horizon of **weathered rock** and it is followed by the **sub soil** and **top soil**. The topmost horizon is rich in humus.

## Distribution of Major Soil Types

Soil is generally classified on the basis of colour and texture.

**Alluvial soil:** It is found over a large part of India. It is mainly formed by the deposition of sediments by river and is confined to northern and coastal plains. This type of soil is very fertile and forms major agricultural land of our country.

**Black soil:** It is found in Deccan plateau. This type of soil is confined to some parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka. This soil has an ability to retain moisture and become sticky when wet. It is largely used for growing cotton and thus, is popularly known as **cotton soil**.

**Red soil:** As the name suggests, this soil is red in colour due to the presence of iron



Major soil types

particles. Red soil is confined to peninsular India and some patches of north-eastern parts of India. It is highly porous, fine grained and deep.

**Laterite soil:** It is found over the hill slopes of peninsular plateau. The laterite soil is found in the regions of heavy rainfall. It is formed by the leaching process.

Apart from these four types, there are **desert** and **mountain soils**. They are found in their respective regions.

Removal of the top layer of soil is called **soil erosion**. We must understand that soil erosion is a serious problem affecting land all over the world. In certain areas, the soil erosion has become a menace which causes decline in the crop yield. This is happening due to wrong human practices like cutting of trees, overgrazing by animals, besides many other reasons. Soil erosion needs to be checked through appropriate measures of soil conservation, such as plantation of trees, selective agricultural practices like crop rotation and multiple cropping method, development and management of pastureland. We need mass awareness and adoption of these practices at local level.



### Keywords

- **denudation:** the wearing away of the earth's surface by weathering process and agents of gradation.
- **distributary:** river channels separating from the main river.
- **'T' shaped valley:** erosional feature with narrow and vertical walls formed by a river. It is also called gorge.
- **leaching:** a natural process in which rainy water dissolves minerals from the soil and carry them away.
- **meander:** sweeping curves of a river.
- **tributary:** small streams joining the main river.
- **'V' shaped valley:** feature formed by a downward cutting of rocks by a river. It resembles the letter 'V'.



## Something To Know

### A. Tick (✓) the correct option.

1. Which one of the following is not a human activity?

(a) diverse land use

(b) cleaning of forests

(c) new human settlements

(d) formation of mountains

2. Which one is a Continental glacier?

(a) Siachin

(b) Antarctica

(c) Gangotri

(d) Yamunotri

3. Which of the following features are formed by a river?

(a) 'V' shaped valley, meander and delta

(b) 'U' shaped valley, meander and delta

(c) 'I' shaped valley, cliff and delta

(d) 'V' shaped valley, meander and sand dunes

4. Which layer of the soil contains humus?

(a) bed rock

(b) weathered rock

(c) sub soil

(d) top soil

5. Which soil type is capable of retaining moisture and becomes sticky when wet?

(a) alluvial soil

(b) black soil

(c) red soil

(d) laterite soil

### B. Fill in the blanks.

1. Organic matter when gets decomposed in the soil and converts it into dark coloured material is called \_\_\_\_\_ .

2. \_\_\_\_\_ soil is found in a large part of our country.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ valleys are formed at the youthful stage of a river.

4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a steep sided rock facing the sea.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ river and \_\_\_\_\_ river form the largest delta of the world.

**C. Give a single term for each of the following statements.**

1. Mounds of sand deposited by wind action in deserts. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The process in which a gradual wearing and carrying away of soil particles takes place on the earth's surface. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The process of laying down of sediments carried by various agents of gradation. \_\_\_\_\_
4. A mass of moving ice down the slope. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Removal of the top layer of soil. \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Answer the following questions in brief.**

1. Specify two differences between internal and external forces.
2. Name the various agents of gradation.
3. Distinguish between transported and residual soil.
4. How is a delta formed?
5. Why is humus formed more rapidly in humid areas?

**E. Answer the following questions.**

1. Explain weathering. Mention the factors that affect the rate of weathering and soil erosion.
2. Explain the formation of soil with the help of a labelled diagram.
3. What are the major soil types found in India? Give one important characteristic of each.
4. Describe the journey of a river from its source to its mouth.
5. Why is conservation of soil important? Suggest three different ways of soil conservation.



**Value Based Question**

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in India. It depends on the fertility of the soil. When soil erodes, it makes the land less productive and lead to landslides, floods and destroys the habitat of micro-organism. Wrong agricultural practices, deforestation for the expansion of agriculture, industrialisation, construction of roads and railway lines are some of reasons of this menace.

- What will be the after effects of this menace?
- In your opinion, which one of the reasons mentioned above is justified?





### Map Skill

Take an outline map of India. Locate and label the areas of major soil types on it. Mention the names of states of each soil type.



### Something To Do

1. Complete the table by writing appropriate features in relevant columns.

Agents	Features formed by Erosion	Features formed by Deposition
Running Water		
Wind Action		
Sea Waves		
Moving Ice		

2. Collect pictures of various features formed by various agents of gradation and weathering. Paste these pictures in a scrap file.



## Medieval Period

History is generally divided into three periods—the ancient, the medieval and the modern. In Class-VI, we have studied about the ancient history—the period from pre-historic times to seventh century CE. In Class-VII, we are going to study about the history and civilisation of medieval period in India and the world.

In Europe, the period from fifth to fifteenth century CE is known as the **medieval period**. In India, the period from eighth to eighteenth century CE marks the beginning and the end of the medieval period. During this period, several important changes took place in the social, economic and political structures of Europe, America and Asia. Though in the ancient period, Indian culture had remained aloof from the outside world, during the medieval period Indian culture was highly influenced by changes that took place in other countries. These influences are evident in the culture, administration, economy, language and religious beliefs of the people even today.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The main sources of information of the medieval period are literature and archaeological findings. The literature of this period consists of religious works and commentaries (based on *Puranas*, *Smrities*, etc.). We get a lot of information about the social, economic, political and military conditions of that period from non-religious works on medicine, astronomy, dramas, stories and other literature. The autobiographies, orders of the rulers and letters written during that period also help us to understand the life of the people during the medieval period. For example, *Prithviraj Raso* written by Chand Bardai throws light on the administration and the life of the people in north India during the reign of Prithviraj Chauhan.

