

Sub: Civics Assignment-3

In the last assignment we discussed at length about the government. I am sure, for now you are able to answer the questions:

- What is government?
- What are the various functions that a government performs?
- Why do we need to pay the government?
- What is Legislature?
- What are the various types of government?
- Differences between Monarchy, Dictatorship and Democracy.

In India, we have representative government. Which means that we choose a representative from amongst us and he/ she acts as our leader (as chosen by us). You will be surprised to know, not everyone had their voting rights by birth.

Universal Suffrage

- The right to vote is called *suffrage or franchise*.
- In India we have Universal adult franchise which means that all adult citizens have the right to vote.
- But, not very long ago when India was under British rule, few Indians had voting rights.
- At the end of the 18th Century, only 2% of Britain's own population had the right to vote.
- The ones who did not own any property could not vote.
- Women could not vote because they did not have the right to own property.
- In the 19th century, reforms were introduced to extend voting rights.
- Women got the right to own property, but they were still not allowed to vote.

Suffragettes

- British women organised a protest movement against the government's policy of not allowing them to vote.
- The participants were called **suffragettes**; they chained themselves to the railings, burned the postboxes and smashed windows and street lights.
- Many suffragettes were imprisoned and tortured.
- In 1914, during World War I, a lot of men had to quit their jobs and go to war; women then took their positions and responsibly took care of the offices- which proved that women were more capable than they were thought to be. They even stopped protesting during those times and they were rewarded in 1918 when

- women **aged 30** got the right to vote.
- In 1928, British women finally won the right to vote on equal terms with men.
 - Women in the USA earned the right to vote in 1920.

Franchise and the Indian Constitution

- The framers of the constitution were well aware of importance of equality between men and women and rich and poor.
- Therefore, since our constitution came into force, all Indian citizens have had equal voting rights.

Please answer the following questions:

1. What do you understand by Universal adult franchise?
2. Who are suffragettes?
3. Why were women not allowed to vote?
4. When did British women win equal voting rights?