

**“Contestations are the manifestation of protest against laws or lawful authorities, which help to establish solidarity in the society.”**

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## **A. Abstract:**

This paper examines the importance of contestation in building solidarity in society. This effect can be examined based on one of the basic principles of democracy, which is the freedom of speech and the ability to voice your opinion. Principles like the aforementioned form an essential component of keeping governmental organizations in check and preventing corruption. Thus, these ideals are necessary for the development of society. Contestations—actions of opposing, refuting, and refusing—are manifestations of these ideals. These contestations or disputes are the early stages of a widespread 'protest' in this case owing to a disruption of misguided peace against an authoritarian monopoly whose essential and initial goal is to establish said peace in the society. In a democracy, People are allowed in the decision-making process. When these people are involved in the decision-making process, they tend to have disagreements with the government; this happens in the form of protests, revolutions, or contestations. These protests can be about laws that are unhelpful or disadvantageous; or a prime minister that governs unlawfully. This disagreement creates two divisions: the idea that there is one side, the government, and there is the other side, which is the people or society. When people come together to protest against the government, they band together, hence forming solidarity

## **B. Keywords**

Contestations, Democracy, Human Rights, Freedom, India, Case Study

## **C. Democracy**

The term democracy is derived from the Greek words "demos" (people) and "Kratos" (power); thus, democracy can be thought of as the "power of the people": a form of government that is based on the will of the people. If democracy is properly understood, it should not even be the "rule of the majority" if minorities' interests are completely ignored. In theory, democracy is a government on behalf of all the people, according to their "will."

### **a. Origin:**

- i.** One of the early pioneers of democracy in civilization was founded in ancient India's republics, which were established before the 6th century BC. These republics were known as Maha Janapadas, and Vaishali (in what is now Bihar, India) was the world's first republic. Some of these republics used the democratic Sangha, Gana, and Panchayat systems; which are still in use in Indian villages today.
- ii.** Another example is Athens, which was among one of the most important democracies in ancient times; the term "democracy" was coined by Athenians around 508 BC to describe their system of government.

### **b. Ideals:**

- i.** The concept of democratic equality holds that one requirement of treating people as equals is that all citizens be treated as equal citizens. If social and political inequalities undermine equal citizenship relations, such inequalities are unjust under

democratic equality.

- ii. Freedom of expression, particularly on political and other public concerns, is essential to any democracy. Most written and verbal speech is not controlled by democratic governments. As a result, democracies are typically packed with many voices expressing diverse or even opposing views and viewpoints. Democracy is dependent on literate, knowledgeable citizens who have access to information that allows them to engage as fully as possible in their society's public life and criticize imprudent or dictatorial government officials or policies.