Muslim rulers encouraged the writing of historical accounts. The well-known works of history of this period are *Tahqiq-i-Hind* (Al-Biruni), *Ain-i-Akbari* (Abul Fazl), etc., which were written mainly in Persian. The travel accounts of foreign visitors, like Ibn Battutah, Marco Polo and Bernier, are also important sources of information about that time.

The significant achievement of this period was the popularity and availability of paper, which encouraged the writing of records. Rulers, temples and monasteries collected these manuscripts which



Marco Polo

are major sources of information about this period.

Historical records of that period exist in a variety of languages. Over a period of time, they have undergone various changes in grammar, vocabulary and meaning or interpretation of different words. For example, the word 'Hindustan' is referred by some people, as a place where Hindus live. But today many people take an exception to the word and want to refer to it as 'India' only. According to our Constitution, the name of our country is India, i.e. Bharat. Hence, terms that are used in different context, at different times take into account the cultural, social and political conditions.



A Mughal Kitabkhana

Though manuscripts provide a lot of useful information to historians, yet the fast pace of development during this period makes their job quite tough. The movement of people in search of opportunities resulted in exchange of ideas regarding agriculture, weaving, food, etc. Many

ranks and differentiations emerged in the society. This was also a period of great technological developments like the Persian wheel, spinning wheel, etc.

Excavation of medieval towns, *sarais* and villages along with paintings, monuments, sculptures, coins and inscriptions, also give us a lot of information about the different aspects of the society and culture.

Let us have a close look at India during the Medieval Period in following chapters.



Old Fort, Delhi



### Do You Know?

The National and State governments keep all records, documents and manuscripts in the Archives. The National Archives of India is located in New Delhi.



### Keywords

- **manuscript:** handwritten text or document.
- **sarais:** inns for travellers.
- **scribe:** a person who copied out documents.



## Something To Know

### A. Tick (✓) the correct option.

- The period from eighth to eighteenth century CE in India is known as—  
(a) prehistoric period  (b) ancient period   
(c) medieval period  (d) modern period
- Prithviraj Raso* was written by—  
(a) Tulsidas  (b) Chand Bardai   
(c) Arya Bhatt  (d) Abul Fazl
- Name the language in which *Ain-i-Akbari* was written.  
(a) Arabic  (b) Persian   
(c) Urdu  (d) Hindi
- The significant achievement of the medieval period was the popularity and availability of—  
(a) autobiographies  (b) literature   
(c) paper  (d) manuscripts
- Tahqiq-i-Hind* is a famous—  
(a) document  (b) drama   
(c) story  (d) travel account

### B. Match the following:

- Purana* a. source of information
- Ain-i-Akbari* b. a foreign visitor
- Inscriptions c. digging underground
- Marco Polo d. a book
- Excavation e. Abul Fazl

**C. Answer the following questions.**

1. Which period is known as the medieval period in Indian history?
2. Which period is known as the medieval period in European history?
3. List the well-known literary sources of information of the medieval period.
4. Name the foreign visitors who wrote travel accounts of medieval period of India.
5. List the technological developments of the medieval period.



**Map Skill**

On a political map of the world, identify and locate the countries visited by Marco Polo.

Harshvardhan was the last great ruler of ancient India. After his death, the whole empire disintegrated into many small kingdoms due to the miserable economic condition and lack of proper administration by his weak successors. This was a period of political instability in north India. Three powerful kingdoms arose between 750 CE and 1000 CE out of the ruins of Harsha's empire, and hence, this period is also known as the **Age of Three Empires**. The **Rashtrakutas** took over the control in northern part of Deccan, the **Palas** in eastern India (Bengal and Bihar region) and the **Pratiharas** in Avanti (southern Rajasthan and Gujarat). The three main kingdoms, though continuously engaged in wars, were successful in providing stable administration, which helped in the progress of art and literature. Let us study them one by one.



Small kingdoms in North India

### RASHTRAKUTAS

The Rashtrakutas established the most powerful empire in northern Deccan in 753 CE. They became the masters of a large area of the present Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Karnataka. Their empire acted as a bridge between north and south India. Dantidurga is considered to be the real founder of the Rashtrakuta empire. Govinda III and Amoghavarsha (814 – 880 CE) were the well-known Rashtrakuta kings. The Rashtrakutas were great warriors, art lovers and scholars. They took up titles like *Chakravarti*, *Maharajadhiraj* and *Param Bhattarak*. They maintained huge armies and encouraged trade for the prosperity of the people. Rashtrakutas followed Jainism but also patronised Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. Rashtrakuta rulers were great patrons of art and



Ellora caves

learning. Their rule saw the flourishing of regional literature. Rock-cut temples of Ellora, belonging to Hindu, Buddhist and Jain sects are a proof of the religious tolerance of Rashtrakutas. King Amoghvarsha himself was a great lover of Sanskrit. He wrote *Kaviragamarga*, one of the earliest works in Kannada poetry. By the end of tenth century, the Chalukyas crushed the power of Rashtrakutas and took over the control of their kingdom.

## PALAS

Very limited information is available about the history of Bengal for the period between the death of Harsha and the ascending of Palas. But, it is well-known that during this time, Bengal faced a lot of infighting among the small kingdoms. The people of Bengal elected Gopala as their king to maintain peace and order. He set up an empire, which ruled over for about 400 years. His successors used 'Pala' after their name and hence, their empire came to be known as **Pala Dynasty**.

Dharamapala was the greatest ruler of Pala dynasty. He set up a centre for Buddhist education which was known as **Vikramsheel Vihar**. His son Devapala extended the Pala empire and also defeated the Huns. The end of his period ushered in the decline of Palas.

The Pala rulers were the followers of Buddhism. Many scholars were sent to distant countries to spread Buddhism. They also gave generous grants to *Brahmins* to build temples. Palas were the great patrons of art, education and literature.

### **Do You Know?**

- West Bengal was known as **Gauda** and East Bengal as **Vanga**.
- The famous Nalanda University was revived during the Pala empire.

