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POLITY

BLUE BOOK



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SATYAM SIR

3 UPSC CSE Interview (Teacher / Founder)

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Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which rulers are elected by the people (NCERT). Democracy is where fundamental rights, equality, and rule of law are protected.

Features of a Democratic Government

- **Elected Rulers Hold Final Power** - True power rests with elected representatives; ultimate authority lies with the people.
- **Free and Fair Elections / Periodic Elections** - Elections must be regular, competitive, and allow citizens to remove rulers; mere voting is insufficient (e.g., China, Mexico).
- **Political Equality** - "One person, one vote, one value"; all adult citizens have equal rights to vote and contest elections.
- **Majority Rule with Minority Rights** - Decisions follow majority opinion while protecting minority interests.
- **Rule of Law** - No one is above the law; governments act within constitutional limits.
- **Protection of Fundamental Rights** - Freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and other basic rights must be ensured.
- **Separation of Powers & Checks and Balances** - Independent judiciary, legislature, and executive to prevent abuse of power.
- **Transparency and Accountability** - Leaders are answerable to the public, laws, and institutions (e.g., Zimbabwe under Mugabe shows limits of popularity).
- Calls into activity the intelligence and character of ordinary men and women. (CSE 2017)

Feature	Democratic	Non-Democratic
Selection of Rulers	Elected by people	Not elected by people
Suffrage	Universal adult franchise	Limited
Elections	Regular, free, and fair	Often unfree or unfair
Accountability	Accountable to the people	Limited
Legal System	Rule of law, fundamental rights, independent judiciary	Limited
Power structure	Distributed	Concentrated in individual or group

Democracy Beyond Government

- Democracy is a system where people's representatives make decisions, but it also applies to families, schools, and organizations through **equal consultation and participation**.
- **Democracy** can take different forms. In small communities like villages, all members can directly participate in decisions, such as in a **Gram Sabha**, emphasizing **equal participation** and **consultation**.
- No country is a perfect **democracy**; the features discussed are basic requirements.
- A strong democracy needs continuous effort, with **citizens' active participation** being as important as the **rulers' actions**.

International Day of Democracy

- The **International Day of Democracy** is observed globally on **15 September** every year.
- Established by a **UN General Assembly** resolution in **2007**, it urges governments to **promote and strengthen democratic governance**.
- The theme for **2025** is "Achieving Gender Equality, Action by Action."

Democracy Report 2025

- It is released by **V Dem institute** (a collaborative project involving scholars from 180 countries)
- The **V-Dem Democracy Report 2025** shows a global decline in **democracies** and a rise in **closed autocracies**, especially in **West Asia, North Africa, and South Asia**.
- In **Sub-Saharan Africa**, both **democratic erosion** and **autocratic consolidation** are evident.

Ethical Foundations of Political Life

Ethical foundations of political life are **moral values** guiding **responsible governance**, ensuring **rights, liberty, equality, secularism**, and fostering **trust, justice, and harmony**.

Freedom

- Freedom is commonly understood as the **absence of external constraints**, allowing individuals to act autonomously and make independent decisions without coercion.
 - Freedom also involves **creating conditions that enable people** to develop creativity, capabilities, and potential.
 - It allows self-expression, personal growth, and the flourishing of individual talents.
- Balancing Freedom and Society:**
 - Total absence of constraints is impossible in society.
 - Social constraints must be evaluated:** which are justified, which hinder freedom, and which should be removed.
 - A free society balances individual liberty with social order, enabling people to make choices using reason and judgment.

Freedom and Constraints:

- In a democracy, citizens enjoy **freedom** to express, vote, and participate, but these freedoms come with **constraints**—they must respect the **law, rights of others, and constitutional limits** to ensure order and fairness.
- Sources of Constraints:**
 - Domination & External Controls:** Imposed by force, authority, or laws (e.g., colonial rule, apartheid). Democracies reduce such domination by letting citizens influence rulers.
 - Social Constraints:** Stem from caste bias or economic inequality; true freedom needs removing these barriers (Subhas Chandra Bose).

