

CBSE Notes Class 8 Social Science Civics

Chapter 10 - Law and Social Justice

To protect people from exploitation, the government makes certain laws. These laws try to ensure that the unfair practices are kept at a minimum in the markets. Many laws have their basis in the Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. For instance, the Right against Exploitation says that no one can be forced to work for low wages or under bondage. Similarly, the Constitution lays down “no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mines or engaged in any other hazardous employment.” How are these laws played out in practice? To what extent do they address the concerns of social justice? You will find the answers to such questions through CBSE Notes Class 8 Social Science Civics Chapter 10 - Law and Social Justice. So, go on to explore this chapter.

CBSE Notes Class 8 Social Science Civics Chapter 10 - Law and Social Justice

According to a law on minimum wages, a worker has to be paid not less than the minimum wage by the employer. There are other laws that protect the interests of producers and consumers in the market. These help ensure that the relations between these three parties i.e the worker, consumer and producer are governed in a manner that is not exploitative. By making, enforcing and upholding laws, the government can control the activities of individuals or private companies so as to ensure social justice.

What is a Worker's Worth?

In India, one worker can easily replace another. There is so much unemployment that many workers are willing to work in unsafe conditions in return for a wage. Thus, even so many years after the Bhopal gas tragedy, there are regular reports of accidents in construction sites, mines or factories due to the callous attitude of the employers.

A worker's worth is the value he/she has in the eyes of an industry he/she is employed in.

Enforcement of Safety Laws

The government is supposed to ensure that safety laws are implemented. It is also the duty of the government to ensure that the Right to Life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution is not violated.

As we can see from the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, the negligence of the government is the reason for such a hazardous disaster.

1. Government officials refused to recognise the plant as hazardous and allowed it to come up in a populated locality.
2. The Government didn't ask Union Carbide to shift to cleaner technology or safer procedures.
3. Government inspectors continued to approve the procedures in the plant, even when repeated incidents of leaks from the plant made it obvious to everybody that things were seriously wrong.

Safety was being disregarded both by the government and by private companies in this case.

New Laws to Protect the Environment

The environment was treated as a 'free' entity and any industry could pollute the air and water without any restrictions. The Bhopal disaster brought the issue of the environment to the forefront. In response to this, the Indian Government introduced new laws on the environment.

The Right to Life is a Fundamental Right under Article 21 of the Constitution and it includes the right to the enjoyment of pollution-free water and air for full enjoyment of life. The courts gave a number of judgments upholding the right to a healthy environment as intrinsic to the Fundamental Right to Life. The government is responsible for setting up laws and procedures that can check pollution, clean rivers and introduce heavy fines for those who pollute.

A major role of the government is to control the activities of private companies by making, enforcing and upholding laws so as to prevent unfair practices and ensure social justice. Laws that are weak and poorly enforced can cause serious harm, as the Bhopal gas tragedy showed. Apart from the government, people should also exert pressure so that both private companies and the government act in the interests of society.