## PRATI HARAS

They are also called **Gurjara-Pratiharas**, probably because they originated from Gujarat. They ruled over Gujarat and south-western Rajasthan. The founder of the Pratihara empire was Nagabhata-I. The greatest ruler of this dynasty was Mihir Bhoj. He conquered Kanauj around 836 CE. The continuous battles weakened the Pratihara empire and it broke into a number of smaller kingdoms.

The Pratiharas were great warriors. They fought many battles with the Palas and the Rashtrakutas.

### **Do You Know?**

Five kingdoms, which emerged from the Pratihara empire were—the Chauhans of Rajasthan, Gahrwals of Kanauj, Solankis of Gujarat, Paramaras of Malwa and the the Chandels of Bundelkhand.



Khajuraho Temple



### Do You Know?

The brave Pratiharas stopped the Arab invasions for nearly 300 years.

The Pratihara kings were also great patrons of art and literature. King Mihir Bhoj himself was a well-known scholar. Regional languages developed at a fast rate under Pratiharas rule. During this time, early forms of Marathi and Gujarati were spoken in western India. Bengali, Assamese and Oriya became popular in eastern India. The beautiful temples of Khajuraho, Kanchipuram, Thanjavur, Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark were built during the rule of the Pratiharas. The art of miniature painting also started during this period.

### Tripartite Struggle

Kanauj was considered a symbol of power in north India. Hence, the three kingdoms—the Rashtrakuta, the Pala and the Pratihara, were continuously engaged in a struggle to possess Kanauj. Their struggle for supremacy was known as the **Tripartite Struggle**. Each of them succeeded in occupying Kanauj, in turns, as they were almost at par in military strength. But, the continuous battles weakened them and finally led to the decline of all the three great powers. Their empires disintegrated into many small kingdoms within a period of hundred years.

### RAJPUTS

Around ninth century CE, the whole of north India had become a patchwork of small kingdoms as the power of the Rashtrakutas, the Palas and the Pratiharas ended almost simultaneously. During the tenth century CE, three important developments took place in medieval India. Firstly, north India came in close contact with western and central Asia. Secondly, most of the kingdoms came under the rule of Rajputs, who were constantly at war with one another. Finally, the continuous wars created political instability, which was the major cause of the beginning of Turkish invasions in north India.

The Rajputs played an important role in medieval India. They were famous for their bravery. There is no clarity about the origin of the Rajputs. The word '*rajput*' means 'son of a *raja* (king)'. But all the Rajputs do not belong to royal families. Many Rajput families trace their origin to sun or moon and thus, are known as **Suryavanshi** and **Chandarvanshi**, respectively. Some historians believe that the Rajputs are the descendants of foreign tribes who had settled in India. It is also believed that the main four clans of Rajputs were born from fire altars. Hence, they are also known as **Agnikulas**. They are Paramaras (Malwa), Pratiharas (Rajasthan-Gujarat), Chauhans (Ajmer) and Chalukyas (Gujarat). There were about 36 clans of Rajputs.



**Chauhan dynasty** enjoys a special place of prestige among all the Rajput clans. The Chauhan kings ruled over Gujarat and parts of Rajasthan. Prithviraj Chauhan was the most powerful king among Chauhans. He came to the throne in 1177 CE. He made many conquests. He also checked the advances made by Muhammad Ghor of Ghor (Afghanistan) by defeating him at the battlefield of Tarain near Bhatinda. Even today, Prithviraj Chauhan remains a hero of many folk tales of India. Chand Bardai composed an epic poem, *Prithviraj Raso*, which narrates his bravery and heroism.



### Do You Know?

Jaichand, the King of Kanauj, held a *swaymvar* for his daughter Samyukta. He did not invite Prithviraj. He placed a statue of Prithviraj in the position of a doorkeeper in his court to insult him. The princess of Kanauj rejected all the princes assembled and instead placed the garland around the statue's neck. Before the courtiers realised what had happened, Prithviraj, who had been hiding closeby, sprung up and rode away with the princess.

The struggle for supremacy and constant infighting created disunity and enmity among the Rajputs. This attracted the muslim invasions in India. The Rajputs failed to join hands with each other to defend India from Arab invasions.

## GOVERNANCE IN NORTH INDIA

### Administration

The king was all-powerful in north India. He was assisted by different officials. The empire was divided into provinces. The king was the head of the military as well as the judiciary. The king spent huge amounts of money on building up strong armies.

### Economy

There was a great economic disparity among different social classes. The royal family, high officials and the traders were prosperous. The people living in villages were poor. The temples were the centres of riches and hence, attracted a lot of invaders.

Feudal system was prevalent in north India. The kings granted land as rewards to officers who came to be known as **Thakurs** or **Rais**. They provided military assistance to the king at times of war.

The feudal system led to the decline of many empires as the feudal lords gave only a small part of the land revenue to the king. This weakened the power of the kings. Moreover, many feudal lords, like Chauhans and Paramaras, became powerful and established independent empires.

### Society

The rigid caste system led to the division of Indian society. The king, the feudal lords and the *brahmins* in high positions, enjoyed a life of luxury. Land was cultivated mainly by *shudras* who

were burdened by taxes and social discrimination. The condition of women was quite miserable. They were deprived of education. The evil practices of *sati*, child-marriage and polygamy contributed to the decline in the status of women.



### Do You Know?

The women of royal families committed *Johar* (immolating in the fire) to protect their honour if their menfolk were defeated or killed in a battle.

## Religion

The Rajputs mainly worshipped Gods Vishnu and Shiva. They also worshipped Goddesses Kali, Lakshmi and Durga. Rajput kings gave gifts of land to the *Brahmins* – *Bramadeya* or *Agrahara*. Hinduism became more popular than Buddhism. Many Buddhists took shelter in south-east Asia when the Turks attacked monasteries at Nalanda. During this period, the *Bhakti* saints preached devotion to God and opposed social discriminations, superstitions and narrow-mindedness.