Harm Principle:

- John Stuart Mill's harm principle** states that freedom can only be limited to prevent serious harm to others.
 - Self-regarding actions:** Affect only the individual – **no interference** is justified.
 - Other-regarding actions:** Affect others – may justify **state or social intervention**.
- Indian Context – Reasonable Restrictions:**
 - Constraints on harmful actions must be **reasonable, proportionate, and not excessive**, as reflected in the **Indian Constitution's "reasonable restrictions"**.
 - The Constitution allows **reasonable restrictions** on freedom that are **defensible, not excessive, and proportionate** to the harm caused.
 - Over-imposing restrictions can weaken freedom in society.
- John Stuart Mill's Four Arguments for Freedom of Expression**
 - No Idea is Completely False:** Even wrong ideas can contain some truth; suppressing them risks losing it.
 - Truth Emerges from Debate:** Truth is discovered through the clash of ideas; disagreement refines it.
 - Prevents Truth from Becoming Dogma:** Challenging ideas keeps them meaningful and trusted.
 - What Seems False May Be True:** Even an idea that seems false may contain elements of truth or may become true in future.

Principle of Proportionality:

- Constraints should not destroy freedom itself.
- Life imprisonment for a minor hate campaign is excessive; limited restrictions may be justified.

Swaraj

- **Swaraj** combines *Swa* (Self) and *Raj* (Rule), meaning self-rule and self-mastery.
- During India's freedom struggle, it symbolized political freedom (Tilak) and moral-social liberation (Gandhi).
- For Gandhi, Swaraj was self-discipline, responsibility, and self-realization, freeing individuals from dehumanizing systems.

Liberty

- **Liberty** means the freedom of thought, expression, and action.
- The term comes from the Latin word '**Liber**', meaning the absence of restraints.
- **Liberty** is the condition in which an individual can act according to their **own will** without undue interference or coercion from external forces. **(CSE 2019)**
- **Aspects of Liberty**
 - **Constraints on Liberty:** Freedom can be limited through laws enforced by the state or due to social and economic inequalities.
 - **Need for Constraints:** People hold different opinions and ambitions, and competition for limited resources can lead to conflicts. Therefore, societies require certain reasonable and justified restraints to ensure that these differences can be addressed through discussion and debate, rather than coercion.
- While this suggests that a person is free to do anything, this reflects the **negative aspect of liberty**.
- In reality, true liberty is possible only when accompanied by **restraints**.

Aspect	Negative Liberty	Positive Liberty
Meaning	Freedom from external interference ("freedom from")	Freedom to develop one's capabilities ("freedom to") (CSE 2019)
Focus	Non-interference by state, society, or authority	Enabling conditions like education, health, security, and participation
Key Question	"Over what area am I the master?"	"Who governs me?" ideally, "I govern myself"
Examples	Choosing clothing or expression without harming others	Access to education, healthcare, and opportunities for self-development
Thinkers	J.S. Mill and Isaiah Berlin	Rousseau, Gandhi, Marx, Aurobindo
Key Difference	Protects from interference	Provides conditions for true freedom

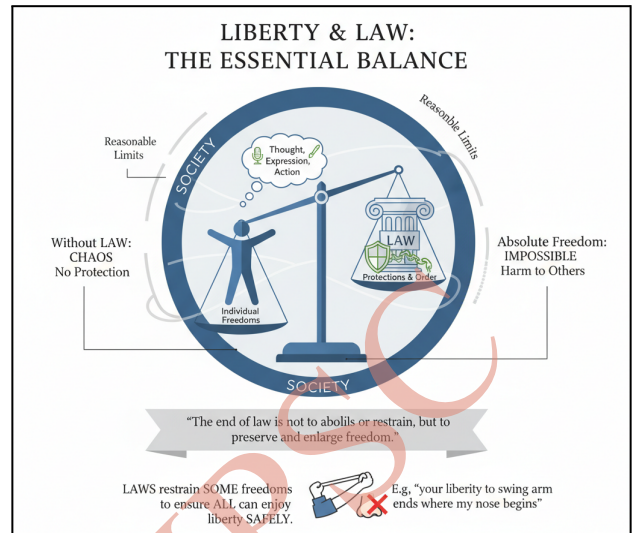
Safeguarding Liberty

- The best safeguard of liberty in a liberal democracy is the **separation of powers**. **(CSE 2021)**
 - Power is divided among the executive, legislature, and judiciary, each with distinct functions and checks on the others. This prevents concentration of power and protects individual freedoms.
- **Other Options for Protecting Liberty**
 - **Committed Judiciary:** Essential for upholding laws and rights, but insufficient alone; without separation of powers, it can be overpowered by other branches.

