

### Lesson at a Glance

- **Public facilities** relate to our **basic needs** such as water, health, education etc.
- The government is expected to play a major role in providing public facilities to all.
- Water is the basic need of the people. It is essential for life and for good health.
- Safe drinking water can prevent several water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, etc. Unfortunately India has the largest number of cases of these diseases.
- Children below the age of five reportedly die everyday because of these diseases.
- It means safe drinking water is not available to all.
- Our constitution recognises **the Right to Water** as being a part of **the Right to Life** under **Article 21**. It means that there should be **universal access** to water. But in reality it does not happen so.
- Not only water but other public facilities such as healthcare, electricity, public transport, schools and colleges also need to be provided for all.
- The chief feature of a public facility is that once it is provided, its benefits can be shared by several people. For example, if an area is supplied with electricity it means that the entire people of that area can use its benefit.
- One of the most important functions of the government is to ensure that public facilities are made available to everyone.
- The government gets money for public facilities from the taxes collected from the people.
- The government is empowered to collect these taxes and use them for such programmes. For example, to supply water the government has to incur costs in pumping water, carrying it over long distances, laying down pipes for distribution, treating the water for impurities, and finally, collecting and treating waste water. It meets these expenses partly from the various taxes that it collects and partly by charging a price for water. This price is set so that

most people can afford a certain minimum amount of water for daily use.

- Although public facilities should be made available to all, in reality we find their shortage. As mentioned above water is a public facility of great importance. But the tragedy is that it is not available to all.
- The poor are the worst sufferers because they don't have money to purchase water from private companies.
- Crisis of water becomes acute during the summer months in several cities of the country.
- The shortage in municipal water is increasingly being filled by an expansion of private companies who are selling water for profit.
- A shortage of municipal water is often taken as a sign of failure of the government.
- Our constitution recognizes many of the public facilities as being a part of the **Right to Life**. Now it is the government's responsibility to see that these rights are protected so that everyone can lead a **good life**.

### ■ IN-TEXT QUESTIONS SOLVED ■

1. *What do you think would happen if the government withdraws from the task of supplying water?*

[NCERT Textbook, page 114]

**Ans.** The crisis of water will take more acute form. The poor would be the worst sufferers. They could not buy water at high price from private companies.

2. *Do you think it is important to conserve resources like water and electricity, and to use more public transport?*

[NCERT Textbook, page 115]

**Ans.** It is very important to conserve these resources because their scarcity will create numerous problems.

3. *Do you think that lack of access to proper sanitation facilities affects peoples' lives? How?*

[NCERT Textbook, page 116]

**Ans.** It will directly affect the health of the people. They will become the victims of several diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, etc. A person with ill-health would not be able to work efficiently. Hence, it is important to make available proper sanitation facilities to all.

4. *Why do you think that this would impact women and girls more acutely?* [NCERT Textbook, page 116]

**Ans.** Because they are usually given less attention.

### ■ TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED ■

Q. 1. *Why do you think there are so few cases of private water supply in the world?*

**Ans.** Whenever the responsibility of water supply is handed over to private companies, there is a steep rise in the price of water, making it unaffordable for many. Cities have to see huge protests forcing the government to take back the service from private hands. It is, therefore, there are so few cases of private water supply in the world.

Q. 2. *Do you think water in Chennai is available and affordable by all? Discuss.*

**Ans.** No, water in Chennai is not available and affordable by all. Municipal supply meets only about half the needs of the people of the city, on an average. There are areas which get water more regularly than others. Those areas that are close to the storage point get more water whereas colonies farther away receive less water.

The poor are the worst victims of the shortfalls in water supply. The middle class people manage water through a variety of private means such as digging borewells, buying water from tankers and using bottled water for drinking. But the poor have to face the problem because unlike wealthy and middle class people they do not have money to buy bottled water, or to dig borewells.

Q. 3. *How is the sale of water by farmers to water dealers in Chennai affecting the local people? Do you think local people can object to such exploitation of ground water? Can the government do anything in this regard?*

**Ans.** The sale of water by farmers to water dealers in Chennai has badly affected the local people. They have to face acute water crisis in their life. Their agriculture suffers, because they fail to manage water for irrigation. Local people can object to such exploitation of ground water, because its levels have dropped drastically.

The government can do much in this regard. It can ban private companies from entering in towns and villages. It can punish those farmers who are indulged in selling of water to private companies for money.

Q. 4. Why are most of the private hospitals and private schools located in major cities and not in towns or rural areas?

Ans. Private hospitals and private schools provide costly services, which people in towns or rural areas fail to afford. But people in big cities always prefer to go to these places.

Q. 5. Do you think the distribution of public facilities in our country is adequate and fair? Give an example of your own to explain.

Ans. No, the distribution of public facilities in our country is neither adequate nor fair.

Take the example of electricity. It is not supplied to public in sufficient measure. In VIP areas, it is abundant and people there avail facilities of ACs, heaters etc. But in middle class and lower class areas people get electricity only for a few hours and sometimes they don't get it for several days.

Q. 6. Take some of the public facilities in your area, such as water, electricity, etc. Is there scope to improve these? What in your opinion should be done? Complete the table.

	Is it available?	How can it be improved?
Water		
Electricity		
Roads		
Public Transport		

Ans.

	Is it available?	How can it be improved?
Water	Yes	The hours of water supply should be extended
Electricity	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misuse of power should be checked.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Street lights should not be kept on during day time.</li> <li>Illegal connections should be checked.</li> </ul>
Roads	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good material should be used in road construction.</li> <li>Whenever, any portion of the road is in bad condition, it should be repaired immediately.</li> </ul>
Public Transport	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of buses should be increased.</li> </ul>

Q. 7. Are the above public facilities shared equally by all the people in your area? Elaborate.

Ans. The above facilities are not shared equally by all the people in my area. The people living in posh localities avail better facilities. They hardly face a minute without water or electricity. But people living in the outskirts have to face the crisis of both water and electricity.

Q. 8. Data on some of the public facilities are collected as part of the Census. Discuss with your teacher when and how the Census is conducted.

Ans. The census is conducted every 10 years. It counts the entire population of the country. It also collects detailed information about the people living in India—their age, schooling, the work they do, etc. This information is used to measure several things such as the number of literate people and the ratio of males and females.

Q. 9. Private educational institutions—schools, colleges, universities, technical and vocational training institutes are coming up in our country in a big way. On the other hand, educational institutes run by the government are becoming relatively less important. What do you think would be the impact of this? Discuss.

Ans. The monopoly of private educational institutions will be established. Money will have a major role in such establishments. This will marginalise those who belong to the havenots.

Note: Discuss about more points in company of your teacher.