

GENDER RELIGION AND CASTE

CLASS 10 POLITICAL SCIENCE

Gender and politics

Gender Division of Labour - It is a kind of hierarchical social division. It is not based on biology. It is based on social expectations and stereotypes. It appears to be natural and unchangeable.

Public and private division of Labour –

1. **Private division of Labour** - It is meant for work inside house. Women are responsible for daily household chores, bring up and look after children.
2. **Public division of Labour** – It refers to all work done outside home. Men perform these works.
3. **Outside work done by women (not valued and recognised)**
 - In villages** – Women bring water, collect fuel wood and work in fields
 - In urban areas** – Poorer women work as domestic helpers. Middle class women work in offices

We can say that majority of women do paid work as well as household work. But their contribution is not valued and recognised.

Feminist movements –

A feminist believes in the equal rights for women. There have been agitations with the demands like-

- Raising the political and legal status of women
- Voting rights for women
- Improving educational and care opportunities
- Some Radical demands of equality of women in personal and family life

Board Questions:

1. What are feminist movements? What were Their demands. (2010, 12, 14)
2. What was the feminist movements? Explain the political demands of the feminist movements in India. (2013)

Discrimination against women in India

Ours is a patriarchal society (ruled by father) where women face disadvantages, discrimination and oppression in many ways

- **Low female literacy rate** – (2011 census) 65.46% for women and 82.14 % for men. Parents prefer boys over girls in sending schools. Girls drop out before going for higher studies.
- **Low proportion of women in paid jobs**
There is very small share of women of women in highly paid and valued jobs
- **Unpaid work of women is not valued**
An Indian woman works one hour more than an average man yet her unpaid work is generally not given importance.

Board Questions:

"Our society is still a male dominated society." Explain the statement with the help of examples. (2019)

1. In what ways are women discriminated in our society? Write any three examples. (2011)
2. "Women are disadvantaged in India "Justify the statement with any three suitable examples. (2012)
3. "Women in India still face discrimination and oppression in various ways." Support this statement with suitable examples. (2010, 12)
4. "In what way women still lag behind than men despite some improvements since independence." Justify the statement by giving four examples. (2010)
5. Explain the different aspects of life in which women are discriminated. (2008, 10, 12)
6. " Women in India continue to be discriminated leading to their unequal position in society." Justify the statement with four suitable examples. (2009)

- **Disparity in salaries and wages for the same job:**
The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 provides for equal wages for the same work yet women are paid less than men in almost all areas of work – from sports and cinema to factories and fields
- **Preference for son and sex-selective abortions:**
The abortions- have led to decline in child sex ratio which is at 940 per thousand boys (2011 census)
- **Crime against women:**
Urban areas are becoming unsafe for women. Women face domestic violence, exploited and harassed at work places.

Women's Political Representation

Different Feminists and women's movements have demanded more and more representation of women in elected bodies.

- The proportion of women in Lok Sabha has been very low. The current percentage of women is 12.5 % of MPs in Lok Sabha. In 1951 there were 22 women MPs whereas in the present Lok Sabha there are 66 women MPs.
- In State Assemblies it is even below 5%.
- India is among the bottom group of nations behind several developing countries of Africa and Latin America

Solution to the women's low political Representation

- Legal provisions for a fair proportion of women in the elected bodies.
- Reservation of at least one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha. The bill regarding this provision is pending because of lack of consensus among parties over the issue.
- The gender division should get Expression in politics as it helps the disadvantaged groups

Religion, Communalism and Politics

Religion and Politics -

Religious differences are not as universal as gender but are widespread in the world today. India is a country with various religions. Religious differences sometimes cause social divisions. Unlike gender differences, the religious differences are often expressed in politics.

Gandhiji's views on religion and politics-

- Religion can never be separated from politics. He was not referring to any particular Religion.
- Religion is a moral force' that can unite different segments of society
- Politics must be guided by the moral and ethical values of all religions.

Board Questions:

What were the views given by Gandhiji regarding religion and politics? (2016)

Arguments of Human Rights groups- Most of the victims of communal riots are people from religious minorities.

Family Laws and women movement - Family Laws of all religions are not equitable and discriminate against women. Family Laws are laws that deal with family-related matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, etc.

Board Questions:

What are Family Laws? (2014)

Communalism

“Communalism is generally associated with narrow, selfish, divisive and aggressive attitude on the part of religious groups” - D. E. Smith

Communal Politics:

Use of religion in the following manners is communal politics

- Religion is expressed in politics in exclusive and partisan terms. Religion becomes exclusive to one's identity
- One religion is presented as superior to those of other religions
- Demands of religious groups appear to be against the other religious groups
- Use of state power to favour domination of one religion over the others.
- Example- the case of Northern Ireland

Board Questions:

1. What is communal politics? Explain the idea behind the communal politics. (2014)
2. How are religious differences expressed in politics? (2011)

Basis of or idea behind Communal Thinking:

- Propel start considering religion as the sole basis of society.
- Followers of a religion consider themselves as distinct from others.
- The followers of a particular religion must belong to one community
- Fundamental interests of the religious community are same
- The followers of different religions cannot be a part of the same society
- Any commonality or similarities with other religious groups is immaterial and superficial
- The interests of different religions are bound to be different and involve conflict
- The extreme form of communal thinking demands for a different nation or domination of their own religion.

Different forms of Communalism:

The modern-day politics in India is making use of religion in communal form. Problem begins when people start considering religion as the sole basis of society.