- **Centralization of Powers:** Concentrating authority to ensure uniform laws and prevent local tyranny.
- **Elected Government:** Elections are necessary for democracy but do not automatically protect liberty; mechanisms to limit power are required.

Law and Liberty (CSE 2018)

- **Liberty** is the **freedom of thought, expression, and action**, but it does not mean complete absence of restraints.
- Without **law**, there can be no **freedom**, because liberty requires protection from **restraint or violence by others**.
- In society, **absolute freedom** is **neither possible nor desirable**; it must have **reasonable limits** so that one's freedom does not harm another.
- Thus, **laws restrain some freedoms** to ensure **everyone can enjoy liberty safely** and maintain **law and order**.



Liberalism

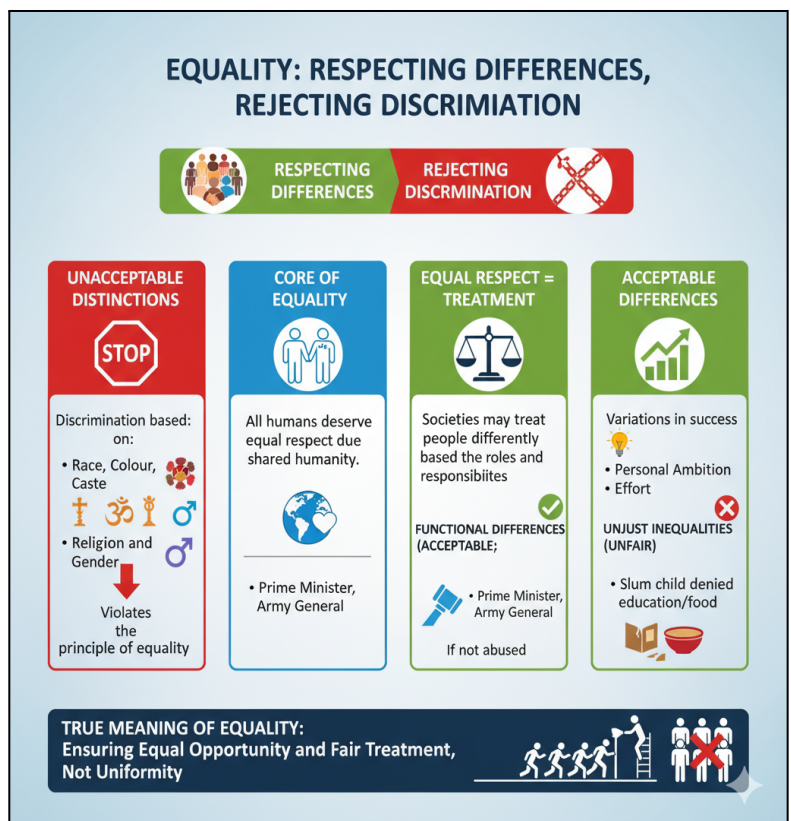
- **Liberalism** emphasizes tolerance, individual freedom, and the right to express opinions.
- It prioritizes personal liberty over collective norms, often questions political authority, and historically favored free markets.
- Modern liberalism also supports welfare measures to reduce social and economic inequalities.

Equality

- **Equality** is a moral and political ideal affirming equal worth and respect for all, regardless of gender, caste, race, religion, or nationality.
- In society, equality implies **absence of privileges**, but inequalities in wealth, power, and opportunities raise the question of whether they are natural or socially constructed. (CSE 2017)

Equality of Opportunities

- Equality means all individuals deserve the **same rights and opportunities** to develop their skills, talents, and pursue goals, regardless of differences in abilities or background.
- **Difference in Outcome vs. Opportunity:**
 - People differ in talents and choices, but **real inequality** arises when access to **basic goods** like education, healthcare, and housing is denied.
- **Types of Inequality:**