## Education

Superstitions and narrow-mindedness were a great hurdle to education. The elementary education was limited to temples and monasteries. The universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila became important centres of higher education. The study of philosophy and religion was encouraged



Nalanda University

but subjects, like mathematics and science, were ignored. The regional languages, like Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali, developed as they were the languages in which the *Bhakti* saints preached and composed songs. But, Sanskrit enjoyed a place of prominence. Pali and Prakrit languages were used for writing books on Buddhism and Jainism.

## Art and Architecture

The examples of the paintings of north India can be found in the form of murals in palaces, caves and temples. The Jain monks and painters of Bengal developed the art of miniature paintings (small pictures drawn to illustrate books). The Lingaraj and Mukteshwara temples at Bhubneswar



Lingaraj Temple (Bhubneswar)

and the Sun Temple at Konark are the fine examples of the architecture of the period from eighth to twelfth century.

## Trade

India developed trade relations with the countries of the east, south-east, west and central Asia, and the European countries. This brought Indians into close contact with the developments in other countries. The common features in the political, social and cultural life in different parts brought the people of India closer. Later on, this proved to be a great boon for Afghan, Turkish and Mughal rulers to establish their rule in India.



Sun Temple of Konark



### Do You Know?

The world famous Khajuraho temple complex was built by Chandelas, rulers of Bundelkhand (who were earlier the feudatories of Pratiharas). These temples are decorated with beautiful sculptures.



Kandariya Mahadev Temple (Khajuraho)



### Keywords

- **epic poem:** a long narrative poem usually about heroic deeds and events that are significant to the culture of the poet.
- **feudal system:** the socio-political set-up of Medieval Europe based on land holdings.
- **miniature painting:** a small painting executed with great detail.
- **mural painting:** any piece of artwork painted or applied on a wall, ceiling, etc.
- **patron:** a person who supports an artist, writer, etc., with money, gift or endorsement.
- **philosophy:** the study of nature, cause of principles of reality.
- **polygamy:** the practice of having more than one wife.



## Something To Know

### A. Tick (✓) the correct option.

1. Who was the author of *Kaviragamarga*?

(a) Dantidurga

(b) Govind III

(c) Amoghavarsha

(d) Gopala

2. Vikramsheel Vihar, a centre for Buddhist education was established by—

(a) Gopala

(b) Dharampala

(c) Mihir Bhoj

(d) Devapala

3. The Sun temple, known for its fine architecture, is situated at—

(a) Puri

(b) Bhubneswar

(c) Khajuraho

(d) Konark

4. Who among the following kings was elected by the people?

(a) Dantidurga

(b) Mihir Bhoj

(c) Gopala

(d) Govinda III

5. Which one of the following temples was NOT constructed by the Pratiharas?

(a) Thanjavur

(b) Khajuraho

(c) Konark

(d) Mahabalipuram

### B. Fill in the blanks.

1. Regional languages developed very fast under the rule of \_\_\_\_\_, a Pratihara king.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ was the real founder of Rashtrakuta empire.

3. The gift of land to the *Brahmins* was known as \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

4. The *Bhakti* saints opposed \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

5. The examples of the paintings of north India can be found in the form of \_\_\_\_\_.

**C. Write True or False for the following statements.**

1. The kingdoms of Pratiharas and Palas rose in north India. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Govinda III was a Rashtrakuta ruler. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The Tripartite struggle involved the Rashtrakuta, the Pratihara and the Pala. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The four main clans of Rajputs are known as Agnikulas. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Mohammad Ghori came from Iran. \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Answer the following questions in brief.**

1. Name the four main clans of the Rajputs.
2. Mention the titles taken by Rashtrakuta rulers.
3. Who was Chand Bardai?
4. List the temples built by Pratihara rulers.
5. Give reasons for the decline of feudal system in north India.

**E. Answer the following questions.**

1. Why is the period after Harshavardhan's death called a period of political instability?
2. Mention any five important features of the Rashtrakuta empire.
3. What is the contribution of the Pala dynasty in various fields?
4. Mention any four famous features of the Pratiharas rule.
5. Describe the economic and social condition of north India during the medieval period.



**Value Based Question**

The Rashtrakutas followed Jainism but also patronised Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

- What qualities of Rashtrakutas are depicted in the above mentioned statement?
- How far is it correct to call the Rashtrakutas secular in the light of present day secularism in India?
- We see Indian secularism advocates respect of all religions. Then why do some people disrespect the religion of others?
- Give two suggestions to make people tolerant towards other religions.



## Map Skill

On an outline map of India, mark the extent of the Rashtrakuta, Pala, Pratihara and Rajput kingdoms.



