

Chapter 1

On Equality

Textbook Exercises

1. In a democracy why is universal adult franchise important?

Ans. Universal adult franchise is an important aspect of a democratic set-up. It is based on the principle of equality. It authorises all adult citizens, who are 18 and above to cast one vote irrespective of their wealth and the communities they belong to. There shall be no discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

2. Re-read the box on Article 15 and state two ways in which this article addresses inequality?

Ans. The two ways in which Article 15 addresses inequality are:

- 1) The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.
- 2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject of any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to:
 - a) Access to shops, public restaurants, hotels, and places of public entertainment.
 - b) The use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads, and places of public resort maintained by the funds of state or meant for public use.

3. In what ways was Omprakash Valmiki's experience similar to that of the Ansaris?

Ans. Both Omprakash Valmiki and the Ansaris were victims of unequal treatment. The headmaster of Omprakash Valmiki compelled him to sweep the school simply because he belonged to the Dalit. The dignity of Omprakash was badly hurt. The self-respect of the Ansaris was also hurt badly when they were refused to lease an apartment because of their religion. The dignity or self-respect of both of them was violated.

4. What do you understand by the term "all persons are equal before law"? Why do you think it is important in a democracy?

Ans. The term "all persons are equal before law" states that all citizens, irrespective of their social or economic background, have to obey the same laws. No person shall be discriminated against in the eyes of law on the grounds of race, religion, caste or gender.

Equality before law is a sacred principle of our Constitution which forms the backbone of democracy. It strengthens the root of a democratic set.