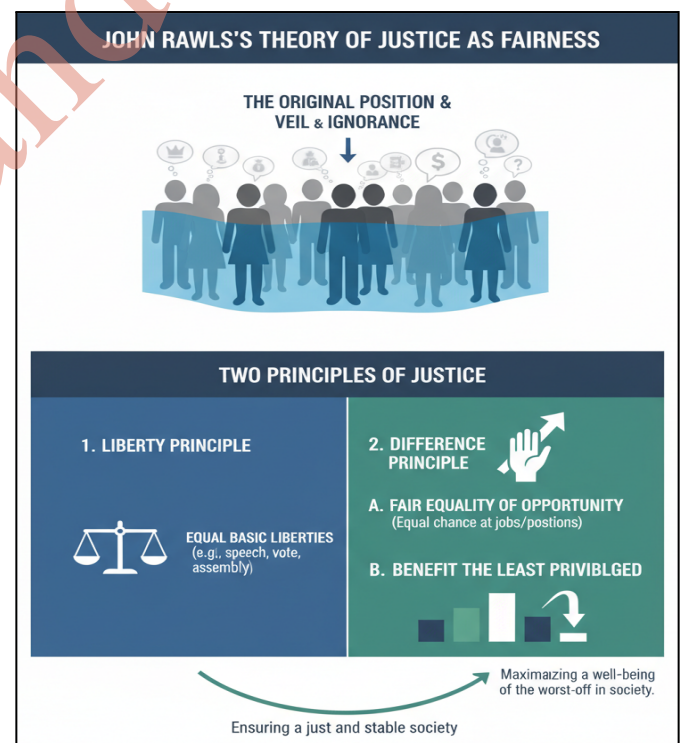
- **Natural Inequalities:** Inborn differences in abilities and talents.
- **Social Inequalities:** Created by society through discrimination or unequal opportunities.
- **Example:** Preference for intellectual over manual work; discrimination based on race, caste, or gender.
- **Social Constructs vs. Natural Differences:**
 - Historical prejudices (e.g., women as weak, black people as childlike) justified social inequalities.
 - Advances in technology and medicine (e.g., Stephen Hawking using assistive devices) show natural differences are not unchangeable.
 - Denying opportunities or rewards due to such differences is unjust.
- **Modern Perspective on Equality:**
 - Focus on reducing inequalities arising from birth and family background.
 - Inequalities from personal choices are generally acceptable; those from social or systemic factors are unjust.

Affirmative Action

- **Affirmative Action** promotes equality for minority and disadvantaged groups through measures like **reservations, scholarships, and hostels**, addressing historical discrimination and social inequalities. Globally, it supports marginalized communities (e.g., **USA Civil Rights Act, South Africa Employment Equity Act**), and in India, it targets caste, religion, and ethnic-based discrimination to enable equal opportunity.

Justice

- **Justice** means giving each individual their **due** with **equal consideration**.
- **Principles of Justice**
 - **Justice** requires **equal treatment for equals**, ensuring rights and opportunities without discrimination based on class, caste, race, or gender.
 - It also involves **proportionate justice**, rewarding effort and contribution appropriately, and **recognizing special needs** by providing additional support to those facing disadvantages, making equality meaningful and fair.
 - **Social justice** ensures fair laws and **equitable distribution** of goods and opportunities, using measures like land reforms and reservations to promote equality.



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

John Rawls' Theory of Justice

- **John Rawls' Theory of Justice** emphasizes **fairness** as the basis of justice, proposing two principles:
 - a. **Equal basic liberties** for all.

- b. **Social and economic inequalities** are acceptable only if they benefit the **least advantaged** and are attached to positions open to all under **fair equality of opportunity**.

Rights

- **Rights** are **reasonable claims of individuals** against the State, ensuring government actions follow constitutional limits. **(CSE 2017)**
- The State must uphold these rights, and violations require legal justification.
- Citizens can seek remedies for infringements on rights like Equality, Freedom, and Constitutional Remedies.

Significant Characteristics

- **Obligation of the State:** Rights are claims on the state to provide essentials.
- **State Action/Inaction:** Define what the state must and must not do.
- **Checks on Power:** Limit state authority and ensure accountability.
- **Respect for Others' Rights:** Exercise rights without harming others.
- **Balancing Rights:** Conflicting rights must be balanced.
- **Vigilance Against Overreach:** Citizens must prevent rights violations.
- **Need for Vigilance:** Rights must be responsibly exercised to protect democracy.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on **10 December 1948**.