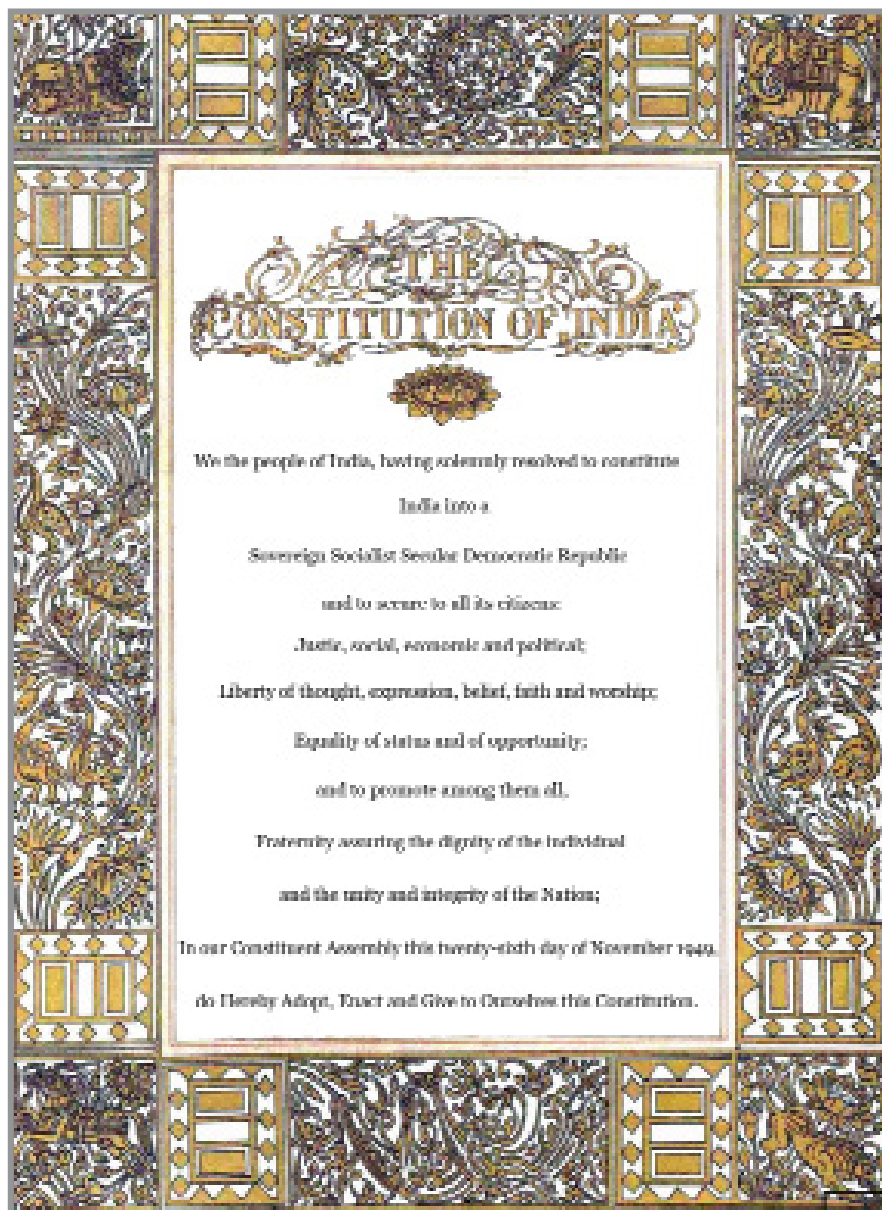
## Something To Do

1. Collect pictures of the great monuments of north India and make a scrapbook with information about their location, special characteristics, modes of travelling to reach there, famous handicrafts, etc.
2. Prepare a comparative table as per the following format about the Rashtrakutas, the Palas and the Pratiharas.

Dynasty	Names of the Kings	The Period	Religion	Literary Achievements	Art and Architecture
Rashtrakutas					
Palas					
Pariharas					

On 15 August 1947 India became an independent country and ended the foreign domination of nearly 200 years. There was an urgent need to frame our own constitution (a document that lays down the framework, political structures and the powers and duties of the government) to strengthen our newly won freedom.

Hence, a Constitution was framed for free India. The **Preamble**, an introduction to the Indian Constitution, starts with the words:



The Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950. It guarantees equality to all citizens and thus, establishes a rule of non-discrimination by the State in every sphere. Our Constitution ensures that the State treats all the citizens equally and allows equality of status and opportunity to all. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, colour, caste, race or place of birth, etc.

A **Constitution** is a set of regulations that a set of people have made and agreed upon. It is often a written document. It lays down powers and functions of the government.

Centuries of subjugation, casteism, poverty and illiteracy had weakened the Indian society. Our Constitution framers wanted to eradicate the discrimination that had divided the Indian society on the lines of religion, caste and economic status by ensuring the upliftment of all, especially of those who had been exploited. Hence, India has opted for secularism, where everyone is free to follow the religion of one's choice and the State does not have a religion of its own. Indian Constitution aims to establish a social order where identification of a person is not on the basis of the religion that he/she follows or the caste he/she belongs to, but is on the basis of what he/she is or what he/she has made himself into!



### Do You Know?

On 25 November 1949, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar spoke in the Constituent Assembly:

“..... In India there are castes. **The castes are anti-national. In the first place because they bring about separation in social life. They are anti-national also because they generate jealousy and antipathy between caste and caste.** But we must overcome all these difficulties if we wish to become a nation in reality.....”

In Class-VI, we have read that in a democracy everyone is equal. Our Constitution has granted **Universal Adult Franchise**, i.e. Right to Vote to everyone, who is above 18 years, without any discrimination of caste, colour, religion, region or language. **‘One Man One Vote’**, was the most courageous step of the Constitution framers, as most Indians were illiterate and poor at that time.

The people of India cast their votes and elect their representatives for a fixed period. These representatives run the government according to the wishes of the people. If the elected representatives do not do so, people do not vote for them in the next election. People also keep a close watch on the activities of their representatives to guard their rights, as granted by the Constitution.



A young woman casting her vote



Look at the cartoon. The politician makes promises to lure the voter. But the voter is confident of the power of his vote. Elections are the basis of equality. Many political parties participate in elections. Each political party is an organised group having its own policies and programmes. Party candidates are selected and supported with manpower and finances by political parties having a definite programme that the general public is familiar with. Independent candidates have to campaign on their own. Hence, it is not an easy task for an independent candidate (a person who does not belong to a political party) to contest elections.



### Do You Know?

In Indian democracy when a single majority party cannot form the government, some political parties join hands to form a government. It is known as the **coalition government**.

In Indian **Multi-Party System**, the party or a combination of parties that gets the majority, forms the government. The elected leader of the party or a person, whom the combination of parties supports, becomes the Prime Minister. A party or combination of parties, that fails to get majority of seats in the election, performs the role of 'opposition'. It keeps a check on the activities of the ruling party and protects the rights of the people.

Before independence, some sections of our society suffered from economic and social backwardness. The Constitution of free India made special provisions for them so that everyone can live a life of dignity and enjoy equality. It has entrusted the government with the responsibility of providing social, economic and political equality to all as a necessary condition for the successful working of Indian democracy.

As you know the Preamble grants us the equality of status and opportunity. Our Constitution also gives us the **Right to Equality**. The main provisions of this right are—

- (a) All citizens are equal before the law.
- (b) Discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, gender or place of birth is prohibited.
- (c) Everyone is entitled to equal opportunities in all walks of life.
- (d) The law gives equal protection to all.

But does everyone enjoy equality in all spheres of life even after nearly seventy years of independence? Unfortunately, the answer is 'No'! It is quite common to see thousands of people

### Do You Know?

Our Constitution has banned the practice of untouchability and awarding of titles, like *Raj Bahadur* or *Khan Bahadur*, as they created discrimination in the society.

struggling for equality. Let us see what this means by reading the two stories given next.

