

Chapter 4 - Gender, Religious and Caste

GENDER DIVISION

- The gender division is commonly perceived as natural and irreversible. It is based on social expectations and preconceptions rather than biology.
- In society, there is a long-standing pattern in which the majority of domestic work is performed by women, either as family members or as workers. The division of labour between men and women is known as the sexual division of labour.
- The sexual division of labour limits the kind of jobs that women can do. They were only allowed in the house's private domains. Women's Suffrage and other social revolutions increased women's opportunities.
- Patriarchy is a social system in which men are regarded as superior to or possessing greater values than women. It also bestows more political and economic power in the hands of men.
- Women face discrimination and oppression in various ways:
 - a. In comparison to men, women have a lower literacy rate (54%) than men (76 %). Even though girls perform as well as, if not better than, boys, girls are more likely to drop out of school. A smaller number of girls are permitted to pursue higher education.
 - b. Women's work is undervalued. Women have fewer high-paying positions.
 - c. Women get paid less than males for doing the same job.
 - d. Despite the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, which prohibits such practices, this inequality occurs in a variety of industries.
 - e. Abortion is performed on female fetuses in the mother's womb. In India, the child sex ratio is 914, meaning that there are only 914 girls for every 1000 boys.
 - f. Girls and women are subjected to a variety of forms of violence and harassment both inside and beyond the home.

Feminist: A feminist is a woman or a man who believes in equal rights and opportunities for men and women. Class 10 Social Science (Civics)

Feminist Movement: These movements are radical women's movements dedicated to achieving gender equality in personal and family life, as well as in public affairs. These movements have organized and agitated to open up avenues

for strengthening women's political and legal position, as well as their educational and employment prospects.

Women's participation in public life is particularly high in some regions of the world, such as Scandinavian countries like Sweden, Norway, and Finland.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Women's political participation has been significantly lower than men's across the globe. Women's well-being can be improved by providing them political power and placing them in decision-making and law-making roles in society. When women gain power, they will devote their efforts to meeting women's demands and finding answers to their challenges.

- Women's political participation in India is lower than the global average. In India, women make up about 10% of legislators, compared to 19% globally.
- In India, women are underrepresented in state legislatures. Only roughly 5% of the population.
- The Panchayati Raj Act mandates that women candidates be given 1/3 of all seats in local bodies. Women's participation in municipalities and panchayats has increased as a result of this.
- However, attempts to introduce such legislation in the Lok Sabha and various state legislatures have failed. The law was never passed because political parties were unable to reach an agreement on it.

RELIGION, COMMUNALISM AND POLITICS

Religion:

Religious divisions frequently manifest themselves in the realm of politics. There are people who follow several religions in India. As members of a religious community, people should be able to express their needs, interests, and demands in politics.

Family Law: These are the laws that govern family-related issues such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption, etc. Different family laws apply to people of various religions in our country.

Communalism:

Communal politics refers to the use of religion in politics when one religious group's demands are formulated in opposition to another's and when State power is utilized to establish one religious group's dominance over the others. This happens:

1. When one religion's beliefs are shown to be superior to those of other religions.

2. When one religious group's demands collide with those of another.
3. When state power is utilized to establish one religious group's dominance over the others.

In politics, communalism can take a variety of forms, as seen below:

- a. Religious prejudices, preconceptions about religious groups, and confidence in the superiority of one's religion over other religions are the most prominent manifestations of communalism in everyday beliefs.
- b. A communal mindset frequently leads to a desire to rule over one's own religious community politically.
- c. Sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal, and simple fear are all used in religious political mobilization to bring followers of one religion together in the political arena.
- d. Communalism can sometimes take the most heinous form of communal violence, riots, and massacres. At the time of partition, India and Pakistan had some of the deadliest communal riots in history.

Secular State:

India is a democratic and secular country. Some of the important features of Indian secular state are:

1. The Indian state has no official religion.
2. Individuals and groups have the freedom to proclaim, practice, and propagate any religion, or not to follow any at all, under the Constitution.
3. Discrimination on the basis of religion is prohibited by the Constitution.
4. The Constitution empowers the government to intervene in religious matters in order to ensure religious equality. Untouchability, for example, is prohibited.

CASTE AND POLITICS

Caste is a system of categorizing people into groups depending on their employment. Caste is hazardous because it is hereditary, has religious backing, and divides people into status groups. This hierarchy prevents groups at the top from interacting with those below them, and vice versa. Politics and caste both have beneficial and harmful aspects.

Caste Inequalities: Occupation is typically passed down from generation to generation in most countries. This is taken to its logical conclusion in the caste system. Members of the same caste were intended to establish a social community

that practiced the same or comparable occupations, married within the caste group, and did not eat with members of other caste groups, according to this system.

The traditional conceptions of Caste Hierarchy are crumbling as a result of economic progress, large-scale urbanization, increased literacy and education, job mobility, and the weakening of the status of landowners in communities. The Indian Constitution outlawed caste-based discrimination and set the groundwork for policies to correct the system's inequities.

Caste in Politics: In politics, caste can take many forms-

1. When political parties choose their candidates or create governments, they normally make sure that members from many castes and tribes are included.
2. In order to win elections, political parties and politicians make appeals to caste sentiment.
3. Political parties emphasise caste-based issues during elections to obtain political support, as the 'one man, one vote' system or adult franchise has made the voter immensely powerful.
4. People from lower castes have become more aware of their voting rights and influence as a result of political parties.