#### **D. Importance of Contestations:**

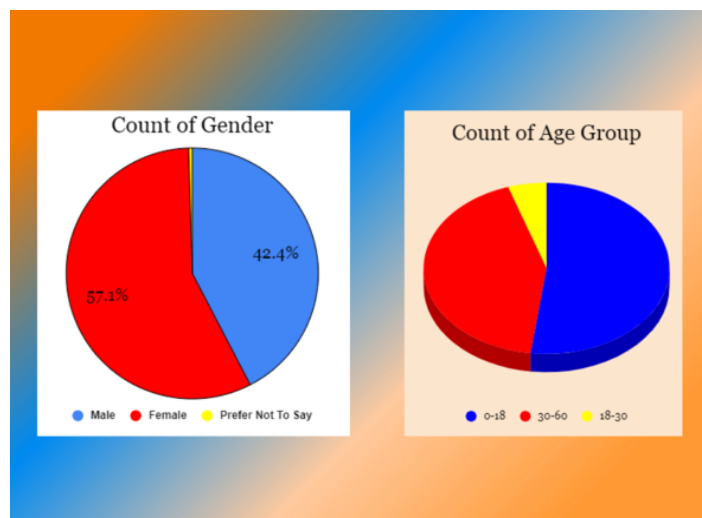
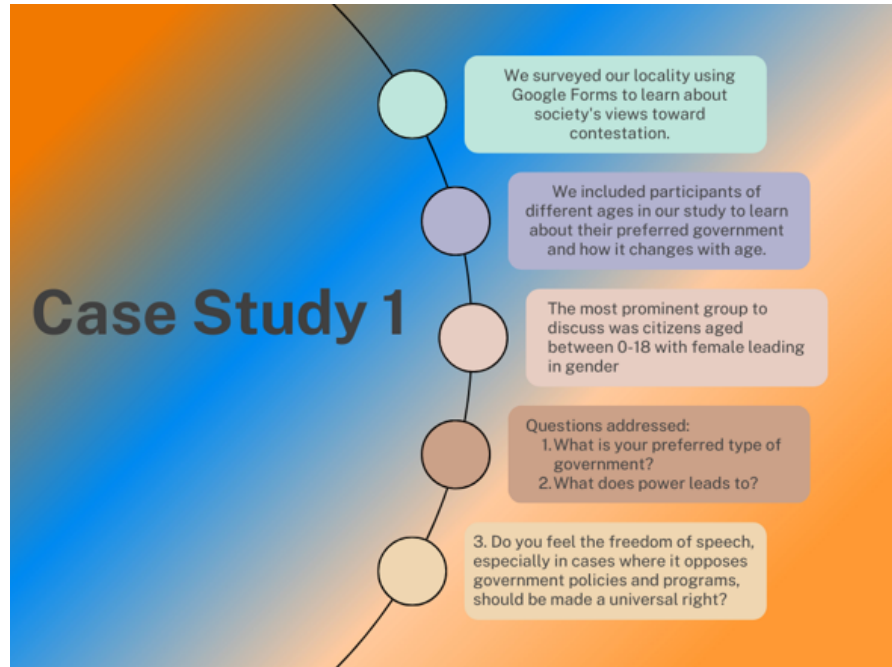
- a. Contestation, as we use the term, refers to the degree of electoral competition in a political community. When there are no elections, there are no contestations. Hence, contestations are part and parcel of democracy.
- b. Contestations, essential to democracies at the subnational level, vary substantially over time and space: caused partly by the national party system and hence exogenous to the regional arena. When competition, and hence democratic accountability, is greater, voters respect this variation and report higher levels of satisfaction with government performance.

#### **E. Human Rights and the validity of contestations**

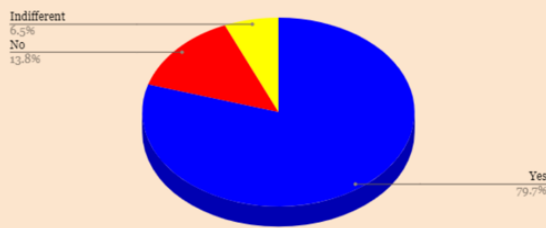
On 10th December 1948, The United Nations convened in Paris to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is a landmark declaration that defines the basic human rights of all individuals, irrespective of race, caste, region, or religion.

This declaration stated that all human beings, born with equal dignity and rights, are entitled to basic human rights, including the right to life, liberty, and security. Thus, it recognizes that all humans must have an equal chance at voicing their opinions, including but not limited to contesting popular beliefs or opinions, and hence contestations are very valid in all societies irrespective of the country they live in or the race they trace their roots to.

## F. Case Study 1

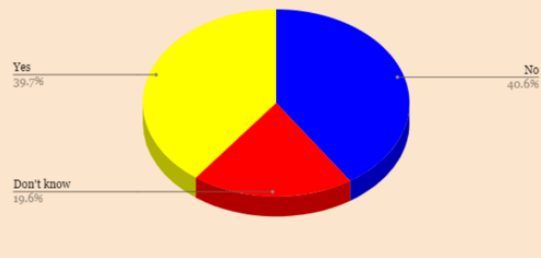


Do you feel freedom of speech, especially in cases where it opposes government policies and programs, should be made a universal right?