1. **Communalism in every day beliefs-** It so common that people fail to notice that they have developed a routine thinking on communal lines- superiority of their religion, prejudices and stereotypes of religious communities.
2. **Urge to form a separate political unit-** Quest for political dominance results in the belief in majority-dominance for those in majority and the minority start to desire for a separate political unit based on their identity.
3. **Political mobilization on religious lines-** It refers to attempts made to bring the target Religious community together It involves the use of sacred symbols, use of religious leaders, emotional appeals and plain fear from other religions. During elections special appeals are issued to woo the voters of one religion in preference to others.
4. **The ugly form of communalism-** It involves Communal violence, riots, and massacre. India suffered some of the worst communal riots at the time of partition.

Board Questions:

1. Explain the various forms that communalism can take place. (2011, 12, 13)
2. It is inevitable to ignore the relationship between politics and religion. In what way does this relationship impact modern day Politics? Explain. (2016)

Secular provisions of the Constitution

The state with no any official religion is called a secular state.

The ideology of Secularism is one of the basic and foundational structure of the Indian Constitution.

- There is no official religion for the Indian state.
- The preamble contains the word 'Secular' (added by 42nd constitutional amendment, 1976)
- Article 25-28 – right to practice, profess, propagate any religion
- Article 15 and 16 prohibit discrimination on ground of religion, caste etc.
- Constitution also allows state power to intervene in matters of religion to ensure equality within religious communities. Example- ban on untouchability (Art 17).

Board Questions:

1. "Secularism is not an ideology of some political parties or persons, but it is one of the foundations of our country." Examine the statement. (2018)
2. How does the Constitution of India ensure secularism? (2010)
3. Mention constitutional provisions that make India a secular state. (2010, 11, 12, 13)
4. What is a secular state? How does the Constitution of India ensure that India remains a secular state? (2012)

Caste and Politics

Features of Casteism

- Caste system is an extreme form of social division based on hereditary occupational division.
- The hereditary occupational division was sanctioned by rituals.
- It was based on exclusion of and discrimination against the 'out caste' group of untouchables
- Members of same caste group practiced the same or similar occupation.
- Marriages were organised within the caste groups

Board Questions:

1. Describe any 5 features of the caste system in India. (2012, 16)

Caste hierarchy: A ladder like formation in which all the caste groups are placed from the 'highest' to the 'lowest' castes.

Board Questions:

1. What is meant by caste hierarchy? Explain the role of caste in Indian Politics. (2015)

Decline of Caste System (reasons)

Economic development, education, occupational mobility etc have been weakening the Caste -hierarchy

- Leaders like Jotiba Phule, Gandhiji, B R Ambedkar and Periyar Ramaswami Naicker worked to establish society which is not based on Caste inequalities
- Urbanisation and growth of literacy and education has helped in the weakening of Caste institutions
- Occupational mobility (choice of occupation) is breaking the old notion of Caste hierarchy
- Weakening of the position of land lords in villages has also contributed to the decline Caste hierarchy
- The Indian Constitution also prohibits Caste based discrimination.

Board Questions:

1. Discuss the reasons for the decline of the Caste System. (2010, 12)

Caste has not yet disappeared from India.

- Most people still prefer marriage within their own caste or tribe
- Untouchability has not ended completely despite constitutional prohibition
- The effect of centuries of advantages and disadvantages continue to be felt today
- Those Caste groups still lag behind which were denied access to education
- Caste continues to be closely linked to economic status.
- Example – Larger presence of upper caste among the urban middle class.

Board Questions:

1. Caste has not still disappeared from contemporary India? Give any three examples to justify the statement. (2010, 12)

Forms of Casteism in Indian Politics

Casteism is rooted in the belief that Caste is the only basis of social community. Political parties and candidates use caste difference to win elections

- Political parties chose candidates in elections considering the case composition of the electorate (the voters)
- Different castes and tribes are given representation when govt is formed
- Caste sentiments are used by political parties and candidates. They are seen as their representatives.
- Universal adult franchise and the principal of one-person-one-vote has compelled political leaders to give importance to even those people treated as low or inferior.

Board Questions:

1. Explain any four forms of Casteism in Indian politics. (2009, 10, 14)
2. Explain the role of Caste in Indian politics. (2016)

Elections are not always related to Caste effects.

- No parliamentary constituency has a clear majority of one single Caste. Vote of other castes also matter
- No party wins the votes of all the bits of a Caste or community (sometimes called 'vote bank's)
- Many candidates from the same Caste divides the votes while many voters have no candidate from their castes.
- Sitting MP or MLAs also lose elections from the same constituency as the same voters vote against them.

Factors other than Caste that influence politics

Caste is not the only factor that influence politics. Some other factors also decide the voting preference.

- Voters having strong attachment with any political party votes for the party discarding the Caste aspect
- Rich and poor or men and women from the same Caste vote very differently.
- People from the same Caste or community may have different interests that decides voting preferences.
- Assessment of the performance of the government and popular rating of the leaders are often decisive in elections.

Board Questions:

Besides Caste which other factors do matter in electoral politics. (2013)

Politics in caste

Politics also influences Caste or we can say that Castes also get politicised. Politicisation of Castes can take following forms.

- Each Caste group tries to become bigger by incorporating within it neighboring Castes or sub-castes.
- Castes or community's coalition to have dialogue and negotiation.
- New Caste groups like backward and forward have come up in political arena.

Board Questions:

1. In what way does Politics influence Caste system. (2010)
2. How far is it correct to say that it is not Politics that gets Caste ridden but it is the Caste that gets politicised. Explain. (2013)

Effects of expression of Caste differences in politics

Positive Effects (Advantages)

- Many disadvantaged communities get attention and space to demand their share in politics.
- Dalits and OBC Castes play a role in decision making
- Political and non-political agitations have demanded an end to discrimination more dignity and better access to land resources and opportunities.

Negative Effects (Disadvantages)

- Too much attention to Caste is not healthy for democracy
- It can divert attention from pressing issues like -poverty, development, and corruption.
- Caste based division can lead to tension, conflict and even violence

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