Politics in Caste: The caste system and caste identities are also influenced by politics since they are brought into the political arena. Here are a few examples to back this up-

1. Each caste group aspires to grow in size by absorbing neighbouring castes or sub-castes.
2. Various caste groupings are formed, and then they engage in communication and negotiation with other castes or communities.
3. In the political arena, new caste groups have emerged, such as 'backward' and 'forward' caste groups.

As a result, caste plays a variety of functions in politics. Caste division can lead to tensions, conflict, and even violence in some circumstances.

Important Questions

1. Why is the political participation of women important to society?

Ans: In most civilizations, systematic exclusion of women from public spheres and divisions based on gender is a frequent social division. However, this is a socially constructed divide with no physiological or biological basis.

Such distinctions result in inequalities in jobs traditionally associated with men and women, a lesser value for women's labour, and substantial restrictions on women's participation in public life, including politics. This leads to a lack of awareness of women's demands and a further restriction of their life. Women's problems are confined to the confines of their homes, and they have no influence over their own lives.

Women's well-being can be improved by increasing their political participation and placing them in decision-making roles in society. When women gain power, they will devote their efforts to meeting women's demands and finding answers to their challenges. This may result in new policies and initiatives for women, facilitating their equal participation in all aspects of society. When women gain power, they will devote their efforts to meeting women's demands and finding answers to their challenges. This may result in new policies and initiatives for women, facilitating their equal participation in all aspects of society.

2. What is patriarchy? How does it discriminate against women?

Ans: Patriarchy is a social order in which men are valued more highly than women. It also bestows more power in men's hands. Economic and political clout In all aspects of life, such a system discriminates against women and girls.

- In comparison to men, women have a lower literacy rate i.e., 54% than men i.e., 76%.
- Girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school, and fewer girls are permitted to pursue further education. Important Question and Answer
- Women's work is undervalued. For the same work, women get paid less than males.
- Girls and women experience different sorts of violence and harassment both within and outside of their families, including sex-selective abortion of female pregnancies due to a preference for a male child.

3. Comment on political participation of women in India.

Ans: Women's political participation in India is lower than the global average.

- In India, women make up about 10% of legislators, compared to 19% globally.

- Women make up only approximately 5% of state assembly members in India.
- The Panchayati Raj Act specified that women would be given 1/3 of all seats in local bodies. Women's participation in municipalities and panchayats has increased as a result of this.

However, in India, women vote, run for public office, and join political parties at a lesser rate than men. Women's political participation is strongest in the areas of activism and voting.

4. Why should we pay attention to religion in politics?

Ans: In India, religion plays a significant role in defining one's identity. It's also the foundation for forming communities. The following are some of the positive and negative aspects of religion in politics.

- a. The most visible manifestations of communalism in everyday beliefs include religious prejudices, preconceptions about religious institutions, and confidence in one's religion's superiority over other religions.
- b. A communal perspective frequently leads to a wish to exercise political control over one's own religious community.
- c. Religious political mobilization uses sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal, and plain fear to pull followers of one faith together in the political arena.
- d. Communalism can sometimes manifest itself in the most terrible forms, including communal violence, riots, and massacres. India and Pakistan had some of the bloodiest communal riots in history during the time of separation.

5. What is communal politics? What is the consequence of such practice?

Ans: When one religious group utilises state authority to create control over another, this is referred to as communal politics. They will wield power over the government and other institutions in society. This type of politics likewise thinks in terms of exclusivity. Religion emerges as the fundamental source of social cohesion.

The following are some of the consequences of communal politics:

- On the basis of religious identity, a desire for political control.
- Religious leaders mobilize people to support one party or agenda by using religious identity and symbols.

- Members of different faith groups brutally brawl in communal violence. In India, partition and other acts of violence have resulted in tremendous loss of life and property.

6. What makes India a Secular State?

Ans: The following are the constitutional provisions that make India a secular state:

- There is no official state religion.
- Individuals and communities have the freedom to practice, profess, and promote their religions or none at all.
- Discrimination based on religion is prohibited by the state.

India is in a peculiar situation. While it separates itself from religion, it also allows for government involvement to avoid prejudice or unfairness within religion. The prohibition of untouchability is one of them.

7. How is caste present in politics?

Ans: In politics, caste can take many forms:

- As a foundation for casting a vote for a specific candidate
- Electoral politics based on caste and political parties that favor certain castes.
- Various political groups are seen as representatives of specific castes.
- Political parties mobilize caste-based support in order to win elections.

8. What is caste-politics? Describe its positives and drawbacks.

Ans: Caste politics refers to the presence of caste in politics. Caste politics can take many forms:

- Caste-groups combine castes from nearby castes to form a larger group.
- Caste coalitions emerge from a variety of groupings.
- Formation of broader interest groupings such as the "backward" and "forward" castes.

Caste politics has the advantage of providing a solid foundation for claiming opportunities and privileges that are frequently denied, either purposefully or as a result of historical prejudice. These are also key centres for fighting discrimination against the 'backward' caste and ending it. However, there is concern that giving caste too much attention would cause other issues such as corruption and poverty to be overlooked.