**CIVICS CHAPTER 4 UNDERSTANDING LAWS**

**MODULE I**

**HAND OUT**

You may be familiar with some laws such as those that specify the age of marriage, the age at which a person can vote, and perhaps even the laws dealing with buying and selling of property. We now know that the Parliament is in charge of making laws. Do these laws apply to everyone? How do new laws come into being? Could there be laws that are unpopular or controversial? What should we as citizens do under such circumstances?

**Let us analyze a situation**

A government official helps his son go into hiding because his son has been given a ten-year jail sentence by a District Court for a crime that he has committed.

Do you think that the government official's actions were rights? should his son be exempt from the law just because his father is economically and politically powerful?

In Indian democracy, the Parliament is in charge of making laws. According to the constitution, all are equal before law.

All persons in independent India are equal before the law. It means that the law cannot discriminate between persons on the basis of their religion, caste or gender. Laws apply equally to all citizens of the country and no one, not even the President of the country is above the law.

Any crime or violation of law has a specific punishment.

But in ancient India laws did not apply equally to all. Even the punishment that two persons received for the same crime varied depending on their caste backgrounds, with lower castes being more ruthlessly penalized.

Even the colonial government failed to establish the rule of law in India. The colonial law was arbitrary. The Sedition Act of 1870 presents the best example of the arbitrariness of British law. Under this Act, any person protesting or criticizing the British government could be arrested without due trial.

Indian nationalists raised voice against the arbitrary use of authority by the British. They began fighting for greater equality and wanted to change the idea of law from a set of rules that they were forced to obey, to law as including ideas of justice.

By the end of the 19th century, the Indian legal profession also began emerging and demanded respect in colonial courts.

Indian judges began to play a greater role in making decisions. Their efforts did not go in vain. The rule of law emerged during the colonial period.

When the Indian Constitution came into existence, laws for the country began to be made by our representatives.

The Indian Parliament makes laws for the entire country.

Whenever, people think that a new law is necessary, they propose for it. The Parliament then comes forward and does what is required.

**In the next module let us discuss in detail How the Indian Parliament makes laws for the entire country.**