## Sheikho – The Rag-Picker

Sheikho is a 10-year-old boy. He picks up rags from the garbage every morning from four to eight, when half the population of the city is still sleeping. After that he works at his father's cycle repair shop till late in the evening. He wants to go to school, laugh and play like other children but he is always working.

Sheikho's parents have also been granted the right to vote, but they do not enjoy the equality of working conditions. Hence, they are unable to fulfil the basic necessities of their family, i.e. food, shelter and clothing.



## Paro – The Flower Seller

Now, let us know about Paro who sells flowers at traffic signals from morning till night. The flower shop owner gives her one rupee for each small bouquet that she sells at rupees ten. She endangers her life as she runs between vehicles and persuades people to buy flowers. Paro's parents were forced to leave their village after the well, belonging to the so-called lower castes, dried. They were not allowed to take water from the well that belonged to the so called upper castes.



Aren't Paro's parents also the citizens of India where the Constitution has prohibited discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, gender or place of birth? But sadly, discrimination on the basis of caste continues to exist, in spite of education and awareness, especially in rural areas.

Another threat to equality is posed by discrimination on the basis of community. Some religious places ban the entry of people belonging to other communities and castes. Certain communities look down upon others and do not give them jobs or houses on rent.

The Government of India has implemented the provisions of the Constitution given under the Right to Equality in two ways–

- (a) Many laws have been made to protect the Right to Equality. For example, equal opportunities in education and jobs.
- (b) Government has launched many programmes and schemes for those communities that need assistance. For example, SCs/STs and OBCs.

The programmes of the government will be meaningful only if they have the support of the people. For example, numerous schemes encouraged people to send their children to elementary schools, as free and compulsory education has been guaranteed for them in our Constitution. But many children could not benefit from it till a supporting scheme of mid-day meal was started on the request of the teachers. It motivated many parents to send their children to school as cooked and nutritious mid-day meal was provided. As a result, the enrolment in schools has increased.



Mid-day Meal Scheme

After independence, there was an urgent need for the government to do something special and concrete to liberate the weaker sections from oppression and backwardness. The forced isolation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, imposed by the caste system, had to end. Thus, **reservation** was provided for them to ensure their proportionate share in all walks of life so that they could live a life of respect and dignity. Later on, along with the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes were also provided the benefits of reservation.

The reservation was to exist for a limited period but as its provisions have still not reached a major portion of population, it is still continuing.



### Do You Know?

In the beginning, caste system (*varna* system) was only a classification of vocation (occupation), based on duty. But later, it came to be based upon one's birth in a particular caste. Then the castes got divided into sub-castes, which forced thousands of people to live a life of misery.

Let us look at the case of Rahul, who qualified for IIT because of Mr. Anand Kumar, who helps poor children with his Super 30 in Bihar.

### News Report

NDTV published a letter from Rahul to his Sir, Anand Kumar. Here is an excerpt from the same.

Dear Anand Sir

Thank you. My life will be different because of you. My father is a poor farmer in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh area. My father goes to Kolkata to work as a labourer. You provided coaching, lodging and food for a year to prepare me for IIT. I will build a hospital and school in my village. I am lucky to have you.

Sir, I owe everything to you!

We feel happy, when we hear about cases like this. It is the duty and moral responsibility of each and every Indian to ensure that all Sheikhos and Paros are able to fulfil their dreams of going to school to make a better life for themselves. Their families should be enabled to fulfil the basic needs of life—food, shelter and clothing.

Our government has adopted various measures like loans, self-employment schemes, low budget housing on instalments, free legal advice, widow pension, etc., to provide education, employment and housing to all. Literacy programmes, like Operation Black Board, Universal Elementary Education and Adult Education, have gained popularity. Along with mid-day meals, the schools are providing free uniforms and books, stipends, scholarships, medical check ups, etc. Girl students and children from weaker sections have a reserved quota, not only in government schools but also in private schools. Special steps have been taken for tribal and rural children to include them in developmental programmes.

We must make sure that Indian democracy goes in the right direction and provides equality to all, where all citizens are aware, enlightened and educated. Let us all make India a successful democracy!



### Keywords

- **community:** people living together sharing common interests.
- **democracy:** a kind of system where people have supreme power. They rule through their representatives.
- **opposition:** all parties other than the party/parties in power.
- **representative:** a person elected/chosen to act or speak on behalf of the people for a fixed period.
- **Scheduled Caste /Scheduled Tribes:** disadvantaged groups enlisted in Article 341 of the Indian Constitution.



## Something To Know

### A. Tick (✓) the correct option.

- The Right to Vote is guaranteed to Indians who are—  
(a) highly educated  (b) highly rich   
(c) the Scheduled Castes  (d) citizens of India
- The most successful scheme of the government which increased enrolment of children in schools is—  
(a) Education for all  (b) Reservation of seats in schools   
(c) Mid-day meal scheme  (d) Scholarships and financial help to poor children
- Which one of the following is NOT responsible for weakening the Indian society?  
(a) casteism  (b) education   
(c) illiteracy  (d) poverty
- According to the Preamble, who is constituting India into a socialist, secular and democratic republic?  
(a) The people of India  (b) All our national leaders   
(c) The Constitution itself  (d) Representatives of the people
- To ensure that all the children from the deprived sections are able to fulfil their dreams, the Government of India should not—  
(a) give them free food and clothing.   
(b) give them monthly stipend/monetary help.   
(c) provide free education.   
(d) leave them to fight for themselves and become self-dependent.

### B. Fill in the blanks.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ is a document that lays down the framework, political structures and the powers and duties of the government.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ is an introduction to our Constitution.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ system creates a social division in a nation.
- Each \_\_\_\_\_ is an organised group, having its own policies and programmes.
- Many \_\_\_\_\_ have been made to protect the Right to Equality.

**C. State True or False for the following statements.**

1. On 15 August 1947 India became a republic.
2. Our Constitution framers wanted to eradicate discrimination.
3. People elect their representatives for a fixed term.
4. The law does not give equal protection to all.
5. The provisions of reservation have not reached everyone.

