

CHALLENGES TO INDIAN DEMOCRACY

L.No	Title of Lesson	SKILLS	Activity
23	Challenges to Indian Democracy	Self Awareness, Problem Solving	To Understand Various Challenges to Indian Democracy

Meaning

India is called the largest democracy in the world. It is democratic because elections take place at regular intervals at different levels. It is almost over six decades that elected governments of people's representatives have strengthened our democracy at the centre, state and local levels.

“Democracy is a government of the people, by the people, for the people.” A form of government which is run by elected representatives.

Democracy is not merely a form of government but has a comprehensive form. Therefore, democracy means, a form of government, a type of state, a pattern of social system, a design of economic order.

Essential Conditions for Democracy

A Democracy becomes genuine and comprehensive only when it fulfils certain conditions :

Political conditions:

- (a) Supreme power in the hands of people
- (b) Provision of Fundamental Rights
- (c) Provision of Universal Adult Franchise
- (d) Free Press and Media
- (e) Active political participation.

Social and Economic conditions:

- (a) Equality before the law
- (b) Equality of opportunities
- (c) Social security
- (d) Provision of education for all.

Challenges

Some of the challenges before the democracy in India are illiteracy, poverty, gender discrimination, casteism and communalism, regionalism, corruption, criminalisation of politics and violence.

Illiteracy

Literacy is very important for the success of democracy but in India it is still a challenge to remove illiteracy.

Poverty

The growing population and unemployment is the root cause of poverty which leads to inequality and deprivation of opportunities.

Gender Discrimination

In India discrimination against women and girls is seen in every walk of life which is against the principle of democracy. Due to discrimination sex ratio has become a cause of concern.

Casteism and Communalism

Indian Democracy is still facing the problems created by casteism and communalism. Politicians use both as an instrument to get votes. Both of these are a threat to the unity and peace.

Regionalism

Imbalance in development and feeling of neglect by the citizens of a particular region leads to regionalism which again is a threat to unity and peace.

Corruption

Dishonesty, bribery, use of casteism and communalism for political gains is corruption. Not only the politicians but the officials of the government are not sincere to the interests of the Nation.

Corrective Measures

- Universal Literacy (Education for All)
- Poverty Alleviation
- Elimination of Gender Discrimination
- Removal of Regional Imbalance
- Administrative and Judicial Reforms
- Sustainable Development (Economic, Social and Environmental)

Role of Citizen in a Democracy

Democracy can be successful and vibrant only when citizens imbibe and reflect the basic values like equality, freedom, secularism, social justice, accountability and respect for all.

In a Democracy, every citizen is responsible for how do the governments function at different levels. Hence, every citizen has a critical role to play. Major opportunities available are as follows:

- Participation in public life, mainly through exercising the right to vote during elections.
- It is the citizen who can make the democratic system responsive, responsible and accountable. The Right to Information Act, 2005, has empowered the citizens to become informed about public issues and express their own opinions and interests.
- Every citizen has certain rights to do certain things. Every citizen has the responsibility to ensure that his/her actions do not infringe upon the rights of others.

Role of Citizen to Actualise Corrective Measures

It is possible through a Proactive Role by the citizen who

- must respect law and reject violence,
- must respect the rights of others,
- must respect the dignity of human beings,
- must not denounce the opponents,
- may question the decisions of the government but not reject the government's authority,
- must respect the cultural diversity.

Evaluate Yourself

- Q. What is meant by Democracy?
- Q. Mention the challenges which pose a threat to the successful working of Democracy in India. Analyse any two most threatening challenges.
- Q. Evaluate the efforts made by the Governments at different levels to overcome the challenges before Democracy. Suggest any two ways and means to meet such challenges.