In a democracy why is universal adult franchise important?

In a democracy, universal adult franchise is important because of the following reasons:

- Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people.
- Every adult irrespective of caste, creed, religion, region, sex, rich or poor people are allowed to vote. This is called universal adult franchise.
- Concept of universal adult franchise is based on equality.
- In democracy every citizen is equal.

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

Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

(1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, and 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 to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to –

(a) Access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment;
Or
(b) The use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

In what ways was Omprakash Valmiki’s experience similar to that of the Ansaris?

By picking on him and making him sweep the school, because of his caste, Omprakash Valmiki’s schoolmates and teachers hurt his dignity badly and made him feel as if he was less equal to all other students in the school. Omprakash Valmiki was not allowed to sit with other students on the desks or mats but at the end of the worn-out mat. Being a child, Omprakash Valmiki could do very little in this situation.

The Ansaris dignity was also hurt when persons refused to lease their apartments to them. However, when the property dealer suggested that they change their name, it was their dignity or self-respect that made them refuse his suggestion. Omprakash Valmiki’s experience was similar to that of the Ansari’s because both were treated unequally based on caste and religion, their dignity was violated. They both deserved the same equality, respect, and dignity as anyone else.
What do you understand by the term “all persons are equal before the law”? Why do you think it is important in a democracy?

The Indian Constitution recognizes every person equal before the law. By the term, “all persons are equal before the law,” we understand equality. Universal Adult Franchise is a concept based on equality. Equality is important in a democracy because democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. Equality is the essence of democracy. If people are discriminated based on caste, creed, religion, sex, prosperity, etc. the democracy will not survive. Every person irrespective of his caste, religion, economic status, educational status etc. has the same right to be treated with dignity as others.