Key Points from its Preamble:

1. Recognition of the inherent dignity and equal, inalienable rights of all humans is the basis for global freedom, justice, and peace.
2. Human rights emerged as a response to barbaric acts that shocked humanity, reaffirming the need for freedom from fear and want.
3. To avoid rebellion against tyranny and oppression, human rights must be protected by legal frameworks.
4. Promotion of human rights is essential to developing friendly relations between nations.
5. Member States reaffirmed their faith in human dignity, equality, and fundamental human rights.
6. Global Responsibility: Countries pledged cooperation with the UN to ensure universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
7. The UDHR is declared a common standard for all peoples and nations, with a call for teaching and education to promote rights.

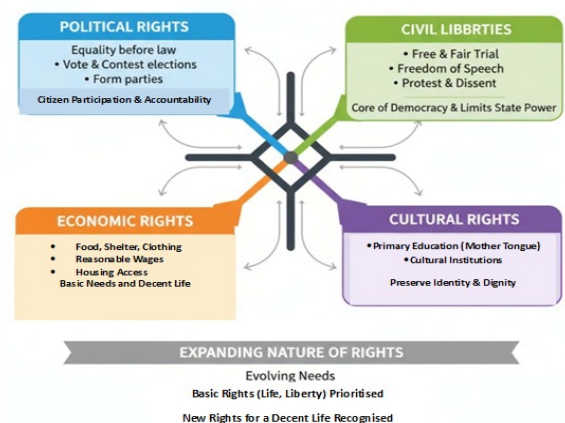
Relationship between Rights and Duties

- Rights are correlative with Duties. **(CSE 2017)**
- Every right implies a corresponding duty.
- For example: The **right to vote** has a **correlative duty of the Election Commission** to conduct free and fair elections.

Rights and the State

- Rights place obligations not only on the state (e.g. sustainable development) but also on individuals.
- **Positive Role:** The state creates laws to ensure rights (e.g., RTE Act).
- **Restrictive Role:** Rights can be curtailed during emergencies or to protect public order, morality, or national security.
- **Doctrine of Reasonable Restrictions:** Article 19(2)–(6) limits certain freedoms to balance individual liberty with collective good.

KINDS OF RIGHTS



Human Rights

- **Human rights** are universal rights inherent to all individuals from birth, regardless of status, articulated in the **UDHR 1948** (adopted by UN on 10 Dec 1948), including rights like **life, education, work, and freedom from torture**, and are protected in India through **Fundamental Rights**.

Secularism

- **Secularism** means that the **State does not favour or discriminate against any religion**.
- It ensures **freedom to practise, profess, and propagate any religion or not follow any religion at all**, while protecting people from **religious domination - both inter-religious and intra-religious**.
- A secular state:
 - Must not be theocratic, i.e., ruled by religious leaders (e.g., Taliban or medieval Papal states).
 - Must not favor any religion legally (e.g., Anglican Church in England or Sunni Islam in Pakistan).

Features of Indian Secularism:

- Indian secularism is **unique** compared to Western models. It stands on three pillars:
 - a. **Equal respect for all religions (Sarva Dharma Sambhava)**.
 - b. **State neutrality in religious matters – no official state religion**.
 - c. **State intervention when necessary to ensure equality and social reform** (e.g., abolition of untouchability, temple entry laws).
- **Indian Secularism** follows a **3-fold strategy**: **Principled Distance** (state neutrality and equal treatment), **Non-Interference** (respect religious practices), and **Selective Intervention** (act against practices violating equality, dignity, or justice).

Value Addition
Constitutional Provisions on Secularism • Preamble: Secular (42nd Amendment, 1976) • Fundamental Rights: Art. 14, 15, 16, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 • Directive Principles of State Policy: Art. 44, 48, 51A(e) • Other Provisions: Art. 51A(f), 51A(h), 290-A, 350-B • Seventh Schedule (Concurrent List: religion-related subjects) Key Judgements • Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973): Secularism declared a basic feature of the Constitution. • S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994): Any state government acting against secular principles can face President's Rule under Article 356. • Aruna Roy v. Union of India (2002): Allowed value-based education in schools, provided it is not religious instruction.