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**D. Answer the following questions in brief.**

1. What is the main function of an opposition party?
2. Why was reservation provided for certain castes in India?
3. What is meant by secularism?
4. Why is Universal Adult Franchise considered a courageous step of the Constituent Assembly?
5. Name any two literacy programmes started by the Government of India.

**E. Answer the following questions.**

1. Mention the main provisions of the Right to Equality.
2. How can the people keep a check on their representatives?
3. List the important steps taken by the Indian government for the benefit of the weaker sections of society.
4. List the factors that create inequalities and hamper the success of the democracy.
5. Why have the benefits of reservation not reached everyone? Suggest two steps that can ensure development of all sections of the Indian society.



**Value Based Question**

Omprakash is a student of government school in Maharashtra. He is made to sit away from the others in the class and that too on the floor. Sometimes he is forced to sweep the school and the playground. He is given left-over mid-day meal, that too not every day. One day his father was passing by the school and saw his son sweeping. He confronted the teachers and said loudly for all of them to hear, "You are a teacher, so I am leaving now. But remember his son will study right here in this school and not just him, but there will be many more coming after him."

- Do you think Omprakash was treated unfairly?
- Imagine yourself as Omprakash and write three lines about how you would feel if you were in the same situation as he.



## Something To Do

1. Do you extend a helping hand to the people who are not as fortunate as you are? If yes, how? If no, what is your future plan?
2. India, today, is producing more trained manpower than the whole Europe but unfortunately India is also the leader in illiteracy, social and economic inequalities. How can education bring about a society that is free from social and economic inequalities? Discuss these problems in the class and try to find out some effective and practical solutions.
3. The government has launched a number of poverty alleviation programmes and income generating programmes. But poverty continues. Give reasons—

(a) Inadequacy of the Schemes

(b) Poor Implementation of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

(d) \_\_\_\_\_

(e) \_\_\_\_\_

India is the seventh largest nation of the world extending over 3.28 million sq. km. For the administrative convenience, it has been divided into 29 States and 7 Union Territories. Each State has its own government which is run on the lines of the Central Government. The Union Territories are administered by the President of India through a lieutenant Governor or the Chief Commissioner.

Both the Central Government and the State Governments are independent in their working. The division of powers between the Centre and the State is on the basis of three lists, i.e. the **Union List** (97 subjects), the **State List** (66 subjects) and the **Concurrent List** (47 subjects). The Central Government is more powerful as it has more power, more resources and more finances. Still, the State Governments have an independent identity and a very important role to play in the Indian federal system.

### THE STATE LEGISLATURE

In most states, the legislature has only one House—**Legislative Assembly** (*Vidhan Sabha*). Only six states, i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Jammu & Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh, have two Houses, i.e. the **Legislative Assembly** (*Vidhan Sabha*) and the **Legislative Council** (*Vidhan Parishad*).

The number of members in an Assembly depends on the population of the state. However, the minimum strength is 60 and the maximum cannot be more than 500. Its members are directly elected by the people. The minimum age to be a member of the Legislative Assembly is 25 years. Some seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For example, Uttar Pradesh has 404 members in its Legislative Assembly and Mizoram has 40 only.

The term of a Legislative Assembly is five years. In case, it is not functioning according to the Constitution, it can be dissolved earlier also. In such a situation, the President's Rule is imposed in that state.

Like the *Lok Sabha*, the Legislative Assembly has a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker. The Speaker presides over the meetings of the Assembly and conducts its business.



#### **Do You Know?**

Legislature consisting of only one house is known as **Unicameral legislature** and legislature consisting of two houses is known as **Bicameral legislature**.





India with all its States, Capitals and Union Territories

The Legislative Council (*Vidhan Parishad*) is a permanent House which cannot be dissolved. The term of its members is six years. But one-third of its members retire after every two years. They are replaced by newly elected members. The *Vidhan Parishad* elects its Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson from among its members.

The minimum number of members in a Legislative Council is 40 and it cannot exceed one-third of the total membership of the Assembly of that state. The minimum age to be a member of the Council is 30 years.

## Functions of the State Legislature

It makes laws for the state on the subjects mentioned in the State list and Concurrent List. It passes the annual budget of the state. It keeps a check on the Council of Ministers of the State.

The money bills can only be introduced in the Legislative Assembly. When a bill is passed by the State Legislature, it is sent to the Governor for consent. The elected members of Legislative Assembly take part in the election of the President of India along with the elected members of Parliament.

## THE GOVERNOR

The Governor, i.e. *Rajyapal* is appointed by the President of India for five years. Normally, the Governor does not belong to the state where he is appointed. The state administration is carried out in the name of the Governor whereas the real power lies with the Chief Minister and his Council of Ministers.

Like the President of India at the centre, the Governor also performs many functions on the advice of the Chief Minister.

## The Powers of the Governor

The Governor appoints the leader of the majority party or the coalition as the Chief Minister. The Council of Ministers is also appointed by him on the advice of the Chief Minister. All appointments to high offices in the state are made by the Governor. He can address, summon and dissolve the Legislative Assembly. Every bill, which the State Legislative Assembly passes, becomes a law only after the consent of the Governor. Like the President of India, the Governor can also issue an Ordinance when the State Legislature is not in session. The Governor can reduce or pardon the punishment awarded to a criminal under the state rules. The Governor also has some discretionary powers, which he/she can exercise on his/her own without the advice of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers, for example, the recommendation for the President's Rule in a state. The Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar, Delhi and Puducherry have Lieutenant Governors. Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep have Administrators.



### Do You Know?

C. Rajgopalachari was the last Governor General of free India for 20 months. After him, the title of Governor General was abolished and replaced by the President of India.

## THE CHIEF MINISTER AND HIS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

The Chief Minister is the most important functionary of the State Government. He enjoys the real executive powers. He acts as a link between the Governor and his Council of Ministers.

## Functions of the Council of Ministers

Following are the main functions:

- Administers and maintains law and order in the state.
- Executes laws and decisions made by the Legislative Assembly as well as the Union Government.
- Formulates policies for the state activities.
- Gives advice to the Governor.
- Makes laws with the help of the State Legislature based on State List and the Concurrent List.