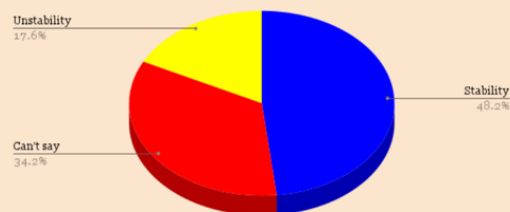
We learned from the responses to the preceding question that the majority of people believe the government should make free speech a universal right.

Do you feel that opposing the government can help bring about equality in society?



People's responses to this topic are divided, with the difference between those who believe that the opposition cannot effect change and those who believe that government can bring about positive social change being almost 1%.

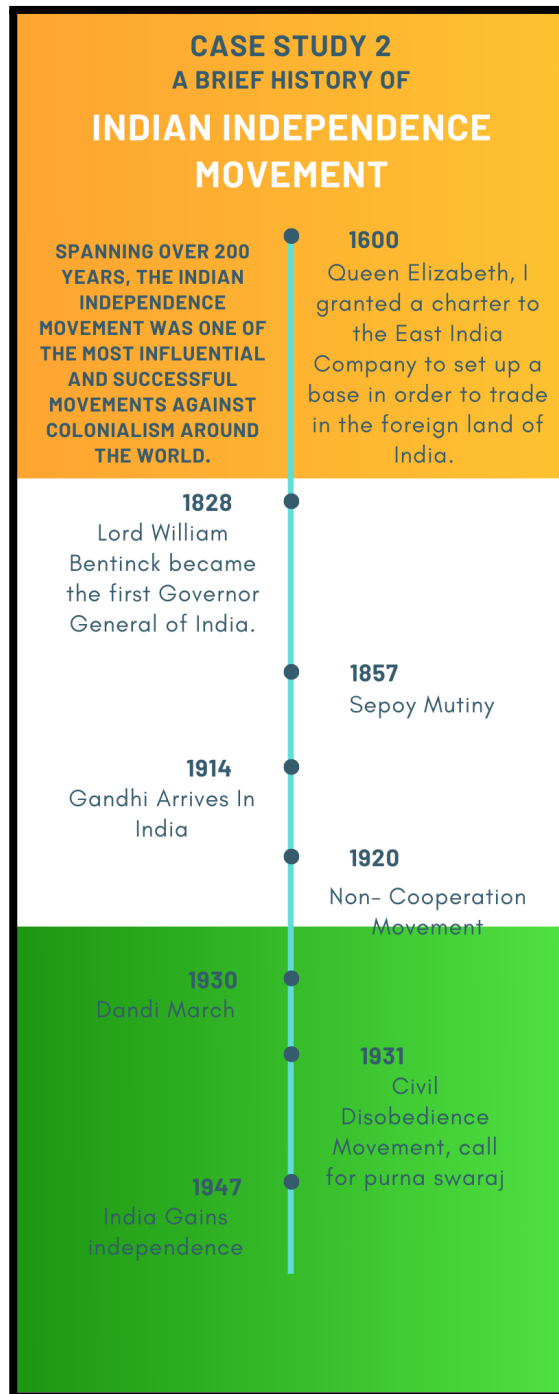
Do you feel that contesting power leads to :



Despite some people's lack of knowledge about effects of contesting power, the majority of people believe that contesting power can result in stability.



## G. Case Study 2:



## **The Indian Independence Movement**

Then, in 1914, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi arrived in India and he transformed the course of action against the British, changing it from violent to nonviolent, in the form of contestations against the British Empire. This method of non-violence or satyagraha managed to sustain itself, despite many unsuccessful attempts by the empire to thwart this effort. These contestations, in the form of dharnas, gheraos, or picketing were very successful in bringing together people, irrespective of race, caste, or religion, and hence, established solidarity.

### **H. Conclusion:**

Through this paper, with the help of case studies, we have established that contestations are the manifestation of protest against laws or lawful authorities, which help to establish solidarity in society. For proving this, we have reasoned our arguments on democratic principles and human rights and proved this with the support of a study conducted by ourselves and through past evidence(The Indian Independence Movement). Thus, we have shown the importance of contestations and fulfilled our purpose of examining this concept.

### **I. Acknowledgment**

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