Aspect	Western Model of Secularism	Indian Model of Secularism
Core Principle	Strict separation between religion and state (mutual exclusion)	Equal treatment of all religions with state intervention when needed

State Religion Relation	State cannot interfere in or support religious matters	State can engage with religion – both negatively (ban harmful practices) and positively (support cultural/educational rights of minorities)
Focus	Individual liberty & equality	Individual freedom + community rights + inter- & intra-religious equality
Religious Rationale in Law/Policy	Not allowed – religion is strictly private	Law/policy may engage with religion to ensure justice and equality
Minority Protection	Focused less on community rights due to relative religious homogeneity in the West	Emphasises minority rights (e.g., right to run schools, preserve culture) due to religious diversity
Domination Addressed	Mainly intra-religious domination	Addresses both inter-religious (majority vs minority) and intra-religious (caste, gender) domination
Examples	U.S. – No state religion, no state-funded religious schools	India – Abolished untouchability , supports minority institutions , bans religious tyranny
Nature	Religion is private , laws cannot have religious rationale	Not just tolerance or equal respect; Ensures the state can intervene to challenge discriminatory religious practices .

Rule of Law

- The **Rule of Law** is a fundamental principle of democratic governance which ensures that **all individuals, institutions, and the government are accountable under the law**.
- In India, the **Rule of Law** is embedded in the **Preamble and the Fundamental Rights** of the Constitution.

Origin

- The term “**Rule of Law**” originated in **England** and was later adopted in several democratic constitutions, including India.
- A.V. Dicey**, a British jurist, articulated the **basic features of Rule of Law**

Features of Rule of Law (CSE 2018)

- Equality before the Law:** Everyone is treated equally under the law, without special privileges based on religion, race, caste, sex, or social status.
- Liberty and Civil Rights:** Individuals are protected in their freedom and basic rights.
- No Punishment Without Trial:** No one can be punished arbitrarily; everyone must go through the same legal process.
- Protection of Rights:** Political and civil rights are safeguarded, ensuring freedom and fairness in society, as reflected in Articles 14, 19, and 21.

Rule of Law Index (ROLI) 2024

Publisher: World Justice Project (US-based civil society)

Purpose: Measures executive accountability and respect for fundamental rights of citizens

Assessment Factors:

1. Constraints on Government Powers
2. Absence of Corruption
3. Open Government
4. Fundamental Rights
5. Order and Security
6. Regulatory Enforcement
7. Civil Justice
8. Criminal Justice

India's Rank (2024):
79th out of 142 countries

- **Limitation on Arbitrary Powers:** The executive cannot act unchecked; all government actions are subject to judicial review.
- **Government Accountability:** The government answers to the people, ensuring transparency, fairness, and responsible governance.

Due process of law

- **Due Process of Law** is a principle requiring governments to follow fair procedures when depriving individuals of life, liberty, or property.
- The concept is borrowed from the **US Constitution** but adapted to protect against arbitrary executive and legislative actions in India.
- Due process is often understood as imposing **restrictions on laws and legal procedures**, allowing **judges, rather than legislators, to ensure and uphold fundamental fairness, justice, and individual liberty**. This understanding is closely related to the principles of **natural justice**. (CSE 2023)
- Though **not explicitly** in the Indian Constitution, due process is interpreted as a fundamental right protecting life, liberty, and property.

State

- The **State** is a politically organized **community** of persons permanently occupying a definite territory independent of external control and possessing an organized government. (CSE 2021)
- It alone has the authority to make **laws**, deriving power from its **sovereignty**.
- The four essential elements of a State are **population, territory, government, and sovereignty**.
- Simply put, the State **makes and enforces laws**, controls **use of force**, provides a **law enforcement framework**, and regulates **economic activities** within its **territory**.

Gandhism & Marxism

Aspect	Gandhism	Marxism
Ultimate Goal	Stateless, decentralized, self-sufficient society (Gram Swaraj)	Stateless, classless communist society
Means to Achieve Goals	Non-violence (Ahimsa) , truth (Satyagraha), moral persuasion	Revolution , class struggle, proletarian dictatorship
View on State	State unnecessary; power should be decentralized	State is a tool of class oppression , will eventually disappear
View on Property	Private property allowed, but should serve social welfare (Trusteeship)	Private property causes exploitation; must be abolished
View on Class Struggle	Harmony between classes (Sarvodaya – welfare of all)	Conflict between classes (bourgeoisie vs. proletariat)
Economic Model	Village-based, self-sufficient economy , decentralized production	State-controlled economy ; common ownership of means of production

Political System	Democratic decentralization (Panchayati Raj)	Proletarian dictatorship leading to communism
Role of Religion	Spirituality and morality central	Religion is the opium of the masses and should be abolished

Similarities

- The **common agreement between Gandhism and Marxism is the final goal of a stateless society (CSE 2020)**
 - **Gandhism:** Ramarajya → self-governing individuals, free from political coercion.
 - **Marxism:** Stateless communist society → withering away from the state after class elimination.
- **Critique of Capitalism** – Both oppose capitalist exploitation and support equality.
- **Stateless Society** – Both envision a society without a state, but use different methods.
- **Emphasis on Labor** – Workers and peasants are central to societal change in both ideologies.
- **Anti-Imperialism** – Both resisted colonialism; Marxism through **revolution**, Gandhism through **non-violence**.