### Do You Know?

There are 610 districts in India which are administered by their respective State/UT Governments.

## UNION TERRITORIES

The areas directly administered by the Union Government are called **Union Territories**. They are –

- (i) Andaman and Nicobar islands
- (ii) Lakhsadweep
- (iii) Puducherry
- (iv) Dadra and Nagar Haveli
- (v) Daman and Diu
- (vi) Chandigarh
- (vii) Delhi

Such areas are small in size and population with the exception of Delhi, the capital of India. It is now called **National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT Delhi)**. It enjoys a special status unlike other Union Territories where the administration is under a Lieutenant Governor or a Chief Commissioner only. Delhi has an elected Assembly and a Council of a Ministers headed by the Chief Minister as well as a Lieutenant Governor.

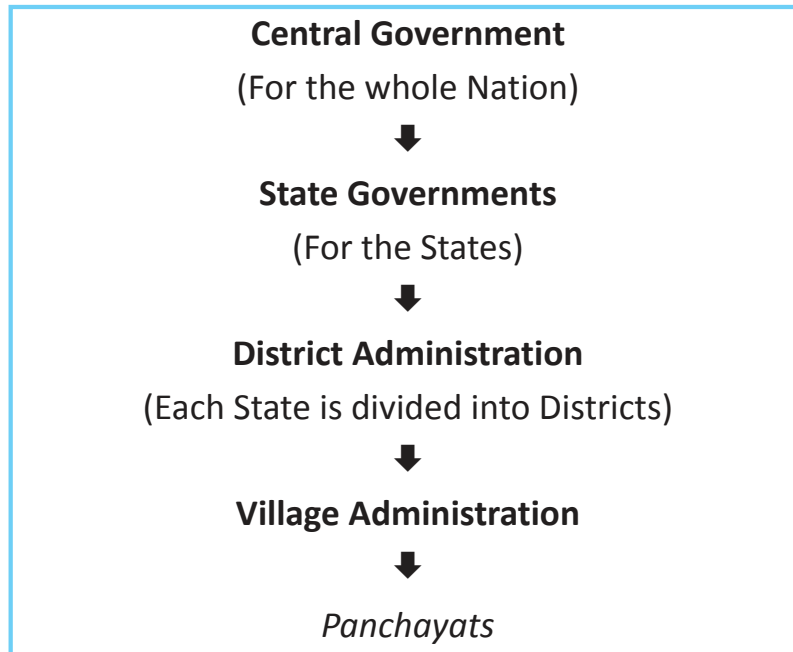


### Do You Know?

The President may appoint the Governor of a State as the administrator of an adjoining Union Territory.

## INDIA IS A FEDERATION WITH A STRONG CENTRE

Let us understand the working of Indian Federation with the help of following Flow chart.



### **Keywords**

- **bill:** a proposed law.
- **budget:** the statement of income and expenditure for a particular period.
- **discretionary:** something that depends on one's own will/choice.
- **law:** certain rules or regulations to be followed whose violation will result in punishment.
- **ordinance:** a temporary law enforced by the Executive when the Legislature is not in session.



## Something To Know

### A. Tick (✓) the correct option.

- The Governor of a state is appointed by the—  
(a) Chief Minister  (b) Prime Minister   
(c) President of India  (d) Vice-President of India
- Vidhan Parishad* is a permanent house because—  
(a) its members are elected for six years.   
(b) its two-third members retire after every two years.   
(c) it cannot be dissolved.   
(d) it is an Upper House.
- The maximum strength of a State Legislative Assembly can be—  
(a) 300  (b) 400   
(c) 500  (d) 600
- The Union Territories are directly administered by the—  
(a) Governor  (b) Chief Minister   
(c) State Government  (d) Union Government
- Which one of the following is NOT a Union Territory?  
(a) Chandigarh  (b) Goa   
(c) Delhi  (d) Puducherry

### B. Fill in the blanks.

- In case of constitutional breakdown in a state, the \_\_\_\_\_ rule is imposed.
- The Upper House in a state is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- The government at State Level is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- There are \_\_\_\_\_ states and \_\_\_\_\_ Union territories in India.
- The members of a *Vidhan Sabha* are elected by the \_\_\_\_\_ directly.

**C. Write True or False for the following statements.**

1. The State Government can make laws only on the Concurrent list. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The Governor appoints the leader of the majority party as the Chief Minister. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Delhi has an elected Legislative Assembly. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The *Vidhan Sabha* is a permanent House. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The term of each member of the Legislative Council is six years. \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Answer the following questions in brief.**

1. What is the minimum age to be the Governor of a state?
2. What is the minimum age to be the Chief Minister of a state?
3. Who presides over the meetings of Legislative Assembly?
4. Who acts as a link between the Governor and the Council of Ministers?
5. Who appoints the Chief Minister of a state?

**E. Answer the following questions.**

1. Mention three functions of the State Legislature.
2. Describe the powers of the Governor of a state.
3. When is the President's rule imposed in a state?
4. Enlist five functions of the Council of Ministers of a state.
5. Why should the State Governments be given more powers?



**Value Based Question**

Khushi is a Class-VII student. Her mother is a teacher. Both leave for the school together. Every day they see Munni [who is of Khushi's age] and her mother who work in their society as a maid [domestic help]. Khushi is always confused and surprised to see Munni working at this age and not going to school.

- What is wrong if Munni is not going to school?
- How does it become an offence if a 12 year old is helping her family by working?
- Should Munni's parents be taken to task? Justify your answer.
- What should the government do for such children?



## Map Skill

On a political outline map of India, locate and mark the states having bicameral legislatures.



## Something To Do

1. Collect the following information about your state:
  - (a) The map of your state.
  - (b) Name of the Governor.
  - (c) Does it have a unicameral or bicameral legislative?
  - (d) Number of members of Legislative Assembly.
  - (e) Population of your state.
  - (f) Name the Chief Minister of your state.
2. Hold a group discussion in the class on the topic "There is no need to have a *Vidhan Parishad* (Legislative Council)."