Bureaucracy

- **Bureaucracy** is the administrative system responsible for **implementing government policies, laws, and programs** in India. (CSE 2020)
- It acts as the **executive arm of the government**, comprising **civil servants, administrative officers, and regulatory bodies** operating at various levels.
- The bureaucracy follows the principles of **hierarchy, specialization, and rule-based administration**, ensuring effective **governance and public service delivery**.

Some snapshot from the NCERT

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

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



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

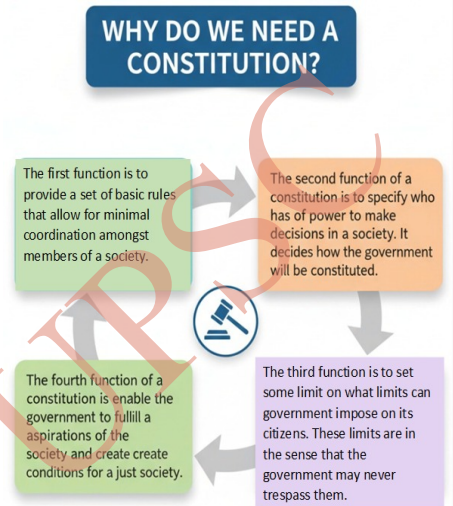
In the Shānti Parva of the Mahābhārata, when Bhīṣma, the wise elder of the Kuru dynasty, lies on a bed of arrows awaiting his death, he teaches Yudhishtira, the eldest Pāṇḍava, at great length on good governance, justice, and the moral responsibilities of a raja. A raja is not just a ruler; the welfare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

NCERT Gyan

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

Constitutional Design

- The term *Constitution* is derived from the Latin word *constituere*, meaning “to establish.”
- A constitution is a **set of fundamental rules and principles** that define how a country is governed.
- It is often described as the ***fundamental law, basic law, instrument of government, or rules of the state.***
- Constitutions **not only restrict** government powers but also empower it to work for society’s collective good.
- **Key Provisions of a Constitution:** A constitution typically outlines:
 - **Formation of government** – how the government is constituted and functions.
 - **Distribution and use of power** – allocation of powers between various organs and levels of government.
 - **Rights and duties of citizens** – fundamental rights and responsibilities.
 - **Limits on government authority** – checks to prevent misuse of power.
- **Authority of a Constitution**
 - A constitution lays down a state’s structure, governance framework, and citizen rights.
 - Some countries, like the United Kingdom, rely on multiple documents forming their constitution.
 - Its true authority, however, depends on effective implementation, not merely its existence on paper.



A Good Constitution

- A successful constitution gives all groups a reason to **accept its rules**. If it allows **majorities to oppress minorities**, it loses **legitimacy**.
- By protecting **freedom and equality**, it encourages adherence. The **Indian Constitution** broadly achieves this.
- To prevent **concentration of power**, constitutions **divide authority** across the **Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, and independent bodies**, creating **checks and balances**.
- A good constitution balances **core values** with **flexibility**, allowing **change within limits**. India’s Constitution is a **“living document”** that maintains **stability** while adapting to change

- ★ It places effective restrictions on the Authority of the State in the interest of individual liberty not vice versa **(CSE 2014)**
- ★ A constitutional government by definition is a limited government **(CSE 2020)**
- ★ A government which is controlled or ruled or limited by a Constitution, is called a constitutional government. **(CSE 2021)**

Constitutionalism

- Constitutionalism is the principle that a government must operate within the **Framework of Laws** set by a **constitution**, ensuring **limited, accountable governance** and protecting **individual rights** through the **rule of law**.
- In **India**, **Constitutionalism** is ensured by the **Indian Constitution**, adopted by the **Constituent Assembly** on **26 November 1949** and effective from **26 January 1950**.